

॥ श्रीः ॥

**Devi Māhātmyam**  
**Apr 2020 Discourse Series**  
**Part - 7**

**By**

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Translation of Speech on July 1st, 2020  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDvutdOZ0bU>

**Bhaskara Prakasha Ashram**

॥śrī sadgurucaraṇāravindābhyāṃ namaḥ ॥

॥ श्रीः ॥



śrī vimarśānandanātham satyāmbāsahitaṃ gurum |

hṛtpadmakarṇikā madhye bhāvayet sarvasiddhaye ||

śrī prakāśānandanātham vimarśāmbā sahitaṃ gurum |

hṛtpadmakarṇikā madhye bhāvayet sarvasiddhaye ||

śrī rāmānanda nātham rāmāmbā sahitaṃ gurum |

hṛtpadmakarṇikā madhye bhāvayet sarvasiddhaye ||

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# Introduction

śrī gurubhyo namaḥ ||

śiva-śakti samārambhāṃ bhāsurānanda madhyamāṃ |  
asmat śrī nātha paryantāṃ vande guru paramparāṃ ||

I am very happy, because I listened to your Durgā Saptashatī pārāyaṇam yesterday starting with mātṛkā nyāsam, all the thirteen chapters -- with all the stotras to be chanted before and after-- and concluding with the kśamā prārthanā, pradakṣiṇā stotrās, namaskārā stotrās and the prārthanā stotras! One should just listen fully when someone is chanting! [That is what I did]. I will tell you the benefits of listening to pārāyaṇam, later today.

I want to share so many things with you when I come for this session. But when I speak, I usually don't know the words that come forth from my mouth. I do jot down a few notes to remind myself of the few important things I want to relate, but many times, I end up talking about some other topics!

Speaking of other topics, yesterday evening I remembered a [special] incident. I think the year was 1974. Some of Swāmigaḷ's devotees from Colombo (Sri Lanka) requested Swāmigaḷ to attend the *kumbābhiṣekam* (consecration) of the Kappigawatha Vinayagar temple. Swāmigaḷ was not keen on traveling out of India--but since the devotees repeatedly exhorted and pleaded with him, Swāmigaḷ relented. Because our passports were not ready in time, we (Swāmigaḷ, myself, and my brother Śrī Subramania Deekshidar) could only go for the Maṇḍala Abhiṣekam. My role was that of an "eḍupiḍi" or assistant, and I would run errands for Swāmigaḷ. Four days prior to our departure, Śrī Kailāsa Nādhā Gurukkaḷ (who lived in Kandy, Sri Lanka and was a professor of Indology and Sanskrit at the university there) was visiting us. He is a Śrī Vidyā Upāsaka himself and used to always visit Swāmigaḷ whenever he visited India. I chanced upon a blessing through him. He was searching for a copy of "Yoga Pītha Nyāsam" in Tanjore. He was referred to Swāmigaḷ by Śrī Srīnivāsa Iyer, a great Śākta Upāsaka (from Tanjore). The Gurukkaḷ got the details and address for Swāmigaḷ and came to our house. Swāmigaḷ asked the Gurukkaḷ to return in a day or two (as I was out then and I usually write the copies). I diligently reproduced the text by hand. I did have my challenges! Anyhow, the copy was ready. When I asked Swāmigaḷ about the text, Swāmigaḷ told me, "We should complete Matṛkā Nyāsam followed by Yoga Pītha Nyāsam--only then are we able to pursue other saadhana. There is an axiom about this. Why don't you make a copy for yourself and familiarize yourself with it since you are interested." So I made a copy for myself by hand; this was a fortuitous event for me. As instructed, I gave the Gurukkaḷ the original manuscript that we had in our possession. I also told Kailāsa Nādhā Gurukkaḷ about our upcoming trip to Ceylon; and also gave him the details for the Caṇḍi Homaṃ Swāmigaḷ was planning to conduct at the temple, so he could attend the Homaṃ in Ceylon.

Gurukkaḷ was in fact returning (from Madras) to Colombo the day of the Caṇḍi Homam. (He could not change this itinerary as his visit to India was part of a university lecture tour in the Pune research Institute and other academic institutions.)

On the day of the Caṇḍī Homam, the Vināyakar temple was overflowing with devotees. Even the Ceylonese Prime Minister of that time Śrī Bandaranayake was there in attendance. Swāmigaḷ was conducting the Homam. Sri. Kailāsa Nādhā Gurukkaḷ somehow made it to the function and arrived just as the 5th or 11th chapter of the Devī Māhātmyam was beginning. He came, took the blessings of Swāmigaḷ and sat listening to the pārāyaṇam. Tears were pouring from his eyes. After the *pūjā* was over, I made a request to him that he talk to the devotees for five to ten minutes about the Devī Māhātmyam. His response to me was: “It is not that I do not know the meaning of the Māhātmyam or the Prayogaṃ that is being employed. Seeing how beautifully the Homam was done, however, I am deeply moved. Tears have been streaming down my cheeks nonstop. I feel like a bee with his six legs [positioned] deep into the nectar of a lotus flower--so deep that it can not leave the nectar. I feel the same way, watching the Caṇḍi Homam today. I am so moved and I am so absorbed in it that it is hard for me to explain in words”.

As I was looking at [Śrī Bhāskararāya Makhin's] commentary of the 11th and 12th chapters, I felt the same way as Gurukkaḷ. [The *caitanya* and bliss we feel when we experience the Caṇḍī in this way is not easily articulated in words]. Also, it is hard for us to talk about everything in the commentary. Even if you may be [thoroughly satisfied and] happy with my commentary, [the fact is that] I will never be satisfied with my own commentary. Śrī Bhāskararāya Makhin has provided us with so much information in his commentary on the Caṇḍī [that no explanation will suffice to cover the commentary in all its expansiveness].

If you think about it, the main theme of the 12th chapter is *phala-stutiḥ* while *vara pradhānam* is the main focus of the 13th chapter--i.e., in the 13th chapter, we see how the wishes of the king and those of the merchant are ultimately fulfilled. But reading the kind of details and information in the commentary for the 13th chapter, I am filled with wonder and amazement (all over again). I thank you all, because you all gave me this opportunity [to re-experience this chapter again].

[Let me add that] when we chant, we usually only focus on the recitation and want to finish chanting properly. We rarely think about the meaning of the chapters or their significance. It is akin to when you drive: You are more interested in reaching the destination. We rarely think about the [driving itself], the car, its make, its mileage, its machinery and the effort that must have gone into its making etc. [But it behooves us to think about the significance of the chapters in the Caṇḍī].

More specifically, we should attempt to understand the following:

- Why, out of all the sacred texts in the world, are there so many commentaries on the Devī Māhātmyam?
- Why do many realized Gurus ask us to read the Devī Māhātmyam?
- Why have so many people benefitted from reading this text?

- Why is reading the Devī Māhātmyam or doing a Caṇḍī homam suggested as a remedy or expiation (*prāyascittam*) by  *jyōtiṣās*  (astrologers) and  *paṇḍitās*  alike?
- Why is Ambā! *ārādhana* important?

Remember that Ambā! Herself tells us the way to easily propitiate and worship Her. Recall how the whole Devī Māhātmyam starts: Mārkaṇḍeya Maḥarṣi asks Lord Brahma to impart to him one simple, facile thing for the benefit human beings--that one phenomenon which is easy to complete, and which will protect [and provide for the well-being of] all mankind. [Brahmā reveals the Devī Māhātmyam in response to this plea.]

## Recap

The essence of the prayer on the part of the *devātā*-s is reflected in the eleventh chapter, where the *devātā*-s chant:

**sarvā-bādhā-praśamanam, trailokyasyākhileśvari |  
evameva tvayā kāryam-asmad-vairi-vināśanam ||  
(chapter 11, verse 39)**

After that juncture, the role of the celestials is over in the story. You don't see them mentioned again.

## Prathama Caritram

In the first chapter (which deals with the vanquishing of Madhu and Kaiṭabha), the two *devātās* we encounter are the father and son duo: Viṣṇu and Brahmā. Perhaps you can include Ādiśeṣā too. But that is about it [as far as characters go]. The one who performs the *prārthanā* is Brahmā [his *stuti* is the *Rātrī Sūktam*]. After hearing the story of Madhu-Kaiṭabha *vadham*, the king asks a slew of questions to Ṛṣi Sumedhas:

“What is the form of this Devī? What is Her *prabhāvam* (glory)?...”

**bravīti kathamutpannā sā, karmāsyāśca kiṁ dvija |  
yat-prabhāvā ca sā devī, yat-svarūpā yadud-bhavā ||  
tat sarvam śrotum icchāmi tvat to brahmavidāṁ vara ||**

(chapter 1, verses 61, 62)

“O Maḥarṣi, the one who knows and understands *Brahma-vidyā*, [please] tell me about Devī completely and elaborately. I wish to hear everything.”

Remember, even though the war between Viṣṇu and Madhu-Kaiṭabha continues for 5000 years,

there is not that much information in the story [about the Devī's prabhāvam].

## Madhyama Caritram

Then, in the second story, we see how all the śakti-s of all the devātā-s were all combined into a *samaṣṭi* (composite) form--and how that effulgent form of Ambāl slays Mahiśāsura. The devātās are in awe witnessing the effulgence and valor of Ambāl. They experience transcendent bliss and horipillation (“romāñca”) just from beholding the Devī in all Her splendor. In the 4th chapter, the devātā-s extol Ambāl [in an exquisite hymn]. When the devātā-s chant the *prārthanā ślokā-s*, that is when we as humans enter into the picture.

I have told you earlier about the nature of the devātā-s. [The term *devatā* itself derives from the divine nature of these beings]. Any being that will pray for the well-being of others--even the worst of his enemies--is a devātā. We as human beings worship all devātā-s. We erect temples for the devātā-s; we do *pujā-s* for them. So, the devātā-s in turn, remember that we human beings depend on them for our welfare, consider our interest and welfare--and when the Divine Mother tells them to articulate what they desire--they ask the Devī for boons on our behalf too! They chant:

saṁsmṛtā saṁsmṛtā tvaṁ no, himsethāḥ paramāpadaḥ |  
yaśca martyaḥ stavairebhi-stvāṁ stoṣyatya-malānane ||  
(chapter 4, verse 36)

“Amma, just like us, human beings too suffer. Please take away their suffering. When they think of you at times of danger or hardship, please help remove the dangers instantly. They should live happily with their children, their kith and kin.” This is the boon that the devātās seek from Ambāl on our behalf. Ambā accedes to the request of the devātā-s right away and disappears.

Now.. those listening to this story are likely to think: Did this happen? Does Ambā in fact come to the rescue of the devatās again? Will She come to our rescue in a difficult situation?

We need some story that serves to substantiate Ambā's assurance to the devās. [It is in our nature to want proof for everything.] Almost as soon as these questions potentially arise-- at the end of the fourth chapter-- the Ṛṣi relates to the King that he will tell the King the story of Ambā who emerges from the body of Gaurī to vanquish the asurās Śumbha and Niśumbha:

punaśca gaurīdehātsā samudbhūtā yathā:'bhavat |  
vadhāya duṣṭa-daityānāṁ, tathā śumbha-niśumbhayoḥ||  
(chapter 4, verse 41)



## Uttara Caritram

Soon enough, a difficult situation arises for the devātās: The asurās Śumbha and Nisumbha wage war with the devās for a hundred years. Dethroned, driven from their homes, devoid of sustenance, and starving, the devās discuss amongst themselves what to do next. Agni (the fire god) suggests that the devās pray to Devī, as the Divine Mother has previously given them her assurance that She would help them in times like these. “After all,” think the devās, “why should we suffer in this way, when we have the assurance from the Divine Mother Herself? Let us pray to Her.”

The devās assemble at the foothills of the Himālaya Mountain range, with the assumption that Devī is somewhere nearby. They begin offering Ambā their salutations in a special *prārthanā* made of 30 ślokās. The hymn which begins with “Namo Devyai Mahādevyai Śivāyai Satatam Namaha” comes to be known as the celebrated “Devi Sūktam”.

### The Significance of the Tantroka Devī Sūktam

In our *anuṣṭhānam* (way of worship), in our *paramparā* (lineage), we chant only the Tantroka Devī Sūktam. I want to remind you that our Gurus (and all those in our lineage continue to be) *vedādhyayana sampannā-s*; i.e., all are great Vedic scholars--and all are *Agnihotrī-s* (experts at maintaining the sacred sacrificial fires). However, where the Devī Sūktam is called for, all chant the tantroka Devī Sūktam only [rather than the Ṛg-veda Devī Sūktam]. I had assumed that perhaps Swāmigaḷ, in his great compassion towards me, allowed me and others to chant the Tantroka version as a concession--given that I am not an expert in Sanskritam or the Vedas. In fact, I have even shared this assumption with others in lectures before. However, this is not the case.

Only today did I discover [from Śrī Bhāskararāya Makhin’s explanation] that it is imperative that the phrase “Devī” necessarily appear in the Devī Sūktam--and that we chant the *padam* “Devī” while chanting the Devī Sūktam. The Tantroka Devī Sūktam starts with the salutatory phrase “Namo Devyai” -- the *padam* “namaha” and “devī” both have to be there. This phrase is very much like the opening salutation to Rudrā: “Om namo bhagavate rudrāya--namaste rudra manyava utota iṣave namaha” in the Rudra-praśna. This hymn comes to be known as the Rudram because it is addressed to Lord Rudra. Śrī Bhāskararāya describes the Devī Sūktam as “Namo-devyādi stotraihi” - he elaborates that the quintessential salutatory hymn designated for the Devī is “Namo devyai mahādevyai” (or the tantroka Devī Sūktam).

Please remember that chanting the tantroka Devī Sūktam is equivalent to chanting the Vedās. We have a priceless treasure in the tantroka Devī Sūktam, which is easy to practice and recite.

I want to share an important anecdote with you all. I am reminded of Śrī Thyāgarājan, a dear and ardent disciple of Swāmigaḷ. He used to be the Joint Secretary in the Central Government in those days. He was very particular about bringing out copies of the ŚrīVidyā Nityānuṣṭhānam



book. He took a loan against his provident fund and used these personal funds (on principle), towards publishing parts 1 and 2 of the book. He did this in the spirit of service and for all to benefit. His spirit embodied the ethos of the *padam* “jagatāmupakāriṇīm” --helping one and all.

There was no śākta *grantha* (text) Śrī Thyāgarājan did not own in his collection. He was an amazing scholar, well-educated, full of learning (*pāṇḍityam*). Once he visited us without notice; and there ensued a discussion on reciting the Devī Māhātmtam. He asked multiple questions: “Should we just recite a chapter a day, or one caritram a day..” etc.

Swāmigaḷ responded: “You should attempt to chant the whole Devī Māhātmyam. If you don't have time to recite the whole text, you may chant the Madhyama Caritram alone. If official pressures and other constraints prevent you from being able to chant even the Madhyama Caritram, then recite the Devī Sūktam alone.” Śrī Thyāgarājan then asked Swāmigaḷ, “Where is the Pramāṇam for this?” To which [Swāmigaḷ responded], “The *pramāṇam* exists in the rahasya-trayam.”

I will relate this to you later when we come to Rahasya-Trayam. [The *pramāṇam* or explicit statement and proof of the tantrokta Devī Sūktam's unparalleled significance exist in the Rahasya-Trayam].

So, reciting just the Devi Sūktam alone, you will be blessed with as much *punya* (merit) as you would earn from reciting the whole Devī Māhātmyam. [Said another way, we derive the benefits of the whole Caṇḍī from recitation of the Devī Sūktam]. I have experienced this truth myself.

## Nārāyaṇī Stuti

So we know, after Devi Sūktam was chanted, Ambāl apparates in front of the devās. [We see Ambikā emerging as Kauśikī from the form of Mother Pārvatī.] Kauśikī-Ambikā or Caṇḍikā slays śumbha-niśumbha, liberates the devātās from their sufferings, reclaims the devās' kingdoms for them and arranges for the devās' continued sustenance and prosperity. After the slaying of Śumbha-Niśumbha, the devātās chant the exquisite stotram called “Nārāyaṇī Stuti” - there are sixteen ślokās that form a subset of the Nārāyaṇī Stuti, which in turn is called the “Nārāyaṇī Sūktam”.

At the beginning of the stuti, we encounter a *padam* “kātyāyanīm tuṣṭuvariṣṭalābhād, vikāśi vaktrābja vikāśitāsāh”. The term “iṣṭa-lābhād” refers to this satisfaction.

[Let us look at the Nārāyaṇī stuti through a loukīka lens and everyday example]. Let us say you ask someone for some help or a specific item. You will only be [truly pleased] if they are able to give you exactly what you asked for. Isn't it? If you ask for an elephant and you get a cat, you will not not be happy--will you? If a child is asking for ice cream and you give it a cookie, he or she will [surely] not accept it. [But if you receive exactly what you wished for, you will be extremely happy and satisfied.]

Devī has restored the devatās to their earlier glory and stature; and has taken care of the devatās' supplications to their great satisfaction. After Śumbha-Niśumbha are vanquished, and after receiving everything they asked for, the devātās are **elated!** Overjoyed and grateful, the devās extoll Ambā prolifically with the most exquisite Nārāyaṇī Stuti.

When the 11th chapter ends, the devātās seek the destruction of their enemies in all the three worlds (everywhere):

**sarvā-bādhā-praśamanaṁ, trailokyasyākhileśvari |  
evameva tvayā kāryaṁ-asmad-vairi-vināśanam||  
(chapter 11, verse 39)**

[Ambāl provides her assurance that the devās' enemies will be vanquished]. To this end, She reveals that she will assume multiple avatārams or manifestations in the future: Her avatārams include Nandajā, Rakta-dantikā, Śatākṣī, Śakambharī, Durgā, Bhīmā, Brāhmarī. She further tells the devātās:

**itthaṁ yadā yadā bādhā dānavotthā bhaviṣyati |  
tadā tadāvatīryā:'haṁ, kariṣyāmyarisamkṣayam ||  
(chapter 11, verse 55)**

“Whenever you are troubled by demonic (evil) forces, I will assume avatārams then and there--to decimate your enemies and free you.”

[So great is the compassion of the Divine Mother.]

## Seeking the Devī's anugraham Through Surrender

Now who is listening to this story? King Suratha and the merchant Samādhi. Who is relating the story? [Sage] Medhas. Who is Medhas? He is a MahaṚṣi--a BrahmaṚṣi. In another time (during a previous discourse) we saw the reference that Medhas is verily Vaśiṣṭha MahaṚṣi. Now MahaṚṣi Medhas already knows the reasons that led the king and merchant to the forest: Fearing his very life, the king had to leave his kingdom, family, kin and *praja* (people) behind. On the other hand, the merchant was driven away from his house by his own family. However, the merchant is still worried about his family members and their well-being--he is also worried about the safety of all his belongings and affairs that he was forced to leave behind. What a conundrum!

When the king and the merchant ultimately ask the MahaṚṣi what the source of their hardship is, the Ṛṣi recounts a story: He begins by telling the duo that Moham (delusion) is ViṣṇuMāyā [the Veiling Grace]; and further explains that no one is exempt from the powerful embrace of Mahāmāyā: The Great Delusion can cause the downfall of any human being-- irrespective of his creed, knowledge, inherent wisdom or scholarship.

**mohyante mohitāścaiva mohameṣyanti cāpare |  
tāmupaihi mahārāja! śaraṇaṁ parameśvarīm||  
(chapter 13, verse 4)**

Even Ṛṣi-s fall prey to the power of delusion. This delusion is what propels or drives us to make mistakes. Even if we don't make mistakes [in an overt or obvious sense], delusion can land us in trouble, and create hardship, unhappiness, etc. But this too is the work of the Divine Mother Ambā and one can not question Her [Play]. Human beings, even learned and thoughtful ones, falling prey to *moham* is something that has happened in the past, is happening now and will happen again in the future. [Think of this] as part of the nitya-karmā of Ambā [as everything is Ambā].

If you want to escape from the clutches of *moham*, you need to surrender to the [lotus] feet of Ambā [as delusion and enlightenment are all part of Her Play]: “*saraṇaṁ parameśvarīm*” means “take refuge in her, the Supreme Sovereign.” This in turn means that these two men (the king and the merchant) should do the *ārādhana* of Ambā. [Ambā is extolled as *pañca-kṛtya parāyaṇā*. Recall the five-fold function of the Divine Mother: *sr̥ṣṭi* (creation), *sthiti* (sustenance), *sarṁhāra* (dissolution), *tirodhāna* (veiling or delusion), and *anugraha* (revelation and redemption). As *tirodhānakarīśvarī* and *sadāśivānugrahadā* the Divine Mother is both the Veiling Grace and the Revealing Grace, respectively. Therefore it stands to reason that only the Divine Mother’s Grace or *anugraham* will free one and all from the embrace of delusion and grant salvation and enlightenment].

## Twelfth Chapter -- Phala Stuti

We human beings enter the picture in the 12th chapter. Until now, Ambā has been responding to the *prārthanā* of *devātās*. In the 12th chapter, we (mortals) experience the full *kāruṇyam* or Compassion of Ambā.

Earlier in Chapter 5, we saw the *devātās* addressing Ambā as the embodiment of *dayā* or compassion: *yādevī sarva-bhūteṣu, dayā-rūpeṇa sarṁsthitā* (chapter 5, verse 65). In the Śakrādi stuti, the *devatās* extoll Ambā with the phrase: *sarvopakāra-karaṇāya sadā'rdra-cittā* (chapter 4, verse 17).

[You see,] *Caṇḍikā Mahālakṣmī* [is verily an ocean of compassion and] has a huge heart. In the context of instructing the king and the merchant to chant Her hymns as a way to be assured of Her Grace, the Divine Mother shows us all [the way to Her Abiding Grace].

The 12th chapter starts with:

**ebhiḥ stavaiśca māṁ nityaṁ stoṣyate yaḥ samāhitaḥ |  
tasyāhaṁ sakalāṁ bādhāṁ, nāśayiṣyāmyasaṁśayam ||  
(chapter 12, verse 2)**

[In the first chapter,] we have Brahmā Stuti (also known as the Rātrī Sūktam), chanted by Brahmā himself to supplicate the Divine Mother Mahāmāyā. The fourth chapter of the Devī Māhātmyam, known as the Śakrādi Stuti or Indrādi Stuti, is the hymn chanted by the celestials (devātās) to propitiate Ambāl after She slays Mahiśāsura. The fifth chapter has the exquisite Aparājītā Stuti or Devī Sūktam; and the 11th chapter contains the Nārāyaṇī Stuti. Ambāl assures us that She will rid us of all our troubles if we were to just chant these four hymns [with total faith].

She fills us up with great confidence and peace just with the aforementioned (first) śloka of this twelfth chapter. There is no ambiguity in Her assurance to us. [This chapter is the *phala stuti* for the entire Devī Māhātmyam]. I have already explained these ślokās to you earlier. So, let us fast-forward to śloka 9.

**yatraitatpaṭhyate samyaṅ-nityamāyatane mama |  
sadā na tadvimokṣyāmi sānnidhyaṅ tatra me sthītam ||  
(chapter 12, verse 9)**

Ambāl says: “I reside abidingly in places where the pārayaṇam of my glories happens. I never leave such a place.”

I need to explain the meaning of the word “**samyak**”. [In and of itself, the *padam* “**samyak**” means “well” or “accurate” in the context of something “well done” or “done right”. How does this relate to our sādhana? How can our recitation be done right?] What you should do from now on, is use a single book for all your pārayaṇam. For you, that book (should represent and) **is** Caṇḍikā Mahālakṣmī. When you do the parayanam, sit in a comfortable place in a convenient posture. Have a seat or cotton/silk/wool cloth as an *asanā* on which to sit--use this for yourself. Similarly the book also needs support --remember your book is a devātā and we need **her** to be given the proper seating. Never keep your book on the floor. Bhāskararāya says: if you keep the book in your hand and chant, you only get half of the merit or fruits of the recitation. Do not change the book or the bookstand/base that you use. Write your name in the book and place both the book and its stand in your bag-- and wherever you go for pārayaṇam, take the set with you. Borrowing another sādhakā's book does not give you the full benefit of the recitation. Be sure to use your own book that you always use. As you keep doing the pārayaṇam with the same book and with the same setup, you will begin to experience the fruits of your pārayaṇam. There is an expression in tamil “uru era, uru era” (which refers to an internalization process: when you slowly and consistently do something, it becomes completely internalized.) When you recite the Caṇḍī with the correct bhāvam consistently with your whole heart, the Caṇḍī becomes a part of you. [In this context, “**samyak**” refers not only to the notion of accuracy in recitation, but to the correct bhāvanā with which one needs to recite the Divine Mother's Glories. It is a reference to the sincerity in the recitation through the lowering of one's resistance, and opening oneself up the full Grace of the Devī] .

Just as we develop a deep love and affection for our children--from caring for them and seeing

them daily--you will feel a special bond slowly evolving between you and the devātā over time. You will begin to feel the presence of Ambāl there with you. You will feel Her embrace. As a result, your prārthanās will become more energized and in turn, your recitations [of the Mother's Glories] will bear fruit! [I feel compelled to tell you all about the cultivation of this special bond through developing the right bhāvanā in your āradhanā.]

## Cultivating the Right Bhāvanā

[Let us look at the prārthanā ślokaṃs from the Nārāyaṇī Stuti (verses 24 through 29 in the eleventh chapter). These verses are employed as the prārthanā stotraṃs again at the end of the recitation of the whole Devī Māhātmyam.]

Remember during your last class that you were taught to offer pradakṣīnam (circumambulation) along with specific stotrams; followed by namaskāram while chanting “**Namo Devyai Mahā Devyai.**” [As the devatās offered the Devī Sūktam and namaskārams to Ambikā, recall that She asked them why they were offering Her namaskārams.]

So, [after offering namaskārams, imagine that] the Divine Mother is asking you with utmost kindness: “What do you want?”

Be sure to get up and chant the prārthanā ślokās as the answer to that question from the Devī. Remember it is very important to advance any prārthanā or request after you are sure that the other person is listening to you. [Therefore offer your pradakṣīna-namaskārams to the Divine Mother first to get Her full attention; then advance your prārthanās to Her.]

The very first prārthanā ślokaṃ to Ambā after the Nārāyaṇī Stuti seeks Her Grace for the annihilation of fear:

**sarva-svarūpe sarveśe, sarvaśakti-samanvite |  
bhayebhyastrāhi no devi, durge devi! namo:'stu te||**

[O Devī who is in the form of all beings, who is the ruler of all, possessing all power, protect us from fear itself! O Devī Durgā, our salutations unto you!]

Imagine Ambāl is fully incarnate (*sāksāt*) and present there in front of you, when you offer Her your namaskārams. As you get up, offer flowers at Her feet -- all you see are Her feet at first. Remember, you are offering the first prārthanā to Ambāl's feet.

**etat te vadanam saumyam, lōcana-traya-bhūṣitam |  
pātu naḥ sarva-bhītibhyaḥ, kātyāyini! namo:'stu te ||**

[May this gentle face of yours, adorned with three eyes, protect us in every way from all fears. O Kātyāyini, our salutations unto you!]

As you raise your glance up to the beautiful face or vadanam of the Divine Mother, offer the prārthanā to Her face and request Her to remove all the fear or bhīti in you.

**Jvālā-karālamatyugraṁ-aśeṣāsura-sūdanam |  
Triśūlaṁ pātu no bhītir-bhadrakālī! namo'stu te ||**

[May your terrifying, flaming trident, exceedingly sharp and slaying all asurās, protect us from dread. O Bhadrakālī, our salutations unto you!]

As you shift your glance onto Ambā's weapons, fix your gaze on Her trident which shines ever so brightly. Advance the request to the Divine Mother that She use her *triśulam* to pierce and destroy your most poignant fear.

**hinasti daitya tejāmsi svanenāpūrya yā jagat |  
sā ghaṇṭā pātu no devī! pāpebhyo'naḥ-sutāniva ||**

[May your bell that destroys the *daityās'* life-force, and fills the entire world with its ringing, protect us from all evils, O Devī--even as a mother would protect her child!]

Now as you gaze at Ambā, wisdom enters us. We begin to understand why we suffer; why we experience 'bad times'. We realize that our own bad karmā is the cause of our hardship. We pray to the Divine Mother to please remove that demerit (*pāpam*) which is the root cause of our suffering. "Mother, may the *ghaṇṭā* that you hold in your hand--that destroys the asurās' strength and courage--may that bell destroy all my accumulated demerit or *pāpam*. I am your child after all."

**asurāsrḡ vasāpaṅkacarcitāste karojvalah |  
śubhāya khaḍgo bhavatu caṇḍike tvāṁ natā vayam ||**

[May your sword, smeared with the remnants of asurās' blood and fat, blazing in the sun's rays, (may it) be always for our welfare and prosperity. O Caṇḍikā, we bow to you!]

"Just as your *khaḍgam* can remove the strength and courage of the enemy on the battlefield and render them lifeless, may it be there for our peace and prosperity". As you gaze at Ambā's sword, make the request to Her to use it to scare our enemies away from us, to save us, and to confer auspiciousness on us.

**rogānaśeṣān-apahaṁsi tuṣṭā, ruṣṭā tu kāmān sakalān abhīṣṭān |  
tvāmāśritānāṁ na vipannarāṇāṁ tvāmāśritā hyāśrayatāṁ prayānti ||**

[When pleased, you destroy all afflictions; but when displeased, you thwart all aspirations. No calamity befalls those who have taken refuge in you; and they who resort to you, in turn become a refuge to others.]

We then conclude the prārthanā stotraṁs with a poignant prayer with multiple parts: we begin with a plea for a healthy body, free of diseases--so we may continue to do the pārayāṇam and ārādhānā to Ambā]. [Next, there is another poignant request to the Divine Mother:] "Amma, may your anger burn all my desires and aspirations born out of delusion, as it is this delusion in me that is the seed of anger, jealousy and all pain and suffering. I know that your anger is your *anugraham* for me"

A note on Devī's anger: The Divine Mother's anger is actually a blessing. A mother takes care of her child not out of responsibility but just out of pure love. She will be angry with the child only because of its misbehaviour, and she will work to correct the ways of the child. [In a similar way, the Divine Mother's anger is always justified and a powerful blessing in and of itself]. In addition,



you pray: “Please let me be recognized for all my efforts, my sādhanā”. [You beseech Her Grace so that through your worship of the Devī, you may become a refuge and safe harbor for others].

[The above ślokā is a very important prārthanā ślokā. In the ślokam “**rogānaśeṣān**” we ask for prosperity in this material plane through health and recognition for one’s sādhanā-- while simultaneously beseeching the Mother’s Grace for liberation through the removal of all desires and attachment that present roadblocks to true liberation. In this regard, the above ślokam is a quintessentially poignant description of the Devī: Ambā takes care of our fundamental ask in this objective material plane or *vyāvahārika daśā*, while simultaneously also helping us with our quantum leap (where we transcend) into the Unity plane or *paramārttika daśā* through the cessation of all desire and attachment. She is the giver of all boons: both prosperity in this material plane as well as true liberation (mokṣā) or transcendental bliss.]

Technically, all the aforementioned ślokās are all from the devatās to Ambā. [But Ambā addresses all of us human beings too in the twelfth chapter.] Imagine how a mother will console a crying child, by putting the kid on her lap and talking to him or her very gently, soothingly. Imagine the mother addressing every grievance of the child specifically, one by one--**that** is how Ambā gives us Her assurances to us in Chapter 12.

Therefore, always remember to retain the bhāvam [I advised earlier] in your heart throughout when you chant all the prārthanā ślokams. [As you continue to worship Devī with a pristine and sincere bhāvam, you will feel your bond with the Divine Mother becoming very strong.]

**[sarvā-bādhā praśamanam trailokya syākhileśvarī |  
evameva tvayā kāryam asmadvairi vināśanam ||**

“O Devī who is the Ruler of all, may you allay all the miseries of the three worlds and so, too, annihilate our enemies.” ]

**āyurdēhi dhanam dēhi vidyām dēhi mahēśvari |  
samastamakhilam dēhi dēhi mē paramēśvari ||  
rūpam dēhi yaśō dēhi bhagam dēhi bhagavati |  
putrām dēhi dhanam dēhi sarva kāmāṁśca dēhimē ||**

The above ślokā set is a direct supplication to the Devī for long life, wealth, scholarship, health, fame, loved ones, kinship, and **all** manner of prosperity.”

**mahiṣagṇi mahāmāyē cāmuṇḍē muṇḍa mālini |  
āyurārōgyamaiśvaram dēhi dēvi namōstutē ||**

O Slayer of Mahiṣā, Mahāmāyā, Cāmuṇḍā--Wearer of a garland of skulls, please grant me longevity, vitality and prosperity. Salutations to you, O Devī!”]

Earlier, I spoke to you about how your book is indeed to be venerated as Caṇḍikā Mahālakṣmī Herself. Remember the *padam* “samyak” I spoke about earlier--for daily recitation to happen in the right way, with the right bhāvanā, one must have the strength of mind and become resolute. Therefore, you pray to the Divine Mother to further bless your sādhanā in this way: “Mother, give



me the strength of resolve to be able to chant every day [from this book]. Also, give me health and wealth, so that I am able to organize and patronize the parāyaṇam of the Goddess's Glories using my own good offices." Remember that Ambāl herself assures us that when we do the Devī Māhātmyam Pārāyaṇam faithfully in the way prescribed by the śāstrās and with total sincerity, Her Grace is a certainty. Recall the earlier śloka again: **yatraitatpaṭhyate samyañ-nityamāyatane mama | sadā na tadvimokṣyāmi sānnidhyaṁ tatra me sthitam|| (chapter 12, verse 9)**

We can say a thousand times that reciting the Devī Māhātmyam is wonderful. But chanting even once--or organizing a pārāyaṇam even once--is not easy. We need the Devī's blessings to be able to chant and organize recitations as well.

## Twelfth Chapter - Phala Stuti (Continued)

Sincere recitation of the Caṇḍī will ensure the success of **all** endeavors. All fire oblations (*agnikāryam*) and yagñās are sure to succeed if the Caṇḍī is recited there. For example, if you were conducting *Rudra Homam*, arrange to have a recitation of the Devī Māhātmyam there. Ambā is sure to shower Her Grace (*anugraham*) on the event -- and the whole function will go very well. [Devī says:

**balipradāne pūjāyāṁ agnikārye mahotsave |  
sarvaṁ mamaītaḥ caritaṁ uccāryaṁ śrāvyameva ca ||  
(chapter 12, verse 10)**

"In the offering of oblation, in worship, in fire ceremonies and in the great festival, My Glories are to be recited and heard."]

There is an important saying about the performance of religious functions: it is important that one understand the vidhi or procedure of the religious offering very well before engaging in the oblation: "jñātvā karmāṇi kurvītā iti āryoktiḥ" -- meaning, it is very important to fully understand all the śāstrās and rules laid down for the proper execution for the karmā; this also means grasping the thought and feeling behind the practice rather than just following the instructions arbitrarily. Again, the right bhāvanā is important for everything.]

However, in our current context, this raises the following doubts: When are we going to learn all the śāstrās and rules applicable to the yagñās? When are we going to understand all the several layers of meanings of the śāstrās? When will we get the permissions and sanctions required to properly perform these oblations? It seems overwhelming, almost impossible that we would be able to perform the oblations and ceremonies exactly as prescribed. But when you compliment the function with the recitation of Devī Māhātmyam, Ambāl's blessings will ensure

the fire oblations and all worship is successful--whether one performs the ceremonies with or without full understanding, with or without mistakes, with or without all the permissions. All worship will be accepted and yield the desired results with the Mother's Grace if Her glories are extolled. Ambāl Herself says this:

**jānatā:'jānatā vāpi balipūjām tathā kṛtām |  
praticchiṣyāmyaham prītyā vahni-homam tathā kṛtam || (chapter 12, verse 11)**

Let us examine a scenario where there is a king or a *prabhu* who is engaged in performing austerities and oblations. He performs *yagñās* (*homam*) and *pūjā* in the best possible way. Let us say that he also performs all the associated procedures perfectly twice a day both morning and evening. Let us imagine that he further follows this up with food service (*bhojanam*) to brahmins, gifting of clothing (*vastra dānam*) to all, *suvāsini pūjās*, *kanyā pūjās*, *upanyāsam*, *gīta seva* in the way of great concerts, and all *upacārams* elaborately for the *devatās* for a whole year. Now imagine the *phalam* or reward one would expect in a situation like this. [Even if one were to engage in all of the above without expectation of any merit or *pūnyam*, it stands to reason that the *devatās* that are propitiated in this manner for this long would be immensely pleased. Hence it would also stand to reason that the merit accrued from the above *sādhanā* would be great.]

Now let us come back to the twelfth chapter. What Ambāl says here in the 20th ślokā is truly astonishing. Let us say, I too have the desire to mount a large *yagñā* like the king in the story above. I wonder if I can take on this kind of worship for even 4 days--where I fulfill all the *pūjās* and associated procedures--and furthermore arrange for food service, other *upacārās* and services fully. If not for 4 days, I wonder if I can do all of the above very well for one full day: so for that day, I would be the *yajamāna* or own the *homam*, do an elaborate *pūrṇāhuti*, then feed all the people in attendance. It is human nature to want to mount a *yagñā* in this way, especially if we see others doing this, assuming the date/time/place all work out in a way that allows us to take on the *sādhanā*.

Here in these ślokās, Ambāl gives us a technique or *upāya* for how we can actually realize the desire [to mount a *shubha-kāryam* of some magnitude rather easily]:

**paśupuṣpārghyadhūpaiś ca gandhadīpaiś tathottamaiḥ |  
viprāṇām bhojanair-homaiḥ, prokṣaṇīyai-raharniśam ||  
(chapter 12, verse 21)**

["As by the offerings of gifts of the finest cattle, flowers, gifts, incense and lights made day and night for a year--and as by the feeding of *brāhmanās*, by oblations, by *prōkṣanam* of consecrated water..."]

**anyaiśca vividhair-bhogaiḥ, pradānair-vatsareṇa yā |  
pṛitirme kriyate sā:'smin, sakṛtsu-carite śrute ||  
(chapter 12, verse 22)**

["As by diverse other offerings and *pūjās* or propitiation, so also by the hearing of the recitation

of my glories will I be pleased.”]

Ambāl says that She will be as pleased by us chanting or listening to the Devī Māhātmyam once (as indicated by the *padam* “sakṛt”) as when we offer oblations to Her morning and evening for a whole year. Hearing a recitation of her glories will confer the same *phalam* or benefit as all of the above *upacārams* done for a whole year! What a concession! How great Ambā’s compassion for us! So what must we do? [Chant the Caṇḍī or listen to the recitation of the Caṇḍī!]

[Next, Ambā says:

Śrutam harati pāpāni tathāroghyam prayacchati |  
Rakṣām karoti bhūtebhyo janmanām kīrtanam mama ||  
(chapter 12, verse 23)

“When heard, this poem of my glory removes all demerit and impurities, and grants freedom from diseases. The relating of my births confers protection from evil spirits.”]

Now that all of you have learned how to recite the Devī Māhātmyam-- just by chanting it from beginning to end each day with great sincerity--you will accrue all the benefits [of great oblations and receive Her protection]. See how your desires are realized in no time at all.

## The Significance of the Battles in the Caṇḍī

Have you wondered why there are so many battles described in detail in the Devī Māhātmyam: we encounter Mahiśāsura Vadam, Śumbha-Niśumbha Vadam, Mahiśāsura-Sainya Vadam [Caṇḍa-Muṇḍa Vadam]? If the Ṛṣi had decided otherwise, he could have just told us summarily that Ambā vanquished Mahiśāsura or Śumbha-Niśumbha in less than a minute--and moved on. However, there is a very specific reason why the Ṛṣi elaborates the battles in great detail: This is because, just listening to the detailed accounts of these battles removes the fear in us!

yuddheṣu caritam yanme duṣṭa-daiṭya-nibarhaṇam |  
tasmīñ chrute vairikṛtam bhayaṁ puṁsām na jāyate ||  
(chapter 12, verse 24)

“Since it recounts my deeds in battles--crushing the wicked daiṭyās--when heard, [this recounting of my battles] dispels all fear of enemies.”

Listening to the glorious accounts of these battles, we are filled with the strength to face adversity and hostility in life in a fearless and intrepid way. No matter how powerful an adversary you may be facing (in any arena of life), if you recite the glorious deeds of the Mother vanquishing the demons (or listen to a recitation of the same), you will be filled with positivity and confidence that you can take on the adversary. The detailed accounts of the Divine Mother

facing off with the daityās, instills *dhairyam* or valor in us--and helps us face our enemies; and even walk into competitions of every kind in everyday life with great confidence and faith.

## The Significance of Ṛṣi-Vāk

The next śloka that follows is:

**yuṣmābhiḥ stutayo yāś ca yāś ca brahmaṛṣibhiḥ kṛtāḥ ||  
brahmaṇā ca kṛtās tās tu prayacchanti śubhām matim ||  
(chapter 12, verse 24)**

["Praises uttered by you (devatās) and the great seers, as well as by Brahmā himself, produce an auspicious mind and state."]

I want to elaborate on this śloka by focusing on the *padam* "**brahmaṛṣibhiḥ kṛtāḥ**". [But first, when Ambā says "praises uttered by you" She means 'the devatās']. Remember that the devatās are still in the audience listening to what Devi is saying. Even though Devī is also addressing us human beings, She is also addressing the devās who are still present there with folded hands. (Remember the audience will not clear the auditorium first.) The devatās praise the Divine Mother in their various hymns: remember Brahmā Stuti in Chapter 1, Indrādi Stuti in Chapter 4, Aparājita Stuti in Chapter 5, and Nārāyaṇī Stuti in Chapter 11. [The *padam* "Brahmaṇā ca kṛtās" refers to the hymn created by Brahmā himself--the Brahmā Stuti also known as Rātrī Sūktam.]

So what does "**brahmaṛṣibhiḥ kṛtāḥ**" refer to? [This is a direct reference to the great seers that have direct access to Knowledge of the Self or *brahma jñānam*.] Devī says the words of the great seers will confer all auspiciousness. Recall the Ṛṣi's words in the first chapter: Śloka 53 of the first chapter is where Mahaṛṣi Medhas tells Suratha and Samādhi who Ambā is -- what Her prabhāvam is. It is only at this juncture that he first coins the *padam* "**Mahāmāyā**":

**tathāpi mamatāvarte mohagarte nipātītāḥ ||  
(chapter 1, 53)  
mahāmāyāprabhāveṇa saṁsārasthitikāriṇā |  
tannātra vismayah kāryo yoganidrā jagatpteḥ ||  
(chapter 1, 54)**

In the first chapter, the great seer explains the attributes of "Mahāmāyā" in six glorious śloka's commencing with the 53rd śloka. Remember that he employs the name "Mahāmāyā" for the first time here. He explains that it is Mahāmāyā's great deluding power that is responsible for our total immersion in the wave of *saṁsāra*. It is Her power that results in our delusion, which leads to duality and suffering--and that it is the same Mahāmāyā's *anugraham* or Revealing Grace that will deliver or liberate us from the delusion as well. Mahāmāyā's *anugraham* will take us to *mukti* or *mokṣā*. She is the force that will lead us to transcendental bliss.

The verses 53 - 58 in the first chapter uttered by Maḥarṣi Medhas is what Ambā means by “brahmaṛṣibhiḥ kṛtāḥ”--this passage is what is referenced by the Devī herself in chapter 12.

lobhātpratyupakārāya nanvetān kiṁ na paśyasi |  
tathāpi mamatāvarte mohagarte nipātītāḥ ||  
mahāmāyāprabhāveṇa saṁsārasthitikāriṇā |  
tannātra vismayah kāryo yoganidrā jagatpateḥ ||  
mahāmāyā hareścaisā tayā sammohyate jagat |  
jñānināmapi cetāmsi devī bhagavatī hi sā ||  
balādākṛṣya mohāya mahāmāyā prayacchati |  
tayā visṛjyate viśvam jagatetaccarācaram ||  
saiṣā prasannā varadā nṛṇām bhavati muktaye |  
sā vidyā paramā mukterhetubhūtā sanātānī ||  
saṁsārabandhahetuśca saivasarveśvareśvarī ||  
(chapter 1, verses 53-58)

Recall that the Maḥarṣi’s description of the Divine Mother Mahāmāyā’s attributes, makes a profound impression on King Suratha. After hearing the seer’s words, the king holds on to the above words of the Ṛṣi (ślokās 53-58) and wants to learn more about Mahāmāyā’s form, Her glories, and Her greatness in ślokās 60-62. It is at this point that the Maḥarṣi recounts the story of Mahāmāyā’s intervention in the vanquishing of Madhu and Kaiṭabha. Therefore, it is important to also recite the verses above, when you decide to do pāraṇam of all the stutis in the Caṇḍī. [Here in the twelfth chapter, we see how important the *brahmaṛṣi-vāk* or the words of the great seers are. Ambā Herself mentions the importance of the hymns composed not only by Brahmā and the devatās but also the significance of the words of the great Ṛṣi-s.]

Ambā says, “brahmaṇā ca kṛtās tās tu prayacchanti śubhām matim” -- if we chant the stuti composed by Brahmā [and all the stutis mentioned above], we will beget an auspicious mind. This is a very big hint. If you were to ask me what we will get from chanting the Rātrī sūktam--my response would be, chanting the rātrī sūktam will lead you to jñānam and auspicious wisdom. We hear people pray, “God, please give me the right mind.” If a devotee were to read the words of the brahma-ṛṣi in the Rātrī sūktam and the other hymns, he or she will automatically become blessed with knowledge. These words of counsel are not mine--they are the Divine Mother’s assurances as intuited by the Maḥarṣi!! [The Ṛṣi mentions “purity of mind” or auspicious thoughts again at the end of the chapter.]

## The Significance of Smṛti (Remembering Devī’s Māhātmyam)

Up until now, we have already seen Ambā’s assurances for our protection and redemption from demerit (*pāpam*) and impurities. We have even seen the *upāyās* or ways for us to perform expiation or *parihāram* through the sincere recitation of the Caṇḍī.

We have seen references to broad categories of hardship or general types of setbacks driven by *navagraha-dosā* or *graha-pīḍā* --ills plaguing us as a result of celestial bodies in inoptimal and detrimental positions in our horoscope. Next, in verses 26 through 28, Ambā gives us her assurances that She will deliver us from very specific dangers and peril of all kinds:

Think of all the most extreme scenarios--the worst possible dangers or the most perilous situations that we could face in our lives: we may be lost in the woods or along a lonely road. We may be surrounded by forest fire or thieves or enemies; we may be threatened by earthquakes and floods and other natural calamities. We may find ourselves being chased by animals in the wild; or we may be kidnapped, assaulted or mugged or be the victims of burglaries. We may be in accidents while traveling. We may find ourselves on the wrong side of the law, or be incarcerated for unjust and false reasons. We may be sentenced to unthinkable punishments. We may find ourselves in impossible situations. What can we do in these types of situations? Many hardships are not easy to share with others--we would not even be able to talk about the hardship. [In most of these situations, it isn't even possible to seek any material assistance or outside help.] The Divine Mother states: "During perilous times, just think of my *caritram*, and you will be rid of the threats and dangers."

**Sarvābādhāsu ghorāsu vedanābhyardito'pi vā |  
smaran-mamaitac-caritaṁ, nara mucyeta saṅkaṭāt ||  
(chapter 12, verse 29)**

["When caught in dreadful straits or tormented with agony, whoever remembers these deeds of mine is freed from danger."]

**mama prabhāvāt-simhādyā dasyavo vaiṛiṇastathā |  
durād eva palāyante smarataś caritaṁ mama ||  
(chapter 12, verse 30)**

["By my power, lions and beasts, robbers and enemies flee far away from one who remembers these deeds of mine."]

Note: In the above ślokaṁs, Ambā! is NOT telling us to perform a *pārāyaṇam* (recitation) or *japam*--nor is She asking us to offer *namaskāraṁs*, flowers or other *upacāraṁ* or reverential services. She asks us to just think of her Caritram. [How great Her compassion that she makes this concession!] But how does one remember these stories or caritrams? It stands to reason that only when you chant daily--regularly--will you think to recall her glorious deeds--especially during a time of great need.

It follows that you should be [familiar with the Devī Māhātmyam to the point of being] able to briefly recall the Devī Māhātmyam in a few poignant verses. Even more importantly, you should believe that the Divine Mother will come to your rescue when She is remembered, invoked with total faith. When that sincere belief is present, the animal chasing you in the forest will stop.



Enemies who may wish you harm, or the thief who wants to steal from you--will all run away from you.

Right after giving us these assurances, Ambāl disappears. From this point on, we do not see the devatāś either. Maḥarṣi Medhas continues the conversation with the king and the merchant: he relates how the *asurās* that remain, return to *pātāḷa-lokā*, while the devās return to *swarga-lokā*.

Note that it is not just us human beings, that can and should chant the Devī Māhātmyam. Even Seers or Ṛṣi-s, and monks and renunciates that have taken the vows of *sannyāsa*, can chant Devī Māhātmyam. The Devī Māhātmyam is relevant to **all**. The text grants all manner of prosperity, including great insight and wisdom.

**sā yācitā ca vijñānam tuṣṭā ṛddhiṃ prayaccati ||**  
**(Chapter 12 verse 37)**

["Entreated, She bestows the right knowledge. Propitiated, she bestows prosperity."]

Those who chant the Devī Māhātmyam with no specific desires in mind, will be rewarded with *jñānam* (knowledge which can lead to enlightenment), *vijñānam* (superior wisdom), and true liberation or Mokṣā. Those that recite the Devī Māhātmyam with specific material desires in mind also have their desires fulfilled. So, whether we have a desire or not, the Devī Māhātmyam is always relevant and poignant--and it is always important to remember the Glories of the Divine Mother and to chant the Devī Māhātmyam.

## Conclusion

In verses 36 and 37 of the twelfth chapter, the Maḥarṣi goes on to explain how the Divine Mother creates, sustains and destroys this universe. He states that Devī, though She is the Eternal Principle beyond time, manifests time and again to ensure the protection and regulation of this universe. [Recall I mentioned another ślokaṃ from the eleventh chapter where the Divine Mother offers this same assurance (chapter 11, verse 55). This ślokaṃ in the twelfth chapter is an assurance from the Devī that She will *always* manifest to protect the universe through all time.]

**evam bhagavatī devī sā nityāpi punah punah |**  
**saṃbhūya kurute bhūpa jagataḥ paripālanam ||**  
**(chapter 12, verse 36)**

[There is a striking resonance between the Rṣi's words in the first chapter and his words in verses 36 through 39 at the end of the twelfth chapter. Once again, Maḥarṣi Medhas mentions the great deluding power or *tirodhāna-śakti* of the Divine Mother as Mahāmāyā; and he goes on to elaborate how the Devī is at once both the destroyer (*saṃhāriṇī*) and the creator of the cosmos ("*viśvam-prasūyate*"). As Mahākālī and Mahāmārī, Devī is the great catastrophe at



*praḷaya* or the time of dissolution; and immediately thereafter, She, the Birthless One, becomes the Creation at the beginning of the next cycle. In addition, it is She the Eternal One who maintains the lives of beings as well: Devī is also the “*sthiti-kāriṇī*” or Sustaining Principle. As the bestower of *vijñānaṁ* or superior knowledge and Wisdom (as seen in verse 37), She is also the Revealing Grace.]

**tayaitanmohyate viśvaṁ saiva viśvaṁ prasūyate |  
sā yācitā ca vijñānaṁ tuṣṭā ṛddhiṁ prayacchati ||  
vyāptaṁ tayaitatsakalaṁ brahmāṇḍam manuješvara |  
mahādevyā mahākālī mahāmārīsvarūpayā ||  
saiva kāle mahāmārī saiva sṛṣṭirbhavatyajā |  
sthitim karoti bhūtānāṁ saiva kāle sanātānī ||  
(chapter 12, verses 37-39)**

Mahaṛṣi Medhas goes on to say: During plentiful times, the Devī bestows Her Grace in our homes as *Lakṣmī* or prosperity and growth or *vṛddhi*. Conversely, in times of privation or scarcity, She exists as *alakshmi* or misfortune. [This verse speaks to the immanence and omnipotence of the Divine Mother. She is the force behind everything--it therefore behooves us to seek Her Grace through lack and plenty, as She is the energy behind the cyclical nature of the phenomenal universe.]

**bhava kāle nṛṇāṁ saiva, lakṣmī-vṛddhi-pradā gr̥he |  
saivā:'bhāve tathā:'lakṣmīvināśāyopa-jāyate||  
(chapter 12, verse 40)**

In the next verse, the Ṛṣi instructs:

**stutā saṁpūjitā puṣpaidhūpa-gandhādibhi-stathā  
dadāti vittaṁ putrāṁśca, matiṁ dharme gatiṁ śubhām|| oṁ  
(chapter 12, verse 41)**

[“And so, praised and worshipped with flowers, incense, fragrant sandal paste and the like, She bestows wealth, progeny and a pure mind firmly rooted in righteousness.”]

Notice that the Ṛṣi does not ask us to perform elaborate *pūjās* for the Devī in this verse. The entire set of *upacāraṁs* described here will take about five minutes. Even these five minutes of sincere worship are enough to please the Divine Mother. The Mahaṛṣi strongly alludes to this. Therefore, offer a flower while reciting or recounting one of the many hymns (*stuti*); offer *dīpa-dhūpa-gandham* (lamps, incense, sandalwood paste); offer a namaskāram or prostration (if you're unable to offer a physical namaskāram, then offer the salutation with folded palms or with your *bhāvanā*); offer a simple *naivedhyam* or food offering. The Mother will be immensely pleased and confer the great boons above.

Let us look at the second line in the above śloka again: if you recite the Devī Māhātmyam or listen to a recitation of it sincerely and regularly, you will be rewarded with all manner of prosperity including: wealth, comfort, progeny, auspicious thinking, and superior wisdom.

R̥ṣi Medhas concludes the 12th chapter poignantly-- stating that when we propitiate the Devī, we beget auspicious or righteous thinking [and will thus automatically be set] on the path to *mokṣā* or liberation. This concluding verse points to the importance of always asking the Devī for the right mind and righteous thinking.

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We could only cover the 12th chapter today. We will go through the 13th chapter next week. I am planning to also talk about the Rahasya-trayam then.

Let the Kaṭākṣam of the Gurus be on you all (abidingly). May you all be very happy and well.

Śrī Mātre Namah  
Śrī Gurubhyo Namah

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