

Veda Vyas'

DEVI PURAN (MAHABHAGWAT)

RAMAYAN

with

RAM KAVACH

(Original Text with complete English Translation,
Explanatory Notes, Appendices, Biblical Parallels etc.)

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**RAM KAVACH
PREFACE**

श्रीपार्वत्युवाच

सत्यमेव महाबाहो समरे मां स्मरिष्यति । तथापि स यथा मृत्युं समवाप्स्यति तच्छृणु ॥८१॥
ममैवैतज्जगत्सर्वं जगद्रूपाहमेव हि । एतस्य पीडनेनैव जायते मम पीडनम् ॥८२॥

Parvati replied to Lord Vishnu— 'Oh the one with the most strong arms! It is true that he (Ravana) will be remembering me in the battlefield. But listen to the way he will die. This whole world is mine and it is me who has been revealed in the form of this myriad and vast world. Therefore, anyone who torments the world, torments me (Chapter 2, verse no.81-82).

मयि लङ्कापुरे तस्य स्थितायां न दुरासदः । समेष्यति रणे मृत्युं तेन त्यक्ष्यामि तां पुरीम् ॥८८॥
रक्षिष्यामि न वै युद्धे जगत्पीडनकारणात् । तस्मान्मानुषतां याहि महेशं प्रणिपत्य च ॥८९॥

While I stay in Lanka, his defeat in the battle is impossible. Hence, I shall exit from it. I shall also not protect him in the battlefield because he indulges in tyrannising and tormenting the people of the world. Hence, you pay your respect to Mahesh (Lord Shiva) and manifest yourself as a human in this world' (Chapter 2, verse no.88-89).

The prodigious and erudite sage Veda Vyas— the genius who classified the four Vedas into their present form— had penned, inter alia, the eighteen Purans and the eighteen sub-Purans. The present book **Devi Puran (Mahabhagwat) Ramayan** has been culled from a major sub-Puran titled Devi Puran (Mahabhagwat).

It is said that even after writing the huge collection of voluminous scriptural texts unmatched anywhere in the world, Veda Vyas did not find peace at heart. So he went to the serene environs of the upper-reaches of the Himalayas to meditate. There he heard a divine voice ordaining him to write the Mahabhagwat. The voice was followed by a divine, supernatural vision in which, on the behest of the four Vedas which resided with the

creator Brahma in a personified form, he had a divine vision of the holy feet of the cosmic Goddess, and these feet consisted of a divine lotus with thousand petals. This entire Puran was inscribed on them. The sight vanished and when Veda Vyas regained his worldly consciousness, the divine lotus with its inscriptions survived in his photostatic memory, and he plunged head-on to write down what he saw. Thus, this Puran was revealed to him, and he wrote it down for posterity.

Essentially, this Devi Puran (Mahabagwat) extols the virtues and omni-potency of the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient Goddess who represents the stupendous powers and dynamism of the cosmic energy which is creative and sustaining on the one hand as well as destructive on the other.

The narration was first done by Lord Shiva to sage Narad, then by Veda Vyas himself to his disciple Jaimini, and finally by sage Sut for the benefit of 88,000 sages assembled at the pilgrim site of 'Naimi-Sharanya' with the purpose of hearing all the voluminous tomes of spiritual literature continuously at one place.

Ramayan constitutes of the divine, holy, purifying and glorious story of Sri Ram as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu in this world to rid it from the burden of vile, vicious, evil-mongering and cruel tyrants, such as the demons headed by their chief Ravana, and consequentially restore peace, order and righteousness in this world. This story of Sri Ram is contained in Cantos 36-49 of this great Puran. It highlights how and why Lord Vishnu worshipped the Goddess, the divine Mother, and established the tradition of the observance of the 'Navratra' festival (i.e. the religious period of nine nights of the bright lunar fortnight in the Hindu month of Ashwin, corresponding roughly to end September and beginning of October) culminating in the 'Dusshera' festival which marks the killing of Ravana by Sri Ram, symbolising the triumph of good over evil.

Briefly, this marvellous version of Ramayan describes the legendary story of Lord Ram with a special twist, and it is that the Lord had worshipped Goddess Durga—who was a manifestation of the cosmic Mother Goddess representing the stupendous forces of Nature that always restored the balance whenever unrighteousness and evil forces became ascendant, suppressing goodness, righteousness and noble virtues in their wake—and had invoked her blessings in order to be able to slay the sinful, evil and pervert demon king Ravana, the 10-headed one. The ten days when the Goddess was worshipped by Lord Ram are commemorated as the Navratra or Dusshera festivals. This Ramayan describes that worship in great detail.

As is the usual norm with any Puranic text, great metaphysical, theological and spiritual doctrines are intricately woven into the text itself, lending it a divine fragrance.

Another interesting thing in this Ramayan is that specific dates have been mentioned for important milestone events—such as Sri Ram's departure from Ayodhya for the forest, construction of the bridge over the ocean to reach Lanka, dates when he worshipped the great Goddess, the commencement of the war, its progress, killing of Ravana and other important

demons etc.—this in itself is unique because specific dates are not to be found in other stories of Ram. Besides this, chapter 8 describes why Brahma, the creator, had lost his fifth head (verse no. 34-51), and chapter 2, verse no. 59-66 describe the basic reason why the Goddess decided to kill Ravana. Such features make this book very interesting.

These two festivals—Navratra and Dusshera—are observed throughout the length and breadth of India, with the ‘Durga Puja’ being another name for the Navratra in certain parts of the country when Goddess Durga, who is personification of cosmic energy and divine forces of Nature, is worshipped to commemorate the victory of Lord Ram over the demon king Ravana.

I must share with my esteemed readers—though most hesitantly and with the greatest of humility—the miraculous way that this book in the present form came into existence. Though it might seem incredulous, but it so happened that I woke up on the morning of the 1st day of the bright lunar fortnight of Ashwin of the year 2006 with a clear recollection of the previous night’s dream when it had appeared that I had to stop all other works and do this Lord’s work first—and that also within the time frame of nine days, i.e. the Navratra period! I was greatly stumped and stunned, totally dumbfounded and stupified—because I wasn’t prepared for it and the time was very short. It was like a divine instruction ordering me to catch the train at a short notice, without prior preparation and time for putting my house in order.

There was no time to procrastinate. I toiled day and night to meet the ordained deadline. I was—astonishingly—able to complete it before the evening of the forthcoming Dusshera which falls nine days later. Puffing and panting, I was literally able to pack the Lord’s parcel, reach the station on time, book and load it on the train for its yonder journey just in time even as the train crawled forward towards its onward journey. The Lord’s work was done! Though fatigue and weariness overtook me, I was happy that after a little rest overnight, I’ll resume my next toil for my Lord from the very next day!

‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest’ (Bible, gospel of St. Matthew, 11/28). I am like a peasant in the Master’s field—I have to carry out His orders, and the fruits are not mine, except the benefit and satisfaction of having pleased Him. The field’s produce are all His.

The onwards journey of the parcel of the Lord will be taken care of by **Sri Navneet Das ji Gupta** of Chaukhambha Surbharti Prakashan, Varanasi, who will publish all the books written by me—glory be to him! Thanks and cheers are also due to him!

To make the book interesting, I have appended Appendix no. 1 which lists the chronological events with their dates as mentioned in the main text in Sanskrit. Further, cross references have been provided wherever necessary in the text itself.

Appendix no. 2 is a unique composition called ‘**Sri Ram Kavach**’ which literally means the ‘impregnable shield empowered by the potent and glory of Sri Ram’s divine and holy name which protects the creature against all the odds of life and bestows salva-

tion upon him and frees him from the torments of this life'. Its relevance with 'Devi Puran (Mahabhagwat)— Ramayan' lies in the fact that both of them deal with the protection of the creature from the horrible torments inflicted upon him by this evil, vile and sinful world. They show the way to overcome hurdles and obtain triumph.

Besides, in consonance with my way of thinking and outlook, Sri Ram is the ultimate and supreme reality, the Truth, and notwithstanding the varied and myriad stories swirling around his legend, he nevertheless is the final redeemer and the giver of ultimate rest for our souls. Lord Ram is no one else but the supreme transcendental Brahm himself. This particular aspect which is sublimely highlighted in 'Sri Ram Kavach' is a fitting addition to this book and will lend spiritual and devotional glint, glitter and shine to the main text. It will show that Sri Ram acted as he did keeping in mind his role as a human being and in deference to the established traditions expounded by the various scriptures. However, let this not in any way delude us and cloud our understanding of the reality, of the supreme Truth; let us not get lost in the thick jungle of the various versions of the Lord's story collectively called the Ramayan, and forget to see their hidden message, their sublime beauty and their divine aspect. After all, the various Ramayans are only different versions of the divine entity's playful activities— as understood by the particular author of that version of Ramayan. So, this inclusion of 'Ram Kavach' will enhance the beauty of the book in as much as it highlights the supremacy of Lord Ram above all manifestations of Brahm, and at the same time establishes that he is the 'real' one who can protect us in our day-to-day battle that we metaphorically fight in this humdrum, mundane, vicious and uncompromising world around us.

Appendix no. 3 is a unique collection of Biblical quotations and prayers which attempt to establish the admirable uniformity between the system of worship, forms and languages of prayers, the ritualistic practices, and basic cardinal doctrines in Hinduism and Christianity. It acts as a sort of bridge between two diverse cultures and civilizations having different ethos, languages and customs. This section titled 'similarity between Hindu and Christian forms of worship and theological doctrines' has extensive quotations from the holy Bible (old & new testaments) and prayers offered during the Holy Mass. Even a cursory reading will show the reader that almost every major thing said in Devi Puran Ramayan has a parallel in Christianity and its doctrines. The prayers offered by the Gods, by Brahma and even by Sri Ram himself are almost similar in essence to what the Christian prayers say, sometimes even the very words are similar.

There is no wonder in it because, as is explained by this author in this appendix no. 3, since the Truth is universal, it transcends boundaries of languages, cultures, customs and civilisations. I hope this section will appeal to the English loving readers.

A short prayer which I have composed in honour of my beloved Lord Ram appears in appendix no. 4 of the book.

This Ramayan compliments and supplements another version called ‘Adbhut Ramayan’ of Valmiki. This is because whereas this ‘Devi Puran (Mahabhagwat) Ramayan’ describes the story of how Lord Ram slayed the 10-headed Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, by worshipping and invoking Goddess Durga, the other Ramayan, the Adbhut Ramayan, describes the story wherein the cosmic Goddess called ‘Mahakali’ was instrumental in the slaying of the 1000-headed Ravana of Pushakar, who happened to be many more times stronger and brave than his younger brother, the 10-headed Ravana. Both these versions extol the glories of the cosmic Mother who had revealed herself as Durga and Mahakali on two different occasions to get rid of ascendant evil powers in this world. These are the only two Ramayans glorifying the greatness of ‘Shakti’, and they literally form the two legs of the body that personifies the divine story of Lord Ram with special emphasis on ‘Shakti’ worship.

The English version of Adbhut Ramayan by this humble author has been published by the publishers of this present book also.

Meanwhile, I am sure that my esteemed readers will understand that I am as mortal a being as them, and never claim to be a scholar of any kind. I do what my beloved Ram wants me to do— so the credit or the discredit are all of his. ‘For it is not ye that speaketh, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you’ (Bible, gospel of St. Matthew, 10/20) and ‘the disciple is not above his master nor the servant above his lord... It is enough for the disciple that he be (do) as (ordered, ordained) by his master and the servant as his lord’ (Bible, gospel of St. Matthew, 10/24-25).

I have no right to claim any credit also because ‘For he that is mighty hath done to me great things and holy is his name’ (Bible, gospel of St. Luke, 1/49). The glory of the Lord, his benediction, magnanimity and benevolence, mercy and grace, his divine name and its stupendous splendour are eternal and magnificent. So, let us rejoice in the spirit of the Lord, the saviour Sri Ram. ‘Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven’ . (Bible, gospel of St. Matthew, 5/12).

Finally, I must express my sincere thanks and gratitude to ‘Ayodhya Shodha Sansthan’, Ayodhya, for coming forward with financial aid, and joining hands with me and the publishers to hold high this symbolic torch of the divine story of Ramayana, enabling its illumination to spread far and wide across the land, along with keeping alive the glorious and the grand tradition of the worship of Goddess Durga, known as Durga Pooja, during the religious festival known as the Navratra. My special thanks are for Sri Manoj Kumar Singh who is the Chairman of Ayodhya Shodha Sansthan and the Secretary of the Cultural Department of the Govt. of U.P., for Dr. Yogendra Pratap Singh who is the Director of Ayodhya Shodha Sansthan, and for Sri Avinash Ji who is the Manager of Ayodhya Shodha Sansthan, Ayodhya. May the Lord bless them!

Amen!

Navratra of 2006

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia

Prayer

मनस्त्वं व्योमस्त्वं मरुदसि मरुत्सारथिरसि त्वमापस्त्वं भूमिः त्वयि परिणतायां न हि परम् ।
त्वमेव स्वात्मानं परिणमयितुं विश्ववपुषा चिदानन्दाकारं शिवयुवतिभावेन विभूषे ॥

Thou art the mind, thou art the space, thou art the wind, thou art the fire, thou art the water, thou art the earth; in fact noting is other than thou and greater than thee. Just in order to project thyself as the Universe, you have taken the form of Shiva's consort (Parvati). But essentially, you are pure-consciousness and bliss personified.

(*Soundaryalahari, verse no. 35 by Adi Shankarcharya*)

गिरामाहुर्देवीं द्रुहिणगृहिणीं आगमविदो हरेः पत्नीं पद्मां हरसहचरीमद्रितनयाम् ।
तुरीया कापि त्वं दुरधिगमनिःसीममहिमा महामाया विश्वं भ्रमयसि परब्रह्ममहिषि ॥

The experts in Vedas call you the Goddess of speech (Saraswati), the divine consort of Brahma; Padma, the divine consort of Hari (Vishnu); the divine consort of Har (Shiva) i.e. Parvati, the daughter of Himvan (Himalayas). In truth you are the mystical, incomprehensible, transcendental Reality of infinite power and glory. You are called 'Maha Maya', the great deluding force of the supreme Brahm which has kept the world enthralled.

(*Soundaryalahari, verse no. 97 by Adi Shankarcharya*)

नमस्ते देवदेवेशि नमस्ते हरपूजिते । ब्रह्मविद्यास्वरूपायै तस्यै नित्यं नमो नमः ॥

I pay my obeisance to the Goddess of the Gods. I bow before the one who is worshipped by Lord Har (Shiva) himself. I repeatedly bow with reverence before her who is the embodiment of the highest knowledge (of Brahm, or the pure-self which is pure consciousness).

श्री रामं त्रिजगद्गुरुं सुरवरं सीतामनोनायकं श्यामाङ्गं शशिकोटिपूर्णवदनं चंचत्कलाकौस्तुभम् ।
सौम्यं सत्यगुणोत्तमं सुसरयुतीरे वसन्तं प्रभुं त्रातारं सकलार्थसिद्धिसहितं वन्दे रघूणां पतिम् ॥

Sri Ram is the Guru (moral preceptor) of the three worlds; the most exalted amongst the Gods, Lord of Sita's heart, is of a dark complexion, resembles the charming beauty of millions of moons, and wears the swaying Kaustav gem on his chest. The Lord is gentle, possesses the best of the good qualities and virtues, resides (or roams) near the banks of the beautiful river Saryu (in the city of Ayodhya), is the one who protects and liberates (the creature), and is accomplished in all forms of spiritual attainments. I bow before the Lord of the Raghu's clan, i.e. Sri Ram!

Sri Ramkarnamritam

*__*__*__*

असतो मा सद् गमय, तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय, मृत्योर्मांमृतं गमय ।

(बृहदारण्य उपनिषद् १/३/२८)

Take me away from falsehood towards the truth, from darkness towards light, and from death towards eternity.

(*Brihad -Aranakya Upanishad 1/3/28*)

*__*__*__*

Veda Vyas'
Devipurān-Mahābhagwat
Ramayan with Ram Kavach
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*Dedication***A humble word from author**

No creature is perfect; its foolhardy to claim so. The best of paintings cannot replace the original; the best of words cannot express the original emotions and sentiments. Even the Lord was not satisfied by one flower or one butterfly— he went on endlessly evolving and designing newer forms. So, I have done my best, I have poured out my being in these books. Honestly, I am totally incompetent— it was the Lord who had done the actual writing and had moved my fingers as if they were merely an instrument in his divine hands. But nonetheless, it's a tribute to the Lord's glory that he does not take the credit himself, but bestows it to them whom he loves as his very own. And to be his very own is indeed an unmatched honour. However, I still beg forgiveness for all omissions, commissions and transgressions on my part that I may have inadvertently made. It's the Lord's glories that I sing, rejoice in, write on and think of to the best of my ability. I hope my readers will also absorb the divine fragrance effusing from the flowers representing the Lord's books, enjoy the ambrosia pouring out of them and marvel at the Lord's stupendous glories.

I submit this effort at the Lord's holy feet, and finding no words to express my gratitude to him, I just wish to remain quiet, and let my silence do the speaking and praying on my behalf.

Navratra, 2009

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Veda Vyas'
Devipurān (Mahābhagwat)
Ramayan

Prologue
Chapter 1; Canto 1
The Genesis of Devipurān (Mahābhagwat)

श्रीगणेशाय नमः

देवेन्द्रमौलिमन्दारमकरन्दकरुणारूपाः । विघ्नं हरन्तु हेरम्बचरणाम्बुजरेणवः ॥१॥
नारायणं नमस्कृत्य नरं चैव नरोत्तमम् । देवीं सरस्वतीं व्यासं ततो जयमुदीरयेत् ॥२॥

Salutations to Lord Ganesh

Let the drop of nectar dripping from the sole of the holy lotus-feet of lord Ganesh destroy all the hurdles, interferences and obstacles. They (the nectar drops) resemble the nectar-drops effusing from the red-coloured flowers of Mandar (medicinal plant called swallow-wort) adorning the head of Devendra (Indra, the King of Gods) (1).

One should bow reverentially before Lord Narayan (Vishnu), Sri Nar who is the best amongst all the males (or the male aspect of Nature), Bhagwati (the Goddess) Saraswati, as well as Veda Vyas, and offer one's obeisance to them. After that, one should attentively read the venerable scriptures (2).

यामाराध्य विरिञ्चिरस्य जगतः स्रष्टा हरिः पालकः
संहर्ता गिरिशः स्वयं समभवद्भवेया च या योगिभिः ।
यामाद्यां प्रकृतिं वदन्ति मुनयस्तत्त्वार्थविज्ञाः परां
तां देवीं प्रणमामि विश्वजननीं स्वर्गापवर्गप्रदाम् ॥३॥

By worshipping her (the cosmic Goddess) Lord Brahma had acquired the powers (the ability and potent) to create this world, Lord Vishnu became the sustainer, and Lord Shiva became the concluder of it. She is meditated upon by Yogis (ascetics) and the sages who are adept in the knowledge of the supreme Truth and absolute Reality. They aver that she is that supreme transcendental Being who is also known as the primary Nature that is beyond comprehension. I pay my obeisance to her by bowing before that mother of all creation who is known by the name of Bhagwati, who grants heaven as well as emancipation and salvation to all the creatures (3).

या स्वेच्छयास्य जगतः प्रविधाय सृष्टिं
सम्प्राप्य जन्म च तथा पतिमाप शम्भुम् ।
उग्रैस्तपोभिरपि यां समवाप्य पत्नीं
शम्भुः पदं हृदि दधे परिपातु सा वः ॥४॥

She (Bhagwati) created this world out of her own free will and took birth to accept Lord Shiva as her divine husband, while Shiva did severe penances and austerities (Tapa) to get her as his divine consort. He then enshrined her divine, holy and august feet in his heart (as a mark of respect for her). Let that divine Goddess Bhagwati protect all of us (4).

एकदा नैमिषारण्ये शौनकाद्या महर्षयः । पप्रच्छुर्मुनिशार्दूलं सूतं वेदविदां वरम् ॥५॥

पुराणं साम्प्रतं ब्रूहि स्वर्गमोक्षसुखप्रदम् । विस्तृतं परमं यत्र देव्या माहात्म्यमुत्तमम् ॥६॥

जायते नवधा भक्तिर्यस्य संश्रवणेन वै । दिव्यज्ञानविहीनानां नृणामपि महामते ॥७॥

Once upon a time at the holy site of Naimisharanya, Shaunak and other sages asked sage Sut who was the best amongst the experts in the Vedas, ‘Oh the wise one! Now describe to us that Puran which provides the happiness, joy and bliss of heaven as well as that of emancipation and salvation, which contains in detail the glories and the famous divine stories of Bhagwati, and by hearing which the 9-fold path of devotion and submission to the supreme Lord (called Navadha Bhakti) sprouts in the bosom of even those people who are devoid of divine wisdom and enlightenment (i.e. in the heart of very ordinary and mediocre people, the laymen) (5-7).

[Note :-*Bhakti*—(noun; feminine gender) The concept of Bhakti has a very broad sweep, and it incorporates such glorious virtues as having, inter alia, sincere devotion and firm faith in the Lord, total submission and surrender before the Lord, having unwavering faith, conviction, belief and dedication for the Lord, having reverence and veneration for the Lord, having no other solace, succour, hope and respite except the Lord, treating oneself as a humble servant of the Lord, remembering the Lord at all times and offering each and every deed and action to the Lord, remaining unruffled and calm under all circumstances with the view that these are the wishes of the Lord and one has no right to get overly excited over them.

Basically, there are the following 9-fold paths of devotion— hearing about the Lord’s virtues, glories, deeds, fames, holy name etc.; talking and discussing about the Lord; remembering him; serving his holy feet; adoring and worshipping him; honouring and revering him; submission and humility before him, treating him as a friend and companion; and concentrating on one’s pure-self or Atma, and treating the Atma (soul) as being the manifestation of the Lord.

The Holy Bible also asserts about ‘Bhakti’ — ‘In him we live and move, and have our being’ (Acts, 17/28), ‘Trust in him at all times, you people, pour out your heart before him; for God is a refuge for us’ (*Psalms*, 62/8).]

सूत उवाच

एतदुक्तं महेशेन नारदाय माहात्मने । पुराणं परमं गुह्यं महाभागवताह्वयम् ॥८॥

तदाह भगवान्वासः श्रद्धया भक्तिशालिने । स्वयं जैमिनये पूर्वं पुनस्तद्वो ब्रवीम्यहम् ॥९॥

Sage Sut said— ‘This most secret and hitherto untold Puran which is called Mahābhagwat was first narrated by Lord Shiva to sage Narad (8).

In some ancient time, it was repeated by sage Veda Vyas most respectfully for the benefit of sage Jaimini who was steadfast in his Bhakti and was blessed with the virtues of

devotion for the Lord. I am repeating the same for your benefit (9).

गोपनीयं प्रयत्नेन न प्रकाशयं कदाचन । एतस्य श्रवणे पाठे यत्पुण्यं लभते द्विजः ॥१०॥
तद्वक्तुं न महेशोऽपि शक्तो वर्षशतैरपि । किमहं कथयिष्यामि संख्याविरहितं यतः ॥११॥
श्रुत्वैवं विस्मयाविष्टा ऋषयस्त्वतिहर्षिताः । पुनरूचुर्मुनिश्रेष्ठाः सूतं वेदविदां वरम् ॥१२॥

All attempts should be made to keep it a secret and not disclose it to unworthy people. The good fortunes and luck that Brahmins and other elders derive by hearing it and reading/studying/reciting it (10)— even Lord Shiva is not capable of and able to describe the benefits obtained by doing so in hundreds of years. Then say, how can I describe (or list) them? For, this good fortune and benefit derived from it are limitless and measureless' (11).

Hearing this, all the assembled sages were very astonished and most exhilarated. Those exalted sages once again requested sage Sut, who was the best amongst the experts in the knowledge of the Vedas, as follows— (12)

ऋषय ऊचुः

यथा पुराणश्रेष्ठं तत्प्रकाशमभवत्क्षितौ । एतदाचक्ष्व तत्त्वेन कृपया मुनिपुङ्गव ॥१३॥

The assembled sages said, 'Oh exalted sage! Please describe to us in detail the reason as to how and why that Puran, which is the best amongst the Purans, came to light on this earth— (i.e. tell us about how it was revealed)' (13).

सूत उवाच

महर्षिर्भगवान् व्यासः सर्ववेदविदां वरः । अशेषं धर्मशास्त्राणां वक्ता ज्ञानी महामतिः ॥१४॥
कृत्वा त्वष्टादशैतानि पुराणानि महामुनिः । न तृप्तिमभिलेभे स कथंचिदपि धर्मवित् ॥१५॥

Sage Sut said— 'Sage Veda Vyas— who was a teacher and preacher par excellence of all the scriptures, who was the best amongst all those who were experts in the Vedas, who was well versed and steeped in Dharma (righteousness, laws of probity, propriety, noble and virtuous conduct), who was wise, erudite and enlightened, and who was most intelligent and a great sage— was not satisfied and contented even after composing the eighteen Purans (14-15).

महापुराणं परमं यत्परं नास्ति भूतले । भगवत्याः परं तत्त्वं माहात्म्यं यत्र विस्तृतम् ॥१६॥
तत्कथं वर्णयिष्येऽहमिति चिन्तापरायणम् । देव्यास्तत्त्वमविज्ञाय क्षुब्धचित्तो बभूव सः ॥१७॥

When he was uneasy in this way, he thought of this Maha Puran (i.e. the great Puran) which is the best amongst them all, and there is nothing superior to it on the surface of the earth. It contains the essential truth about Bhagwati and her elaborate fames, renowns and glories (16).

'Without the knowledge of the essence of the Goddess' truth and reality, how will I be able to describe it?' Worrying thus, he became very remorseful and frustrated (17).

[Note--Sage Veda Vyas realised that in order to attain mental and spiritual peace he had to narrate the glories of the divine Goddess, but those glories were so stupendous and profound that they appeared beyond the reach of the erudite sage. It's such a great wonder that a person who has such stupendous and prodigious memory and writing skills as to describe the eighteen Purans and classify the voluminous

Vedas should find it difficult to describe one Puran. Perhaps this has been emphasised here to indicate the importance and greatness of this Puran.]

यस्यास्तत्त्वं न जानाति महाज्ञानी महेश्वरः । यस्या हि परमं तत्त्वं ज्ञातव्यमतिदुष्करम् ॥१८॥

विचिन्त्यैवं महाबुद्धिश्चकार परमं तपः । गत्वा हिमवतः पृष्ठं दुर्गाभक्तिपरायणः ॥१९॥

The supreme and essential truth and reality about her is not fully known even to Maheshwar (Lord Shiva) who is the most wise, erudite and enlightened one; so it is very difficult for others to know about it' (18).

Thinking thus, the most intelligent and wise sage Vyas—who was eager to have devotion for Goddess Durga—went to the Himalayas and did severe Tapa (austerities and penances) there (19).

तेनैव विधिना तुष्टा शर्वाणी भक्तवत्सला । अदृष्टरूपा चाकाशे स्थित्वैवं वाक्यमब्रवीत् ॥२०॥

यत्रासन् श्रुतयः सर्वा ब्रह्मलोके महामुने । गच्छ तत्र परं तत्त्वं मम वेत्स्यसि निष्कलम् ॥२१॥

प्रत्यक्षतां गमिष्यामि तत्रैव श्रुतिभिः स्तुता । तत्र सम्पादयिष्यामि तवाभिलषितं च यत् ॥२२॥

Pleased with his Tapa, Goddess Sharwani—who is benevolent and kind towards her devotees—spoke to him from the sky in an invisible form (20), 'Oh great sage! You must go to the abode of Brahma where all the Srutis (Vedas) are present. You will come to know all about my supreme truth and essence there (21). When the Vedas will pray to me, I shall manifest myself there, and then I shall fulfil whatever you wish' (22).

तच्छ्रुत्वा भगवान्व्यासो ब्रह्मलोकं तदा ययौ । वेदान्त्रणम्य पप्रच्छ किं ब्रह्मपदमव्ययम् ॥२३॥

ऋषेस्तद्वचनं श्रुत्वा विनयावनतस्य वै । वेदाः प्रत्येकशः प्राहुस्तत्क्षणान्मुनिपुङ्गवम् ॥२४॥

Thereafter, as instructed by the divine voice in the sky, Lord Veda Vyas, went to the abode of Brahma. There he bowed before the Vedas to show his respect and asked them— 'What is the immortal stature called 'Brahm Pad', or the supreme destination for the soul?' (23).

Hearing this humble question from the sage, the Vedas replied immediately one by one as follows— (24).

ऋग्वेद उवाच

यदन्तःस्थानि भूतानि यतः सर्वं प्रवर्तते ।

यदाह तत्परं तत्त्वं साक्षाद्भगवती स्वयम् ॥२५॥

Rigveda said— 'All the creatures are established in her, the whole world is produced from her, and she is called the supreme and absolute Truth and Reality in creation. She is known as Goddess Bhagwati' (25).

यजुर्वेद उवाच

या यज्ञैरखिलैः सर्वैरीश्वरेण समिज्यते ।

यतः प्रमाणं हि वयं सैका भगवती स्वयम् ॥२६॥

Yajur Veda said— 'She is worshipped by performance of various fire-sacrifices and other religious rituals. We are the witnesses and proofs of it. She is known as Bhagwati, and she is the only one of her kind (i.e. she has no parallel)' (26).

सामवेद उवाच

ययेदं धारयते विश्वं योगिभिर्या विचिन्त्यते ।

ययेदं भासते विश्वं सैका दुर्गा जगन्मयी ॥२७॥

Sam Veda said— 'She bears the entire world, the Yogis (ascetics) concentrate and meditate upon her, and the world has been brought to light (i.e. created and manifested in visible form) because of her. She is known as Durga who pervades uniformly in the whole creation' (27).

अथर्व उवाच

यां प्रपश्यन्ति देवेशीं भक्त्यानुग्रहिणो जनाः ।

तामाहुः परमं ब्रह्म दुर्गा भगवतीं पुमान् ॥२८॥

Atharva Veda said— 'Those on whom the Goddess is kind and benevolent have the opportunity of having her Darshan (divine, august sight), and are bestowed with devotion. The people call that Goddess as Bhagwati Durga, who is also the supreme Brahm personified' (28).

सूत उवाच

श्रुतीरितं निशम्येत्थं व्यासः सत्यवतीसुतः । दुर्गा भगवतीं मेने परं ब्रह्मेति निश्चितम् ॥२९॥

श्रुतयस्त्वेवमुक्त्वा ताः पुनरुचुर्महामुनिम् । प्रत्यक्षं दर्शयिष्यामो यथास्माभिरुदाहृतम् ॥३०॥

इत्येवमुक्त्वा श्रुतयस्तुष्टुवुः परमेश्वरीम् । सर्वदेवमयीं शुद्धां सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहाम् ॥३१॥

Hearing the solemn affirmative words of the Vedas, Satyawati's son Veda Vyas determined conclusively that Bhagwati Durga is indeed the supreme Brahm personified (29).

The Vedas said to him once again, 'We shall show you personally what we have just said so that you can verify the truth yourself' (30).

Saying this, all the Vedas began praying to the supreme Goddess who is an embodiment of supreme and eternal bliss, is pure and uncorrupt, and encompasses/incorporates all the Gods and Goddess in her single self (31).

श्रुतय ऊचुः

दुर्गे विश्वमपि प्रसीद परमे सृष्ट्यादिकार्यत्रये

ब्रह्माद्याः पुरुषास्त्रयो निजगुणैस्त्वत्स्वेच्छया कल्पिताः ।

नो ते कोऽपि च कल्पकोऽत्र भुवने विद्येत मातर्यतः

कः शक्तः परिवर्णितुं तव गुणाँल्लोके भवेद्दुर्गमान् ॥३२॥

The Vedas said— 'Oh Durga! Be benevolent and gracious on the whole world. Oh the supreme One! You have, out of your own free will and relying on your own ability, potentials and powers, created Brahma and other Gods of the Trinity (i.e. Vishnu and Shiva) for the purpose of the creation, sustenance and annihilation of the whole world respectively. That is why there is no one who has created you. Oh mother! Who in this world is ever capable of (literally has the power of) describing your virtues and qualities which are beyond the reach and comprehension of the mind and intellect (32).

त्वामाराध्य हरिर्निहत्य समरे दैत्यान् रणे दुर्जयान्

त्रैलोक्यं परिपाति शम्भुरपि ते धृत्वा पदं वक्षसि ।

त्रैलोक्यक्षयकारकं समपिबद्यत्कालकूटं विषं

किं ते वा चरितं वयं त्रिजगतां ब्रूमः परित्र्यम्बिके ॥३३॥

Lord Vishnu is able to slay the most formidable of the demons in the battlefield and thereby protect the three worlds (i.e. the heavens, the terrestrial and the subterranean worlds) from their tyranny and torments due to the powers and potential effects of his worshipping you. Even Lord Shiva had been able to drink the horrible and scalding poison that had the potential of destroying all the three worlds by invoking the blessings and by enshrining your holy feet in his heart (which acted as a shield to protect him from the horrifying effects of the poison). Oh Ambike (mother) who protects the three worlds! How can we (the Vedas) ever describe your divine and famous legendary stories and glories (33).

या पुंसः परमस्य देहिन इह स्वीयैर्गुणैर्मायया

देहाख्यापि चिदात्मिकापि च परिस्पन्दादिशक्तिः परा ।

त्वन्मायापरिमोहितास्तनुभृतो यामेव देहस्थितां

भेदज्ञानवशाद्ब्रुवन्ति पुरुषं तस्यै नमस्तेऽम्बिके ॥३४॥

You assume the body of the Sagun (i.e. visible, manifest, qualified and with attributes) aspect of the supreme Purush (the male aspect of Nature; the Virrat Purush; the macrocosmic gross body of creation) in this world by the virtue of your own qualifications (potential powers) and by using your own deluding powers called 'Maya'¹ (the deluding powers that keeps the world enthralled). You are established in this world as two vital powers known as 'Gyan Shakti'² (i.e. the powers, potentials, authority, strength and respect that come with truthful knowledge about the reality and essence of anything; the powers and potentials that are natural accompaniment of wisdom, erudition, sagacity, scholarship, enlightenment), and the 'Kriya Shakti'³ (i.e. the powers and authority for doing various deeds, the strength for achieving success in any endeavour, the ability to enjoy the results of doing such deeds and actions taken by the creature; the word also refers to being active and enterprising, and the opposite of being lethargic and indolent). These virtues activates, infuses life into and keeps this mundane and humdrum world around us moving. The people of this world come under the deluding spell of your Maya and are led to believe that the same supreme universal cosmic powers or energy of creation represented by you, and which has manifested as the Atma or soul of all the creatures, have a male or a female form though all these forms have the same Atma in them. This is because of the misleading concept called duality. [That is, it is you who manifests as both the male as well as the female aspects of creation, and therefore there is no basic difference between any two persons, though the ignorant ones do not realise this non-dual secret of creation and treat a male and a female separately]. Oh Ambika! We pay our obeisance to you (34).

[Note--¹Maya--It is a word which has two parts, Ma + Ya. 'Ma' means 'to measure, mark off, by any standard; to show, to exhibit, to display; to infer, to conclude; to be formed, built, made of', while the second part 'Ya' means 'this or that'. 'Ma' has a negative connotation. Therefore, the composite word Maya means neither

this nor that; anything that is not real; that which is deluding, illusionary, deceptive, mirage like and deceitful, and is caused by the ignorance about its truth and reality; something that has no substance or pith; displays no certainty and leads to wrong inference. The term Maya is used to define all these phenomenon. Hence, Maya is a synonym used for all that is deceptive, faulty, false, deluding, ignorance based, illusionary, imposter, deceitful, invisible and super-natural; all that which has no reality or substance; all that is hollow. It creates hallucinations in a creature's mind leading him to believe that what he sees is the truth. It is the deluding and magical powers of the supreme transcendental Lord that hides the reality and creates an imaginary world of deceptions and misconceptions

Maya has three basic constituent qualities. Hence it is called 'Trigunmayi' (त्रिगुणमयि), i.e. one which has the three Gunas or qualities. These three Gunas or qualities are— Sat, Raj and Tam. 'Sat' is the most auspicious, virtuous and noblest quality in a man and raises him to a high moral and spiritual pedestal. It marks predominance of righteousness and the highest standards of spirituals and mental evolvment leading to high thoughts, noble actions and righteous behaviour. 'Raj' is the medium quality in a person, and it is marked by worldly passions, desires, yearnings and greed. It makes a man more worldly than spiritual. 'Tam' is the third and most lowly of the three qualities and is used has a synonym for darkness and evil. Obviously, 'Tam' means ignorance, delusions and all the forces or qualities that are evil, mean, lowly, miserly, wicked and base. They pull down a man from high pedestal and virtually dump him in the dust yard of creation to rust and decay.

These three qualities together, in various permutations and combinations, decide the innate nature of a man. The greater presence of 'Sat' makes a man nobler as compared to a high ratio of 'Tam' which makes him wicked, pervert and evil. Various proportions of these qualities will therefore produce innumerable varieties of creatures having different temperaments, thought processes, behaviours, demeanors and mental setup in this world.

When a man understands any 'Truth' after rigorously examining the 'truthfulness' of that truth, when he has established the veracity of facts, he believes in it more firmly and more convincingly. No matter what other people tell him about the truth being not the correct or the whole truth, he would not listen to them, simply because he has verified the facts for himself, he has witnessed the truth himself, he has logically eliminated all falsehoods to deduce that what he knows is the 'truthful Truth'. His Truth is based on rigid and solid foundation; he is unwavering and steady in it. If he is steadfast and convinced in his knowledge, no matter how much ignorance and delusions (Maya) try to push him away from the absolute 'Truth', he will remain steadfast and unwavering in it. There will be no doubts and confusions in his mind.

The basic idea here is that Maya is like a transparent sheet which covers the supreme 'truth' in the creation. Since it is transparent, it assumes the attributes of the truth that it covers, because for all practical purposes an ordinary man in unable to see that veil because of its transparency. This is a simple way of

understanding what is called 'illusion and Maya vis-à-vis the Truth and Reality'. Maya nevertheless hides the truthfulness of the Truth, and instead lends its own attributes and characteristics to that Truth known as the 'Nirgun Brahm' by the Upanishads when the latter is observed through this veil, while at the same time assuming the glorious attributes of Brahm itself. So ignorant fools think that the Maya is the real thing, whereas they are actually seeing the 'veiled truth' as observed through this covering of Maya, because the actual 'truth' is hidden from view by this transparent sheet which has lend it its own colour and hue to it . As a result, that Nirgun appears to have some attributes, and it thereby becomes 'Sagun', or the one with attributes and characteristics, by the interference of Maya.

We can understand this phenomenon how the Maya of the Lord has created this vast canvas of creation with a simple example. A painter wishes to paint a landscape. He starts with a pure white canvas, and using his imagination and powers to visualise a magnificently beautiful scene, he starts painting with numerous primary colours and then goes on mixing these colours to produce umpteen numbers of colours of varying hues and shades. Besides the colour, he continuously adds a stroke here and a brush there as he tries to reveal on the lifeless canvas the conception of life as he visualises in his mind; he is never satisfied with his work and goes on and on endlessly adding colours and lines to the canvas. The result is most astounding and stupendous to behold. But still the painter is not satisfied; so the net result is that the canvas gets being redone over and over again, and layers after layers of lines that had been made and erased, of paints that had been painted over numerous times, of shapes and figures that had been visualised, rejected and reconceived and placed on the canvas only to make the painter uneasy about them. In short, the basic canvas that was pristine pure at the beginning has been reduced to scrap! The painter then keeps it aside or if totally disgusted with it, he may throw it in the garbage bin.

This all but sums up how the supreme Lord creates, develops and concludes the creation. The clean white canvas represents the Satwic qualities with which the Atma starts out. The painter is the supreme Lord or Brahm, the landscape he imagines is equivalent to Maya because it has no actual existence but is imagined by him, and he is so skilled a painter that once the painting is ready, the scene that is depicted on the canvas appears to be very real and live, creating an illusion of the grandeur of the actual thing; this is a deception because the painter has used his imagination as the subject of the painting, but an ignorant man who is not aware of this fact would believe that the painting has been inspired by some actual landscape that the painter must have seen somewhere. As a matter of fact, it might also happen that the scene does actually exist, but the painter has added touches of his own imagination to add vibrancy and colour to the scene about which the observer is unaware. The scene and the 3-dimensional landscape is equivalent to the creation and the colourful Nature. The paint and the primary colours used by the Lord during the process of creation to make it vibrant and lively are the different Gunas (virtues, qualities and characteristics), the various Vasanas (desires and passions) and Vrittis (inherent

tendencies and inclinations of a creature; his nature and temperaments) as well as the Tattwas (elements) which are fundamental to and inseparable from creation. The innumerable varieties of shades of characters, virtues and qualities that are present in the creature represent these myriad colours that the creator uses to paint his creation. Until at last the Lord stands back and is stumped at the Frankenstein Monster that he has unleashed! Then he decides to call it quits, and this is equivalent to annihilation of the creation. But as a painter he cannot sit quiet; and so starts the process once all over again!

Supposing the painter did not add his own name to the painting, or he had added a pseudonym. Then in such a case, there would be conjectures about his identity, leading to so many theories and debates. Then some wise man would look up the archives and dig up some evidence about who he was. This is exactly what happens here in the case of creation—no one knows for sure who that creator is, what is his name, etc. Some wise and enlightened man came to unearth the truth about him, and he tried to tell others in the words he could muster. This is how the great maverick Lord has been known and recognised by us. When his glories are sung, it is actually praising the great painter for his skills and the matchless heritage that he has created for us to cherish and behold.

The colours ‘white’, ‘red’ or ‘dark’ and the various shades created from them are only symbolic of the innumerable variations in which the basic qualities can combine to produce countless number of characteristics and virtues and behaviours that give individuality to millions and millions of creatures. These are simply metaphors only meant to explain and help visualise certain things, and therefore should not be taken too literally as meaning that dark skinned people are sinful and pervert and worthy of condemnation, or that fair skinned ones are all righteous and noble, for just the opposite is witnessed daily in our lives.

Shakti--²*Gyan Shakti* is the power, strength and empowerment obtained as a result of acquisition of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, enlightenment, sagacity, scholarship and expertise. It is called ‘Gyan Shakti’ simply because merely wish and determination wouldn’t suffice if a person does not have the required knowledge and skill, the expertise and wisdom to accomplish his objectives successfully.

³*Kriya Shakti*’ is the actual ability to carryout his plans to their successful completion, i.e. to do deeds, to take actions and enter into enterprise, because simply sitting and procrastinating endlessly wouldn’t give success unless there is assiduous activity and diligent effort, no matter how wise a man is and how determined he might be.]

स्त्रीपुंस्त्वप्रमुखैरुपाधिनिचयैर्हीनं परं ब्रह्म यत्

त्वत्तो या प्रथमं बभूव जगतां सृष्टौ सिसृक्षा स्वयम् ।

सा शक्तिः परमाऽपि यच्च समभून्मूर्तिद्वयं

शक्तितस्त्वन्मायामयमेव तेन हि परं ब्रह्मापि शक्त्यात्मकम् ॥३५॥

The supreme transcendental Brahm is without a dual form of a male and a female. The first desire/wish that originated in Brahm that resulted in the creation of this vast cosmos was

due to you and it was an exhibition of your potent but subtle powers. The cosmic, supreme creative energy that initiated the first process of creation split or divided it into two aspects— the male and the female— for the express purpose of creation, relying exclusively on your strength. [It is you who injected that vital, all-important initial spark which started off the chain reaction resulting in the creation of this vast cosmos]. That is why the supreme Brahm is also regarded as being an embodiment of Maya and its stupendous powers and potentials. [This is because though you had subtly and silently empowered and inspired Brahm to initiate this creation, for all practical purposes it was Brahm who appeared to be the one who initiated this whole process out of his desire to do so.] (35).

[Note :- This verse describes how the creation originated. There was no such thing as a Male or a Female in the beginning. The initial spark split the neutral entity called Brahm into two aspects— a male and a female— with the express purpose of propagation of creation. Then what followed is akin to a nuclear chain reaction, unleashing the vast canvas of the cosmos.]

तोयोत्थं कारकादिकं जलमयं दृष्ट्वा यथा निश्चयस्तोयत्वेन
भवेद्ग्रहोऽप्यभिमतां तथ्यं तथैव ध्रुवम् ।
ब्रह्मोत्थं सकलं विलोक्य मनसा शक्त्यात्मकं ब्रह्म
तच्छक्तित्वेन विनिश्चितः पुरुषधीः पारं परा ब्रह्मणि ॥३६॥

Wise and knowledgeable people come to the conclusion that the hail— which is formed by the crystallisation of water vapour— is basically nothing else but consisting of water molecules. Similarly, on seeing this vast, complex and myriad world, one realises that it is nothing else except the supreme Brahm manifested in its various forms and infused with the supreme cosmic energy called ‘Shakti’ which empowers and actually makes that Brahm do anything at all. Further, it logically leads to the conclusion that the concept of the supreme Brahm as the Male aspect of creation in its first manifestation as the Viraat Purush (the macrocosmic gross body of creation from which the rest of the visible world gradually unfolded) is also a result of illusion created by your deluding powers called Maya which created the sense of duality in the first place. That is, the Viraat Purush--or the male aspect of Nature or the macrocosmic gross body of the soul-- is nothing else but an entity that is one of your revelations as the supreme Shakti (36).

षट्चक्रेषु लसन्ति ये तनुमतां ब्रह्मादयः षट्शिवास्ते
प्रेता भवदाश्रयाच्च परमेशत्वं समायान्ति हि ।
तस्मादीश्वरता शिवे नहि शिवे त्वय्येव विश्वाम्बिके
त्वं देवि त्रिदशैकवन्दितपदे दुर्गे प्रसीदस्व नः ॥३७॥

The six ‘Chakras’¹ (the subtle energy circles or centres) present in the human body enshrine the six majestic and glorious powers that the human beings possess², such as the creative powers represented by Brahma the creator etc.— they (i.e. these six powers represented by their respective chakras) attain the oneness with the supreme Brahm (i.e. they coalesce or merge with the parent source of creation) at the time of conclusion of the

world relying on your (Goddess's) strength and powers. Hence, oh Shive (literally, the divine consort of Lord Shiva), Lord Shiva himself and all other Gods do not have their own independent powers, majesty, glory and potential. Rather, they depend on you (i.e. the majestic powers that the different Gods possess are delegated to them by you; they are centered in you and not in them though they appear to possess them). Oh Goddess! It is your holy feet that are worshipped by all the Gods in the three worlds. [These three worlds are the celestial, the terrestrial and the subterranean worlds. In other words, your holy feet are the only worshipable entity in this creation]. Oh Durga! Be benevolent upon and pleased with us' (37).

[Note :- 'The six *Chakras* or energy centres are as follows :- Muladhar chakra is located between the anus and the genitals, the Swadhisthan chakra is located above the groins, the Manipur chakra in the region of the navel, the Anahat chakra in the heart, the Vishuddha chakra in the throat, and the Agya chakra in the centre of the eyebrows.

²The six glories and majesties possessed by a man are the following--(a) Sham (self restraint, control) (b) Dam (forbearance, tolerance, patience), (c) Uprati (renunciation, detachment, dispassion), (d) Titiksha (endurance, sufferance, patience), (e) Samadhan (solution and answer to all confusions and doubts), and (f) Shraddha (faith, reverence, belief, conviction).]

सूत उवाच

इत्येवं श्रुतिवाक्यैस्तु श्रुतिभिः संस्तुता सती । स्वरूपं दर्शयामास जगदम्बा सनातनी ॥३८॥

ज्योतीरूपा हि सा देवी सर्वप्राणिव्यवस्थिता । व्यासस्य संशयं छेतुं स्वतन्त्राकृतिमादधे ॥३९॥

Sage Sut Said— 'Being thus honoured and prayed to by the Vedas, the truthful and eternal mother of the world, called Jagdamba, who is also named as Sati¹, revealed herself (38).

Bhawani— who resides in the bosom of all the creatures in the form of a divine light of consciousness— revealed herself out of her own free will to destroy the doubts, confusions and perplexities of Veda Vyas (39).

[Note--The word Sati means a lady who is loyal to her husband and is chastity personified. The word usually refers to Goddess Parvati who is the divine consort of Lord Shiva. She has many names, Bhawani and Jagdamba being one of them.]

स्फुरत्सूर्यसहस्राभां चन्द्रकोटिसमद्युतिम् । सहस्रबाहुभिर्युक्तां दिव्यास्त्रैरभिसंवृताम् ॥४०॥

दिव्यालंकारभूषाढ्यां दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनाम् । सिंहपृष्ठे समारूढां कदाचिच्छववाहनाम् ॥४१॥

Her divine form effused with the dazzling splendour of thousands of suns; her divine radiance resembled millions of moons; she had thousands of arms; she was armed with divine and magnificent arms and armaments (40).

She was adorned by radiant, bright, decorative paraphernalia; her body was smeared with a cream from which emanated a divine fragrance; she was sitting astride on the back of a lion, and occasionally it appeared that she was sitting on a corpse instead of

the lion (41).

चतुर्भिर्बाहुभिर्युक्ता नवीनजलदप्रभा । द्विभुजा च चतुर्हस्ता तथा दशभुजा क्षणे ॥४२॥

अष्टादशभुजा क्वापि शतसंख्यभुजा तथा । अनन्तबाहुभिर्युक्ता दिव्यरूपधरा क्षणे ॥४३॥

She had four arms; the complexion of her body was like a newly formed cloud; she changed her form every moment— sometimes she appeared to have two arms, sometimes four, at other times ten, or eighteen, or hundred, or countless arms. She was with a divine, stupendously magnificent and glorious form each time (42-43).

कदाचिद्विष्णुरूपा च वामे च कमलालया । राधया सहिताकस्मात्कदाचित्कृष्णरूपिणी ॥४४॥

वामाङ्गधिगता वाणी कदाचिद्ब्रह्मरूपिणी । कदाचिच्छिवरूपा च गौरी वामाङ्गसंस्थिता ॥४५॥

एवं सर्वमयी देवी कृत्वा रूपाण्यनेकधा । व्यासस्य संशयच्छेदं चकार ब्रह्मरूपिणी ॥४६॥

She suddenly assumed the form of Laxmi (the divine consort of Lord Vishnu and the goddess of wealth) sitting on the left of Vishnu; sometimes she looked like Radha with Krishna (44).

At other times she appeared like Saraswati (the goddess of knowledge and wisdom) on the left of Brahma, or like Gauri (Parvati) sitting to the left of Shiva (45).

In this way, the all-pervading Bhagwati, who was a personified form of the supreme Brahm, revealed herself in various forms, and dispelled all the confusions and doubts of Veda Vyas (46).

सूत उवाच

एवं रूपाणि चालोक्य पराशरसुतो मुनिः । तां ज्ञात्वा परमं ब्रह्म जीवन्मुक्तो बभूव ह ॥४७॥

ततो भगवती देवी ज्ञात्वा तस्याभिवाञ्छितम् । स्वपादतलसंलग्नं पङ्कजं समदर्शयत् ॥४८॥

Sage Sut said that in this way, the son of sage Parashar, that is Veda Vyas, had a divine vision of Bhagwati and realised that she was another form of the supreme Brahm. This made him feel relieved; he felt delivered or freed from doubts and confusions arising from ignorance and delusions, and was instantly liberated from the fetters that shackle a man to this humdrum life in this deluding world (47).

Thereafter, realising the wishes of Vyas, Goddess Bhagwati showed him the divine lotus present (or marked) on the sole of her feet (48).

मुनिस्तस्य सहस्रेषु दलेषु परमाक्षरम् । महाभागवतं नाम पुराणं समलोकयत् ॥४९॥

प्रणम्य शिरसा देवीं नानास्तुतिभिरादरात् । जगाम स्वाश्रमं भूयः कृतकृत्यः स्वयं द्विजाः ॥५०॥

Sage Veda Vyas saw this Puran called Mahabagwat written (i.e. inscribed) in divine letters (alphabets) on the one thousands petals of that lotus marked on the Goddess' feet (49).

Oh Brahmins and elders! Then he bowed his head in reverence before her and prayed to her in many ways. He felt most satisfied, contented, fulfilled and grateful. Then he went back to his hermitage (50).

यथा तत्पङ्कजे दृष्टं पुराणं परमाक्षरम् । महाभागवतं पुण्यं प्रकाशमकरोत्तथा ॥५१॥

स्नेहात् कथितं तेन श्रुतं चाधिगतं मया । स्नेहाद्ब्रह्म कथयिष्यामि गोपनीयं प्रयत्नतः ॥५२॥

He brought to light (i.e. preached, wrote, published) this holy and divine Puran called

Mahābhagwat exactly as he had seen (witnessed) it in the lotus present in the sole of the holy feet of the Goddess. It was written in divine letters (alphabets) (51).

He narrated this Purān to me with a lot of affection, and having heard it attentively, I had enshrined it in my heart (i.e. I had learnt it by heart). Now I shall most affectionately and earnestly narrate that Purān to you in detail. You must attempt to keep it to yourself, i.e. you should not tell it to unworthy people (52).

अश्वमेधसहस्राणि वायपेयशतानि च । महाभागवतस्यास्य कलां नार्हन्ति षोडशीम् ॥५३॥

एवं महाभागवतं प्रकाशमभवत्क्षितौ । परित्राणाय लोकानां महापातकिनामपि ॥५४॥

Thousands of 'Ashwamedh Yagyas' (the horse-sacrifices) and hundreds of 'Vajpai Yagyas' (a sacrifice which is the last of the five Srouta sacrifices enjoined in the Vedas) are no comparison (in rewards, potent, majesty, magnificence and powers) to the hearing of even the 16th fraction (part) of this Mahābhagwat Purān (53).

In this way, this great Purān was revealed to this world (by the Goddess herself) to enable the most evil, sinful and vilest of men to get protection, solace, succour and deliverance from this world' (54).

[Note :- This chapter details how this Purān came into being. The main focus of this book is the theme of Rāmāyan— that is, the divine story of Sri Ram. So, the entire story of Rāmāyan contained in this Mahābhagwat Devi Purān, extending from Cantos 36 to 48, has been culled from it and presented in the following chapters incorporating the full original text of Cantos 36 to 48.]

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Chapter 2; Canto 36

**Ravana becomes invincible by worshipping the Goddess;
Vishnu assures the Gods that he would appear as Sri Ram;
the Goddess advises the Gods about the way Ravana can be killed**

नारद उवाच

शारदीया महापूजा या देव्याः प्रीतिदायिका । वार्षिकीति त्वया प्रोक्ता यां चकार रघूत्तमः ॥१॥

रावणस्य वधार्थाय भक्त्या परमया युतः । तां ब्रूहि मे महादेव विस्तरेण जगत्प्रभो ॥२॥

Sage Narad said— 'Please tell me in detail, oh Mahadev, the Lord of the world (i.e. Lord Shiva), about the annual religious worship of the Goddess known as 'Shardiya Maha Pooja' (literally, the great worship of Goddess Sharda), which Sri Ram had done with due affection and reverence with a desire to slay Ravana, and which is very dear to the mother of the world called Jagdamba. She is extremely pleased with it (1-2).

यथा स भगवान् विष्णुः सम्भूय मनुजाकृतिः । पूजयामास विश्वेशीमकालेऽपि महामते ॥३॥

त्वत्तः कश्चिन्न विद्येत वक्ता लोकत्रये प्रभो । पवित्रं कुरु मां देव दासं ते शरणागतम् ॥४॥

Oh the great and wise one! Do tell me all about the way in which Lord Vishnu had manifested himself as a human (in the form of Sri Ram) and had worshipped the mother of the world known as 'Vishweshari' (literally, the Goddess of the world) at a time which was proving unfavourable for him. [That is, when he faced the formidable and daunting task of conquering and killing such an invincible enemy as Ravana and was finding it difficult to accomplish it, he had relied upon the Goddess to achieve success in his efforts] (3).

Oh Lord! No one is more competent to describe all this except you in the whole of Triloki (i.e. the three worlds consisting of the subterranean, the terrestrial and the celestial worlds). Oh God! I am your humble servant (devotee) and have come seeking refuge in your holy feet. Please purify me (i.e. protect and save me by helping me to wash all my sins and evil thoughts) through the medium of this divine story' (4).

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

देवीं त्रैलोक्यजननीं सम्प्रार्थ्य कशकन्धरः । तस्या प्रसादात्त्रैलोक्यविजयी समभूत्पुरा ॥५॥
तस्य भावेन संतुष्टा शर्वाणी भक्तवत्सला । उवास नगरे तस्य रावणस्य महात्मनः ॥६॥

Lord Shiva said— 'In some ancient time, the ten-headed demon (Ravana) had become unconquerable in the whole world by virtue of worshipping the mother of the three worlds (i.e. the entire universe) and by being blessed by her (5).

Bhawani— who is most benevolent and munificent towards her devotees— was so pleased with his devotion that she took up residence in his capital (at Lanka) (6).

संस्थिता तपसः पुण्यं न यावत्क्षीणतामगात् । नित्यं विजयदा भूत्वा सहिता योगिनीगणैः ॥७॥
क्षीणे तु तपसः पुण्ये जगत्पीडनकारणात् । त्यक्त्वा तस्य पुरीं देवी चण्डिका चण्डविक्रमा ॥८॥
पूजिता रामचन्द्रेण तं जघान सबान्धवम् । कैलासमगमद्देवी परिवारगणान्विता ॥९॥

Till the time the beneficial effects of his earlier Tapa (austerities and penances) had not worn off and declined, till the time the good effects of his deeds had not dissipated, petered out and vanished, she constantly stayed there along with her Yoginis (i.e. female attendants), providing him persistent victory over all obstacles (7).

When the good effect of his Tapa had worn out due to the counter bad effects of his tyranny and torments that he had inflicted upon the world, the most ferocious and fierce, glorious and splendid Chandika had, upon being worshipped and invoked by Sri Ram for the express purpose of eliminating this wart-like demon from the world for the greater welfare of the rest of creation, destroyed him along with his kith and kin. After that, she abandoned his city (Lanka) and went to Mt. Kailash (the abode of Lord Shiva) along with her female companions (8-9).

स रावणः पुरा दर्पाद्विजित्येन्द्रादिदेवताः । विष्णुं च जगतां नाथं त्रिलोकं बाधते स वै ॥१०॥
न हविर्बुभुजुर्देवास्तद्भयान्मुनिपुङ्गव । न यज्ञं मुनयश्चक्रुर्न तपो देवपूजनम् ॥११॥
भयाद्राक्षसराजस्य रावणस्य दुरात्मनः ॥१२॥

To begin with, Ravana conquered Indra and other Gods, and then had become so proud and haughty owing to his repeated successes that he began tyrannising Lord Vishnu, the

Lord of the world, along with the rest of the Triloki (the three worlds) (10).

Oh the best amongst the sages! Out of the fear of that wicked and evil-hearted Ravana, the Gods could not partake of the offerings in the fire sacrifices, while the sages, hermits, seers, ascetics and monks could not worship their Gods, do Tapa, and perform other religious rites (11-12).

भयादिन्द्रः प्रतिदिनं गृहीत्वोपायनानि च । तत्कृतानुग्रहापेक्षी संस्थितः सम्मुखं मुने ॥१३॥

तथान्ये ये च दिक्पालाश्चान्द्रसूर्यादयः सुराः । ते सर्वे तेन दुष्टेन कृताश्चाज्ञानुसारिणः ॥१४॥

Oh sage! Out of the fear of his wrath, Indra used to stand before him with hands joined together in submission and holding gifts and tributes for him to keep him in good humour, waiting for his turn to please Ravana, and expecting him to gracefully accept those gifts and oblige the former (13).

The other Dikpals (custodians of the world), such as the Sun and the Moon, had all been made subservient and obedient by that rascal (14).

ततस्तेनार्दिता देवाः पृथिव्या सहिता मुने । ब्रह्मणोऽन्तिकमासाद्य प्रोचुः प्राञ्जलयः सुराः ॥१५॥

प्रभो विधे जगन्नाथ पौलस्त्यतनयो महान् । रावणो बलदर्पाच्च त्रिलोकीं बाधते स्वयम् ॥१६॥

तस्य भारसहा पृथ्वी तवान्तिकमुपागता । वधोपायं चिन्तयस्व तस्य देव दुरात्मनः ॥१७॥

Oh sage! Being fed up of his horrifying torments and persistent tyranny, the Gods along with the mother earth went to Lord Brahma and prayed to him (15), 'Oh Lord of the world! The son of the great sage Pulastya, Ravana, has become very reckless, haughty and arrogant due to his immense strength and powers. He is creating misery for the whole of the Triloki and tyrannising it (16). Oh Lord! This earth has come to seek succour and solace from you because she is unable to bear any longer the burden of sins committed by him. Think of some way to kill him (and get rid of this burden of the earth)' (17).

इत्युक्तस्त्रिदशैर्ब्रह्मा समाश्रास्य वसुन्धराम् । वैकुण्ठं समुपागम्य वैकुण्ठेशमुवाच ह ॥१८॥

प्रभो त्रिजगतां नाथ विश्वपालनतत्पर । लङ्कायामतिदुर्धर्षो जायते दशकन्धरः ॥१९॥

When the Gods had said thus, Brahma reassured the earth. Then he went to Vaikunth, the abode of Lord Vishnu, and said to him (18), 'Oh Lord of the three worlds! You are always eager and diligent in sustaining and looking after the welfare of the whole world. In the city of Lanka, Ravana, the ten-headed one, has become very belligerent, reckless, strong, haughty and invincible (19).

तं हन्तुं मानुषं देहं समाश्रय जगत्पते ॥२०॥

अथ त्वं मानुषो भूत्वा रावणं देवकण्ठकम् । सपुत्रबान्धवं दुष्टं जहि त्वं विश्वपालक ॥२१॥

इत्युक्तो ब्रह्मणा विष्णुस्तमुवाच महामतिम् । आश्रास्य त्रिदशान् सर्वान् रावणेन समर्दितान् ॥२२॥

Oh Lord of the world! You must assume the form of a human being to slay (i.e. get rid of) him (20). Oh the sustainer of the world! Manifesting yourself as a human being, you must kill that wicked Ravana along with his sons, kith and kin etc. who are thorn-like and have been tormenting the Gods constantly' (22).

When Brahma had requested so, Vishnu consoled all the Gods who were being

tyrannised and tormented by Ravana. Then he turned to Brahma and said— (22).

श्रीभगवानुवाच

आश्रित्य मानुषं देहं भूत्वा दाशरथिः स्वयम् । पातयिष्यामि तं दुष्टं सपुत्रगणबाध्वम् ॥२३॥

किंतु देवाः सहायार्थमृक्षवानरूपिणः । भवन्तु पृथिवीपृष्ठे भूभारहरणाय तु ॥२४॥

Lord Vishnu said— 'I shall assume the form of Dashrath's son (Sri Ram) and kill that wicked fellow along with his sons, kith and kins (23).

But the Gods must also assume the form of bears and monkeys and help me in my endeavour on the surface of the earth (24).

अन्यद्ब्रूयामि ते ब्रह्मन्यदेकमतिदुष्करम् । तत्रोपायं चिन्तयस्व वधार्थं दुष्टचेतसः ॥२५॥

पूज्यते त्रिजगन्माता देवी कात्यायनी परा । सद्भक्त्या तेन दुष्टेन रावणेन दुरात्मना ॥२६॥

Oh Brahma! There is one more thing that I must tell you. There is one big hurdle in killing that rascal, and you must find out a way to overcome it (25).

That wicked Ravana worships the mother of the three worlds known as Katyayani with great devotion, sincerity and reverence (26).

सापि कात्यायनी तुष्टा नित्यं तस्य जयप्रदा । लङ्कायां कुरुते वासं सहिता योगिनीगणैः ॥२७॥

सा संत्यजति चेल्लङ्कां सुप्रसन्ना भवेन्मयि । तदा शक्यमि तं हन्तुं न चेन्नैवास्म्यहं क्षमः ॥२८॥

The Goddess named Katyayani too is very pleased with his devotion and submission towards her so much so that she lives in Lanka with her companion Yoginis and gives constant protection to him (27).

If that Goddess becomes pleased with me and leaves (abandons) Lanka, it is only then that I can kill him, otherwise it is not possible for me to do so (28).

तदत्र यद्विधेयं तत्कुरुष्व कमलासन । न विनानुग्रहं तस्याः शत्रुं जेतुं क्षमो भवेत् ॥२९॥

अप्यल्पवीर्यं सुमहान्महाबलपराक्रमः । सानुकूला जगन्माता यावत्कात्यायनी विधे ॥३०॥

तावज्जगदिदं सर्वं नाशयेद्यदि रावणः । तथापि तस्य किं कर्तुं क्षमोऽहं विश्वपालकः ॥३१॥

Oh the one who sits on the divine lotus (i.e. Brahma)! Do whatever you think proper and fit for this purpose. No one can conquer that enemy (Ravana) without her grace (i.e. without the help of Goddess Katyayani) (29).

Oh Brahma! As long as Goddess Katyayani is pleased with and benevolent on him, that most valiant, valorous, strong and powerful Ravana would continue to destroy the weak and meek world, which is no match for his strength, with impunity (30). And though I am the sustainer and protector of the world, I am still unable to harm him' (31).

ब्रह्मोवाच

सत्यमेव जगन्नाथ दुर्गाभक्तिपरायणः । नावसीदति दुष्टोऽपि कदाचिदपि भूतले ॥३२॥

तथाप्युपायो भगवन् विद्यते तस्य नाशने । तस्या एव जगत्सर्वं चराचरमिदं प्रभो ॥३३॥

तयैव सृष्टं काले तु तयैव परिपाल्यते । नाकाले जायते तस्या विनाशेच्छा जगत्पते ॥३४॥

Brahma said— 'Oh Lord of the world! It is the truth that anyone— even the evil and wicked ones— who worship Goddess Durga can never suffer in this world (32).

But oh Lord! There is definitely a way out for destroying that wicked fellow. This whole world is created and nourished by that same mother of the whole world (whom Ravana worships) (33).

Oh Lord of the world! She surely cannot desire and condone the destruction of the world before appropriate time (i.e. before its time for conclusion) by a single individual (34).

त्वमहं वा महेशानः सृष्टिस्थितिलयेषु च । निमित्तमात्रं सैवैका कारणं तेषु वस्तुतः ॥३५॥

तस्या मूर्त्यन्तराः सर्वे वयं देवा जगत्पते । अस्मान् विद्विषतो रक्षां शाश्वतीं न करोति सा ॥३६॥

Me, you and Shiva are only nominally responsible for the creation, sustenance and annihilation of the world. In actual fact, that Jagdamba is the primary force behind all of it (35).

Oh Lord of the world! All of us Gods are part of her various forms. Hence, will she not protect us from him who keeps ill-will, malice and enmity with us?' (36).

श्रीभगवानुवाच

गच्छामि च त्वया सार्धं कैलासशिखरं विधे । प्रार्थयिष्यामि विश्वेशीं वधार्थं दुष्टचेतसः ॥३७॥

पौलस्त्यतनयस्यास्य रावणस्य दुरात्मनः ॥३८॥

Lord Vishnu said— 'Oh Brahma! I shall accompany you to Mt. Kailash and shall pray to the Mistress and Goddess of the whole world for the purpose of slaying the wicked Ravana who is the son of sage Pulastya' (37-38).

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

ततस्तौ जग्मतुः शीघ्रं कैलासं मुनिसत्तम । यत्रास्ते सा जगद्धात्री शंकरेण महात्मना ॥३९॥

तौ दृष्ट्वा तु समायातौ ब्रह्मविष्णु महेश्वरः । अभ्यर्च्यार्गमने हेतुं पप्रच्छ मुनिसत्तम ॥४०॥

Lord Mahadev (Shiva) said— 'Oh the exalted sage (Narad)! Then both Brahma and Vishnu soon went to Kailash where the mother of the world, Parvati, stayed with Lord Shiva (39).

Oh the exalted sage! Seeing that Brahma and Vishnu have both come to visit him, Shiva welcomed them and asked them the reason for their visit (40).

ततस्तावूचतुः शीघ्रं वृत्तान्तं सकलं विभुम् । चेष्टितं राक्षसेन्द्रस्य चात्मनश्चाभिचेष्टितम् ॥४१॥

ततस्ते सहिता देवा ब्रह्मविष्णुमहेश्वराः । उपतस्थुर्महादेवीं पार्वतीं मुनिसत्तम ॥४२॥

Then both of them (Brahma and Vishnu) informed Vibho (literally one who is omnipresent, magnanimous, eternal, almighty, majestic, Lord God; here referring to Shiva) about the tumult and vandalism caused by the king of demons Ravana, as well as the wish or desire that they had in their mind (41).

Oh the best amongst sages! Then the three Gods— Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh— went near Parvati together (42).

दृष्ट्वा तां परमेशानीं सुप्रसन्नमुखाम्बुजाम् । प्रणेमुस्त्रिदशश्रेष्ठा दण्डवत्पतिता भुवि ॥४३॥

प्रणतान्वीक्ष्य सा देवी ब्रह्मादीन्कृपयाक्षणात् । भूत्वा परा महादेवी रत्नसिंहासनस्थिता ॥४४॥

They saw that she had a happy, contented and a lotus-like face. Seeing her, the three most

exalted Gods fell to the ground like a stick, prostrating themselves before her to pay their obeisance (43).

When the Goddess (Parvati, Jagdamba) saw that Brahma and the other Gods were giving respects to her, the supreme Goddess assumed her original divine form and gracefully seated herself on a gem-studded throne (44).

अष्टादशभुजा चारुहारशोभिकुचस्थला । प्रसन्नवदना चारुचन्द्रार्धकृतशोखरा ॥४५॥

सुचारुदशाना स्मेररुचिरास्या त्रिलोचना । भूमेरुत्थाय भगवान् विष्णुस्तां जगदम्बिकाम् ॥४६॥

प्राञ्जलिः प्राह सद्भक्त्या रोमाञ्चितकलेवरः ॥४७॥

She had eighteen arms, her bosom was adorned with a beautiful garland, she had a happy and pleasing countenance, and her forehead was adorned by the mark of the crescent moon (45).

Her face looked beautiful and charming with a row of beautiful teeth and a pleasing smile, and all the three eyes¹ shone with a divine light on it (face) (46).

Vishnu got up from his prostrated position on the ground and said to her with hands joined together in a prayerful mode and with a thrilled body— (47).

[Note :- ¹The three eyes of the Goddess are as follows— two normal eyes placed on either side of the nose and the third located in the forehead just between the eyebrows.

This eye is called the eye of wisdom.]

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मातः पौलस्त्यतनयो रावणो राक्षसाधिपः । त्वदनुग्रहदर्पेण बाधते सकलं जगत् ॥४८॥

तेन देवाः सगन्धर्वा ब्रह्माणं शरणं गताः । ब्रह्मापि मां वधार्थाय तस्य देवि दुरात्मनः ॥४९॥

Lord Vishnu said— 'Oh mother! The son of Pulastya, Ravana, who is the king of demons, is tormenting and tyrannising the whole world because your benevolence and grace has made him haughty, proud, invincible and arrogant (48).

For that, all the Gods and Gandharvas (celestial musicians; semi gods) went to take shelter (i.e. help and advice) with Brahma. And then Brahma asked me to do something so as to eliminate that wicked fellow (49).

अवोचन्मानुषं देहं पृथिव्यां धारय प्रभो । मया प्रतिश्रुतं चैव तथैव जगदीश्वरि ॥५०॥

भूत्वा दाशरथिर्भूमौ हनिष्ये तं दुरासदम् । किंतु त्वं सेवितानेन प्रत्यहं सुमहात्मना ॥५१॥

He (Brahma) has asked me to manifest myself as a human being on the earth for that purpose. Oh the Mistress and Goddess of the whole world! I have also promised him to do so (50).

So I will reveal myself on the earth as the son of Dashrath (i.e. as Sri Ram) to kill (and get rid of) that rascal, but that great soul regularly worships and serves you (51).

आराधितश्च भगवान्परमात्मा महेश्वरः । त्वं चापि परमप्रीत्या तस्य रक्षणकारणात् ॥५२॥

करोषि वसतिं तस्य पुरे त्रिदशवन्दिते । समरे तु निहन्ता वा कथं त्रिदशकण्टकम् ॥५३॥

Besides you, he worships Lord Maheshwar (Shiva), the supreme Lord. As a result, you are very benevolent and gracious towards him and reside in his city (Lanka) to give your patronage and protection to him. Oh the one who is worshipped and honoured by the

three worlds as well as by the Gods! In such a circumstance, how is it possible to eliminate him— who is like a thorn for the three worlds— in battle' (52-53).

यस्य संरक्षणकरी त्वं तथासौ महेश्वरः । विशेषतस्त्वमेवासि स्वयं लङ्केश्वरी शिवे ॥५४॥

अतस्त्वं रक्षणार्थाय जगतोऽस्य जगन्मयि । यथा विधेयं तद् ब्रूहि नमस्ते जगदम्बिके ॥५५॥

One who is protected by you and Maheshwar (Shiva), can he ever be killed by anyone? Oh Shive (i.e. the divine consort of Shiva; Parvati)! You reside in Lanka yourself as its patron Goddess (54).

Oh Jagdamba (the divine mother of the entire world)! Tell us yourself some way to protect the world. I bow before you in reverence!' (55).

श्रीदेव्युवाच

पूजिता रावणेनाहं सुचिरं मधुसूदन । सत्यं वसामि लङ्कायां तस्य रक्षणकारणात् ॥५६॥

यथा मामर्चयेद्भक्त्या रावणः स महाबलः । महेशमपि सद्भक्त्या तथा प्राप्य च सम्पदः ॥५७॥

न चावशिष्टं विद्येत तस्य प्राप्यं सुदुर्लभम् । मनोरथश्च सम्पूर्णः सम्पूर्णतपसः फलम् ॥५८॥

The Goddess (Parvati) replied— 'Oh Madhusudan (Vishnu)! Ravana has worshipped me for a long time. It is also true that I live in Lanka to protect him (56).

That most strong, valiant and brave Ravana has worshipped me and Shiva most diligently, faithfully, sincerely and devotionally. As a result (or reward), he has acquired all the power, majesty, riches and glories that he currently possesses (57).

Nothing in this world is beyond his reach now. All his wishes and desires have been fulfilled, and he has got the results (rewards) of his doing severe Tapa (i.e. austerities and penances) (58).

आत्मनः स विनाशाय साम्प्रतं बलदर्पितः । बाधते सकलं विश्वं चराचरमिदं बलात् ॥५९॥

अहं हि निधने तस्य साम्प्रतं चिन्तये स्वयम् । निमित्तं यदि चाप्नोमि तदाहमपि पातये ॥६०॥

तं दुष्टं किंतु नो साक्षात्स्वयं वा हन्तुमुत्सहे । भद्रं तु ब्रह्मणा प्रोक्तं याहि मानुषतां स्वयम् ॥६१॥

Now he (Ravana) is forcibly and cruelly tormenting the whole of the animate as well as the inanimate world because he is very proud of his strength and invincibility. This will be the very cause of his own ruin (59).

I am also thinking of killing him if I can find an excuse. I shall slay him myself (60), but it is not proper for me to kill him without help from anyone else. Brahma is right; you must incarnate yourself as a human being for this purpose (61).

यतस्व तद्वधे चापि साहाय्यं ते करिष्यति । त्वयि मानुषतां जाते कमलापि मदंशजा ॥६२॥

मानुषं देहमाश्रित्य सम्भविष्यति भूतले । तां दृष्ट्वा चातिलोभेन हरिष्यति सुदुर्मतिः ॥६३॥

वीरः सुरतमोहेन मम मूर्त्यन्तरं बलात् । तस्यां लङ्कां प्रविष्टायां शिवस्यानुमते ध्रुवम् ॥६४॥

त्यक्ष्यामि लङ्कानगरीं विनाशाय दुरात्मनः ॥६५॥

मम मूर्त्यन्तरं लक्ष्मीमवमंस्यति तां यदा । तदैव मम कोपेन स नाशं समवाप्स्यति ॥६६॥

In that form (as a human), you must make all necessary efforts required to kill him. When you become a man, Laxmi— who is but one of my other forms— shall also accompany you to help you (62).

She will also assume a human form and manifest herself on the earth. That vile and pervert Ravana will get passionate and amorous on seeing her, and shall forcibly steal (kidnap) her (63) who will be no one else but me (in a human form as Sita). As soon as she enters Lanka, I shall take permission of Shiva and most certainly (64) abandon the city, clearing the way for the destruction of that pervert and wicked fellow (65).

When he shall insult my image in the form of Laxmi (Sita), he shall certainly be ruined by my wrath and curse (66).

त्यक्तायां तु मया तस्यां लङ्कायां मधुसूदन । वधार्थं तस्य दुष्टस्य रावणस्य दुरात्मनः ॥६७॥

त्वयि मानुषतां याते सूर्यवंशे रघोः कुले । ब्रह्मपुत्रो वसिष्ठस्त्वां मन्त्रं प्रग्राहयिष्यति ॥६८॥

Oh Madhusudan! When I shall have abandoned Lanka and you shall have revealed yourself as a human in the clan of Raghu of the Sun-race for the purpose of slaying Ravana, Brahma's son sage Vashistha shall give you the holy Mantra (i.e. shall become your Guru, the moral preceptor and teacher, by initiating you by the sacrament of the sacred thread ceremony and giving you the divine Mantra for the purpose of the formal initiation) (67-68).

[Note :- Please also see Chapter 4, Canto 38, verse 1-2.]

तन्मन्त्रं समरे तात स्मरिष्यसि सुगोपितम् । रक्षार्थमात्मनश्चापि रावणस्य वधाय च ॥६९॥

न तदा तेन निःक्षिप्ता अपि बाणाः सुदारुणाः । त्वां भेत्यन्ति रणे घोरे कदाचिन्मधुसूदन ॥७०॥

During the thick of battle when you invoke those Mantras, which are top secret, for the purpose of your protection and for the destruction of Ravana (69), even the most formidable and infallible arrows shot by him (Ravana) shall not be able to harm you (because of the protective shield thrown around you by the powers of your Guru-Mantra), oh Madhusudan! (70).

[Note :- Please also see Chapter 8, Canto 42, verse 9-10, 12-14.]

तस्मिन्बाणप्रहरणे स्मर्तव्याहं महामते । संहारकारिणी नित्यं ततस्ते विजयो भवेत् ॥७१॥

मत्प्रसादात्सुदुर्लभ्यं समुद्रमपि हेलया । उत्तीर्य वानरैः सार्धं लङ्कामेष्यसि निश्चितम् ॥७२॥

Oh the great and wise one! During that Great War involving a volley of powerful arrows, you must constantly remember (invoke) me who am the 'slayer-personified'; this will lead to your victory (71).

By my grace, you will certainly tame the ocean (i.e. build a bridge over it) without much effort with the help of monkeys, and then surely enter Lanka (72).

ब्रह्मोपदेशतस्तात शरत्काले विधानतः । समुद्रतीरे कृत्वा तु मृण्मयीं प्रतिमां शुभाम् ॥७३॥

मां प्रपूज्य विधानेन वेदोक्तेन जनार्दन । पातयिष्यसि दुर्धर्षं रथाद्धेमपरिष्कृतात् ॥७४॥

Oh dear! As per the method described by Brahma (or, in other words, according to the destiny determined by Brahma, the creator), you must make a beautiful mud or clay auspicious image (idol) of my form during the winters on the shore of the ocean (73) and worship me there as per the established traditions sanctioned by the Vedas. Oh Janardan! Then you will be able to fell the invincible and most formidable one (Ravana) from his excellent gold-plated chariot in the battlefield (74).

तं हत्वा समरे वीरं सपुत्रगणबान्धवम् । लङ्काजयीति सुख्यातिं मत्प्रसादादवाप्स्यसि ॥७५॥

तस्मान्मानुषतां याहि द्रुतं त्वं मधुसूदन । वधाय राक्षसेन्द्रस्य रावणस्य दुरात्मनः ॥७६॥

By killing that brave and strong fellow (Ravana) along with his sons, kith and kin, by my grace, you shall acquire the fame and glory of being the conqueror of Lanka (75).

Therefore, oh Madhusudan, you must assume the form of a human very soon to kill the wicked and evil king of Demons, Ravana' (76).

श्रीभगवानुवाच

त्वयि तस्य दृढा भक्तिस्त्वां च स्मरति भक्तिः । कथं त्यक्ष्यसि तं लङ्कां मातस्त्वं करुणामयि ॥७७॥

संकटेऽपि स दुर्धर्षस्त्वां स्मरिष्यति भक्तिः । तत्कथं तं हनिष्यामि तन्मे वद सुरेश्वरि ॥७८॥

Lord God (Vishnu) said— 'Oh Mother! He (Ravana) has a steady and sincere devotion for you, and he constantly remembers you with great reverence and faith. Being merciful, kind and compassionate by nature, how will you be able abandon (forsake) him and his Lanka? (77).

When faced with adversities, that formidable and invincible one will invoke you with humility, sincerity and devotion. Then, oh the mistress and Goddess of the world, say, how will I be able to kill him (because then you would become favourable and benevolent towards him)? (78).

ये त्वां स्मरन्ति ताञ्छाम्भुस्तथाहं शमनोऽपि च । सायुधाश्चानुसंगम्य संरक्षामो महाभये ॥७९॥

तत्कथं संस्मरन्तं त्वां समरे रावणं शिवे । स्वरक्ष्यं संहनिष्यामि त्वद्भक्तं परमेश्वरि ॥८०॥

Those who remember (invoke) you when faced with troubles and difficulties (i.e. during adversities) are protected by me (Vishnu), Shiva and Yam (the patron God of death) personally using all the strengths, powers and arms (i.e. resources) that we command (79).

Then, oh the supreme Goddess, how can I kill that Ravana in the battlefield when he would be constantly remembering you with devotion, because, in this eventuality, he becomes worthy of my protection' (80).

श्रीपार्वत्युवाच

सत्यमेव महाबाहो समरे मां स्मरिष्यति । तथापि स यथा मृत्युं समवाप्स्यति तच्छृणु ॥८१॥

ममैवैतज्जगत्सर्वं जगद्रूपाहमेव हि । एतस्य पीडनेनैव जायते मम पीडनम् ॥८२॥

Parvati replied— 'Oh the one with the most strong arms! It is true that he will be remembering me in the battlefield. But listen to the way he will die (81).

This whole world is mine, and it is me who has been revealed in the form of this myriad and vast world. Therefore, anyone who torments the world, torments me (82).

[Note :- Please also see Chapter 8, Canto 42, verse 32-33.]

एतत्प्रपीडयन्भक्त्या यो मां स्मरति संकटे । नैहिकं हि फलं तस्य किंतु पारत्रिकं भवेत् ॥८३॥

अविद्विषन् जगत्सर्वं यो मां स्मरति भावतः । तस्याहं रक्षणकरी परत्रेह च सर्वदा ॥८४॥

While involved in tormenting and tyrannising this world, if anyone remembers/invokes me

with devotion during difficulties, then he cannot (expect to) get any worldly benefits/rewards/fruits. [In other words, if anyone causes harm to my own creation and other creatures who are all my offsprings, then I just cannot sit indifferently and condone such behaviour, even though the perpetrator might be my great devotee.] But nevertheless (since my remembrance/invocation cannot go in vain), he reaps the benefits/fruits/rewards of the world beyond this mortal world. [That is, though I have to punish him for his misdeeds, when he dies he would surely go to heaven and find emancipation and salvation for his soul. Indeed, my worship does not go in vain.] (83).

Those who do not keep any malice, ill-will or enmity with anyone in this world and then remember/invoke me with sincerity and devotion, I always give them my protection, both in this world as well as the world beyond (84).

[Note :- 'Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be fulfilled... blessed are they that are prosecuted for righteousness' sake, for their's is the kingdom of heaven... blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and prosecute...' (Bible, gospel of St. Matthew, 5/6, 10-11). 'And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved' (Bible, gospel of St. Matthew, 10/20)]

यूयं च तस्य रक्षायै यतिष्यथ महामते । स तु यन्मां महाभीतः संस्मरिष्यति संकटे ॥८५॥
तस्मै तद्विफलं विद्धि यन्मोक्षं समवाप्स्यति । इह भुक्त्वा परं भोगं यथाभिलषितं चिरम् ॥८६॥
परत्र मोक्षं परमं समेष्यति सुदुर्लभम् । किमितो देहिनामस्ति फलं वा मधुसूदन ॥८७॥

Oh the great and wise one! Even all of you Gods always remain vigilant to protect such a devotee. When he (Ravana) will try to remember/invoke me when he is extremely distressed and petrified with fear (during the fierce, last ditch battle with Sri Ram), he wouldn't be able to do so (because of the distraction of a horrifying and raging war). After having enjoyed the pleasure of this world for a long time, he will at last attain emancipation and salvation. [Please refer also verse no. 83 above.] Oh Madhusudan! What more can the creature who has a mortal body expect to accomplish? (85-87).

[Note :- Please also see Chapter 13, Canto 47, verse 60-61.]

मयि लङ्कापुरे तस्य स्थितायां न दुरासदः । समेष्यति रणे मृत्युं तेन त्यक्ष्यामि तां पुरीम् ॥८८॥
रक्षिष्यामि न वै युद्धे जगत्पीडनकारणात् । तस्मान्मानुषतां याहि महेशं प्रणिपत्य च ॥८९॥

While I stay in Lanka, his defeat in the battle is impossible. Hence, I shall exit from it (88).

I shall also not protect him in the battlefield because he indulges in tyrannising and tormenting the people of the world. Hence, you pay your respect to Mahesh (Lord Shiva) and manifest yourself as a human in this world' (89).

[Note :- Please also see Chapter 5, Canto 39, verse 22-28.]

Thus ends Canto 36 dealing with the conversation between Parvati and Vishnu.

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Chapter 3; Canto 37

Shiva incarnates as Hanuman, Vishnu as Sri Ram, Laxmi as Sita, and other Gods as bears & monkeys etc.

श्री महादेव उवाच

इति देव्या वचः श्रुत्वा भगवान्मधुसूदनः । प्रणिपत्य मुहुर्भक्त्या हर्षोत्फुल्लविलोचनः ॥१॥
महेशं वचनं प्राह सार्धं कमलयोनिना ॥२॥

Continuing his narration to Narad, Lord Mahadev (Shiva) said, 'Hearing these words (of Canto 36) of the Goddess, Madhusudan's (Vishnu's) eyes were filled tears of joy and overwhelming affections. He bowed before her reverentially once again, and accompanied by Brahma, he said to Shiva— (1-2).

श्री भगवानुवाच

देवदेव जगन्नाथ देवी भगवती स्वयम् । यथा प्राह समक्षं ते तत्सर्वं श्रुतवानसि ॥३॥
इदानीं यत्त्वया कार्यं साहाय्यं मम शंकर । तद् ब्रूहि त्वं महेशान वधार्थं तस्य दुर्मतेः ॥४॥

Lord God (Vishnu) said (to Shiva)— 'Oh Lord of Gods, oh Lord of the world! You have heard yourself what Goddess Bhagwati has just said in front of you (3).

Oh Shankar! Now, whatever help you wish to extend to me for the purpose of slaying that pervert and wicked one (Ravana), please tell me' (4).

शिव उवाच

अहं वानररूपेण सम्भूय पवनात्मजः । साहाय्यं ते करिष्यामि यथोचितमरिदम ॥५॥
उल्लङ्घ्य सागरं घोरं समन्विष्य च तेऽङ्गनाम् । प्रीतिं ते जनयिष्यामि सर्वदा मधुसूदन ॥६॥

Shiva said— 'Oh the vanquisher of enemies! I will assume the form of a monkey as the son of the Wind God (i.e. Hanuman) and shall help you as required (5).

Oh Madhusudan (another name of Lord Vishnu)! By leaping across the vast ocean and searching out your wife (Sita), I shall become the object of your affection, grace, kindness, benevolence and munificence for all times to come (6).

अन्यच्चापि महत्कर्म करिष्यामि सर्वदा सुदारुणम् । त्रैलोक्यदुष्करं विष्णो तव प्रीतिविवर्धनम् ॥७॥
मयि लङ्कां प्रविष्टे तु सूक्ष्मवानररूपिणि । लङ्केश्वरी स्वयं लङ्कां परित्यक्ष्यति निश्चितम् ॥८॥
इति ते यन्मया कार्यं साहाय्यं तत्प्रतिश्रुतम् । ब्रह्मणो भवतः प्रीत्यै किं करिष्यति या च तत् ॥९॥

Oh Vishnu! I shall also accomplish any other most daunting and formidable task in the three worlds if it shall greatly please you and would be conducive to your mission (7).

When I enter Lanka like a miniature monkey, the patron Goddess of the city (Lanka) shall surely abandon it (8).

I have told you the way in which I shall help you; is it okay with you and Brahma?' (9).

[Note :- Please also see Chapter 5, Canto 39, verse 25-26.]

श्री महादेव उवाच

इत्युक्तः शम्भुना विष्णुः स्मृत्वा कमलसम्भवम् । अवैक्षत महाबाहुर्हर्षनिर्भरमानसः । १२० ॥

ततो ब्रह्मापि विज्ञाय विष्णोरीप्सितमेव हि । प्रहस्य वचनं प्राह नारायणमनामयम् । १२१ ॥

Lord Shiva said to Narad¹— 'When Shiva had assured him thus, the most strong and powerful Vishnu became reassured and exhilarated in heart. He remembered (with closed eyes as a mark of reverence and concentration) Lord Brahma (literally, the one whose existence was made possible by the divine lotus emerging from Vishnu's navel). Upon his deep concentration and invocation, Brahma appeared there (10).

Realising what Vishnu was planning and thinking about, Brahma smiled and said to Lord Narayan who has no faults, has no forms, and is eternal (11).

[Note--1 There should be no confusion here. We must remember that this story is being narrated by Lord Shiva to Narad. The narration is being done as if Shiva was a third person doing the narration. That is why he uses the name 'Shiva' instead of saying 'I' in the narrative sequence. The 'third person narrative' style helps to preserve the authenticity and neutrality in the narration.]

श्री ब्रह्मोवाच

अहं तव सहायार्थमृक्ष्योनौ निजांशतः । सम्भूतोऽस्मि पुरा देव महाबलपराक्रमः । १२२ ॥

दास्यामि मन्त्रणां तुभ्यं शुभां तव हिते रतः । १२३ ॥

Brahma said (to Vishnu)— 'Oh Lord! I shall manifest myself in the form of a bear to help you. I shall do it prior to your advent on the earth and shall be empowered with great wisdom, glory, strength and valour in order to give you proper and correct advice that will be beneficial to you (12-13).

धर्मः स्वयं तु संजातो लङ्कायां हि विभीषणः । भ्राता राक्षसराजस्य रावणस्य दुरात्मनः । १२४ ॥

सोऽपि तं सम्परित्यज्य त्वत्सहायो भविष्यति । गच्छ मानुषतां देव रक्ष विश्वं चराचरम् । १२५ ॥

'Dharma' (righteousness, probity, propriety, noble and virtuous conduct) has already taken birth in Lanka as Vibhishan, the brother of that pervert, wicked and sinful king of demons called Ravana (14).

Oh Lord! He too shall abandon his brother and join you to help you. You must soon manifest yourself as a human and protect the whole animate as well as the inanimate creation' (15).

श्री महादेव उवाच

एवं स भगवान्विष्णुः सम्प्रार्थ्य परमेश्वरीम् । पृथिव्यां जन्म सम्प्राप्तो राज्ञो गेहे महात्मनः । १२६ ॥

स्वयं दशरथस्यैकश्चतुर्धा मुनिसत्तम । रामश्च लक्ष्मणश्चैव भरतश्च महाबलः । १२७ ॥

शत्रुघ्नो रूपसौन्दर्यशालिनस्ते महाबलाः । श्रीरामभरतौ तत्र श्यामौ दूर्वादिलप्रभौ । १२८ ॥

Shiva said— 'In this way, Lord Vishnu prayed to the supreme Goddess (Parvati) and manifested himself on the earth in the household of the great and noble king (Dashrath) (16).

Oh the most exalted sage (Narad)! He himself assumed four distinct forms in the household of Dashrath as the most strong, brave, valiant and valorous Sri Ram, Laxman,

Bharat (17) and Shatrughan who were treasuries of virtues, beauty and charm besides being very strong, brave, robust and courageous. Sri Ram and Bharat were dark complexioned like the Durba grass (18).

लसत्कनकगौराङ्गौ द्वौ तदन्यौ महामते । रामस्यानुगतो नित्यं लक्ष्मणो लक्षणान्वितः ॥१९॥
 भरतस्य तु शत्रुघ्नो बाल्यावधि महामुने । लक्ष्मीश्चापि समुद्भय क्षितौ परमसुन्दरी ॥२०॥
 स्थित्वा जनकराजस्य गेहे कन्यास्वरूपिणी । तथा ब्रह्मा निजांशेन बभूव पृथिवीतले ॥२१॥
 ऋक्षयोनौ महाबुद्धिर्जाम्बवानिति विश्रुतः । महेशश्च तथांशेन भूत्वा पवननन्दनः ॥२२॥

The other two brothers— Laxman and Shatrughan— were fair complexioned with the hue of gold, and were wise and noble. From their childhood days, Laxman— who possessed noble characters— followed Sri Ram (19), while Shatrughan followed Bharat. Oh great sage! Goddess Laxmi manifested herself on this earth in a beautiful form (20) as the daughter of King Janak (i.e. as Sita), while Brahma came on the surface of the earth out of his fractional manifestation (21) in the form of the king of bears named Jamvant who was very wise, erudite and intelligent amongst his compatriots. Meanwhile, Mahesh's fraction (i.e. sperms; genes) revealed itself as the son of the Wind God (22).

हनुमानिति विख्यातो महाबलपराक्रमः । किष्किन्धायां स्थितो वीरो मन्त्री वानरभूपतेः ॥२३॥
 तथैवान्ये च त्रिदशा ऋक्षवानररूपतः । संस्थिता कानने विष्णुं प्रतीक्षन्तो महामते ॥२४॥

His (the son of Wind God's) name was Hanuman. He was famous and glorious, and was endowed with matchless and great strength, courage and bravery. He stayed at Kishkindha and served as a minister (advisor) of the king of monkeys (Sugriv) (23).

Oh the wise one (Narad)! Other Gods also assumed the form of either bears or monkeys and lived in forested areas waiting for Vishnu to reveal himself as Sri Ram (24).

Thus ends Canto 37 of Devi Puran Mahābhagwat-Rāmāyan describing how the Gods manifested on the earth to help Vishnu in the form of Sri Ram.

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Chapter 4; Canto 38

**Description of Sri Ram's achievements; Protection of sage Vishwamitra's sacrifice; visit to Janakpur, breaking the bow and marriage with Sita;
 Sri Ram's exile; Bharat's life as a hermit;
 Deformation of Supernakha; Ravana's abduction of Sita**

श्री महादेव उवाच

अथ तं रामचन्द्रं च भरतं लक्ष्मणं तथा । शत्रुघ्नं च महाबाहुं वसिष्ठो मुनिसत्तमः ॥१॥
 सर्वान् वै दीक्षयामास देव्या मन्त्रेण नारद । बभूवुस्तेऽपि चत्वारः सर्वशास्त्रार्थपारगाः ॥२॥

Lord Shiva said to Narad— "The most exalted sage Vashistha initiated the four brothers, Sri Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan— who were strong in arms and most brave, fear-

less, valiant and valorous--by giving them the divine Mantra of the Goddess. Oh Narad! Those four brothers became experts in all the scriptures and sciences (1-2).

[Note :- Please also see Chapter 2, Canto 36, verse 68.]

अथैकदा समागत्य विश्वामित्रो महामुनिः । मखसंरक्षणार्थाय श्रीरामं सह लक्ष्मणम् ॥३॥

आनयत्स तपोऽरण्ये सम्प्रार्थ्य पितरं तयोः । तत्र गत्वा महाबाहुस्ताडकां घोरराक्षसीम् ॥४॥

निहत्य च मुनेस्तुष्टादस्त्राणि समवाप ह । ततो गत्वा महारण्ये मखविघ्नकरं मुने ॥५॥

Once, the great sage Vishwamitra arrived, and with the permission of the father (Dashrath), he took Sri Ram and Laxman with him to his hermitage in the Tapovan (a forest where hermits live to do Tapa) for the purpose of protection of his Yagya (religious ceremonies; fire sacrifices) from being defiled by the demons (3).

There, the most strong and brave Sri Ram killed the fierce demoness named Tadka which pleased the sage who gave him divine, glorious and potential arms and armaments (as a reward). Oh sage! Then he proceeded to the great forest where Vishwamitra's hermitage was located and his fire sacrifice was being defiled by fierce demons (4-5).

सुबाहुमदहत्क्षिप्त्वा बाणमेकं महाबलः । अपरेणैकबाणेन मरीचं युद्धदुर्मदम् ॥६॥

सागरे प्राक्षिपद्रामः स्वबाहुबलदर्पितः । ततस्तेन मुनीन्द्रेण सार्धं स रघुनन्दनः ॥७॥

मिथिलां प्रययौ क्षिप्रं विमोच्य ब्रह्मणः सुताम् । ततो जनकराजस्य पुत्रीं गत्वा महाबलः ॥८॥

There, the brave and strong one (Sri Ram) reduced to ashes the demon called Subahu, who had been defiling the sage's fire sacrifice, with a single arrow. With a second arrow, he (Sri Ram) threw (flung) Marich—who was eager for battle and was most strong and proud of his valour—into the sea. After that, Raghunandan (Sri Ram) accompanied the sage (Vishwamitra) to Mithila (Janakpur). On the way, he liberated Brahma's daughter (i.e. Ahilya) from her curse. Then the brave and strong Sri Ram went to Janakpur (6-8).

बभञ्ज धनुरत्युग्रं महेशस्य महामुने । ततः स राजा संतुष्टो वृद्धं दशरथं नृपम् ॥९॥

सपुत्रं पुरमानीय महोत्सवपुरःसरम् । तत्सुतेभ्यश्चतुर्भ्यश्च चतस्रः कन्यका ददौ ॥१०॥

Oh great sage (Narad)! There Sri Ram broke the formidably strong bow of Lord Shiva. This pleased the king (Janak) who invited the aged king Dashrath to Janakpur (9) along with his other sons. Thereafter, he ceremoniously handed over his four daughters to the latter's four sons in a great marriage ceremony (10).

रामाया प्रददौ सीतां लक्ष्मणायोर्मिलां ददौ । भरताय सुतां प्रादान्माण्डवीं मुनिपुङ्गव ॥११॥

शत्रुघ्नाय ददौ कन्यां श्रुतकीर्तिं शुभाननाम् । तासां सीता तु सम्प्राप्ता यज्ञभूमिविशोधने ॥१२॥

उर्मिलौरससम्भूता द्वे परे भ्रातृकन्यके ॥१३॥

Oh the most exalted sage! He (Janak) gave Sita to Sri Ram, Urmila to Laxman, Mandavi to Bharat (11) and Srutkirti to Shatrughan. All the brides were graceful, auspicious and virtuous. Out of them, Sita was obtained while sanctifying the 'Yagya Bhumi' (i.e. while the ground for the ceremonial fire sacrifice was being ploughed by Janak) (12), Urmila was his biological daughter (i.e. born out of his wife), and the other two (i.e. Mandavi and Srutkirti) were the daughters of his brother (13).

अथातः परिसंगृह्य चत्वारो भ्रातरश्च ते । पित्रा सह ययुः शीघ्रं पुरं प्रति महामते ॥१४॥

पथि तत्र समायातो भार्गवो बलदर्पितः । तस्य संचूर्णयामास महादर्पं महाबलः ॥१५॥

Oh the wise one (Narad)! After marriage, all the four brothers started off for the journey back to their city (Ayodhya), along with their father (14).

On the way, they met sage Bhrigu's son (Parashuram) who was very proud and haughty due to his strength and valour. The most valiant and strong one (i.e. Sri Ram) crushed his (Parashuram's) great vanity, haughtiness, arrogance and false pride (15).

ततः पुरं समागत्य रामराज्याभिषेचने । उद्योगमकरोद्राजा सहामात्यैर्महामते ॥१६॥

अत्राभवन्मुनिश्रेष्ठ त्रिदशा विघ्नकारिणः । ययाचे केकयीं तं वै राज्यं पुत्रस्य कारणात् ॥१७॥

रामस्य वनवासं च चतुर्दशसमा इति । सत्यसन्धो दशरथस्तस्यै तं च वर ददौ ॥१८॥

Oh the wise one! After returning to Ayodhya, king Dashrath, accompanied by his ministers, started preparations for his (Sri Ram's) anointment as prince regent (16).

Oh the best amongst sages! On this occasion, the Gods created a hindrance by which Kaikeyi asked the king to give the crown to her son (Bharat) (17), and to send Sri Ram to exile in the forest for fourteen years. Dashrath—who was always steadfast in keeping his vows—granted her those two boons (which he had promised to grant her in some ancient time and were pending for redemption) (18).

तेन राज्यं परित्यज्य सीतया लक्ष्मणेन च । प्रतस्थे दण्डकारण्यं रामः सत्यपराक्रमः ॥१९॥

प्रणम्य पितरौ भक्त्या वसिष्ठं च गुरुं मुने । संध्याय चेतसा देवीं प्रणिपत्य पुनः पुनः ॥२०॥

रावणस्य वधार्थाय यात्रां चक्रे रघूद्वहः । दशम्यां शुक्लपक्षस्य इषस्य मुनिसत्तम ॥२१॥

Hence, the most truthful, most steadfast in his vows, most famous, mighty, majestic and valiant Sri Ram left his kingdom and went to the Dandakaranya forest along with Sita and Laxman (19).

He bowed before his father and his Guru Vashistha. Then he invoked mother Goddess (Jagdamba or Parvati) repeatedly and bowed to her before embarking on his journey (20).

Finally, oh the most exalted sage, the Lord commenced his journey on the 10th day of the bright fortnight in the month of Ashwin according to the Hindu calendar (i.e. roughly mid of September to the first half of October) for the purpose of slaying Ravana (21).

[Note :- The fact that Sri Ram killed Ravana on the 9th day of the bright lunar fortnight in the month of Ashwin, did the last worship of the Goddess the next day on the 10th and immediately returned to Ayodhya by the air route to fulfil his promise to Bharat that not a single day extra will pass after the expiry of 14 years of exile before Sri Ram returns to Ayodhya, and Bharat had told him that if he does not return the latter would die, we come to the conclusion that it must have been the month of Ashwin when Sri Ram had gone to exile from Ayodhya exactly 14 years before his return to his city after the conquest of Lanka.]

राजा पुत्रवियोगार्तो मुक्तकण्ठो रुरोद ह । सुमन्त्रेणान्वितो रामो रथमारुह्य नारद ॥२२॥

सानुजः सीतया सार्धं स्वपुरान्निर्गम सः । पौराञ्च शोकदुःखार्ता अनुजमुस्तमेव हि ॥२३॥

Oh Narad! The king (Dashrath) began lamenting and weeping aloud due to the agonies of separation from his beloved son (Sri Ram). Sumantra (the senior most minister) took a chariot and Sri Ram boarded it (22), along with his younger brother (Laxman) and Sita. They came out of the city. The residents of the city could not cope with the agony of separation from their beloved prince and were so overwhelmed with sorrows that all of them followed him (23).

तांस्त्यक्त्वा तु समागत्य शृङ्गवेरपुरं ततः । सुमन्त्रं सरथं रामो विससर्ज महामतिः ॥२४॥

तत्र कृत्वा जटां रामो लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितः । सीतया नावमारुह्य गङ्गामुत्तीर्य नारद ॥२५॥

The most erudite and wise Sri Ram (रामो महामतिः) shook-off the citizens (तांस्त्यक्त्वा) somehow and reached Srīngverpur. Then he sent Sumantra back with the chariot (सुमन्त्रं सरथं विससर्ज) (24).

Oh Narad! There Sri Ram and Laxman matted their lock of hairs, and boarding a boat with Sita, they crossed river Ganges (25).

भरद्वाजाश्रमं प्रायाच्चित्रकूटं ततो ययौ । राजा दशरथः श्रुत्वा सुमन्त्रस्य मुखान्मुने ॥२६॥

वनप्रवेशं रामस्य दुःखात्प्राणान्मुमोच ह । भरतस्तु समागत्य मातुलस्य गृहात्ततः ॥२७॥

कृत्वोर्ध्वदैहिकं राज्ञो मातरं भर्त्सयन्मुहुः । सामात्यः सानुजः प्रायाद्रामचन्द्रस्य सन्निधिम् ॥२८॥

They came to the hermitage of sage Bharadwaj, and from there they proceeded onwards to Chitrakoot. Meanwhile, king Dasarath heard from Sumantra (26) that Sri Ram has gone to the forest. He was so shocked and dismayed that he died due to overwhelming distress and sorrows. After that, Bharat came back from his maternal uncle's home (27) and performed the last rites of his dead father. Scolding and severely taking his mother to task, he and his younger brother (Shatrughan), along with their kith and kin, went to Sri Ram (at Chitrakoot) (28).

स तन्निवर्तने यत्नमकरोद्भरतस्तदा । तदनादृत्य रामोऽगाद्देवकार्यस्य सिद्धये ॥२९॥

सुघोरं दण्डकारण्यं सान्त्वयन्भरतं मुहुः । ततस्तदाज्ञया सोऽपि भरतो विनिवर्तितः ॥३०॥

Bharat made his best of efforts to bring Sri Ram back, but the latter did not oblige him. Sri Ram reassured Bharat, and, in order to accomplish the task of the Gods, he (Sri Ram) went ahead towards the dense, uninhabited and formidable Dandakaranya forest. Meanwhile, at his command, Bharat returned back (to Ayodhya) (29-30).

सानुजः संस्थितो नन्दिग्रामे परिजनैर्वृतः । भूमिशायी जटाधारी राजभोगविवर्जितः ॥३१॥

चिन्तयन् चेतसा रामं चतुर्दशसमा मुने । प्रतीक्ष्य रामचन्द्रस्य राज्ये प्रत्यागमं पुनः ॥३२॥

Bharat stayed at Nandigram (on the outskirts of Ayodhya) with his younger brother and compatriots. He slept on the ground, had matted hairs, and forsook all the comforts associated with the kingdom (31).

He focused his attention on Sri Ram and waited out the fourteen year exile period for his return from the forest (32).

रामस्तु दण्डकारण्ये विराधं घोररूपिणम् । हत्वा राक्षसनाशाय कियत्कालमुवास ह ॥३३॥

निर्माय पर्णशालां तु पञ्चवट्यां महामते ॥३४॥

तत्र शूर्पणखानाम्नी राक्षसी कामरूपिणी । समेत्य राघवं कर्तुं पतिमैच्छत्स्मरातुरा ॥३५॥

Sri Ram killed a fierce demon named Viradh in the Dandakaranya forest. Then for the purpose of eliminating the demons, he stayed there for some time (33) in Panchvati. For that purpose, the great and wise one (i.e. Sri Ram) erected a thatched hut for his dwelling (34).

There, a demoness named Supernakha, who could assume any form that she wished, came there, was overwhelmed with passion and lust, and she approached Raghav (i.e. Sri Ram) with a desire to make him her husband (35).

तां ज्ञात्वा राक्षसीं दुष्टां लक्ष्मणो भ्रातृशासनात् । चिच्छेद कर्णौ नासां च खड्गेन मुनिपुङ्गव ॥३६॥

ततः सा रुदती गत्वा भ्रातरौ खरदूषणौ । उवाच वचनं क्रुद्धा राक्षसी भीमरूपिणी ॥३७॥

Oh the most exalted sage (i.e. Narad)! On the instructions of his brother, Laxman cut-off her ears and nose with a sword realising that she was a ferocious demoness (instead of the beauty she appeared to be) (36).

Humiliated and peeved, she went away weeping to her brothers Khar and Dushan, and said to them angrily— (37)

शूर्पणखोवाच

अयोध्याधिपतिः श्रीमान् रामो भ्रात्रा सह स्वयम् । आगतो दण्डकारण्ये श्यामो दूर्वादलप्रभः ॥३८॥

तस्याङ्गनापि तेनैव सार्धं तत्र समागता । सा यथा रूपसौन्दर्यशालिनी न तथा क्वचित् ॥३९॥

सर्वो मर्त्ये च पाताले कैश्चिद्दृष्टं न च श्रुतम् । त्वदर्थं तामानयन्त्या भ्राता तस्यानुजो मम ॥४०॥

चिच्छेद कर्णौ नासां च तेन याता त्वदन्तिकम् ॥४१॥

Supernakha said— 'Oh brother! The king of Ayodhya, Sri Ram, has come to the Dandakaranya forest along with his brother. He is dark complexioned like the Durba grass (38).

His wife (Sita) has also come along with him. She is so beautiful that the like of her has never been heard of anywhere (39) in the celestial, the terrestrial as well as the nether worlds. I was bringing her for you, but his younger brother (Laxman) (40) chopped off my ears and nose. That is why I have come to you' (41).

[Note--We see here how that wicked demoness has twisted facts to incite her brothers to avenge her insult and hide her own misdeeds. Had she been truthful, she would not have been a demoness in the first place.]

श्री महादेव उवाच

इति तस्या वचः श्रुत्वा राक्षसौ खरदूषणौ । राक्षसानां परिवृतौ चतुर्दशसहस्रकैः ॥४२॥

जग्मतुः कानने तत्र यत्रास्ते रघुनन्दनः । तान् जघान शरव्रातै रामचन्द्रः समागतान् ॥४३॥

Lord Shiva said to Narad— 'Hearing her words, the demons Khar and Dushan, accompanied by fourteen thousand demon warriors, went to the forest where Raghunandans (Sri Ram and Laxman) lived. Sri Ram killed all those demons by a hail of his arrows (42-43).

ततः शूर्पणखा गत्वा लङ्कायां शोकविह्वला । वृत्तान्तं कथयामास रावणाय महामते ॥४४॥

स तस्या वचनं श्रुत्वा सीताया रूपमुत्तमम् । गुण्ठितः कालपाशेन तां हर्तुं मतिमादधे ॥४५॥

Then Supernakha was overwhelmed with anguish and sorrows (at the death of her brothers Khar and Dushan) and went to Lanka to narrate the whole episode to the wise Ravana (45).

When he heard her and learnt about the matchless beauty of Sita, and then being inspired by death (or destiny), he decided to abduct her (Sita) out of his wickedness, delusions and stupidity (45).

ततः सहायं कृत्वा तु मारीचं ताडकासुतम् । तां हर्तुकामः प्रययौ काननं तं स रावणः ॥४६॥

मारीचस्तु विनिश्चित्य श्रीरामान्मृत्युमात्मनः । मायास्वर्णमृगो भूत्वाऽनयद्रामं सुदूरतः ॥४७॥

Thence, in order to take the help of Tadak's son Marich to kidnap Sita, he went to that forest (where Marich resided) (46).

Marich decided that his death at the hands of Sri Ram was a certainty, so he assumed the form of a golden deer/stag and took Sri Ram far away from the latter's hermitage by deceit (47).

रामस्तं प्राहिणोद्बाणं तेन विद्धः स राक्षसः । पपात धरणीपृष्ठे लक्ष्मणेति वदन्मुने ॥४८॥

तन्मत्वा रामचन्द्रस्य भाषितं जनकात्मजा । सद्यः प्रस्थापयामास रामं प्रति च लक्ष्मणम् ॥४९॥

Oh sage! Sri Ram aimed and shot an arrow at him. Being mortally wounded with it, he cried aloud 'oh Laxman' as he fell to the ground (48).

The daughter of Janak (Sita) thought that it was Sri Ram calling out in distress, and she immediately sent Laxman in that direction (to help him) (49).

एतस्मिन्नन्तरे सोऽपि समागत्य दशाननः । जहार जानकीं लक्ष्मीदेव्या मूर्त्यन्तरं बलात् ॥५०॥

तदैव भस्मसात्कर्तुं समर्थापि सुरेश्वरी । नाकरोत्प्रार्थिता यस्माद्देवीरूपेण सा सदा ॥५१॥

Meanwhile, the 10-headed one (Ravana) came there and forcibly kidnapped Janki (Sita) who was an incarnation of Goddess Laxmi (50).

Though that great Goddess was capable of reducing him to ashes then and there, but she refrained from doing so because Ravana always worshipped her in her another divine form as a Goddess (Jagdamba) (51).

रक्षसा नीयमानां तां जटायुः पक्षिपुङ्गवः । त्रातुकामोऽकरोद्युद्धं रावणेन दुरात्मना ॥५२॥

स तस्य पक्षौ छित्वा तां बलाद्राक्षसपुङ्गवः । गृहीत्वा प्रययौ लङ्कां रात्रौ देवर्षिसत्तम ॥५३॥

The king of birds (or the most superior of the birds) named Jatayu fought angrily, bravely and courageously with the wicked and sinful Ravana in order to protect and retrieve Sita who was being forcibly taken away by him (52).

Oh the most exalted sage of the Gods (i.e. Narad)! The best in the race of demons (i.e. Ravana) cut-off his (Jatayu's) wings (to immobilise him), and took away Sita stealthily to Lanka during the night (53).

अशोककानने रम्ये स्थापयामास तां सतीम् । न धर्षितुमभूच्छक्तो ज्वलदग्निसमप्रभाम् ॥५४॥

एवं भगवती देवी भवकालं शुभप्रदा । स्वयं लङ्केश्वरी देवी ह्यन्तर्धत्तुं मनो दधे ॥५५॥

He kept the Sati (i.e. the lady who was most loyal to her husband, and was extremely immaculate, virtuous and uncorrupt; here referring to Sita) in the charming Ashok grove. He failed to exert influence or use force on her because she was radiant and fierce like a burning fire (54).

After that, the patron Goddess of Lanka called Lankeshwari— whose presence had made Ravana and the city invincible— decided to abandon the city' (55).

Thus ends Canto 38 describing the story of Sri Ram till the abduction of Sita by Ravana and her incarceration at Lanka.

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Chapter 5; Canto 39

Sri Ram laments for Sita; friendship with Sugriv; Hanuman crosses the ocean, reaches Lanka, meets Sita, requests the patron Goddess to abandon the city, burning of Lanka, return to Kishkindha with the news of Sita; Vibhishan's refuge with Sri Ram

श्री महादेव उवाच

रामस्तु हत्वा मारीचं लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितः । आगत्य पर्णशालायां नापश्यत्तत्र जानकीम् ॥१॥
 बभ्राम कानने तत्र रुदम् सीतामनुस्मरन् । तत्र दृष्ट्वा पतङ्गेशं जटायुं छिन्नपक्षतिम् ॥२॥
 सीतापहारिणं मत्वा हन्तुकामोऽन्तिकं ययौ । ततस्तमपि विज्ञाय सखायं पितुरात्मनः ॥३॥

Lord Shiva said to Narad— 'After slaying Marich, when Sri Ram came back to his thatched dwelling, he didn't find Sita there. Being extremely dismayed and overwhelmed by sorrows and anguish, he distressfully started wandering aimlessly in the forest, remembering Sita most fondly and frantically searching for her. Seeing the king of birds Jatau with wings cut-off (2), he (wrongly) guessed that the mighty bird might be the one who had kidnapped her (Sita). So he went near him (Jatau) to kill him to avenge Sita's abduction. There, he found out that Jatau was a friend of his father, Dashrath (3).

न प्राहिणोच्छरं तत्र रामः सत्यपराक्रमः । ततः स उक्त्वा रामाय रावणेन हतां प्रियाम् ॥४॥

परित्यज्य दिवं प्रायात्प्राणान् रामस्य पश्यतः । ततस्तमपि दग्ध्वा च कानने तत्र राघवः ॥५॥

Realising this, the most truthful, steadfast, majestic and powerful Sri Ram did not shoot an arrow at him. Jatau told Sri Ram about the abduction of his beloved Sita by Ravana (4), and then died immediately while Sri Ram watched Jatau as he went to the heaven. Thereafter, Raghav (Sri Ram) himself performed his last rites in the forest (5).

हत्वा कबन्धं प्रययावृष्यमूकं महामते । यत्र वालीभयादास्ते सुग्रीवः सूर्यनन्दनः ॥६॥

हनुमत्प्रमुखैर्वीरैश्चतुर्भिर्मन्त्रिसत्तमैः । तत्र सख्यं स कृत्वा तु सुग्रीवेण महात्मना ॥७॥

निहत्य समरे वीरं वालिनं भीमविक्रमम् । राज्याभिषेचनं चक्रे सुग्रीवस्य महामते ॥८॥

Oh the wise one (Narad)! After killing the demon Kabandh, both the brothers reached Mt. Rishyamook where the Sun God's son Sugriv (6) stayed along with his four chief ministers of whom Hanuman was one, due to the fear of Bali. There, he (Sri Ram) befriended the great soul Sugriv (7).

Oh the wise one (Narad)! Then he (Sri Ram) killed the extremely valiant, strong, fearless and powerful Bali, the elder brother of Sugriv, in battle, and then anointed the latter on the throne (of Kishkindha) (8).

ततो व्यतीत्य वर्षां स स्थित्वा माल्यवति प्रभुः । आनाय्य वानरं सैन्यं विपुलं मुनिसत्तम ॥९॥

सीतान्वेषणकार्यार्थं दूतान् प्रास्थापयद्भुवि । चतुर्दिक्षु ययुस्तेऽपि सीतान्वेषणतत्पराः ॥१०॥

Oh the most exalted sage! After the rainy season, Sugriv summoned the vast army of monkeys on the Malyawan Mountain where Sri Ram had been staying during the intervening period (9).

Then he sent messengers in all the four direction of the earth in search of Sita. Those messengers went to search for her (Sita) everywhere (10).

तत्र याता दिशं यामीं हनूमदङ्गदादयः । जाम्बवत्प्रमुखाश्चापि महाबलपराक्रमाः ॥११॥

ते सम्पातिमुखाच्छ्रुत्वा सविशेषं महामते । समुद्रलङ्घनायाशु मन्त्रयामासुरेव हि ॥१२॥

The most famous, strong, courageous, brave and powerful amongst the monkeys and bears such as Hanuman, Angad and Jamvant etc. went in the south direction (11).

Oh wise sage (Narad)! They heard everything in detail (about the place where Sita was incarcerated at Lanka) from the mouth of Sampati (the brother of Jatayu), and discussed how to cross the ocean (12).

अथर्क्षाधिपतेर्वाक्याद्धनुमान्भीमविक्रमः । उल्लङ्घ्य सागरं घोरं शतयोजनविस्तृतम् ॥१३॥

सायं प्रविश्य लङ्कायां रात्रौ च व्यचरत्पुरीम् । अन्वेषयन्नकजां सप्तरात्राणि मारुतिः ॥१४॥

अशोकवनिकामध्ये तां ददर्श शुभाननाम् । ततश्चिकीर्षुरत्यन्तं दुष्करं कर्म मारुतिः ॥१५॥

Then on the advice of Jamvant, the most valiant, valorous, brave, strong and courageous Hanuman leapt across the ocean which was one hundred Yojans wide (i.e. appx. 800 miles) (13), entered Lanka during the evening hours and roamed around the city during the night in search of Janaki (Sita). The son of the Wind God spent seven consecutive nights searching for her (14).

Then finally he saw the most auspicious Sita in the centre of the Ashok grove. Maruti (Hanuman) decided that he will accomplish the most difficult and daunting task which was at hand (15).

सस्मार पूर्ववृत्तान्तं देव्या युद्धं कृतं पुरा । तत आरुह्य वृक्षाग्रं देव्या मन्दिरमद्भुतम् ॥१६॥

दिदृक्षुर्दिक्षु सर्वत्र स दृष्टिं प्राहिणोत्तदा । तथापश्यत्स ऐशान्यां मन्दिरं सुमनोहरम् ॥१७॥

He recalled the earlier episode when the Goddess had prophesised to him (in his principal form of Shiva, and in the presence of Vishnu and Brahma) about the war. [See Chapter 2, Canto 36, verse nos. 64-66]. Then he climbed atop a tall tree and looked in all the directions in order to have a good bird's eye-view of the majestic temple of the Goddess. He

then saw a beautiful shrine in the east (16-17).

मणिमणिक्करचितं शुद्धहेमपरिष्कृतम् । सिंहध्वजं च तस्याग्रे दृष्ट्वा पवननन्दनः ॥१८॥

चकार निश्चयं देव्या मन्दिरं चैतदेव हि । ततस्तन्मन्दिरद्वारं गत्वाऽपश्यत्सुरेश्वरीम् ॥१९॥

The gold plated beautiful, charming, auspicious and clean shrine was studded with gems and jewels. There was a 'Singhdhwaj' (a high ceremonial standard or flag bearing the mark of the patron deity worshipped in the kingdom) on it. Seeing it, the son of the wind God (Hanuman) (18) determined (deduced) that it was the temple of the Goddess. He went to the main door of the temple and had a divine glimpse of Goddess Sureshwari (meaning the Goddess of the Gods) there (19).

नृत्यन्तीं प्रहसन्तीं च सहितां योगिनीगणैः । तां प्रणम्य महादेवीं प्रावृत्त्य पवनात्मजः ॥२०॥

उवाच त्रिजगद्वन्द्यां भक्त्या परमया युतः ॥२१॥

She was merrily dancing in the shrine along with her companions called Yoginis. The son of the Wind God (Hanuman) went around the Goddess to pay his respects to her and then bowed before her (20).

Then he most humbly said to the Goddess who is worshipped by the three worlds— (21).

हनुमानुवाच

देवी प्रसीद विश्वेशि रामस्यानुचरोऽस्म्यहम् । अन्वेष्टुं जानकीं लक्ष्मीं लङ्कायां समुपागतः ॥२२॥

त्वयैव प्रेरितो विष्णुर्मनुजत्वमुपागमत् । वधार्थं राक्षसेन्द्रस्य रावणस्य दुरात्मनः ॥२३॥

Hanuman said— 'Oh Goddess! Oh Mistress and Goddess of the whole world! Be pleased with me. I am a humble servant (messenger) of Sri Ram and have come to Lanka searching for Janki who is an incarnate Laxmi herself (22).

It is on your inspiration that Vishnu has manifested as Sri Ram with the express purpose of killing the wicked, sinful and evil king of demons named Ravana (23).

[Note--Refer chapter 2, canto 36, verse nos. 61-76.]

शिवोऽहमपि सम्भूय वानरोऽत्र समागतः । कर्तुं रामस्य साहाय्यं तवाज्ञावशतः शिवे ॥२४॥

त्वयैवैतत्पुरा प्रोक्तं लङ्कायामागते त्वयि । संत्यज्य नगरीमेनां प्रस्थास्ये स्वनिवेशनम् ॥२५॥

तस्मात्त्यज पुरीमेनां रावणं सुदुरासदम् । पातयस्व महादेवी रक्ष विश्वं चराचरम् ॥२६॥

Oh Shive (the divine consort of Lord Shiva, i.e. Parvati)! I myself am Shiva, and have manifested myself as a monkey on your advice and orders in order to help Sri Ram on this earth (24).

You had earlier said that when I come to Lanka, you will leave the city and go to your divine abode (at Kailash) (25).

So, oh the great Goddess, you must leave this city forthwith, help in destroying that formidable Ravana, and protect the entire animate as well as the inanimate world (which is being tormented and tyrannised by him)' (26).

[Note :- Please refer Chapter 2, Canto 36, verse nos. 64-66, 88-89 and Chapter 3, Canto 37, verse no. 8.]

श्री देव्युवाच

सीतावमाननेनापि रुष्टाहं वानरर्षभ । लङ्कात्यागमतिं पूर्वमकार्षं पुरुषर्षभ ॥२७॥
त्वद्वक्त्यापेक्षयाद्यापि स्थिताहं रावणालये । त्यजाम्येतां पुरीं लङ्कां त्वयोक्ता कपिपुङ्गव ॥२८॥

The Goddess replied— 'Oh the best amongst monkeys! I am angry and extremely peeved at the way Ravana has insulted (i.e. has been treating) Sita. Oh the best amongst males! I have already decided to abandon Lanka (27).

Oh the most exalted monkey! I have been staying here waiting for the moment when I shall hear this request from you and meet you. Now as per your wishes, I am abandoning Lanka forthwith' (28).

श्री महादेव उवाच

इत्युक्त्वा सा महादेवी लङ्कां त्यक्त्वा महेश्वरी । अन्तर्दधे मुनिश्रेष्ठ सहसा तस्य पश्यतः ॥२९॥
ततो बभञ्ज गहनं राक्षसेन्द्रेण पालितम् । अशोकवृक्षसंघातं मारुतिः क्रोधमूर्च्छितः ॥३०॥

Shiva said to Narad— 'Oh the best amongst sages! Saying this, the great Goddess Maheshwari (literally, the divine consort of Lord Mahesh, i.e. Shiva) vanished from sight immediately even while Hanuman watched (29).

Then, being extremely angry and furious so much so that he literally fainted with anger, Maruti (Hanuman) wrathfully destroyed the Ashok grove that had been well looked after by and was very dear to Ravana (30).

तच्छ्रुत्वा रावणः क्रोधाद्राक्षसान्सुबहूस्तदा । अक्षाहं तनयं चापि प्रेषयामास नारद ॥३१॥
तं जघान महाबाहुर्हनुमान् सुमहाबलः । वृक्षैराताड्य समरे स्वयमुत्पाटितैर्बलात् ॥३२॥

Oh Narad! When the news reached Ravana, he angrily sent his son named Akshay along with many other demons (31).

The most strong, brave, courageous and powerful Hanuman uprooted trees and killed him with them (32).

ततो विरूपं तं कर्तुं रावणो राक्षसाधिपः । लाङ्गूलं वाससा बद्ध्वा दत्त्वा वह्निं स दीपयत् ॥३३॥
ततः स मारुतिर्वीरो वह्निना तेन नारद । लङ्कां दग्ध्वा समुल्लङ्घ्य पुनस्तं सरितां पतिम् ॥३४॥

Thereafter, the king of demons, Ravana, got his (Hanuman's) tail wrapped in cloth and put fire to it in order to deform and punish him (33).

Oh Narad! The most brave Maruti (Hanuman) burnt down Lanka with that ferocious fire, and then crossed the ocean (literally, the Lord of rivers) and came back to this side of the shore (where other monkeys were waiting eagerly for him) (34).

सत्प्राप तीरं यत्रैव सन्ति तेऽप्यङ्गदादयः । ततश्च समुपागम्य जाम्बवत्प्रमुखैर्वृतः ॥३५॥
भुक्त्वा मधुवनं राज्ञो ययौ रामस्य सन्निधिम् । तं दृष्ट्वा रामचन्द्रस्तु दूरतो मुनिसत्तम ॥३६॥
पप्रच्छ जानकीं चाथ हनुमांस्तुष्टमानसः । ततः सर्वं यथावृत्तं राघवाय न्यवेदयत् ॥३७॥

Here, Angad, Jamvant and other brave ones were present (35).

He (Hanuman) refreshed himself by playing and eating in the garden of honey called Madhuvan belonging to the king (Sugriv) before finally presenting himself before

Sri Ram. Oh the most exalted sage (Narad)! Sri Ram saw him from a distance (36) and asked about his meeting with Janki (Sita). Then Hanuman cheerfully told him everything as it happened (37).

ततः स राघवश्चापि समस्तैर्वानरैर्वृतः । दशम्यां शुक्लपक्षस्य श्रावणे मासि निर्ययौ ॥३८॥

वधार्थं राक्षसेन्द्रस्य रावणस्य महामते । स्थितः परिवृतः सर्वैः ससैन्यैर्वानरर्षभैः ॥३९॥

Then on the 10th day of the bright lunar fortnight in the Hindu month of Shrawan (roughly late July-early August, Sri Ram made his departure (for Lanka) along with all other monkeys (38), and oh the wise one (Narad), Sri Ram, together with the excellent and brave monkey army, pitched camp on the shore of the ocean with the purpose of killing Ravana, the king of demons (39).

एतस्मिन्नैव काले तु रावणो राक्षसाधिपः । आहूय मन्त्रिणः सर्वान्मन्त्राय समुपाविशत् ॥४०॥

तत्रोवाच महाबुद्धिः सर्वमन्त्रविदां वरः । विभीषणो दशास्यं तु वारयन् सर्वतो रणे ॥४१॥

Meanwhile, Ravana called all his ministers to a meeting to discuss the matter (40).

There, Vibhishan— who was an expert in the laws of proper conduct and behaviour, was most wise, sagacious and intelligent— tried all the methods he could think of to dissuade the 10-headed one (Ravana) from going to war (which would be ruinous for the demon clan) (41).

सीतां त्यक्तुं मुहुः प्राह राघवस्य पराक्रमम् । तच्छ्रुत्वा रावणः क्रुद्धस्तं पदाऽताडयन्मुने ॥४२॥

ततः क्रुद्ध स्वयं धर्मस्वरूपोऽयं विभीषणः । चतुर्भिर्मन्त्रिभिः प्रायाद्रामचन्द्रस्य सन्निधिम् ॥४३॥

He described the immense glories, majestic powers, famed valour and stupendous prowess and strength of Raghav (Sri Ram) and advised him (Ravana) that Sita should be sent back. Hearing this, Ravana became extremely annoyed and angry. Oh sage (Narad)! He kicked him (Vibhishan) in annoyance and disgust (obviously because Vibhishan was praising his enemy) (42).

After that, Vibhishan— who was like Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, noble and virtuous conduct) personified— became very exasperated and angry himself, and accompanied by four of his ministers (advisors), he came to Sri Ram Chandra (to join him and seek his refuge)' (43).

Thus ends Canto 39 of Devi Puran Mahābhagwat Rāmāyan dealing with the burning of Lanka by Hanuman and Vibhishan joining Sri Ram's camp.

* __* __* __*

Chapter 6; Canto 40

Building of the bridge; Sri Ram's army lands in Lanka; his worship of the Goddess; start of the war, and wounded Ravana's retreat

विभीषणमशेषेण ज्ञात्वा तु शरणार्थिनम् । सख्यं कृत्वा महाबाहुर्लङ्काराज्येऽभ्यषेचयत् ॥१॥

ततस्तितीर्षुर्जलधिं रामस्तं वानराधिपम् । सुग्रीवं वचनं प्राह जिज्ञासुर्बलविक्रमम् ॥२॥

Lord Shiva said to Narad— 'Seeing that Vibhishan has come most sincerely to seek refuge and succour with him, he (Sri Ram) established a cordial and friendly relationship with him. The most valiant, valorous, brave and courageous one with strong arms (i.e. Sri Ram) symbolically anointed him to the throne of Lanka (1).

Then, with the intention of crossing the ocean, Sri Ram enquired of Sugriv about the potentials of his army (2).

स आह भगवंस्त्वं तु मा चिन्ता कर्तुमर्हसि । समुद्रं शोषयिष्यामि सेतुं चोत्पाट्य भूधरान् ॥३॥

रचयिष्ये महासिन्धौ तेन पारं गमिष्यसि । तच्छ्रुत्वा सम्प्रहृष्टात्मा रामः सत्यपराक्रमः ॥४॥

He (Sugriv) replied— 'Oh Lord! You must not worry in this regard. We will dry up (conquer or tame) the ocean by uprooting mountains and constructing a bridge across it. That is, we will throw huge mountains in the ocean and create an artificial dam across it. We shall hammer these mountains and trees into place and walk across this rough structure (3). You can easily get across the great ocean on top of it'. The truly powerful and valiant Sri Ram felt extremely glad when he heard it (4).

चक्रे जलनिधिं घोरं स्वयंस्वीकृतबन्धनम् । ततः सुग्रीववचनादुत्पाट्योत्पाट्य भूधरान् ॥५॥

रचयामास जलधौ सेतुं मयसुतो नलः । आरभ्य पौर्णमास्यां तु श्रावण्यां मुनिसत्तम ॥६॥

यामद्वयेनवै सेतुं सागरे वानरर्षभः । बबन्ध मुनिशार्दूल सर्वलोकसुदुष्करम् ॥७॥

Sri Ram created such a situation that the fierce and uncompromising ocean had to relent and submitted itself to his wishes (i.e. he buckled against the might of Sri Ram and refrained from creating any hindrance in his endeavours; he rather became cooperative) and willingly accepted to be tied (bridged). Thereafter, on the instructions of Sugriv, huge mountains were uprooted and dumped in the ocean (5) by Nal, the son of Maye. Thus was created (constructed) the bridge. Oh the lion amongst sages (i.e. Narad)! The construction was started on the full moon day of the month of Shrawan (roughly late July-early August) (6), and that great and expert monkey completed it in (a record period of) two Prahars (i.e. approximately 6 hours; 1 Prahara = 3 hours) between and sunset. Oh the most superior amongst sages (Narad)! This feat was most impossible for anyone to accomplish and even imagine about (7).

ततस्तु रावणः श्रुत्वा सेतुबन्धं महाम्बुधौ । भयं मोहं च सम्प्राप्य चकम्पे च मुहुर्मुहुः ॥८॥

ततः परिवृतो रामो वानरैश्च महाबलैः । कोटिलक्षैर्महाबाहुर्लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितः ॥९॥

त्रयोदश्यां तु कृष्णायां लङ्कां प्राप महामते । वेष्टिता वानरैर्लङ्का समन्ताद्भीमविक्रमैः ॥१०॥

When Ravana heard about the taming of the ocean by the construction of the bridge across it, he became extremely alarmed, astonished and terrified so much so that he repeatedly shivered and trembled with fear (8).

Meanwhile, surrounded by millions of monkeys and accompanied by Laxman

(9), Sri Ram reached Lanka on the 13th day of the waning phase of the moon (i.e. the dark lunar fortnight in the month of the Hindu month of Bhado). Oh great sage! The most courageous and brave monkeys besieged Lanka from all the sides (10).

जले स्थले च प्राकारे वृक्षेषु गृहमध्यतः । चत्वरेषु गोपुरेषु वनेषूपवनेषु च ॥११॥

नासीद्वानरशून्यं तु स्थलं किञ्चिन्महामते । ततो युयुत्सुर्भगवान् चिन्तयामास चेतसा ॥१२॥

In the water, on the land, ramparts, trees, houses, public squares, entrances/gates, gardens/groves/forests (11) — there was not a single place where one could not find the monkeys. Oh the wise one (Narad)! Then the Lord (i.e. Sri Ram) thought of starting the war (12).

पूजार्थं भगवत्यास्तु लङ्काविजयहेतवे । अकालेऽहं महादेवीं पूजयामि सुरेश्वरीम् ॥१३॥

निद्रिता त्रिजगन्माता साम्प्रतं दक्षिणायने । एवं विचिन्त्य भगवान् रामो नारायणोऽव्ययः ॥१४॥

चकार बुद्धिं तां यष्टुं पितृरूपां सनातनीम् । सैव देवी महामाया पक्षेऽस्मिन् पितृरूपिणी ॥१५॥

The Lord (Sri Ram) decided that in order to get victory over Lanka, he must worship and invoke the great Goddess known as Sureshwari (literally, the Goddess of Gods), but this was not the proper time for this purpose (13).

The reason was that it was the time of Dakshinayan (when the Sun goes to the south of the equator), and the mother of the three worlds is usually sleeping (i.e. taking rest) during this period. Thinking so, Lord Ram— who was an incarnation of the supreme, eternal and infinite Lord Narayan himself (14)— decided to worship that eternal and truthful Shakti in the form of a deified ancestor (i.e. instead of as a cosmic mother and Goddess, Sri Ram worshipped her as a deified spirit of ancestors). The great Goddess called Maha-maya (literally, the great Maya of the Lord personified as the goddess) remains in the form of an ancestral spirit (i.e. spirit of dead ancestors) during this fortnight (of the waning moon of the month of Bhadra. Please also see Chapter 11, Canto 45, verse no. 9) (15).

प्रवृत्तोऽपरपक्षश्च प्रतिपत्तिथिरप्यतः । अद्यारभ्य महादेवीं पितृरूपां जयप्रदाम् ॥१६॥

पार्वणेनैव विधिना यावद्दर्शदिने दिने । सम्पूज्य समरे योत्स्ये शत्रूणां निधनाय वै ॥१७॥

'The dark lunar fortnight of the month (of Bhado) has commenced, and today is the first day of that fortnight. Hence, starting from today, I shall worship the great Goddess Jayprada (literally, the Goddess that provides victory) in the form of a deified forefather (16) for the next fifteen days till the night of the forthcoming dark moon in the properly sanctified and established tradition of worshipping her. After that I shall enter into battle so that the enemy can be conquered and killed' (17).

[Note :- (i) The bridge was constructed in six hours on the full moon night of the Hindu month of Shrawan (verse 6.), then came the month of Bhado because the Hindu lunar calendar ends with a full moon. That is, the construction of the bridge took place on the last day of Shrawan, it being a full moon night. (ii) Sri Ram landed in Lanka on the 13th day of the following dark fortnight, i.e. the 13th day of the month of Bhado which roughly means August-September (verse 10). Hence, Sri Ram stayed on the main land of India for twelve days after the completion of the

bridge. (iii) He decided to worship the Goddess in a deified ancestor form from the day following the completion of the bridge, or the 1st day of the dark fortnight of the month of Bhado and continued to worship her for the next fifteen days till the day of the dark moon (verse 16-17). (iv) Since he landed on the soil of Lanka on the 13th day and finished his worship on the 15th day of commencement (i.e. on dark moon night), therefore he stayed for the next two days more on the soil of Lanka before the commencement of battle. (v) Ravana had fifteen clear days to relent and strike a compromise deal, or strike back as a pre-emptive move, but he didn't do either. The calculation is summarised as follows :-

- | | |
|---|--|
| (a) Bridge constructed in 6 hours— | last day of Shrawan |
| (b) Sri Ram starts worshipping Goddess— | 1 st day of Bhado |
| (c) Sri Ram lands in Lanka— | 13 th day of Bhaod |
| (d) Sri Ram completes the worship of Goddess— | 15 th day of Bhado |
| (e) The battle commences— | night of the dark moon of Bhado i.e. at the end of the 2 nd day of Sri Ram's arrival. |
- (f) Sri Ram stayed on the soil of India on the Northern end of the bridge for 13 days, i.e. from the 1st day till the 13th day of the dark lunar fortnight of Bhado. See also appendix no. 1.]

एवं निश्चित्य मनसा लङ्कायां प्राह सादरः । करिष्ये पार्वणश्राद्धमपराहणेऽद्य भक्तितः ॥१८॥

ततस्तु प्रतियोत्स्यामि समरे राक्षसाधिपम् । तच्छ्रुत्वा सर्व एवाहुर्वानरा रघुवंशजम् ॥१९॥

Deciding thus, Sri Ram (having reached Lanka by this time) announced in Lanka that he would perform the 'sacred Shradh' ceremony with due devotion in the afternoon of that day. [The sacred Shradh ceremony signifies showing respect and giving oblations as well as libations to dead ancestors.] (18)

After that, he would fight the evil king of demons (i.e. Ravana) in the battlefield. Hearing his proclamation, all the monkeys said to him who was born in the clan of Raghu (i.e. to Sri Ram)— (19).

भक्त्या पूजय सद्भावैः पितृन् विधिविदांवर । जयार्थं समरे देव विधानज्ञस्त्वमेव हि ॥२०॥

ततः प्रवृत्ते काले तु रामः सत्यपराक्रमः । चकार पार्वणश्राद्धं देवीं सम्भाव्य चेतसा ॥२१॥

'You must pay your obeisance and worship your deified ancestors with due reverence, honour and devotion so as to obtain victory in the war by getting their blessings. You are wise and expert in all the tenets and procedures for such worship' (20).

Then Sri Ram invoked/remembered the Goddess and completed his sacrificial Shradh ritual in the afternoon hours (i.e. of the 15th day or the last day of the dark lunar fortnight of the month of Bhado) (21).

[Note :- Please also refer Chapter 8, Canto 42, verse nos. 14-33 and appnx. no. 1.]

तस्मिन्नेव दिने युद्धमारब्धं राक्षसैः सह । पश्चिमां दिशामाक्रम्य तमसाप्ते दिवाकरे ॥२२॥

उद्योगो रामचन्द्रस्य रावणस्य च संयुगे । यादृशोऽभूत्तथा कश्चिन्न दृष्टो न श्रुतोऽपि वा ॥२३॥

When the sun had set in the west, his (Sri Ram's) war with the demons started in right earnest that night itself (22).

The gallantry, valour, courage, power, potential, strength, prowess, punch, bravery, diligence, manoeuvrability, war skills and dare-devilry that both Sri Ram and Ravana had exhibited in the war had neither been ever heard of or witnessed by anyone before it (23).

रावणः प्रेषयामास चतुरङ्गबलान्वितम् । अकम्पनं महावीरमक्षौहिण्या तु सेनया ॥२४॥

प्रथमेऽहनि युद्धार्थं तं तस्मिन् दिवसे मुने । मारुतिः समरे क्रुद्धः प्राहिणोद्यमसादनम् ॥२५॥

Ravana sent the most strong demon Akampan to the battlefield along with the four wings of his 'Akshohini' brave and gallant army (अक्षौहिण्या चतुरङ्गबलान्वितम्) (24).

Oh sage! In the 1st day of battle, Maruti (Hanuman) furiously attacked him most angrily and with great force, sending him to the abode of Yam, the patron God of death (i.e. killed him) (25).

[Note :- An Akshohini army is a huge army consisting of 1,09,350 foot soldiers, 65,610 horses, 21,870 chariots and 21,870 elephants.]

एवं भक्त्या राघवस्तु श्राद्धं कृत्वा दिने दिने । प्रीणयन्परमेशानीं पातयामास राक्षसान् ॥२६॥

निहतेऽकम्पनाख्ये तु धूम्राक्षः सेनया वृतः । दशाननाज्ञयाऽऽगत्य प्राकरोद्युद्धमुल्बणम् ॥२७॥

Raghav (Sri Ram) used to worship and do the Shradh ceremony (involving offering of sacrifices, purifying bath called ablution, offering of oblations and libations of water, etc.) of the Goddess daily with due affection, devotion and reverence. This way, he kept the supreme Goddess pleased and favourable, and continued to slay the demons day after day (26).

After the death of Akampan, the demon Dhumrakshra came to the battlefield, accompanied by his army, on the orders of Ravana, and fought most bravely, courageously and fiercely (27).

तं जघान रणे वीरं द्वितीयेऽहनि राघवः । तथान्येषु सुघोरेषु निहतेषु महाहवे ॥२८॥

मातुले राक्षसेन्द्रस्य प्रहस्तो युद्धमाययौ । रात्रौ समभवद्युद्धं तेन सार्धं दुरासदम् ॥२९॥

On the 2nd day of battle, Raghav (Sri Ram) killed that brave demon. In this manner, when the most formidable demons were killed in the horrifying and ferociously fought battle (28), Ravana's maternal uncle named Prahast came to the battlefield. During the night, a fierce battle ensued between them (i.e. between Sri Ram and Prahast) (29).

सुरसुरनराणां च दैत्यानां भयदायकम् । तस्य नादेन घोरेण कम्पितास्त्रिदशेश्वराः ॥३०॥

युद्धसंदर्शनं त्यक्त्वा दिगन्तं समुपागमन् । एवं तमपि दुर्धर्षं तस्मिन् रात्रौ महाबलम् ॥३१॥

समरे पातयामास शेषयामे महामतिः । तच्छ्रुत्वा राक्षसेन्द्रोऽपि रुरोद बहुदुःखितः ॥३२॥

That war was equally frightening and awe-inspiring for the Gods as it was for the demons, Satan, ogres and humans. The thunderous roar of that ferocious demon warrior (Prahast) caused a lot of fear amongst the Gods and they trembled in horror (30).

The Gods stopped watching the proceedings of the battlefield and ran helter-skelter in every direction out of mortal fear. The most strong and valiant demon was killed in battle (by Sri Ram) in the last quarter of that night. When the king of demons (Ravana) heard about it, he was dismayed and became overwhelmed with anguish and sorrows so much so

that he couldn't hold back his tears and wept bitterly and openly (31-32).

तं सान्त्वयन्त्ययौ युद्धे मेघनादः प्रतापवान् । अतर्कितः समागत्य रात्रौ गगनमास्थितः ॥३३॥

घोरेण नागपाशेन स बबन्ध रघूत्तमौ । समस्तैर्वानरैः सार्धं भल्लूकैश्च महामते ॥३४॥

The powerful, strong and famous Meghnad (son of Ravana) consoled him and came out for battle during the night (i.e. the 3rd night) itself (after the death of Prahast). He became invisible and stood in the sky (33).

Oh the wise one (Narad)! He tied all the monkeys and bears as well as the two great Raghav (Sri Ram and Laxman) by the 'Naag-pash' (i.e. a magical weapon whereby the enemy was tied by serpents transformed in the form of magical ropes) (34).

मोहयन्मायया वीरो राक्षसेन्द्रसमो बली । विभीषणः समागत्य ततस्तु रघुनन्दनम् ॥३५॥

बोधयामास रात्रौ स तस्मिन्नेव क्षणे पुनः । ततः प्रबुद्धो भगवान्भीतः परमभक्तितः ॥३६॥

सस्मार देवीं शर्वाणीं महाभयविनाशिनीम् । तत आगत्य गरुडो मोचयामास बन्धनात् ॥३७॥

भक्षन् पाशं पहाघोरं राघवौ सह सैनिकैः ॥३८॥

He (Meghnad) was as strong, powerful and a valiant a warrior as the king of demons (Ravana) himself. He mystified (i.e. stunned, confounded, dazed and overwhelmed) everyone by his maverick tricks. Then Vibhishan came to Raghunandan (Sri Ram) (35) and instantly woke him up from his dazed condition. As soon he (Sri Ram) regained consciousness, he found himself so stunned and confounded that he immediately invoked (and sought help from) Goddess Sharvani— who is the destroyer/eliminator/vanquisher of all fears, no matter how great they were — most reverentially and with due devotion. Then Garuda (the legendary eagle/heron who is the mount of Lord Vishnu) came there instantly (36-37) and quickly gobbled up the great serpents that had been tying Sri Ram and Laxman and their army, thereby setting free the two Raghavs (Sri Ram and Laxman) as well as their army (38).

ततः प्रभाते तच्छ्रुत्वा रावणः स्वयमागतः । अकरोत्तुमुलं युद्धं सर्वलोकभयावहम् ॥३९॥

रावणं समरे वीक्ष्य कालान्तकयमोपमम् । समकम्पन्त सर्वे तु वानरा भयमोहिताः ॥४०॥

अभवत्सुमहद्युद्धं रामेण च महात्मना । तस्मिन्निपातिता वीरा दशकोटिसहस्रशः ॥४१॥

Then in the next morning (4th day), on hearing of the entire episode, Ravana himself came to the battlefield and started a tumultuous, uproarious and no-holds-barred fierce battle which instilled mortal fear of annihilation in the whole world (39).

Seeing Ravana— who resembled the wrathfully fierce Yam (the God of death) at the time of dooms-day— in the battlefield, all the monkeys became terrified and petrified with fear; they trembled with fear and awe (40).

The great Sri Ram fought a most fierce battle with him in which tens of thousands and millions of brave warriors died (41).

अथ तं समरे क्रुद्धो रामो राजीवलोचनः । निक्षिप्य शरजालानि छादयामास वै मुने ॥४२॥

आनीय गिरिश्रृङ्गाणि कोटयो वानरा अपि । चिक्षिपुः समरे तस्य रथोपरि दुरात्मनः ॥४३॥

Oh sage (Narad)! The angry and wrathful Sri Ram, who was lotus-eyed, covered

(shrouded) Ravana with a shower/hail of his arrows in the battlefield (42).

Millions of monkey warriors brought summits of huge mountains and threw them on the chariot of that rascal and evil fellow (Ravana) during the great war (i.e. they pounded him relentlessly with rocks and boulders) (43).

वृक्षैः शालप्रियालाद्यैस्तथान्यैर्वनजैरपि । ताडितः समरे वीरो महापर्वतसंनिभः ॥४४॥
हनूमदङ्गदाद्यैश्च महाबलवलीमुखैः । प्रक्षिप्तैः पर्वतैश्चापि शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ॥४५॥
बभूव रावणो युद्धे विरथो मुनिपुङ्गव ॥४६॥

They (the monkeys) attacked him with huge trees such as Shal, Priyal and other large trees growing in the forest. Ravana looked like a huge, colossus mountain in the battlefield (44).

Being relentlessly pounded and thereby getting gravely wounded by hundreds and thousands of boulders and rocks thrown at him by Hanuman, Angad, Mahabal, Balimukh etc. (45), oh the most exalted sage (Narad), Ravana fell down on the ground from his chariot (46).

प्रहसन्तौ रणे वीरौ चन्द्रसूर्यसमप्रभौ । भ्रातरौ राघवौ संख्ये महाबलपराक्रमौ ॥४७॥
धनुरुद्यम्य वेगेन यमदण्डोपमैः शरैः । छादयामासतुर्वीरौ रावणं युद्धदुर्मदम् ॥४८॥

Glorious and radiant like the sun and the moon, the most strong, powerful, courageous, valiant and valorous Raghav brothers (Sri Ram and Laxman), smilingly and cheerfully (47), raised their bow, and shooting a hail of quick arrows— which resembled the baton of Yam— they covered Ravana, who was hysterical and wild with war-fever, once again with them (48).

कपीनां किलकिलाशब्दैर्धनुषां च विनिःस्वनैः । रक्षसां घोरशब्दैश्च रथनेमिस्वनैरपि ॥४९॥
गजानां बृहितैस्तद्द्रव्याजिनामपि हेषितैः । अकालप्रलयं सर्वे मेनिरे प्राणिनो मुने ॥५०॥

The shrill, bone-chilling chuckle and giggle of monkeys, the fearsome twang of bows, the terrifying roar of demons, the rattling and screeching of chariots, the fierce trumpeting of elephants, and the wild neighing of war horses in the battlefield created a horrifying, blood-cuddling and hair-raising atmosphere. All the creatures thought that it was an untimely dooms-day for the entire creation (49-50).

आच्छादितश्च समभूत्समरे राक्षसाधिपः । प्रक्षिप्तैर्बाणसंघैश्च पर्वतैश्च महत्तरैः ॥५१॥
ततः संत्यज्य समरं रावणो भयविह्वलः । प्रविवेश पुरीं रम्यां संग्रामे क्षतविक्षतः ॥५२॥

The king of demons was literally buried under (or covered by) a blanket of sharp arrows and huge mountains thrown at him (51).

Hence, he was so much terrified, dazed and gravely wounded in the battle that he fled from the battlefield and went back to his charming city (of Lanka)' (52).

Thus ends Canto 40 of Devi Puran Mahābhagwat-Rāmāyan describing the commencement and initial days of war and the retreat of the wounded Ravana.

Chapter 7; Canto 41

Brahma advises Sri Ram to worship the Goddess for victory

श्री महादेव उवाच

एवं पराजितः संख्ये रावणो राक्षसाधिपः । बोधयामास युद्धार्थं कुम्भकर्णं महाबलम् ॥१॥
कोटीनां पञ्चभिर्लक्षै राक्षसैः परिवारितः । स कुम्भकर्णः समरे समसज्जत दुर्जयः ॥२॥

Lord Shiva said to Narad— 'Being defeated at the battle front, the demon king Ravana woke up Kumbhakarn (his brother) from his sleep (1).

Accompanied by five million-million (i.e. 5×10^{12}) demons warriors, Kumbhakarn—who was most formidable and invincible— prepared to enter the battle (2).

एतस्मिन्नन्तरे देवा भीताः सर्वे महामते । मन्त्रणार्थं महाबुद्धिः सर्वलोकेश्वरः प्रभुः ॥३॥
ब्रह्माणमागतं वीक्ष्य सहितं सर्वदैवतैः । सम्पूज्य वचनं प्राह भगवान्युरुषोऽव्ययः ॥४॥

Oh great sage (Narad)! All the Gods became scared and petrified with fear. Then Sri Ram—who was very intelligent and wise, who was the supreme Lord of the world personified, who was eternal, infinite and faultless, and who was an incarnation of the supreme Purush (the male aspect of Nature, or the Viraat Purush who is also known as Lord Vishnu who is the all pervading and all encompassing Lord from whom the whole creation has emerged, in whose body the entire creation is said to reside, and in whom everything would eventually merge at the time of dooms day) — saw that Brahma had come with other Gods to consult with him (about the strategy to be followed now). He (Sri Ram) worshipped Brahma and said— (3-4).

श्री राम उवाच

कथं जयेऽहं संग्रामे राक्षसान्युद्धदुर्मदान् । रावणप्रमुखान्वीरान्महाबलपराक्रमान् ॥५॥
तन्मे वद सुरश्रेष्ठ भयं मे जायते महत् । रावणस्य यथा संख्ये तं बाहुबलविक्रमम् ॥६॥

Sri Ram said— 'How can I get victory over Ravana and other war-hardened chief demon warriors who are very eager for battle and virtually cringing for it. They are war veterans, most valiant and valorous, courageous and fearless, to say the least. Please tell me what to do (5).

Oh the most exalted and senior most amongst the Gods! I am very scared of this prospect, because Ravana is most courageous, brave, strong, powerful, majestic and valiant in this world (6).

अनुभूतोऽस्मि बहुधा जगत्प्लवनकारणम् । तथा कस्यापि नो मन्ये विद्यते भुवनत्रये ॥७॥
साम्प्रतं श्रूयते तस्य भ्राता राक्षसपुङ्गवः । समायास्यति संग्रामे महाबलपराक्रमः ॥८॥

I have repeatedly witnessed and experienced his formidable ability and potentials of being able to crush the world with impunity. There is no other brave and strong warrior in the three worlds who can compare himself with him— this is my belief (7).

It is heard now that his brother (Kumbhakarn), who is the best amongst the de-

mons warriors, and is most valiant, strong, powerful and brave, is coming for battle (8).

कोटीनां पञ्चभिर्लक्षै राक्षसैः परिवारितः । स योत्स्यति मया सार्धं भ्रातुः साहाय्यकारणात् ॥९॥

विभीषणमुखाच्छ्रुत्वा तस्यापि च पराक्रमम् । भीतोऽस्मि साम्प्रतं ब्रूहि यथैतान् समरे जये ॥१०॥

Accompanied by five million-million (5×10^{12}) demon warriors, he will fight with me to help his brother (Ravana) (9).

Hearing about his reputation and formidable strength and valour from Vibhishan, I am feeling scared. Do tell me the means by which I can win these warriors in the battle-field' (10).

श्री महादेव उवाच

इत्युक्तो रामचन्द्रेण ब्रह्मा लोकपितामहः । उवाच सान्त्वयन् रामं सर्वलोकस्य पश्यतः ॥११॥

ब्रह्मोवाच

सर्वं जानासि राजेन्द्र तथापि कमलापते । यत्पृच्छसि जगन्नाथ जयार्थं समरे शृणु ॥१२॥

त्रैलोक्यजननी देवी ब्रह्मरूपा सनातनी । कात्यायनी तवोपास्या महाभयनिवारिणी ॥१३॥

Lord Shiva said (to Narad) — 'Hearing these words of Sri Ram Chandra, the grandfather of the creation, Brahma, reassured Sri Ram and said to him publicly as follows— (11). Brahma said, 'Oh king of kings (i.e. Sri Ram)! Oh Kamlapati (literally, the Lord of Laxmi who is also known as Kamla because she holds a lotus flower in her hand and also stands upon a divine lotus at the time she is worshipped by her devotees)! Oh Jagganath, the Lord of the whole world ! You know everything (because you are omniscient and all-knowing), yet I shall tell you what you have asked me about, i.e. how to obtain victory in the war (12).

You should worship Goddess Katyayani who is the mother of the three worlds (the celestial, the terrestrial, the subterranean worlds), who is an embodiment or image of the dynamic powers of the supreme transcendental almighty Brahm, and who is therefore eternal, infinite, imperishable and truthful. She can eliminate the greatest of fears that haunts anyone from any source whatsoever (13).

जयदा सर्वलोकानां या स्वयं चापराजिता । तां प्रार्थय महाबाहो दुर्गा संकटतारिणीम् ॥१४॥

विना प्रसन्नतां तस्याः समरे शत्रुसूदन । न विजेतुं समर्थोऽसि रावणादीन्महाबलान् ॥१५॥

She remains unconquerable herself and gives victory to all others (who worship her). Oh the most brave one with strong arms (i.e. Sri Ram)! You must pray to Goddess Durga who can relieve all distress, troubles, problems and misfortunes (14).

Oh Shatrushudan, the vanquisher of enemies! Without her grace, benevolence and showing of favour, you shall not be able to get victory over Ravana and other demons in the war (15).

यन्नाम संस्मरन् शम्भुः पिबन् हलाहलं परम् । विजित्य मृत्युं लोकेऽस्मिन्नाम्ना मृत्युञ्जयोऽभवत् ॥१६॥

तां प्रसाद्य रघुश्रेष्ठ जय लङ्कां महामते । दुष्टप्रणाशिनी देव सभापि च जयप्रदा ॥१७॥

स्मर्तव्या पूजितव्या च साम्प्रतं सा त्वया ध्रुवम् । संग्रामे जयलाभाय जगतो रक्षणाय च ॥१८॥

Lord Shiva had remembered (invoked) her divine name and had drunk the most potent and corrosive poison to conquer death, and had survived. That is why he is called 'Mritunjai' (literally, the one who has conquered death) (16).

Oh the best in the clan of Raghu (i.e. Sri Ram)! Oh the great and wise one! You should please her and, thereafter, conquer Lanka. Oh Lord! She is a slayer of wicked and evil fellows, and her companions also provide similar victory (17).

You must certainly worship and invoke her to win the war as well to protect the world from the torments of the demons (18).

चण्डिकायां परा भक्तिर्विद्यते रावणस्य हि । कस्तं विजेतुं शक्तोऽत्र देव्या दृष्टिं विना प्रभो ॥१९॥
उक्तं चापि तयैवैतत्पुरा तुभ्यं महात्मने । समक्षं देवदेवस्य मम चापि महामते ॥२०॥
अपि जानासि तत्सर्वं स्वयं त्वं मधुसूदन । तथापि तव वक्ष्यामि यत्पृष्टो जयकारणम् ॥२१॥

Oh Lord! Ravana is greatly devoted to Goddess Chandika (who is the great goddess of war and one of the fiercest forms of the cosmic Goddess). Without obtaining the blessings and favours (literally, a favourable and benign view or glance) of that great Goddess, who can ever win him in war? (19).

Oh the wise one! She had advised you this very thing in front of me and the Lord of Gods (i.e. Shiva) [See chapter 2, canto 36, verse nos. 73-74.] (20).

Oh Madhusudan (Vishnu; Sri Ram)! You know everything yourself. Still, since you have asked me, I shall tell you the way to obtain victory (in the war against the demon Ravana)' (21).

Thus ends Canto 41 of Devi Puran Mahabhogwat-Ramayan describing Brahma's advice to Sri Ram to worship Goddess Durga in order to obtain victory in war.

*__*__*__*

Chapter 8; Canto 42

Brahma narrates the reason why he lost his fifth head; prayer of the Goddess by Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu

श्री महादेव उवाच

ततः स भवान्ब्रह्मा श्रीरामाय महात्मने ।

संक्षेपात्पूर्ववृत्तान्तं कथितुं सम्प्रचक्रमे ॥१॥

Lord Shiva said to Narad— 'Then Brahma told Sri Ram an earlier episode in brief (1).

ब्रह्मोवाच

भगवन्नस्य दुष्टस्य वधार्थं प्रार्थितो यदा । मया त्वं भगवन् विष्णो नृषु जन्मपरिग्रहे ॥२॥

तदा त्वमस्य रक्षायै देवीं ज्ञात्वा व्यवस्थिताम् । तस्याः सम्प्रार्थनार्थाय कैलासमगमः स्वयम् ॥३॥

अहं तथा महेशश्च सहितौ चागतौ ततः । एतस्यैव वधार्थाय त्वदनुग्रहेतवे ॥४॥

Brahma said— 'Oh Lord! For the express purpose of killing this evil and sinful rascal, I had prayed to you previously in your cosmic form of Lord Vishnu to assume a human form (2).

Then you had realised that the Goddess (Jagdamba, Parvati) was herself protecting him (Ravana). So you had gone to Mt. Kailash (her abode) yourself (3), accompanied by me and Shiva, so that we can jointly request her to find out a way to kill him (4).

[Note--See chapter 2, canto 36, verse nos. 18-42.]

ततस्त्वया महादेवी प्रणिपत्य मुहुर्मुहः । उक्तमेतद्वचो देवि प्रसन्न भव मे शिवे ॥५॥

रावणस्य वधार्थाय मानुषत्वं व्रजाम्यहम् । प्रार्थितस्त्रिदशैः सर्वब्रह्मणा च विशेषतः ॥६॥

You had repeatedly prostrated before the Goddess and had said to her prayerfully— 'Oh Goddess! Be pleased with me (5). I am manifesting myself as a human on the request of all the Gods, and especially Brahma, for the purpose of slaying Ravana (6).

त्वं तस्य वरदा नित्यं भक्तिस्तस्य दृढा त्वयि । तत्कथं पातयिष्यामि समरे तं महाबलम् ॥७॥

इति वाक्यं तथान्यच्च त्वयोक्तं विस्तरं तदा । तच्छ्रुत्वा सा यथा प्राह तच्च राम निबोध मे ॥८॥

He has sincere, steady and unwavering devotion for you. You keep on blessing him daily. Say, how can I kill him in the battle then, because he has got the support of your strength?' (7).

Oh Sri Ram! When you had said so and had narrated in detail many other things to her, she replied to you, and I shall tell you (i.e. remind you) now about what she had said then' (8).

[Note--The entire chapter 2 is dedicated to this topic.]

श्री देव्युवाच

त्वयाहं स्मरणीया तु संग्रामे सर्वदा तदा । यदा योत्स्यसि लङ्केशं त्वं मायामनुजाकृतिः ॥९॥

ततस्त्वां नैव भेत्यन्ति बाणा अपि सुदारुणाः । न भीतिर्भविता वापि दृष्ट्वा तेषां पराक्रमम् ॥१०॥

कृत्वा च विधिवत्पूजामकाले मम तत्र वै । विजेष्यसि रणे वीरं रावणं मत्प्रसादतः ॥११॥

The Goddess said (to Vishnu) — 'When you will assume a human form using the powers of your Maya (delusion-creating powers of the Lord) and fight with the Lord of Lanka (Ravana), you must constantly remember me in the battlefield (9).

As a result, even the most fierce arrows (shot by Ravana) will not be able to harm you, nor would you be afraid by observing the might of the demons (10).

When you worship me there— though it would not be the proper place and time for such worship— you will be able to obtain victory over the brave Ravana in the war by my grace. (11).

ब्रह्मोवाच

तस्माद्राम महाबाहो जेतुकामस्तु रावणम् । स्मरन्नुध्यस्व संग्रामे देवीं तां जयदायिनीम् ॥१२॥

गुरुमस्ते मम पुत्रस्तु वसिष्ठो मुनिसत्तमः । यं मन्त्रं दत्तवांस्तस्यास्तं संस्मृत्य महारणे ॥१३॥

Brahma said (to Sri Ram) — 'Oh the brave and strong-armed one! Therefore, in order to conquer Ravana, you must remember and invoke the Goddess 'Jaiprada' (literally, the

Goddess who bestows victory) while fighting with him (12).

My son, the exalted sage Vashistha, is your Guru (i.e. moral preceptor, teacher, guide). He has provided you with the Goddess' Mantra; you must remember it constantly during the Great War (to ensure victory) (13).

[Note :- Please see Chapter 2, Canto 36, verse nos. 68-70.]

कृत्वा युद्धं राक्षसेन्द्रं सबन्धुं जहि राघव । पूजायै च महादेव्या यतस्व रघुनन्दन ॥१४॥
तस्या विना प्रसादेन न जेष्यसि कथंचन । प्रपृत्ते शुक्लपक्षे तु रावणस्तां सुरेश्वरी ॥१५॥
पूजयेद्यदि नो मृत्युस्तदा तस्य भविष्यति । तस्मादस्मिन्नकालेऽपि तस्यास्तु परिपूजने ॥१६॥
यतस्वैषां राक्षसानां नाशनाय रघूद्वह ॥१७॥

While doing so, you must kill Ravana along with his brother (Kumbhakarn). Oh Raghav, oh Raghunandan! You must make diligent efforts to worship that great Goddess (14), because unless she is pleased with you and turns in your favour (तस्या विना प्रसादेन), you can never win the war at any cost. When the bright lunar fortnight commences and Ravana begins to worship the Goddess Sureshwari (literally, the Goddess of the Gods) (15), then he will not die, no matter how hard you try. Hence, oh the two Raghus (i.e. Sri Ram and Laxman), you must begin to worship her immediately (before Ravana does so), even though it is not the proper time and place for it' (16-17).

श्री महादेव उवाच

इति तस्य वचः श्रुत्वा श्रीरामः प्रत्युवाच तम् ।

विजानन्नपि तत्सर्वं लोकानामुपकारकम् ॥१८॥

Shiva said to Narad— 'Although Sri Ram knew all these things which were meant for the larger interest and welfare of the people and the world, he replied to him (Brahma) thus—' (18).

श्री राम उवाच

सत्यं जयप्रदा देवी सैव साक्षात्परात्परा । स्मर्तव्या पूजितव्या च संग्रामे जयमिच्छता ॥१९॥
किंतु नायं स कालो हि यत्र देवार्चनाविधिः । निद्रिता च महादेवी सम्प्राप्ता त्रिदशेश्वरी ॥२०॥
विशेषतः कृष्णपक्षो नायं शुक्लः पितामह । कथमत्र महादेवीमप्रबुद्धां प्रपूजये ॥२१॥

Sri Ram said (to Brahma) — 'The Goddess is truly eternal, infinite, supreme and transcendental; she is indeed a bestower of victory, and those desirous of victory in the battle must indeed worship and remember her (19).

But this is not the proper time to worship Gods. The great Goddess Trideshwari (i.e. the Goddess of the three worlds) is presently in a sleeping state (20).

Oh grand-father (i.e. Brahma)! This is the dark fortnight and not the bright fortnight of the moon. How can I worship the sleeping Goddess now?' (21).

[Note :- Please see Chapter 6, Canto 40, verse nos. 13-21.]

ब्रह्मोवाच

अहं तां बोधयिष्यामि युद्धे तव जयाय वै । वधाय राक्षसेन्द्रस्यामङ्गलस्य दुरात्मनः ॥२२॥
अकालेऽपि महादेवीं पूजयिष्यसि राघव । विजेष्यसि रणे शत्रून् मा चिन्तां कर्तुमर्हसि ॥२३॥

Brahma replied (to Sri Ram) — 'I shall wake her up for your victory in the war and for the destruction (i.e. defeat and killing) of the king of demons (Ravana) who is a harbinger of inauspiciousness, unrighteousness and misfortunes, collectively called 'Amangal', as much as he is wicked, sinful, pervert and a doer of evil deeds, called a 'Duratma' (22).

Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! You can worship the great Goddess even when the time and circumstance is not favourable (in order to eliminate such a unholy creature who is a burden on the earth). As a result of this worship, you would obtain victory over the enemy in the war. You must not worry on this count' (23).

श्री राम उवाच

भद्रं ब्रह्मन् वसिष्ठस्ते तनयो मे गुरुः स्वयम् । पिता तस्य भवानेव जगतां च पितामहः ॥२४॥

अतस्त्वं म गुरुर्देव पूजयिष्यामि चण्डिकाम् । अहं तु समराशक्तो न स्वयं जेतुमुत्सहे ॥२५॥

Sri Ram said (to Brahma) — 'Oh honourable Brahma! It is the truth that your son Vashistha is my Guru. You are his father, as well as the grandfather (patriarch) of the whole creation (24).

Hence, you are also my Guru (a moral preceptor and guide)! I shall worship Goddess Chandī (as advised by you), for I am unable (or incapable) to go on with the war relying solely upon my own strength, and it is not possible for me to win it alone (25).

किंतु देव्याः प्रसादेन रावणं जेतुमुत्सहे । सोऽपि चेतूपूजयदेवं शुक्लपक्षे सुरेश्वरीम् ॥२६॥

ददाति यदि तस्मै वा सुप्रसन्ना वरं स्वयम् । तत्कथं पातयिष्यामि संग्रामे भीमविक्रमम् ॥२७॥

But I certainly can win victory over Ravana by the kind grace of the Goddess. But, suppose Ravana worships her during the bright fortnight of the moon (26) and the Goddess shows her benevolence on him and blesses him, then how can I kill that most formidable and strong one in the battle?' (27).

ब्रह्मोवाच

तयोक्तं पूर्वमेवैतदवश्यं तव हस्ततः । भविष्यति रणे मृत्युस्तस्य तत्र न संशयः ॥२८॥

त्वयस सम्पूजिता देवी यदि भूयोऽपि तद्वरम् । ददाति समरे राम ततस्ते विजयो ध्रुवम् ॥२९॥

Brahma replied to Sri Ram's enquiry— 'The Goddess had already told us that his death is destined at your hands in the battlefield; there is no doubt about it (28).

Oh Sri Ram! Even after your worshipping her she blesses Ravana, your victory over him is still assured in the war (29).

स पापात्मा यदा सीतां साक्षाल्लक्ष्मीं पतिव्रताम् । रिसुरानयामास तस्या मूर्त्यन्तरं बलात् ॥३०॥

तदा सैव विनाशाय तस्य दुष्टविचेतसः । रुष्टा विपत्स्वरूपेण प्रविवेश पुरीं स्वयम् ॥३१॥

When that pervert, sinful and licentious fellow had forcefully brought the image of Sita—who is an incarnation of Laxmi herself and is most honourable, virtuous and chaste—with amorous and licentious intentions, then she (Goddess Parvati) became very angry, dismayed, peeved, annoyed and wrathful at his sinful behaviour. She entered Lanka in the disguise of troubles, misfortunes, calamities, disasters and adversities to destroy that pervert and sinful rascal. [That is, she entered Lanka to corrupt the wisdom of Ravana, coax

him to become reckless, and incite him to do something which is completely unrighteous and beyond the boundary of accepted and established criterion of civilised, moral and ethical behaviour. This would give her an excuse and opportunity to get rid of him.] (30-31).

यत्र धर्ममतिः शान्तिस्तत्र श्रीः कान्तिरेव च । अधर्मो यत्र सा तत्र विपद्द्रूपा स्वयं शिवा ॥३२॥

अहंकृतिवशाद्यो हि कुरुते धर्महेलनम् । दर्पोपशमनी तस्य सैव देवी महामते ॥३३॥

Wherever there is righteousness, nobility and purity of thoughts, deeds and action, as well as virtuousness and auspiciousness (called 'Dharma'), there is peace, tranquility, happiness and bliss as well as prosperity, wealth, well beings and glories everywhere. But wherever there is the opposite (i.e. prevalence of unrighteousness, evil, sinfulness, perverseness), that Goddess—who is the divine consort of Lord Shiva—herself arrives disguised as 'Vipatti' (that is, as discontent, misfortunes, troubles, calamities, adversities and disasters of all kinds; as corrupted wisdom and intellect leading to misdemeanours, vices, evil deeds, recklessness, haughtiness, pride, belligerence etc.) (32).

Oh the great and wise one (Sri Ram)! Those who are impelled, coaxed and swayed by the negative trait of 'Ahankar', i.e. those who are influenced and controlled by, and allow themselves to be subdued by, such unworthy characteristics as having ego, pride, arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy, vanity etc., are misled into doing things that are deemed to be pervert, unlawful, unrighteous, unethical, immoral and sinful. Then that same Goddess (Parvati or Shiva) crushes their Ahankar to smithereens (because she is the upholder of goodness, righteousness, auspiciousness, and nobility of thought and deeds; she is empowered by the supreme Brahm to enforce law of good conduct and behaviour; she regulates the functioning of this world through exercising her authority judiciously, but without taking any sides or showing any favours whatsoever while regulating the conduct of all; she would not let off the hook corrupt creatures simply because they worship her.) (33).

[Note :- Please see Chapter 2, Canto 36, verse nos. 81-87 and Chapter 13, Canto 47, verse 60-61.]

अत्रैतच्छृणु वक्ष्यामि सेतिहासं रघूद्बह । यथा सम्भाषितं देव्या स्वयमेव ममाग्रतः ॥३४॥

यथा महेश्वरो देवः पञ्चवक्त्रो महामतिः । तथाहमपि पञ्चास्यः पूर्वमासं रघूत्तम ॥३५॥

Oh the two Raghus (i.e. Sri Ram and Laxman)! I shall now narrate to you what the Goddess had told me herself in some previous time. Listen to that history (i.e. episode) (34).

Oh the best amongst the Raghus! Even as Maheshwar (Shiva) is 5-headed, I too had five heads in some earlier time (35).

तत्रैकदा त्वहंकारवशाच्छम्भुमहं पुरा । अवोचमपि संक्रोधसम्भूतं रघुनन्दन ॥३६॥

तच्छ्रुत्वा स महादेवः पञ्चमं मे शिरस्ततः । प्रचिच्छेद महाक्रोधात्तत्क्षणादेव पश्यतः ॥३७॥

Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! Then out of my stupid arrogance, vanity and haughtiness, I had once angrily said something so annoying to Shiva (36) that when he heard it, Mahadev (Shiva) lost his cool and most angrily cut-off my fifth head (37).

ततोऽहं चतुरास्यः सन्नेकदा तां सुरोत्तमाम् । प्रणन्तुं तां पुरं पूर्वमगमं सह विष्णुना ॥३८॥
 महारुद्रस्तु तत्रैव प्रणन्तुं तां महामते । महादुर्गा समायातस्तस्मिन्नेव क्षणे प्रभुः ॥३९॥
 एवं तत्र त्वहं ब्रह्मा महाविष्णुर्महेश्वरः । समवेतास्त्रयो राम महादुर्गासमीपतः ॥४०॥

After that, when I had become 4-headed (as a result of the severance of my fifth head), I once went to pay my obeisance to the Goddess at her abode accompanied by Vishnu (38).

Oh the great and wise one (Sri Ram)! Just at that time, Lord Maharudra (i.e. Shiva in one of his angry forms) too came to bow before the great Goddess known as Mahadurga (39).

Oh Sri Ram! This is how we three— my self, Vishnu and Shiva— had gathered together at a place in the presence of Goddess Mahadurga (40).

एतस्मिन्नेव कालेऽहं तां प्रणम्य महामते । अवोचं त्रिदशेशानीं तस्य शम्भोः समीपतः ॥४१॥
 त्वदनुग्रहदर्पेण मातः शम्भुरयं मम । चिच्छेद पञ्चमं वक्त्रं निगूहणन् सुरसंसदि ॥४२॥

Oh the wise and great one (Sri Ram)! Then I bowed most reverentially before the Goddess of the three worlds and said to her in front of Shiva (41), 'Oh mother! Shambhu (Shiva) is proud of your grace and benevolence upon him so much so that he had arrogantly cut-off my 5th head in the assembly of Gods (42).

मया किमपराद्धं वा कथं वा मच्छिरः शिवः । प्रचिच्छेद जगन्मातस्त्रिदशेश्वरवन्दिते ॥४३॥
 इति मे वचनं श्रुत्वा ततः स जगदम्बिका । मामाह वचनं चेदं सुचारुमुखपङ्कजा ॥४४॥

Oh mother of the three worlds who is worshipped even by the Gods! What was my fault that Shiva has cut-off my head?' (43).

Hearing my plea, the beautiful lotus-faced mother Jagdamba replied— (44).

श्री देव्युवाच

वत्स जानीहि कर्माणि शुभसंसूचकानि च । तथैवाशुभभोगानां सूचकानि च तानि वै ॥४५॥
 शुभानामशुभानां हि कर्मणां पऽसम्भव । फलप्रदाहमेवैका स्वतन्त्रास्मि न चापरः ॥४६॥
 यो यथा कुरुते कर्म शुभं पाप्यशुभं तथा । तथा फलं भवेत्तस्य नान्यथा तु कदाचन ॥४७॥

The Goddess (Jagdamba, Parvati) said to Brahma— 'Oh dear! Learn that actions and deeds are the givers of corresponding good or bad fruits or rewards to all the creatures. [That is, one would get the rewards of what he does; it is an inviolable law of Nature.] (45).

Oh the one who has his origin in the divine lotus (i.e. Brahma)! I am the independent Authority to judge, decide and give the good or bad fruits/reward to the creature depending upon the good or bad deeds/actions respectively done by him. No one else has the authority to do this (i.e. no one can give judgement and nither can anyone else punish or reward anyone for his evil or good deeds, except me) (46).

The good or bad deeds done or actions taken by a person begets similar good or bad fruits/rewards/results which are in consonant with the former. There is no exception to this rule (47).

[Note :- These verses sum up one of the basic tenets of Gita— that is, one gets what one sows, as well as of physics— that is, every action has a corresponding reaction.]

न तत्र विद्यते कश्चिदप्रियो वा प्रियोऽथ वा । अवश्यं स्वकृतं कर्म भुङ्क्ते तत्र न संशयः ॥४८॥
रन्तुं संध्यां स्वतनयां दृष्ट्वा कामेन मोहितः । अकरोद्यदभिप्रायं तस्मात्तत्फलमाप्तवान् ॥४९॥

There is no one who is either dear to me or opposed to me (for I am absolutely neutral and dispassionate towards all). A person always has to suffer the results of his own deeds or actions (whether good or bad). There is no doubt about it (48).

When you saw your daughter Sandhya, you had become lustful and passionate towards her. That is the reason you got this fruit (of severance of the fifth head) as a punishment (49).

शम्भोः क्रोधस्तथान्यच्च निमित्तं केवलं विधे । वस्तुतः कर्मणस्तस्य फलमेतत्सुनिश्चितम् ॥५०॥
यस्तु स्वतनयां दृष्ट्वा क्रियते कामचिन्तनम् । शिरश्छिन्नं भवेत्स्य मदिच्छावशतो विधे ॥५१॥

Oh Brahma, the one who decides the destiny of all (and hence called 'Vidhe')! Shiva's anger and other circumstances are only an excuse (or medium). In fact, this (cutting-off of your head) is certainly due to that single misdeed done by you¹. (50).

Oh Brahma! Anyone who gets licentious and passionate and sexually aroused on seeing his daughter, his head gets smashed due to my wish to punish such people (51).

[Note--¹A bad thought is as good as actually doing the bad deed because it corrupts the mind, and the mind is the deciding Authority for the creatures. If the mind becomes corrupt, it is more dangerous because it would effect not only this one evil deed that the mind was thinking about, but many more others, and even the overall personality of the man, thereby derailing the whole process of righteousness and probity. Since the goddess is responsible for maintaining law and order in the creation, it is her responsibility that a person is punished even for his bad thoughts. The lesson to be learnt here is to guard oneself against allowing any pervert thoughts from entering the mind at all.]

तस्मात्तु ते मयैवैतच्छिरश्छिन्नं महामते । अधिष्ठात्र्या त्रिशूलात् को दोषस्तत्र शिवस्य तु ॥५२॥
ध्रुवमेतद्विजानीहि धर्माधर्मविरोधिनाम् । अहमेव नियन्त्री च नान्योऽस्तीह जगत्त्रये ॥५३॥
ब्रह्मंस्ते पञ्चमं वक्त्रं कल्पितो हव्यवाहनः । तस्मिन्हृते सुराः सर्वे तृप्तिमायान्ति शाश्वतीम् ॥५४॥

Oh the wise one (Brahma)! Hence, me, the 'Adhistratri' (literally, the chief one who is responsible and in-charge, the one Authority who enforces laws, ethics, tenets of morality etc.), has cut-off your head with a trident. What is the fault of Shiva in it? He had simply carried out my orders (52).

Be certain that in all the three worlds, I am the only one responsible to control and regulate (or put a leash upon) those who are opposed to righteousness, morality, ethics, noble and virtuous conduct and behavior, probity and propriety etc. There is no one else accept me to do this, and I do not tolerate impropriety and unethical thought or conduct no matter whosoever the person might be (53).

Oh Brahma! Your 5th mouth (head) has been transformed into the vehicle or me-

dium for accepting the offerings made to the sacred fire during religious sacrifices. By making offerings in it, all the Gods attain true satisfaction (i.e. feel contented and well-fed)' (54).

ब्रह्मोवाच

ततस्तु त्रिजगद्धात्रीं तय एव सुरोत्तमाः ।

प्रणम्य दण्डवद्भूमौ तुष्टुवुर्भक्तिसंयुताः ॥५५॥

Brahma said to Sri Ram— 'Then all the three exalted Gods (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva) fell to the ground before the mother of the three worlds as a mark of respect and reverence. They prayed to her most devotionally' (55).

[Note--The reader would note that on numerous occasions the narration done by an individual cites an earlier event when that same individual had been involved but during the current narration he describes the episode as if that person was someone different. This is clear from this episode, as in many others. Here, Brahma is talking about himself, but the language appears to indicate that this Brahma is another person than the one whose head was cut, because he is talking in the third person. This is a standard pattern adopted in ancient texts to ensure that the narrator is dispassionate in his narrative, and he describes the events as they happened without getting emotionally involved in the effects of his own actions and deeds that had brought about the present development which might put him to shame. This third person format is to ensure neutrality and objectiveness of the narrative.]

ब्रह्माविष्णुशिवा ऊचुः

उत्पन्नाः पुरुषास्त्रयस्तव सुता ब्रह्मेशानारायणा जानीमो महिमानमेव नहि ते प्राचीनमत्यद्भुतम् ।

भूयोऽप्येतदचिन्त्यरूपमहिमैश्वर्यादिभिः प्रोज्झिताः स्तोष्यामः कथमेव देवि जगतां धात्रि प्रसीदेश्वरि ॥५६॥

The Trinity Gods (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) said to Goddess Parvati— 'We three Gods have been born as your children. We do not know about your magnificent majesty, glory, fame, powers, grandeur, greatness and prowess which are ancient, eternal, truthful as well as most strange, stupendous and marvellous. How can we—who are unaware of, or ignorant about your majestic glories and fame etc.— ever be competent to praise you and your holy divine form (i.e. how can we laud, sing and narrate your divine glories and sing devotional hymns in you honour) which are beyond imagination and comprehension. Oh Goddess, the mother of the three worlds! Be pleased, graceful and benevolent on us' (56).

शिव उवाच

संधर्तुं शिरसा सुरेशि पदयो रेणूनहं भक्तितो गङ्गायां न्यपतन् कियन्त इति ते सालोक्यसम्पादिनीः ।

यस्यास्ते पदपङ्क्रेणुमहिमाप्येतादृशस्तां कथं त्वां स्तोष्ये स्वगुणैः प्रपाहि जगतां धात्रि प्रसीदाम्बिके ॥५७॥

Lord Shiva said to the Goddess— 'Oh the Goddess of Gods! I had tried to keep the particles of the holy dust of your divine feet on my head, and in that process, a number of those particles fell in the river Ganges (as it flowed down from my matted lock of hairs on to the ground). As a result, it (river Ganges) acquired the potential of providing liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to the creatures of this world. How can I praise the

one the dust of whose feet has such a great and stupendous magical potential, prowess, glory and majestic powers? Oh mother of the whole world! Oh Ambika (mother)! Rescue this world (from the horrifying torments that it has been suffering at the hands of the cruel and tyrannising demons) by the virtue of your nature of providing succour and solace to those who are distressed and seek your intercession on their behalf. Be pleased with me; be kind and gracious upon me (57).

देवि त्वत्पदपङ्कजं हृदि धृतं तेनैव दत्तेन वै जित्वा मृत्युमशेषलोकभयदं तत्कालकूटं बलात् ।

पीतं यन्नवनीतवत्स हि गले चाद्यापि संराजते दीप्तं जम्बुनिभं सुरेशि जगतां धात्रि प्रसीदाम्बिके ॥५८॥

Oh Goddess! I have enshrined (i.e. installed) your lotus-like august and divine feet in my heart. It is due to its potent and strength that I have forcibly conquered (i.e. triumphed over) death itself, and had been able to drink the uncompromising, corrosive, fierce and scalding poison— which instills horrifying fear of death and destruction in the whole world by its scorching ferocity— like it were harmless liquified butter. That poison called 'Kalkoot' still remains in my throat and has given it a bluish-tinged radiance. Oh Goddess of the Gods, oh mother of the world, oh Ambika ! Be pleased, graceful and benevolent upon me' (58).

विष्णुरुवाच

यत्राब्धौ भुजगेश्वरस्य शिरसि शश्वच्छयिष्येऽम्बिके

लक्ष्मीवाण्यनुमोदितस्तनुघटस्यन्दैकबिन्दूद्भवः ।

सोऽप्यन्तर्न विदंस्तवापि सुतरां त्वां वा शिवे यत्नतः

स्तोष्येऽहं स्वगुणेन पाहि जगतां धात्रि प्रसीदाम्बिके ॥५९॥

Lord Vishnu said to the Goddess— 'Oh Ambika (divine mother)! Oh the divine consort of the Lord of the legendary serpents who are wrapped around his body (i.e. Lord Shiva's wife Parvati)! I am born out of the holy drops seeping out of your divine body. By the grace, permission and at the pleasure of Laxmi and Saraswati, I always keep on reclining (or sleeping) on the legendary Seshnath floating on the cosmic ocean of milk, known as Kshirsagar. I do not know your true and real form, but still I try to sing hymns in your praise and honour according to my abilities. Oh mother of the world, oh Shive (the divine consort of Lord Shiva)! Oh Ambike (divine mother)! You must protect and provide solace and succour to this world out of your natural habit of being benevolent and merciful towards those who depend upon you. Be pleased, graceful and kind upon me (59).

त्वं सूक्ष्मा प्रकृतिः परात्परतरा विश्वैकहेतुः शिवे

त्वां जानन्ति परेण कोऽपि जगतां सृष्ट्यादिशक्त्या अपि ।

त्वं माता जगतां त्रयो ह्यपि सुताः कारुण्यदृष्ट्या

कृपामस्मांस्तु प्रविधाय पाहि जगतां धात्रि प्रसीदाम्बिके ॥६०॥

Oh the divine consort of Lord Shiva! You are the eternal, supreme, infinite and truly beyond comprehension microcosmic Nature (i.e. you are the invisible, imperceptible and subtle pow-

erful cosmic energy) which is responsible for and the only cause of the creation. Those who are erudite, sagacious, wise and knowledgeable understand and realise that you are beyond the forces of creation. You are the mother of whole creation, and we three Gods (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) are also your sons. Be gracious and kind on us by casting your merciful and benevolent glance upon us. Oh mother of the world, oh Ambika! Save and protect the world . Be pleased, graceful and kind upon us' (60).

ब्रह्मोवाच

स्तोत्रं ते न च वेऽपि नापि च परं रूपं न शीलं गुणान्
सम्यग्यच्च कियच्छ्रुतीरितमहं जाने तथान्येऽपि वा ।
तद्वक्त्रैरपि कोटिभिर्बहुयुगं वक्तुं न शक्तः शिवे
पाहि त्वं निजसद्गुणेन जगतां धात्रि प्रसीदाम्बिके ॥६१॥

Then Brahma prayed to the Goddess— 'I do not know either your Stotras (devotional hymns sung in your praise) or your excellent, transcendental, ethereal and supreme form, nor do I know about your glorious virtues and noble and stupendous qualities in their correct, comprehensive, contemporary and full form'. I am only aware of a little of your vast glories and virtues that have been described by the Vedas, and so do others. I am not capable of saying or describing your innumerable and immaculate virtues and qualities even by millions of mouths speaking simultaneously for a long period of time. Oh the divine consort of Shiva! You must save the world and protect it by the virtue of your natural inclination and characteristic habit of doing so. Oh mother of the world, oh Ambika! Be gracious and benevolent upon me' (61).

[Note--'We must note here that Brahma is considered the one who created the Vedas which are repositories of knowledge and wisdom. So, for such a wise one to say that he is not aware the greatness of the Goddess is only to emphasise the fact that Brahma wished to express his humility and submissiveness before the Authority that is more powerful than him. This is because the great goddess represents Brahm himself in all his holistic glories and majestic magnificence. She was no ordinary mother or goddess. This is borne out by the fact that the three Gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, who themselves are considered the most powerful in creation, call themselves as her sons and pray to her most humbly (see verse no.59 and 60).]

श्री महादेव उवाच

इत्यादिस्तुतिवाक्यैस्तां स्तुत्वा नत्वा च भक्तितः । प्रययुस्ते निजं स्थानं ब्रह्माद्या रघुनन्दन ॥६२॥
तयैतदुक्तं राजेन्द्र स्वयमेव ममाग्रतः । अयं चापि सुदुष्टात्मा नैनं सा परिरक्षति ॥६३॥

Lord Shiva said to Narad— 'After that, Brahma told Raghunandan (Sri Ram) that having sung the prayers of that Goddess by the medium of these hymns (verse nos. 56-61) and bowing before her in reverence, those Trinity Gods went to their respective abodes (62).

[Having thus narrated this past episode, Brahma said to Ram--] 'Oh Rajendra (literally, King of kings, i.e. Sri Ram)! She has said herself in front of me (Brahma) that this

fellow (Ravana) is wicked, sinful, pervert and evil-hearted, and that she will not protect him any longer (63).

सीता मन्दोदरीगर्भे सम्भूता चारुरूपिणी । क्षेत्रजा तनयाप्यस्य रावणस्य रघूत्तम ॥६४॥

तां लोभादपहत्यैव रिरंसुः काममोहितः । यदा लङ्कां समायातस्तदा लङ्का गताभवत् ॥६५॥

Oh the most exalted in the clan of Raghus ! The most attractive and charming Sita was born from the womb of Mandodari¹. Hence, she is the deemed-daughter of Ravana (64).

Being under the spell of passion, lust and libido, when he will forcibly bring her to Lanka with licentious intentions of having sex with her, Lanka would be deemed to have been ruined and destroyed at that very instant when such a vile thought occurs in Ravana's mind (even as the head of Brahma was severed when the pervert thought of passion came in his mind while thinking of his own daughter as described in verse nos.49-51) (65).

[Note :- ¹There is a legendary story regarding Sita being the daughter of Mandodari. It has been elaborately described in 'Adbhut Ramayan' by sage Valmiki in its cantos 6 and 8. An English version of this Ramayan by this author has been published separately. Briefly, Ravana extracted the blood of sages, hermits and seers etc. residing in the Dandakaranya forest and collected the blood in a pitcher stored secretly in his palace. Once, when he was involved in his usual sexual dalliances with the ladies of Gods who he had kept in his captivity, his lawful wife Mandodari became sexually aroused so much so that she became mad with heat of passion. But she gravely regretted the fact that her husband finds other ladies more charming than his own wife. So she decided to commit suicide by drinking that stored blood which her husband had warned her was stronger than the strongest of poisons because it was forcibly extracted from enlightened sages and hermits. But as it happened, that blood had been stored in the pitcher that had some milk that had been previously sanctified by invoking Mantras of Goddess Laxmi by a sage couple who had wished to have the goddess as their daughter. Since that milk had been seeded by Mantras of Goddess Laxmi, so when the blood was put in it, the entire liquid became very potent and creative instead of being lethal. When Mandodari drank it, she conceived. Shocked and awed at this unintended development, and the prospects of ignominy when her pregnancy would be discovered especially while her husband was not there for a long time, precisely for a year, she decided to get it aborted. She made a ploy of going on a pilgrimage to Kurushetra, and there aborted the foetus in the same pitcher and buried it in the ground. By and by, when king Janak of Janakpur went there in connection with some religious ceremony and was ploughing the field to sanctify it for the rituals, that pitcher emerged when the ploughshare got stuck in the ground. Janak kept the infant girl as his own daughter. Hence, it was only Mandodari who knew that Sita was her daughter; this fact was never known to Ravana. This is how— so it is said— Sita happened to become Mandodari's daughter, and by extension, of Ravana's.

The word 'Kshetra' (क्षेत्र) means area, territory, realm, district or a place where a

person has his influence. It also means the womb of the woman where the husband is deemed to have exclusive rights over all other males. Since Mandodari was the wife of Ravana, hence he had the exclusive right of way over her sexual organs. So the word 'Kshetraja' (क्षेत्रजा) refers to that exclusivity and the fact that Sita's first conception was in Mandodari's womb— though Ravana was not the biological father— but still she was deemed to be his daughter.

Brahma has cited this incident to assure Sri Ram that notwithstanding Ravana's great devotion for the Goddess, this one error and misdemeanour on his part— to have amorous designs on his deemed daughter— was such an unpardonable sin that the Goddess can never take his side. To bolster his arguments and convince Sri Ram, Brahma has also alluded to the cutting-off of his 5th head by the Goddess because of almost the same reason— he had become sexually aroused on his own daughter Sandhya. She verse nos. 49-54 of this canto.]

जयदा धर्मनिष्ठानां पापिनां नाशकारिणी । एकैव सा श्रेष्ठतमा भवानी भुवनेश्वरी ॥६६॥

तामभ्यर्चतयां नित्यं सत्यं सत्यं रघूत्तम । न विद्यते क्वचिद्भानिः स्वर्गे मर्त्ये रसातले ॥६७॥

The one who gives victory to those who are steady on the path of Dharma (i.e. are scrupulous followers of the tenets of righteousness, probity, propriety, noble and virtuous conduct, morality, ethics, et-al), and crushes (i.e. destroys, eliminates, subdues and nullifies) those who are sinful, evil and pervert, is no one else but 'Bhawani Bhuwaneshwari' (who is no one else but the Goddess Parvati, the divine mother of creation and the consort of Lord Shiva; she is the Goddess and Mistress of the whole world) who is the best amongst the Goddesses and Lords (66).

Oh the most exalted and noblest of the Raghus! Those who offer worship and adore her sincerely daily cannot be harmed in any of the three worlds— whether it is the celestial, the terrestrial or the subterranean worlds. This is the absolute truth (67).

तस्मात्त्यक्त्वा भयं राम विविधैरुपचारकैः । शत्रूणां निधनाकाङ्क्षी समरे शत्रुसूदन ॥६८॥

अकालेऽपि महादेवीं परिपूज्य विधानतः । विजेष्यसि रणे शत्रून्मा चिन्तां कर्तुमर्हसि ॥६९॥

Oh the vanquisher of enemies, Sri Ram! Hence, you must stop worrying and procrastinating any further. You must leave fear aside and adopt all possible strategies to kill the enemy in the battle, and to accomplish it, you must forthwith worship the great Goddess according to the sanctified and established procedure, though it is not the proper time and period to do so (68-69).

धर्मो विजयदस्तत्र देवी यत्र प्रपूजिता । अधर्मो यत्र तत्रैषा विपद्रूपा रघूत्तम ॥७०॥

त्वं शुद्धप्रकृतिः सर्वजगतां हितकारकः । न्यायवर्त्मप्रवृत्तश्च ततस्ते विजयो ध्रुवम् ॥७१॥

Oh the most exalted and noblest of the Raghus! Wherever the Goddess is duly worshipped and honoured, Dharma is on the ascension; it is fortified, fostered and bolstered. As a consequence, it provides victory. Whereas, wherever the opposite prevails, i.e. where there is unrighteousness, sinful conduct and misdemeanours, she comes disguised as corrupted wisdom and intellect leading to misfortunes, calamities, troubles, disasters and ruin for the

perpetrators of such unlawful and unethical way of life (70).

You are of a noble, pure, upright and righteous temperament and natural bearing. You do good for the whole world, you think for the general welfare of all the creatures, and you follow the exemplary path of justice, ethics, morality, propriety and probity. Hence your victory is a foregone conclusion; it is a certainty (71).

तेन यच्च कृतं कर्म शुभं तस्य च यत्फलम् । तद्भक्तं नावशिष्टं तत्किञ्चित्तस्य तु वर्तते ॥७२॥

इदानीं कृतदुष्कर्मफलं तु समुपस्थितम् । तवैव बाणजालेन निहतः सम्पतिष्यति ॥७३॥

तस्माद्राम स्थिरो भूत्वा देवीं सम्पूज्य भक्तितः । घातयिष्यसि लङ्केशं मा चिन्तां कर्तुमर्हसि ॥७४॥

Whatever good and virtuous deeds that Ravana had done, he has already got the good rewards/fruits of it. Nothing is due to him anymore (72).

Presently, the fruits/results of all his evil deeds and sins have ripened and presented themselves for him to suffer from now; these evil consequences of all the unrighteous deeds done by him over time have accumulated and are pending for him to be suffered from; they are long over due for him. Hence, he will fall after being wounded by your arrows in the battlefield (73).

You must steady yourself with a firm resolve and worship the great Goddess with due devotion, and then you shall (be able to) kill the Lord of Lanka (i.e. Ravana). There is nothing in it to worry about' (74).

Thus ends Canto 42 of Devi Puran Mahābhagwat-Rāmāyan describing the prayers of-fered to the Goddess by the trinity Gods, Brahma's narration of some previous episode related to him, and his advise to Sri Ram to worship the Goddess and be certain of victory.

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Chapter 9; Canto 43

**Description of the Goddess as a supreme all-pervading Authority;
Her magnificent abode as well as other divine celestial abodes;
Sri Ram's worship of Mother Goddess**

श्री महादेव उवाच

इत्याकर्ण्य रघुश्रेष्ठो ब्रह्मवक्त्रान्महामुने ।

पुनस्तं परिपप्रच्छ प्रसन्नात्मा प्रसन्नधीः ॥१॥

Shiva said to Narad—'Oh great sage! On hearing what Brahma had said, Sri Ram— who was happy and contented in his mind and heart as well as was wise and intelligent— asked him once again (1).

श्री राम उवाच

ब्रह्मन् विजयदा देवी सैव सत्यं महामते । पूजयिष्यामि तां भक्त्या जयकामो महारणे ॥२॥

इदानीं तु हि सा देवी जयदुर्गा महेश्वरी । कुत्रास्ति कीदृशं रम्यं रूपं तस्या वद प्रभो ॥३॥

Sri Ram said to Brahma— 'Oh the wise Brahma! It is the truth that that great Goddess provides (bestows) victory, and so I shall worship her with due devotion in order to get victory in the Great War (2).

Oh Lord! Now tell me where this great victory-providing Goddess called Durga Maheshwari (i.e. the divine consort of Mahesh or Lord Shiva) is present now, and what is her divine form?' (3).

ब्रह्मोवाच

श्रुणु राजन् प्रवक्ष्यामि स्वयं जानासि यद्यपि । तथापि पावनं पुण्यं श्रोतृणां भाषतां यतः ॥४॥

सर्वगा सर्वसंस्था च विश्वेषां पीठवासिनी । ब्रह्माण्डमध्यसंस्था च तद्बहिर्वासिनी तथा ॥५॥

Brahma replied to Sri Ram— 'Oh king! Listen. Though you know everything yourself, I shall nevertheless tell you about it, because this narration/story is good and auspicious both for the narrator as well as for the listener (4).

That Goddess of the universe moves around everywhere (i.e. she has access to all the places in the world), lives everywhere, resides in all the 'Shakti-peeths' (i.e. special sanctified places of worship and pilgrimage dedicated to the Goddess in her various manifestations), and resides inside as well as outside of the universe, being omnipresent, all-pervading and all-encompassing (5).

स्वर्गे मर्त्ये हिमाद्रौ च कैलासे शिवसन्निधौ । या मूर्तिर्भगवत्यास्तु सैव पौराणिकी मता ॥६॥

ब्रह्माण्डबाह्यसंस्था च या मूर्तिस्तान्त्रिकी परा । सुगोप्या सा महादुर्गा नित्यानन्दमयी तथा ॥७॥

तस्याः स्थानं तु यादृक् च केन वक्तुं प्रशक्यते । किञ्चिद्वक्ष्यामि तद्राम श्रुणुष्ववहितो मम ॥८॥

The divine and holy image/form of the great Goddess that dwells in the heaven, the mortal world, the Himalayan Mountains, as well as in Mt. Kailash in the company of Lord Shiva— this magnificent, enigmatic and mystical image/form of the Goddess is regarded as ancient and it is authenticated by the Purans (6).

The image that is present outside the known and discernible Universe is the excellent 'Tantrik form'¹ of the Goddess. That Goddess Durga, who is always blissful, is very mysterious and beyond the purview of the intelligence to comprehend and fathom (7).

Say, who, under these circumstances, is capable of describing the place where she resides? Still, oh Raghav, I shall try to describe it (to the best of my ability). Listen to what I say attentively (8).

[Note--¹This charming image is most esoteric, mysterious and mystical in form, and it pertains to the *Tantras*. These are religious treatises supposed to be compiled by Lord Shiva, and they contain mystical formulas for attainment of supernatural powers; the occult science and its form of worship.

There are three dimensions of Tantra — (a) Mantra, (b) Yantra and (c) Tantra. Mantra is pure sound, and it consists of various monosyllables and letters pertaining to specific Gods much like alphabets used in algebra and other branches of mathematics as well as in complex physics diagrams to depict various coded information and data. Every sound has an energy wave associated with it which

takes a definite form depending upon the frequency, amplitude and other aspects as proved by an oscilloscope. The seed or root words forming the Mantra are the purest forms of sound. The Yantra is the physical form that these sounds take, and is depicted in the form of a diagram or sketch having various Mantras like a text book of music. Yantra is an instrument to use the Mantra much like the musical instrument is used for the purpose of transforming the magic of sound to produce a captivating and enchanting music which has a therapeutic value as well. Again, a Yantra is like an instrument of physics that uses various components to create a machine that can generate stupendous powers that are beyond the scope of these individual components when they are kept separately. The Yantra is like a figure in geometry that uses lines and different alphabets to mark various parameters, and then uses these parameters to deduce some fundamental truths of science, whether it is in the realm of mathematics or of physics. The Mantras are these coded alphabets, and the Yantra is the sketch that is used to tap their potentials to provide supernatural powers to the person who uses them.

Even as technology of harnessing the stupendous powers of the electron which helps a man in many ways is not possible without the use of an instrument to make it possible, the magnificent and glorious powers of the Mantra in the field of spiritualism cannot be properly tapped for the benefit of an aspirant without the use of such an instrument called a Yantra.

Tantra is therefore the technique, the science, to put to beneficial use the Mantra and the Yantra. The Tantra helps to achieve success in the spiritual realm where the mind cannot physically go; it takes a man beyond his physical capabilities and bestow him with certain mystical and ethereal powers. That is why ancient sages could perform stupendous and seemingly impossible tasks using the various Mantras and Yantras through the technology of the Tantra. Tantra is, therefore, a science in the realm of metaphysics and occult. It must be noted here that there is a subtle difference between self realisation and emancipation of the soul using the technique of Yoga (meditation and contemplation) using the various Mantras to focus attention on the ultimate Truth (Brahm and the pure self as consciousness), and seeking benefits from the same Mantras using the Tantra technique. While the former lays emphasis on detachment from the artificial and deluding world and prepares an aspirant for realising the ultimate Truth about his pure self and its oneness with the Supreme Being, the latter is usually not so focused on self-realisation, and is usually employed by those who rely upon occult practices to achieve great supernatural powers which they can employ to attain great heights of spiritual ecstasy and bliss. But more often than not, such practices lead to fall of the aspirant because they involve many very difficult and unconventional methods and practices that are considered out of bounds by the main stream philosophers of

metaphysics. Such Tantra form of worship is followed usually by the worshippers of different forms of the great Goddesses which form a part of Hindu mythology and mysticism. Besides this, Tantra is used to achieve some worldly successes and accomplish certain worldly objectives as compared to pure metaphysics and meditation that pulls the man away from such considerations.]

पातालभूतलस्वर्गब्रह्मलोकाश्च राघव । ब्रह्माण्डान्तःस्थिताः सर्वे क्रमादूर्ध्वं सुदूरतः ॥९॥

ब्रह्माण्डबाह्यादुचिराद्ब्रह्मलोकात्समुत्थितः । लक्षयोजनमात्रं तु शिवलोको निरामयः ॥१०॥

Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! The netherworld (subterranean world), the terrestrial world, the heaven and the Brahma Lok (residence of Brahma)— they progressively extend out in consecutive layers (i.e. in concentric circles) far deep into the recesses of the boundless universe (9).

Brahma Lok is situated in the outer layer (i.e. on the fringes) of the universe, and further afield from it, at a distance of 1 lakh Yojans (1 Yojan = 8 miles; hence, at a distance of 8 Lakh, or roughly 8 hundred thousand miles), is the Shiva Lok (abode of Shiva) which is faultless, sinless, healthy and divine (10).

यत्र प्रमोदते नित्यं प्रमथैः प्रमथेश्वरः । आद्योऽनिर्वचनीयोऽसौ नित्योत्सवसुसंवृतः ॥११॥

शिवभक्ताश्च ये लोकास्ते तं प्राप्य मनोहरम् । मोदन्ते देवदेवस्य प्रसादात्करुणानिधेः ॥१२॥

There (in Kailash), the Lord of the ‘Parmath’ class of attendants (they are the unconventional attendants of Shiva— phantoms, ghosts, spirits) lives with them. He is always blissful, happy and contented, is eternal, universal and infinite, is without a beginning, and is beyond description and comprehension. He remains in a perpetual rejoicing and cheerful mood as if celebrating ecstasy daily (11).

Those who are the devotees of Lord Shiva attain that Loka (habitat of Shiva) and remain happy, contented and blissful like him due to the grace and kindness of that Lord of Gods (i.e. Shiva) who is a treasury of grace, benevolence, compassion and mercy (12).

लक्षयोजनमात्रं तु तदूर्ध्वं विष्णुलोककः । सार्धं कमलया शङ्खचक्रपद्मगदाधरः ॥१३॥

सोऽप्यनिर्वचनीयो वै लोकः श्रीकमलापतेः । शुद्धज्योतिर्मयो नानारत्नजालविचित्रितः ॥१४॥

1 lakh Yojans (8 hundred thousand miles) higher than the Shiva’s abode is the Vishnu’s Loka where he (Vishnu) resides with Kamla (Laxmi). He holds a conch, a discus, a mace and a divine lotus in his hands (13).

That abode of the Lord of Kamla (i.e. Vishnu) is also beyond description. It is illuminated by a magnificently glorious and divine light even as it is adorned by a spectacular array of different types of gems or jewels (14).

विष्णुभक्तिरता ये च देवगन्धर्वकिन्नरेः । सालोक्यं समनुप्राप्तास्ते तु विष्णुप्रभावतः ॥१५॥

मोदन्ते नगरे तत्र नित्यं मुदितमानसाः । द्वारसंरक्षको यत्र गरुडः पतगाधिपः ॥१६॥

Those who are ardently devoted to Lord Vishnu obtain closeness with him due to his grace upon them, and they live in his abode (15) along with (or in the company of) other Gods, Gandharvas (celestial musicians; semi gods) and Kinnars (semi gods with the head

of a horse; celestial singers and dancers) most cheerfully. The king of birds known as Garuda (the legendary eagle, heron) is the door-keeper of Lord Vishnu (16).

शम्भुलोकस्य वामे तु गौरीलोको मनोरमः । विचित्रमणिमाणिक्यसमूहैरतिशोभितः ॥१७॥

तत्र या वैदिकी मूर्तिर्देव्या दशभुजापरा । अतसीकुसुमाभासा सिंहपृष्ठनिषेदुषी ॥१८॥

To the left of the Shiva's abode is the most pleasant and enchanting 'Gauri Loka', which is adorned with a large treasure-trove of strange and magnificent gems such as rubies etc. (17).

The image or form of the Goddess that is present there, and which is proclaimed and sanctified by the Vedas, has ten arms. It is like the beautiful flower of the linseed plant, and mounts the back of a lion (18).

समास्ते मन्दिर रम्ये षोडशद्वारशोभिते । विचित्ररत्नवत्स्तम्भे पताकाभिरलङ्किते ॥१९॥

स्तुवद्भिः सर्वदा देवमुनीन्द्रैरतिशोभिते । अनन्तचेटिकावृन्दैर्भैरवैश्चैव रक्षिते ॥२०॥

ब्रह्माण्डवासिभिः सर्वैर्ब्रह्माद्यैर्जगदम्बिका । पूज्यते समुपागत्य शम्भुना विष्णुना तथा ॥२१॥

She is present in a magnificent and charming temple having sixteen doors (gates). Its pillars are studded with various precious gems, and it has buntings, flags and standards fluttering atop it (19).

It is always (i.e. at all times) attended by different Gods and sages singing hymns in the praise of the great Goddess. It is protected by numerous female attendants (called Bhairivis who are attendants of Parvati) and Bhairavs (the male attendants of Shiva) (20).

All the residents of 'Brahmaand' (the whole universe), including Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu and other Gods, come there to worship her (21).

सर्वैर्कृण्ठलोकैश्च शुद्धज्योतिर्मयप्रभे । गोलोके राधया यत्र कृष्णो विहरते प्रभुः ॥२२॥

विचित्ररत्नसंनद्धपुरे कल्पद्रुमावृते । ब्रह्मर्षिवेदध्वनिभिः परितः प्रतिनादिते ॥२३॥

रत्नस्तम्भसमुद्दीप्ते मन्दिरे भगवान् स्वयम् । आत्मेच्छां रमते देव्या राधया द्विभुजो हरिः ॥२४॥

Better and more magnificent than all the 'Brahma Lokas' put together, endowed with a divine ethereal illumination, most marvelous, glorious and pure is the 'Goloka' where Sri Krishna resides with Radha (22).

It is endowed with an excellent treasure of gems, is covered with Kalpa Trees (the evergreen celestial tree of Gods), and it reverberates with the hymns of the Vedas being chanted by 'Brahma Rishis' (those exalted, self-realised and enlightened sages and seers who have acquired the higher status of Brahma compared to ordinary, mediocre sages and seers) (23).

In that abode, in a temple of gem-studded pillars, the 2-armed Hari (i.e. Sri Krishna) resides with Goddess Radha (his divine partner) as per his own wish (24).

तत ऊर्ध्वं रघुश्रेष्ठ पञ्चाशत्कोटियोजनम् । स्थानमस्ति महादेव्या यत्र देवी सुगोपिता ॥२५॥

यत्कलाकोटिकोट्यांशा राधा कृष्णस्य गेहिनी । स्वयं विहरते ब्रह्मविष्णुरुद्रादिदुर्लभा ॥२६॥

Oh the most exalted and noble among the Raghus (i.e. Sri Ram)! Fifty crore Yojans above

it (1 crore = 10 million; 1 Yojan = 8 miles) is the divine abode of the great Goddess where she resides most secretly (25).

Even Radha, the divine partner of Krishna, represents only a million-millionth fraction of the Goddess' full glory and divine form. The Goddess— who is inaccessible and rare even for the Gods such as Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra (Shiva)— lives there all by herself (26).

वेदागमस्मृतिषु यत्परिपूर्णमेकं वेदान्तकादिविधेषु च दर्शनेषु ।

ब्रह्मेतिनिश्चितमनेकविधप्रमाणैः साक्षात् तद्भगवती खलु सैव नित्या ॥२७॥

The supreme, infinite, complete, unique and absolute transcendental Brahm, which is proved beyond doubt by various logics and proofs by the Vedas, Agams, Smritis and Vedanta (i.e. by all the holy scriptures of ancient origin) in their elaborate and voluminous philosophical treatises and the various tenets and proclamations contained therein, is no one else but the truthful, eternal and infinite Goddess Bhagwati herself. [That is, Brahm and Bhagwati are synonymous with each other; Brahm and Bhagwati are but two names of the same divine entity.] (27).

नित्यातिसौख्यविरहाखिलनित्यदेहा विश्वाश्रया रघुपते परमापि सैव ।

तस्याः पदाम्बुजनखट्वृतिमेव सर्वे नानाकठोरतपसा परिलोकयन्ति ॥२८॥

Oh Lord of the Raghus (i.e. Sri Ram)! She is eternal, truthful and infinite, a provider of bliss, peace and happiness, a resident of lonely, secluded, calm and serene places, and is universally present in all the bodies of the creatures in this creation. She is the refuge and succour of the world as well as is the supreme and cosmic energy personified. All people who do severe Tapa (i.e. who observe severe austerities and penances) have a chance to get a divine glimpse of the brilliant and holy dazzling illumination emanating from the august toe-nails of her divine lotus-like feet (and radiating everywhere in all the directions) (28).

ध्यायन्ति चानिशमहोऽखिलयोगवन्द्यां तद्ब्रह्मचाकृतिविहीनमपि बुवन्ति ।

तस्या निजांशजनितस्य महेश्वरस्य विष्णोश्च यत्परिहितं श्रुतिभिश्च तत्त्वम् ॥२९॥

तत्स्वांशजत्वविषया खलु तद्विराजन्

पारं परं रघुपते न पुनस्तु साक्षात् ॥३०॥

It is a great wonder that the Goddess, whose manifested visible form is regularly worshipped and meditated upon by various means by Yogis (ascetics), is also known as the unmanifested, unqualified and attributeless supreme transcendental Brahm. The Gods Vishnu and Shiva who have been mentioned in the 'Srutis' (Vedas) are also born out of a minute fraction of her (divine, cosmic) form. This is also a great mystery (29).

Oh Raghupati (Sri Ram)! All this (i.e. the birth of Gods and other such concepts) is a part of horary tradition; it is not the essential and absolute truth as it stands¹ (30).

[Note--¹That is, the idea of Gods taking birth from different sources, and the very idea itself, is a part of Puranic folklore. There are eighteen major Purans and as many sub-Purans, and they differ in details and depiction of mythological events.

The indisputable facts have been interpreted in different ways by the different Purāns and Itihāsas of Hindu mythology. Their depiction of reality varies, but they essentially say the same thing. It is because of their varying presentation of facts from different angles that so much dichotomy exists in Hinduism. The Upanishads are considered the best guides in spiritual matters because they speak in a universal language shorn of confusion and doubts. Basically the Upanishads stress that there is nothing true but Brahm, and what ever that exists, including the Gods, are nothing but the same non-dual Brahm revealed in those forms. Therefore, whether these Gods are known by so many names, and whether they are to be regarded as males or females, is inconsequential as far as their basic and fundamental essence is concerned--and it is Brahm. See the following verses in this connection.]

यथाब्धिसंगतागङ्गा भिद्यते न समुद्रतः । तथा ब्रह्मांशजातास्ते भिद्यन्ते ब्रह्मणोऽपि न ॥३१॥

सैव संजायते विश्वं सैव सम्पालयत्यपि । सैव संहरते प्रान्ते नान्यत्तत्र तु कारणम् ॥३२॥

यथा कृत्रिमहस्त्यादिः परिस्पन्दादिहेतुना । प्राधान्यात्कुहकस्यैव तथा तस्याश्च हेतुता ॥३३॥

Even as the river Ganges cannot be separated from the ocean after it merges with it (i.e. falls into it), the various Gods such as Brahma etc who emerged out of the supreme Brahm cannot be separated from the latter. [That is, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and other Gods are synonymous with each other and indistinguishable from the supreme Brahm from whom they have emerged. In fact, they are but the same Brahm revealed in their forms.](31).

She (the Goddess) reveals herself in the form of the world; she sustains it and, in the end, she concludes it. There is no other reason or cause for this to happen (32).

Even as artificial wooden elephants etc. (e.g. toys and puppets) are able to show movement only because of some magical charm or deft manipulation by the artful player or puppeteer, all the efforts of this basically inanimate, inert and inane world are actually due to the wishes and efforts made by her. [In other words, it is the Goddess who is the very cause of all the signs of activity, life and animation in this world; the creature moves and does so many formidable deeds in this world because it is empowered by the great Goddess who instills life and energy in it and enables it to act and live in the way it does. The Goddess is the powerhouse and the driving force in this creation. Even the Gods carry out their duties under the guidance of and as authorised by the Goddess.] (33).

[Note :- Verse nos. 29-32 essentially mean that since Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh and other Gods are various manifestations of the same Brahm in his myriad forms, there is no difference between them and the Goddess simply because the Goddess is Brahm personified. Since the Goddess is no one else but the supreme Brahm in his ethereal form as the divine cosmic energy as well as the powers of creation and its control personified, it follows that all the Gods are also synonymous with the Goddess.]

ये तु तामदिर्गम्यां सर्वेषां मूलकारणम् । न जानन्ति महामोहात्तत्तद्ब्रह्मादिदेवताम् ॥३४॥

सृष्ट्यादिहेतुं जानन्ति प्राधान्याद्रघुनन्दन । यथा घटस्य हेतुं तं कुलालमपहाय वै ॥३५॥

Those who are entangled by the great deluding dragnet of ignorance do not know that Goddess Durga is the personification of the most difficult to understand, most mysterious, most enigmatic and the supreme transcendental entity known as Brahm. She is the Lord and the root/basic cause for the origin of the Gods such as Brahma (the creator) etc. (34).

Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! Such ignorant persons think that Brahma and other Gods are the creators and progenitors (as well as sustainers, protectors, nourishers or annihilators) of the creation, and that they are the chief ones in the entire creation. Even as foolish people forget about the potter who has moulded the mud or clay pitcher— (35).

प्राधान्यात्कल्प्यते दोषाद्दटादिषु विमूढधीः । तथैवान्यत्रसृष्ट्यादिहेतुतायाश्च कल्पना ॥३६॥

प्राधान्येन रघुश्रेष्ठ मुग्धानामिह मायया । जगदाधारभूता या सर्वरक्षणकारिणी ॥३७॥

— into its shape and search for the essential cause of the pitcher's existence in the mud or clay, chalk, water etc. (which are the ingredients used to make it but will be useless until the potter uses them deftly and skillfully to mould the pitcher out of them), oh the most exalted and noble Raghu (i.e. Sri Ram), such low-witted and ignorant ones try to search for the cause of the origin, sustenance and conclusion of the world somewhere else (other than the Goddess) because they are under the spell of Maya (delusions). The Goddess, in fact, is the essential and basic support and cause of the whole world; it is she who gives it rest and succour; and it is she who protects it as well (36-37).

परमा मोक्षदा सैव मोहबन्धप्रवर्तिनी । सैव सिन्धौ निमग्नस्य विष्णोः संरक्षणाय वै ॥३८॥

वटपत्रमयी भूत्वा तं दधार महाम्भसि । सैव चैतन्यरूपा च तथा च रहितं जगत् ॥३९॥

विभाति शववत्सर्वं तद्युक्तं च रघूद्बह । चैतन्यं समवाप्नोति स्वयन्त्रं यन्त्रिणा यथा ॥४०॥

The one who provides the best and the most exalted stature that the soul of the creature can expect to find, a state called 'Moksha' (i.e. deliverance from the cycle of the birth and death; emancipation and salvation) also entangles one in the knot or snare of 'Moha' (delusions, hallucinations, infatuations, worldly attachments and attractions etc.). She had protected Vishnu who was being drowned in the legendary ocean (38) by assuming the form of a large leaf of the Banyan tree upon which the Lord floated in an infant form during the great deluge. She is an embodiment (or an image) of pure, cosmic consciousness. Without her, all the world (39) appears to be lifeless and inane like a dead body. Oh Raghudwaha (i.e. Sri Ram and Laxman; literally, the two sons of the Raghus's clan)! This world looks infused and injected with life just like a toy (or an instrument) becoming active when its player (or operator) makes efforts to activate it or move it. Left to itself, the toy is lifeless and useless as well as unattractive and worthless (40).

सैव कृतेच्छया नित्यं लीलया परमं शिवम् । स्वमूर्त्यन्तरमेवैका स्वस्मिन् विहरते सदा ॥४१॥

सैव दुर्गतिमापन्नान्निस्तारयति दुर्गतान् । तस्मात्सा प्रोच्यते लोके दुर्गा दुर्गतिनाशिनी ॥४२॥

That Goddess manifests herself as Lord Shiva using her mysterious, infinite, supreme maverick and cosmic powers out of her own free will. She always, in the form of Shiva, sportfully roams about accompanying herself. [That is, there is no duality between Shiva and Parvati; both are the same. So when the Goddess moves around in the company of

Shiva, she is actually, and fantastically, accompanying her own self. This seems incredulous on the face of it, but it must be remembered that we are not dealing with matters physical and gross that can be explained on physical plane alone. The Goddess and Shiva are the two sides of the same divinity; they represent the two aspects of Brahm--one is the creative and regulating aspect as represented by the Goddess, while the other is the conclusion aspect as well as the philosophical aspect of renunciation, dispassion and Yogic trance represented by Lord Shiva.] (41).

That Goddess is called Durga because she rescues (i.e. provides solace and succour) to those who are overwhelmed by and subjected to the horrors of formidable and most intractable of misfortunes, miseries, distresses and troubles of all kinds. She destroys or removes those troubles, misfortunes and miseries that torment the creature, and hence is known as Durga (42).

मन्दभाग्योऽपि संस्मृत्य तस्या नामवराक्षरम् । सौभाग्यं समवाप्नोति तस्मात्सा परमेश्वरी ॥४३॥

मन्दभाग्यपरित्रात्री प्रोच्यते वेदवादिभिः । सैव देवी परा विद्या लोकानां रघुनन्दन ॥४४॥

चतुर्वर्गप्रदा सर्वविपक्षक्षयकारिणी । श्रृणु संकीर्तये वत्स स्थानं तस्यास्तु यादृशम् ॥४५॥

Even those who have a miserable luck and face adversities can obtain good fortunes and favourable circumstances by remembering the excellent alphabets (or syllables) of the Goddess' holy name. That is why she is also called 'Permeshwari' (the supreme Goddess of the world, because only the name of the supreme Lord has the potential to bestow such benefits upon the devotee) (43).

According to those who are expert in the Vedas, she is the one who can liberate or give succour and solace to those who are not so fortunate and are under the effect of bad times. Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! That Goddess is the supreme transcendental knowledge personified (44).

She bestows the four fruits or rewards¹ to the creature for all the efforts made by it. She removes or destroys all oppositions and obstacles. Oh dear! I shall describe to you her lavish, divine and magnificent abode in detail. Listen carefully (45).

[Note--¹The four fruits are the rewards that the creature gets for being righteous, noble and virtuous. These are the following— (a) 'Artha'— worldly wealth, prosperity, well-being; (b) 'Dharma'—the virtues of nobility and righteousness, of probity and propriety of thoughts and actions, and of general virtuousness and goodness; (c) 'Kaam'— fulfilment of desires, passions and worldly wishes, and (d) 'Moksha'— emancipation and salvation; liberation and deliverance of the soul from this mundane and entrapping deluding world.]

रत्नद्वीपं महाबाहो सुधासागरवेष्टितम् । कल्पद्रुमसमाकीर्णललितं चारुहाटकैः ॥४६॥

वसन्तः सर्वदा तत्र नान्यर्तुर्वर्तते सदा । नदी त्रिपथगा तत्र सुखाम्बुरूपधारिणी ॥४७॥

Oh the brave one with strong arms! Her gorgeous abode is like a magnificent island made up of fabulous jewels and surrounded by an ocean of 'Amrit' (elixir of life; ambrosia of eternity). It is adorned with 'Kalpa Trees'¹ and beautiful market places

(46).

The season of 'Basant' (spring) prevails the whole year round; no other season goes there. The holy river Ganges continuously flows there with its life-giving water providing happiness and joy (47).

[Note--1Kalpa Tree--It is the evergreen tree of the Gods. It is said to possess mystical powers and can bestow all that is desired by an aspirant or seeker. The Botanical name of the Kalpa Tree is Adansonis Digitta ; it is also called 'Parijat' meaning 'descended from the sea', and 'Harsingar' meaning 'the decoration of the Gods, especially Lord Hari'. The English name of it is Coral Jasmine; in Latin it is called Nyctanthes Arbor Tristis (nyctanthes means the night flower, while arbor tristis means the sad tree). Its flower is said to be worn by the Gods. The orange colour of the flower is used for dying silk and cotton, a practice originating with Buddhist monks. According to legends, it was produced during the churning of the ocean for the search of Amrit, or the ambrosia of eternity and bliss, by the Demons and the Gods. The king of the Gods, Indra, took it away and planted it in his capital at Amravati. According to another legend (in Vishnu Puran), a princess named Parijat fell in love with the Sun God and followed him throughout the day. As night approached, the Sun became disenchanted with her and did not like her overtures any longer. Disillusioned and despaired, she died, and a tree grew up from the ashes at the site of her funeral pyre. The flower of this tree could not bear the sight of the Sun, and therefore it blooms during the night, and with the crack of dawn, it falls and dies.]

नानामणिभास्त्र पक्षिणश्चारुनिःस्वनाः । देवांशा असुरास्ते तु पुण्यात्मानो महामते ॥४८॥

गायन्ति सर्वदा देवीगुणवेदाभिभाषितम् । कालोचितेन रागेण मधुरध्वनिभिर्मुदा ॥४९॥

सुगन्धः सर्वदा वाति वायुर्दक्षिणसम्भवः । मन्दं मन्दं रघुश्रेष्ठ परमाह्लाददायकः ॥५०॥

Oh the great and wise one (i.e. Sri Ram)! In the hallowed portals of her divine abode, numerous fascinating birds— which appear like multicoloured, glittering gems moulded into the shape of a bird— chirp and frolic around sweetly and enchantingly. Virtuous, righteous and noble souls who are born out of the fraction of different Gods (i.e. are their offspring) as well as the non-Gods (i.e. the various semi gods and other souls such as demons who, though they have taken birth as demons, have changed themselves from being cruel and unrighteous to being merciful and noble) too sing the magnificent glories and noble virtues of the Goddess as described in the Vedas in a sweet, lyrical and melodious voice, from time to time, with great delight and enthusiasm (48-49).

Oh the most exalted and noblest of the Raghus (i.e. Sri Ram)! A sweet, pleasant, fragrant and cool breeze arising from the Malay Mountain blows softly and constantly there (50).

भवानीलोकसंस्थानमेतत्पुण्यानुसारिणः । सालोक्यं समनुप्राप्ताः सन्ति ते तत्र देहिनः ॥५१॥

नित्यानन्दमयास्ते तु नित्यविज्ञानशालिनः । तेषां देवीसमा नार्यः पुमांसो भैरवोपमाः ॥५२॥

सर्वेषां मन्दिरं चारुरत्नहेमपरिष्कृतम् । सुरम्यरत्नजालैस्तु रचितैस्तोरणैरलम् ॥५३॥

Only those people who have done relevant good and virtuous deeds which make them eligible to reside in her divine abode close to her, are able to find a dwelling in that magnificent abode of the Goddess known as Bhawani. This is called the 'Salokya' form of deliverance for the creature (whereby it finds closeness to its chosen deity by being able to reside close in the deity's proximity) (51).

Such people (souls) are always happy and blissful as well as enlightened and wise. The female citizens (of her abode) are like the Goddess herself, while the males are like 'Bhairavs' (the husband of the Goddess; a form of Lord Shiva) (52).

The dwellings of all the residents of the Devi's abode are decorated with nets or meshes studded with attractive gems of various kinds. They are adorned with various golden hangings made up of stringed gems as well as by many other varieties of festoons and buntings (53).

यैर्गीतनृत्यवाद्यैश्च तोषिता जगदम्बिका । ते तत्स्थानमनुप्राप्य नित्यं मुदितमानसाः ॥५४॥
गायन्ति चैव नृत्यन्ति वादयन्ति समुत्सुकाः । एवमानन्दसंदोहमयं तद्रघुनन्दन ॥५५॥
भगवन् भगवत्यास्तु वाचातीतं रघूद्भव । तत्र देव्या पुरं चित्रं रत्नप्राकारतोरणम् ॥५६॥

Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! Those who have pleased the Goddess by their melodious rendering of devotional songs sung in her honour, to the accompaniment of joyous dancing and the playing of different musical instruments, attain her abode, and they always remain cheerful and happy, dancing and singing merrily there (54-55).

Oh Raghudwaha (i.e. the two sons of king Raghu's clan)! All of them are treasures of happiness and joy. Full of gem-studded gates and arches, that strange and fantastic

abode of the Goddess is most magnificent and beyond any description (56).

दीप्तं हि चन्द्रकान्त्यादिमणिभिः कौस्तुभैरलम् । चतुर्दिक्षु चतुर्द्वारं भैरवरूपलक्षितम् ॥५७॥
रत्नदण्डधरैः शूलधारिभिर्भीमलोचनैः । भैरव्यः शतशस्तत्र द्वाररक्षणतत्पराः ॥५८॥

It is illuminated by the light emanating from various types of glittering gems such as 'Chandrakant and Kaustav' etc. It has four gates in the four directions where stern-looking 'Bhairavs' (a fierce form of Lord Shiva's attendants) are stationed to guard it (57).

These guards have fierce-looking and awe-inspiring eyes, hold gem-studded batons and spears, are fully armed with various arms and armaments, and they are always eager and vigilant to protect the entrance of the hallowed portals of her abode (58).

कुर्वन्त्यो गल्लवाद्यानि धावन्त्यो दण्डपाणयः । दोधूयमाना विविधाः पताकास्तत्र राघव ॥५९॥
ध्वजाश्चापि मनोज्ञाश्च विराजन्ते सुनिर्मलाः । तन्मध्ये सन्ति चित्राणि चत्वरणि बहूनि च ॥६०॥

Oh Raghav! Besides them, there are hundreds of female Bhairavis who run hither and thither with batons in their hands and making horrible bone-chilling sounds through their throats. Magnificent and pleasant looking flags and banners bearing the ensignia of the Goddess adorn that place (i.e. the entrance gates). In the centre of the city are many beautiful platforms or public squares (59-60).

प्रासादैर्वेष्टितान्येव तत्रापि द्वारपालकाः । मध्ये त्वन्तःपुरं देव्यास्तत्र द्वारि गणधिपः ॥६१॥

षडाननश्च देव्यास्तौ पुत्रौ रघुकुलोद्भव । इच्छन्तौ दर्शनं देव्यास्तत्र ध्यानपरायणौ ॥६२॥

Those platforms (or city squares) are surrounded by tall and elegant buildings. Guards are positioned on those tall buildings as well. In the center of all this is the palace of the Goddess herself. Oh the rising sun of the Raghu's clan (i.e. Sri Ram)! The commander of these guards at the gates are the Goddess' two sons— Ganesh ¹(also known as Vinayak) and Shadaanan ² (also known as Kartikeya). They are engrossed in concentrating on her form (i.e. they are remembering their mother in deep meditation as the supreme Brahm personified) with a desire to have her 'Darshan' (divine, holy and august sight) (61-62).

[Note--¹'Lord Ganesh' is also known as Vinayak, the son of Lord Shiva and Parvati. He is said to be the wisest and most honoured of the Hindu Gods and is always worshipped in the beginning of any endeavour or enterprise, whether it pertains to the mundane worldly affairs or to the spiritual realm. This is done to invoke his blessings which preempt any evil forces from throwing a spanner in the wheel of the successful completion of the exercise.

²Shadaanan refers to Kartikeya, the son of Lord Shiva or of Agni (the Fire God). He is called the God of War as a leader of Shiva's ghosts against the enemies of the Gods. He is also known as 'Skand' which refers to someone who attacks; one who jumps, leaps or hops swiftly and with agility as an active soldier in the heat of battle.]

ब्रह्माण्डकोटिकोटिस्था ब्रह्माणः कोटिकोटयः । कोटयो हलहस्ताश्च कोटयो हरयः शिवाः ॥६३॥

सन्ति राम महाबाहो किमन्यच्च ब्रवीमि ते । तस्मिन्नन्तःपुरे रम्ये विचित्रमणिमण्डपे ॥६४॥

In the Goddess' divine and magnificent abode are present millions and millions of Brahmaands (universes) inhabited by Brahmas, Balrams (elder brother of Krishna), Vishnus and Shivas residing in each such Brahmaand (63).

Oh the most strong and valorous Sri Ram! What more can I tell you? In the magnificent palace of the Goddess is a fantastic and strange pavilion which is studded and embellished with brilliant and precious gems (64).

ज्वलद्रत्नमये स्तम्भे तोरणे मौक्तिकोज्ज्वले । रत्नप्रदीपावलिभिः प्रसन्नेऽपि दिगन्तरे ॥६५॥

रत्नसिंहासने रम्ये विद्युत्पुञ्जसमप्रभे । तप्तकाञ्चनसङ्काशे भ्राजत्सूर्यसमप्रभे ॥६६॥

भास्वच्छरन्निशानाथकोटिकान्तिशुभानना । समास्ते त्रिजगन्माता महादुर्गा रघूद्भव ॥६७॥

Its pillars are illuminated by the glittering light emanating from gems studded on it, while the bright radiance of pearls is spread on its buntings, festoons and decorative archways. All the directions are glowing with the simmering light reflected from the chain of gem-studded lamps present in the pavilion (65).

Inside it is a pleasant and attractive gem-studded gilded throne which is brilliant in dazzle and splendour; it is as glowing and radiant as hot gold, and resembles a shining sun and a fount of electric (66).

Oh Raghudwha (i.e. the two brothers of king Raghu's clan; Sri Ram and Laxman)! On it is seated the great Goddess Durga who resembles in radiance and brilliance millions of moons during the full night of winter, and who is the mother of the three worlds (the

celestial, terrestrial and subterranean worlds) (67).

भास्वत्स्वर्णसुसंनद्धस्यमन्तकसहस्रकैः । अनल्पकौस्तुभैश्चापि राजमाना किरीटिनी ॥६८॥
महामाणिक्यहारौघरुचिशोभितवक्षसी । सुचारुदशनस्मेररुचिरा श्यामलोचना ॥६९॥
कर्णालङ्करणैश्चित्रैर्नासिकाभरणैस्तथा । शशाङ्कलयातीव राजमानमुखाम्बुजा ॥७०॥

The Queen Mother of the world is adorned with a crown made up of shining gold and studded with thousands of 'Symantak' gems and numerous 'Kaustav' gems (68).

Her bosom is also adorned with a number of necklaces/garlands studded with the best of rubies. Her charming countenance is dark-hued, and the beauty of her face is enhanced by her enchanting eyes and a bewitching sweet smile that reveals a row of beautiful teeth (69).

It looks all the more adorable with ornaments worn in the ears and the nose as well as by the crescent moon on her forehead. The Queen Mother's face is like a lotus flower (70).

शुद्धरत्नमयैर्नानाभूषणैरभिशोभिता । चतुर्भिर्बाहुभिर्युक्ता महासिंहोपरि स्थिता ॥७१॥
रक्तवस्त्रपरीधाना क्वणत्काञ्चीसुमध्यमा । ब्रह्मेशविष्णुसंवन्द्यसुचारुपदपङ्कजा ॥७२॥
पुरस्तात्स्तुतिवाक्यैस्तु महाब्रह्मा महेश्वरः । महाविष्णुश्च संस्तौति प्राञ्जलिस्तां महामते ॥७३॥

She is lavishly adorned with various ornaments made of pure gems. She has four arms and is seated on a huge lion (71).

She is wearing a red-coloured garment (called a 'Sari'), and has a beautiful waist-band around her waist which chimes with tiny bells hooked to it. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh (Shiva) are paying their obeisance to her by worshipping her beautiful and august lotus-feet (72).

They are standing with hands joined together in submission and humility in front of her, and are praising her with devotional hymns (73).

चामरेणाभिशुक्लेन जया च विजया सदा । संवीजयन्त्यौ तिष्ठन्त्यौ तत्पार्श्वे सव्यदक्षतः ॥७४॥
चित्रव्यजनहस्ता च लक्ष्मीर्दक्षिणमास्थिता । कुङ्कुमारुणगन्धादिसौगन्ध्यं प्रति यच्छति ॥७५॥

To her left and right are the two of her celestial attendants named Jaya and Vijaya who are swaying the most auspicious whisks for her (74).

Laxmi is standing to her right with a hand-held beautiful fan and offers 'Kumkum' (saffron) and other orange/red coloured fragrant spices as mouth fresheners to her (75).

वीणया तु स्वयं वाणी संस्थिता वामपार्श्वतः । सङ्गायति गुणं देव्या वेदागमसुसम्मतम् ॥७६॥
शुद्धरत्नमये पात्रे सुधामादाय राघव । अथ वाणीप्रभृतयो यच्छन्ति प्रियकाम्यया ॥७७॥

To her left is present the goddess of speech herself (i.e. Goddess Saraswati), and the latter sings her praises in the form of hymns of her glorious virtues narrated by the Vedas and other scriptures. She uses the Indian lute for this purpose (76).

Oh Raghav! With 'Amrit' (ambrosia) filled in clean, gem-studded pots (e.g. drinking cups), the goddess of speech (Saraswati) and her ilk offer them to the Goddess in order to seek blessings from her and please her (77).

नारदाद्यैर्मुनिगणैरर्चितं वेदगोपितम् । गीयते पुरतो देव्या भक्त्या गद्गदया गिरा ॥७८॥

योगिन्याद्यास्तु संगृह्य महामाणिक्यनिर्मितम् । सताम्बूलं तदाधारं ददुर्देव्यै प्रयत्नतः ॥७९॥

भैरवप्रमुखा देवा रत्नदण्डासिपाणयः । सन्त्यनेकविधास्तत्र द्वारिणः कतिकोटयः ॥८०॥

Celestial sage Narad and other exalted sages sing (i.e. chant; describe in verse form which is usually sung or melodiously rendered), with emotionally choked throat, the mysterious and Veda-sanctioned methods of her worship, as they stand devotionally before her (78).

Sixtyfour 'Yoginins' (female attendants) hold 'Betel-pans' (which are decorative vessels in which Betel leaves are served) made of big and excellent rubies and full of properly arranged betel leaves. They try to offer them to the Goddess (79).

Millions of 'Bhairavs' (male attendants of Shiva) and their chiefs stand before her in attendance as if they were her obedient gatekeepers or guards; they hold gem-studded swords and batons (80).

एवं तदतुलं देव्या ऐश्वर्यं रघुनन्दन । किमहं ते प्रवक्ष्यामि चतुर्भिर्वदनैः प्रभो ॥८१॥

अलं वर्षसहस्राणां कोटिभिस्त्र्यम्बकः प्रभुः । श्रुतयश्च प्रयच्छन्ति तस्या वाक्यमया गुणाः ॥८२॥

Oh Raghunandan, Oh Lord (Sri Ram)! How much can I describe the measureless majesty, stupendous glories, immense fames and countless virtues of the great Goddess though I have four mouths (i.e. my four mouths are insufficient to describe them all) (81).

Even Lord 'Tryambak' (literally, the Lord with three eyes; here referring to Shiva) was not able to do it in thousands of millions of years. The Vedas sing her magnificent glories, immaculate virtues and majestic fame in the form of 'Chandas' (which are the various forms of poetical compositions in which the verses and stanzas of the Vedas were composed by Brahma). [That is, the glories and virtues of the Goddess are so numerous and profound that they could not be described in continuity. They had to be broken down into short, manageable stanzas or verses in order to enable the Vedas to try to describe them.] (82).

सावित्री चैव गायत्री प्रत्यक्षं चांशसम्भवाः । इन्द्रादयो लोकपाला नानाब्रह्माण्डवासिनः ॥८३॥

इच्छन्तो दर्शनं देव्याः पुरबाह्यसमागताः । भक्त्यार्चनरता ये तु ते त्वरान्वितदर्शनाः ॥८४॥

Savitri (the divine consort of the Sun God; the holy river Yamuna personified) and Gayatri (a specific type of hymn of the Rig Veda personified; the holy river Ganges personified; the famous Mantra of the Sun God as well as of Brahm), as well as Indra (the king of Gods), other Gods accompanied by all those residents of many universes who have come to have a 'Darshan' (divine, holy and august sight) of the Goddess, stand in wait outside the Devi's abode for their turn to come. Those who are sincerely involved in her worship and have devotion for her, can have an easy 'Darshan' (i.e. they do not have to wait for their turn much longer, and get preference over others). (83-84).

अन्योन्यदुर्गमं राम दर्शनं तत्र पुण्यदम् । नाधिपत्यविचारोऽस्ति न वा वर्णविवेचनम् ॥८५॥

तस्यां यस्य मतिः पुण्या तस्यैव सुलभा तु सा । इत्युक्ता सा रघुश्रेष्ठ मूर्तिस्तस्याः सुतान्त्रिकी ॥८६॥

But oh Sri Ram, her auspicious and divine sight is too difficult for all others. [This is obvious because when even the Gods have to wait for their turn to come, what can one say of ordinary mortals.] There is no distinction made based on caste, creed, clan or social standing as well as of power and authority for having her 'Darshan' [That is, every one has equal right to have access to the Goddess. There is no seniority or preference in this; all are equal in the eyes of the divine mother, but still a right of way is given to those who have sincere devotion for her, and have a pure and uncorrupt mind and intellect.] (85).

Those whose mind and intellect are involved in her devotion, that Goddess is easily accessible to them. Oh the best amongst the Raghus (i.e. Sri Ram)! I have told you about her divine form/image as described in the holy 'Tantras' (i.e. scriptures describing the Tantrik form of worship of the Goddess involving elaborate rituals, magical charms, offering of sacrifices etc.) (86).

उक्तं च नगरं रम्यं यथा पृष्टस्त्वया प्रभो । पौराणिकी तु या मूर्तिर्देवीदशभुजापरा ॥८७॥
तां च मूर्तिं विनिर्माय मृण्मयीं सिंहवाहिनीम् । पूजयिष्यामि संग्रामे जयलाभाय ते ध्रुवम् ॥८८॥

Besides that, I have also told you all about her glorious, lavish, fascinating and divine abode regarding which you have asked me. Oh Lord (Sri Ram)! The image of hers having ten arms, and which is sanctified and depicted by the Purans (87), I shall make a clay idol of it with the Goddess astride a lion, and duly worship it for your sure victory in the war (88).

बोधयिष्यामि चैतस्यां नवम्यां परिपूज्य च । बिल्ववृक्षे महादेवीं महाभयनिवारिणीम् ॥८९॥
अत्र त्वया वृतो राम भगवत्यास्तु पूजने । अद्यारभ्य नवम्यां तु कृष्णायामार्द्रयोगतः ॥९०॥

I shall worship and invoke that great supreme Goddess--who is capable of dispelling even the most formidable of misfortunes, calamities, perplexities and fears--under the 'Vilwa Tree' (the wood apple tree) on the 9th day of the lunar calendar (89).

Oh Sri Ram! You have engaged me to perform the worship ritual of the Goddess on your behalf. I shall commence the worshipping during the incumbent 'Ardra Nakshatra' (a special configuration of stars in the asterism called Ardra) and carry it uninterrupted till the 9th day of the dark lunar fortnight to invoke the Goddess on your behalf (90).

प्रबोध्य प्रत्यहं यावद्राक्षसेन्द्रं हनिष्यसि । तावत्प्रपूजयिष्यामि युद्धे ते जयकाम्यया ॥९१॥
ईप्सव राम शुचिर्भूत्वा स्तुत्वा देवीं समाहितः । युध्यस्व राक्षसैः सार्धं जयं प्राप्स्यसि राघव ॥९२॥

I shall then try to wake the Goddess up (or make her conscious) on that day, and thenceforth I shall continue to worship her with a desire for your victory in the war till the day you will actually kill the demon king (Ravana) (91).

Oh Sri Ram, oh Raghav! You must purify yourself by taking the ritualistic bath and invoke/remember the Goddess with devotion and offering of prayers. Then you should enter into battle with the demons. You shall surely get victory, be assured of it' (92).

श्री महादेव उवाच

एवमुक्तः स भगवान् देव्याः सम्बोधनाय वै । समुद्रस्योत्तरे तीरे बिल्ववृक्षस्य सन्निधिम् ॥९३॥

प्रययौ त्रिदशैः सार्धं सर्वलोकपितामहः । रामस्तु प्राञ्जलिभूत्वा चोत्तराभिमुखस्ततः ।
तुष्टाव जयलाभाय संग्रामे जयदायिनीम् ॥९४॥

Lord Shiva said to Narad— 'When he was told this, in order to invoke the victory-providing Goddess' (Durga's) blessings, Sri Ram, along with the patriarch Brahma and other Gods, went to the northern shores of the ocean where there was a 'Vilwa Tree' (the wood apple tree) (93).

Then Sri Ram stood there facing the North with hands joined together in submission and humility, and sincerely and fervently prayed to the victory-giving Goddess for success in the war against his enemies, the demons led by Ravana' (94).

Thus ends Canto 43 of Devi Puran Mahābhagwat-Rāmāyan describing Goddess Durga and her divine abode.

*__*__*__*

Chapter 10; Canto 44 Sri Ram prays to the Goddess; her prophesy and assurance; battle with Kumbhakarn

श्री राम उवाच

नमस्ते त्रिजगद्वन्द्ये संग्रामे जयदायिनि । प्रसीद विजयं देहि कात्यायनि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥१॥
सर्वशक्तिमये दुष्टरिपुनिग्रहकारिणि । दुष्टजृम्भिणि संग्रामे जयं देहि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥२॥

Sri Ram prayed to the Goddess most earnestly and said— 'Oh the one who is revered and honoured by the three worlds and is the bestower of victory in war! I repeatedly bow before you. Oh Goddess Katyayani! Be pleased with me and give me victory over the enemy (1).

You are all powerful and almighty, you are the vanquisher of the wicked enemies , and you are the slayer of evil and sinful ones. I bow before you reverentially. Bestow victory on me in the war (2).

[Note :- 'He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts' — Bible, the gospel of St. Luke, 1/51.]

त्वमेका परमाः शक्तिः सर्वभूतेष्ववस्थिता । दुष्टं संहर संग्रामे जयं देहि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥३॥
रणप्रिये रक्तभक्षे मांसभक्षणकारिणि । प्रपन्नार्तिहरे युद्धे जयं देहि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥४॥

You are the only supreme and eternal power and cosmic energy in this whole world which resides in all the creatures as their vital life-giving force. I bow before you most reverentially. Kill the sinful and wicked ones (enemy) in battle and bestow victory to me (3).

Oh the one who loves being invoked during the war! You drink blood and eat flesh of the enemy, and remove the torments and distresses of those who seek your refuge and shelter. I bow before you most reverentially; give me victory in the war (4).

खट्वाङ्गासिकरे मुण्डमालाद्योतितविग्रहे । ये त्वां स्मरन्ति दुर्गेषु तेषां दुःखहरा भव ॥५॥

त्वत्पादपङ्कजाद्दैन्यं नमस्ते शरणप्रिये । विनाशय रणे शत्रून् जयं देहि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥६॥

You hold a sword in your hand and wear a garland of skulls on your divine and radiant body. Those who remember you in adversities, you remove their distresses, troubles and sorrows; that is why you are called Durga (5).

You are kind and benevolent towards those who submit themselves before your lotus-feet. I bow before you most reverentially. Destroy the enemy in the battlefield and give me victory. I bow before you again (6).

अचिन्त्यविक्रमेऽचिन्त्यरूपसौन्दर्यशालिनि । अचिन्त्यचरितेऽचिन्त्ये जयं देहि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥७॥

ये त्वां स्मरन्ति दुर्गेषु देवीं दुर्गविनाशिनीम् । नावसीदन्ति दुर्गेषु जयं देहि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥८॥

Your majesty, glory, fame, prowess and valour, your beauty, charm, auspicious form and virtuous characters are so great and immeasurable that they cannot be comprehended and therefore described. I bow before you most reverentially; give us victory (7).

Those who remember Goddess Durga— who is the destroyer of misfortunes, calamities, adversities and troubles— during bad times are not subjected to sorrows or distresses of any kind. I bow before you most reverentially. Bestow me with victory (8).

महिषासृक्प्रिये संख्ये महिषासुरमर्दिनि । शरण्ये गिरिकन्ये मे जयं देहि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥९॥

प्रसन्नवदने चण्डि चण्डासुरविमर्दिनि । संग्रामे विजयं देहि शत्रूञ्जहि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥१०॥

You have slayed demon 'Mahisasur' in battle and are worthy of taking or seeking refuge with. Oh the daughter of Himalayas (i.e. Parvati)! I bow before you most reverentially; give me victory (9).

Oh the cheerful Goddess Chandi! You had killed the demon 'Chandasur'. Slay the enemies in the war and give me victory; I bow before you most reverentially (10).

रक्ताक्षि रक्तदशने रक्तचर्चितगात्रके । रक्तबीजनिहन्त्री त्वं जयं देहि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥११॥

निशुम्भशुम्भसंहन्त्रि विश्वकर्त्रि सुरेश्वरि । जहि शत्रून् रणे नित्यं जयं देहि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥१२॥

Your eyes are red as blood, your teeth are dripping with blood, and your body is smeared with blood. [This is because you are the great Goddess of war.] You are the slayer of demon 'Raktabij'. I bow before you most reverentially; bestow victory to me (11).

You are the slayer of demons 'Nishumbh' and 'Shumbh'. You are the creator of the world as well as are its Goddess and supreme Lord. Slay the enemy in the battle on a daily basis and bestow me with victory. I bow before you most reverentially (12).

भवान्येतज्जगत्सर्वं त्वं पालयसि सर्वदा । रक्ष विश्वमिदं मातर्हृत्वैतान् दुष्टराक्षसान् ॥१३॥

त्वं हि सर्वगता शक्तिर्दुष्टमर्दनकारिणि । प्रसीद जगतां मातर्जयं देहि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥१४॥

Oh Bhawani! Oh mother! You always sustain this whole world. You must kill these sinful and wicked demons and protect/save the world (13).

You are an embodiment / personification of 'Shakti' (cosmic energy, stupendous powers of mother Nature) that resides in all the creatures (and which instills life and vigour in them; it gives powers and potentials to them; it makes the wheel of creation

turning endlessly and flawlessly). You are the crusher of the evil, vile, wicked, sinful and pervert ones. Oh mother of the world! Be pleased with me, I bow before you most reverentially. Oh mother, give me victory (14).

दुर्वृत्तवृन्ददमनि सवृत्तपरिपालिनि । निपातय रणे शत्रूञ्जयं देहि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥१५॥

कात्यायनि जगन्मातः प्रपन्नार्तिहरे शिवे । संग्रामे विजयं देहि भयेभ्यः पाहि सर्वदा ॥१६॥

You crush those who are sinful, unrighteous, evil, pervert and vile, while you sustain and support those who are good, righteous, noble, virtuous and upright. Slay the enemy in the war and give me victory. I bow before you most reverentially (15).

Oh Shive (i.e. the divine consort of Lord Shiva; Parvati)! You remove/eliminate the troubles, tribulations, sorrows and miseries of those who have taken shelter with you. You provide welfare, goodness, well-being, happiness and auspiciousness to them. Oh Katyayani! Give victory to me in the war and always protect me from fear' (16).

श्री महादेव उवाच

एवं संस्तुवतस्तस्य श्रीरामस्य महात्मनः । बभूवाकाशतो वाक्यं सहसा मुनिसत्तम ॥१७॥

मा भैस्त्वं रघुशार्दूल महाबलपराक्रमान् । विजेष्यस्यचिरेणैव लङ्कां हत्वा निशाचरान् ॥१८॥

अहं सम्पूजिता बिल्वे ब्रह्मणा लोककर्तृणा । दास्यामि त्वां मनोऽभीष्टं वरं शत्रुनिबर्हण ॥१९॥

Shiva said to Narad— 'Oh the most exalted sage! When Sri Ram had prayed to the Goddess as narrated above, there was an announcement from the sky (17).

The formless voice (from the sky) said, 'Oh the lion in the clan of Raghu! Do not be afraid at all. You will soon be able to kill the most formidable, strong, valiant and powerful demons and conquer Lanka (18).

Oh the vanquisher of enemies! The creator Brahma has worshipped me under the Vilwa Tree (the wood apple tree). Hence I shall grant you your desired boon' (19).

इति श्रुत्वा रघुश्रेष्ठो वाक्यमाकाशसम्भवम् । असंशयं मुनिश्रेष्ठ मेने विजयमात्मनः ॥२०॥

एवं चिन्तयतः काले समरे भीमविक्रमः । आयातः कुम्भकर्णो वै राक्षसैः परिवेष्टितः ॥२१॥

Oh the best amongst sages (i.e. Narad)! When the best among the Raghus (i.e. Sri Ram) heard this divine voice from the sky, he felt reassured of his victory (20).

While Sri Ram was thinking thus, the most powerful and strong Kumbhakarn came to the battlefield, accompanied by other demons (21).

तस्य नादेन घोरेण सशैलवनकाननम् । चकम्पे धरणिः क्षुब्धो बभूव सरितां पतिः ॥२२॥

रथाश्वकुञ्जराणां च सुघोरैरपि बृंहितैः । चकम्पे वसुधा वीरबलात्कारेण वायुना ॥२३॥

चुक्षुभुर्वानराः सर्वे भीता दिक्षु विदिक्षु च । दृष्ट्वा तमतिदुर्धर्ममुद्यतास्त्रं महाबलम् ॥२४॥

Due to his (Kumbhakarn's) terrible roar, the whole earth shook and trembled along with its forests and mountains, while the ocean became perplexed and frightened (i.e. there were tremors in the ocean bed leading to the ocean becoming agitated and showing its uneasiness by heaving, splashing and buffeting; there were high waves and vicious churning of the waters of the ocean so much so that all the marine creatures thought that it was the end for them) (22).

A great storm was raised due to the terrible roar and thunderous cacophony created by the chariots, war horses and elephants of the demon army, as well as by the aggressive force, fierce demeanours, horrifying tumult and wild gestures (such as kicking, punching, jumping, hopping wildly, gesticulating ferociously, etc.) of the most powerful and strong demon warriors. That gale-force wind made the earth rumble and tremble with its ferocity (23).

Seeing that formidable and most valiant and powerful demon Kumbhakarn (who was the brother of Ravana) with formidable weapons in his hands, all the monkeys became terrified with fear and stood dumbstruck in all the direction where they were present (i.e. they became immobile in awe and fear; they were stunned into in-action; they were petrified with mortal fear when they saw such a vicious demon who personified death itself) (24).

अथ रामस्तमायान्तं समालोक्य भयप्रदम् । देवीं प्रणम्य कोदण्डं वामेनादाय पाणिना ॥२५॥

सोऽपि पादावघातेन करघातेन वानरान् । विमर्द्य भक्षयंश्चान्यानाससाद रघूत्तमम् ॥२६॥

Then, when Sri Ram saw that frightening demon come towards him, he mentally bowed before the Goddess and, invoking her, he lifted the bow in his left hand (25).

That demon punched, pounded, thrashed and trampled the monkeys recklessly and relentlessly using his arms and legs ; he gobbled up those who came in his way and, by and by, he approached the one who was the most exalted in the Raghu's clan (i.e. Sri Ram) (26).

स सम्प्रेक्ष्य रघुश्रेष्ठं श्यामं दुर्वादिलप्रभम् । उद्यतास्त्रं महाबाहुं रक्षसामन्तकारिणम् ॥२७॥

सानुज समरेऽक्षोभं नीलोत्पलदलेक्षणम् । ननाद बलवान् घोरो युगान्तजलदो यथा ॥२८॥

The most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram)-- who was dark complexioned like the dark green Durba grass (*Agrostis linearis* grass.)-- was eager for battle with arms/weapons ready in hand. He was most strong, majestic, potent and powerful, and had the potential to bring about the end of the demon clan for good. He found that he was standing in front of Kumbhakarn, face to face (27).

Lord Ram was accompanied by his younger brother (Laxman); he had no regrets or remorse as well as fear of any kind in war (i.e. he was cheerful and not war-weary at all). He had eyes resembling the petals of a blue lotus. Seeing him, the most strong and powerful Kumbhakarn roared thunderously like the clouds of the dooms-day (28).

राघवोऽपि महानादं ब्रह्माण्डक्षोभकारकम् । चक्रे मुदा मुनिश्रेष्ठ ततो युद्धमवर्तत ॥२९॥

ब्रह्मास्त्रजालैः संक्षिप्तैः परस्परजिगीषया । तयोरासीन्महायुद्धं सुरासुरदुरासदम् ॥३०॥

सैन्यैश्च राक्षसश्रेष्ठैर्वानराणां महात्मनाम् । आसीत्सुतुमुलं युद्धं संग्रामे जयमिच्छताम् ॥३१॥

Oh the best amongst sages (i.e. Narad)! Raghav (Sri Ram) cheerfully roared, and his roar instilled fear in the universe. Thereafter, the battle commenced in good earnest. [When Kumbhakarn roared, only the earth shook with fear, while when Sri Ram roared, the universe shook.] (29).

They fought ferociously and feverishly to obtain victory over each other, and shot

so many Brahmastras (weapons that are powered by Brahma's Mantras) at each other that those weapons formed a virtual net or grid over both of them. This duel was so unique and awe-inspiring that it was most impossible for both the Gods as well as the demons to even imagine it in their dreams (30).

The great and excellent monkey army fought ferociously and gallantly with the best of the demon army. Both the sides were equally brave, gallant, great, strong and powerful; they roared, yelled and cheered thunderously, and equally yearned for victory (31).

Thus ends Canto 44 of Devi Purān Mahābhagwat-Rāmāyan describing Sri Rām's prayers to Goddess Durgā and the commencement of battle with Kumbhakarn.

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Chapter 11; Canto 45
Brahma and other Gods worship the Goddess for
Sri Rām's victory, and her assurance for it.
The details of 'Navratra worship' of the Goddess

श्री महादेव उवाच

ब्रह्मापि बिल्ववृक्षे तां देवीं सम्पूज्य भक्तितः । बोधयामास रामस्य जयार्थं जगदम्बिकाम् ॥१॥
 स्तोत्रेण देवीसूक्तेन प्रणिपत्य पुनः पुनः । वेदोक्तेन सुरश्रेष्ठोऽकालेऽपि च सुरेश्वरीम् ॥२॥

Shiva said to Narad— 'Brahma began to worship Goddess Jagdamba under the Vilwa tree (wood apple tree) with due devotion in order to invoke her and wake her up (i.e. make her conscious of her responsibilities as the supreme Goddess who should eliminate the evil ones and restore peace and righteousness in the world) for the express purpose of doing Sri Rām's work (which was to kill the demons representing such evil forces of creation) (1).

He worshipped her by the hymns of the Vedas as well as by specialised hymns devoted exclusively to the Goddess, and repeatedly prostrated before her. The most exalted of the Gods (i.e. Brahma) invoked her sincerely and frantically, in spite of the fact that it was not the proper time to wake up the 'Goddess of the Gods' from her rest (2).

ब्रह्मोवाच

ॐ नमो विमलवदनायै भूर्भुवःस्वःपरमकमलायै केवलपरमानन्दसन्दोहरूपायै
 लोकत्रयतिमिरापहारकपरमज्योतीरूपायै असदभिलाषयुक्तसंदूषितदोषापसारणपरमामृतरूपायै
 मूर्तिमत्कोटिचन्द्रवदनायै दुर्गादेव्यै सर्ववेदोद्भवनारायण्यै
 जनशरीरे परमात्मरूपायै प्रसीद ते नमो नमः ॥३॥

Brahma prayed— 'Om salutations! Regards to the one who has a divine body! You pervade the nether world, the terrestrial world and the celestial world. You are a personification of Kamla (Goddess Laxmi, the patron Goddess of wealth, and consort of Lord Vishnu).

You are the only treasury of supreme bliss, and are happiness personified. You are the eliminator (or dispeller) of the darkness of the three Lokas. You are an embodiment of the cosmic divine light representing the light of wisdom and enlightenment. You are the remover of all faults associated with or arising from false expectations, hopes and yearnings. You are an image of pure 'Amrit' (the elixir of eternity). You have a shining and graceful face that resembles millions of moons. You are the mother of the three worlds who is praised by all the Vedas. You are present in the form of the pure conscious self or 'Atma' of the individual creature, the Atma which is a representative of the supreme Soul of the creation, called 'Parmatma'. You are called Durga. I bow repeatedly before you most reverentially. Be pleased and benevolent upon me (3).

ॐ करारूपे प्रणवस्वाहास्वरूपे ह्रींस्वरूपिणि अम्बिके भगवत्यम्ब त्रिगुणप्रसूते नमो नमः ॥४॥

सिद्धिकरे स्फ्रं स्फ्रौं स्वाहारूपिणि स्वधारूपे विमलमुखे चन्द्रमुखे कोलाहलमुखे शर्वे प्रसीद ॥५॥

Om salutations! You have a fearsome and ferocious form. You are the embodiment of the cosmic fire which devours everything. You are an image of the seed or root word 'Hring' (ह्रीं) used in occult practices as a divine Mantra to invoke the stupendous powers of cosmic Nature. You are the cosmic divine Mother from whose womb has emerged the whole of the three worlds characterised by the three qualities of Sat, Raj and Tam¹. I reverentially bow before you (4).

You provide success and glories to your devotees. You are an image of the seed or root words 'Sfre-Sfrong' (स्फ्रं स्फ्रौं) which are used during occult worship. You are the holy word 'Swaha'² that is uttered each time an offering is made to the sacrificial fire. You are 'Swadha'³. You have a beautiful, august, sweet, charming and divine face that resembles the full moon. You make a tumultuous clamour and a frightening ruckus in the battlefield to frighten away even the most valiant and courageous of enemies. You are the supreme and transcendental One who is the Lord and the only Authority in this creation. Be pleased and gracious upon me (5).

[Note :- ¹The three characteristic qualities inherently present in the creature are the three thought textures which bombard the mind. These three thought textures are manifestations of the 'Vrittis and Vasanas' (inherent tendencies or desires) of the creature which mire its soul as a covering or veil.

(a) 'Sat Guna or quality' is the noble, virtuous, auspicious and good qualities present in a creature, (b) 'Raj Guna or quality' pertains to worldly passions, desires and ambition etc., while (c) 'Tam Guna or quality' is the lowest and meanest of the three qualities leading to various vices, evils, sins, perversions etc. The various permutations and combinations of these three qualities create a particular nature of an individual giving him his individuality and his special characters which are unique to him; they determine his temperament, behaviour, thought process et al.

The Satwic quality or Guna is the veil covering the soul like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satwic desires; its removal requires the least effort. It is

the foremost and the best amongst the three characteristics of a creature such as good and positive virtuous such as righteousness, creativity, noble deeds and thoughts, the positive qualities of service, benevolence, mercy, devotion, wisdom, holiness, piety etc.

The Rajsic quality or Guna can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with Satwic quality. Rajsic tendencies are the second best quality which produces worldly desires, ambitions, passions, selfishness, various obsessions, desire to sustain and expand etc.

The Tamsic quality or Guna covering the soul is like a foetus in the womb covered by the embryonic membrane—they cannot be removed easily and require diligence, effort, dedicated and careful handling requiring time and patience. It is the basest and the lowliest of the three characteristics, the worst type to possess, and is marked by such negative traits as sin, evil, perversions, immorality, vices, misdemeanors, anger, inertia, delusions, deception, gloom, ignorance et al.

The proportion of the three Gunas decides the nature, natural temperament, tendencies, habits and inclination of the creatures. For example, a person with a greater proportion of ‘Satvic’ (noble) characteristic will be considered nobler than a man with a greater proportion of ‘Rajsic’ or ‘Tamsic’ qualities. So we can say that sages, seers, prophets, scholars and generally enlightened persons have a high degree of ‘Satvic’ qualities in them; kings and householders who live a noble life are example of those with higher amount of ‘Rajsic’ quality in them; while sinners, killers, drunks, rowdy elements, cheats etc. are those people with higher ‘Tamsic’ quality in them. These Gunas have direct bearing on the personality of a man.

The first quality of Sattva is concerned with creation and enhancement of knowledge and wisdom. For this, one has to remain alert and vigilant like Brahma. The Jagrat state also corresponds to that state when the creature is awake and interacts physically with the external world, imbibes whatever knowledge and information that comes to it, gains experience, and physically reacts to that knowledge and information. Further, such people are regarded as seniors in society, and they are best depicted in the form of the old patriarch Brahma. They are awake to the harsh realities of existence and remain so engrossed in the world that they forget who they actually are what is their true identity, and the very basic fact that what they are thinking as the real is actually not.

Next comes the Swapna state in which a man dreams, and it is a metaphor for imagination and visualization of things based on the experience and knowledge gained during the Jagrat state. In this state a man lives and does things in a virtual manner in a virtual world of dreams. He sustains and nourishes his imaginations, fantasies and conceptions in a world of dreams which is far away from the harsh realities of life in the physical world. He suffers and enjoys in his dreams, then when he wakes up, he sometimes forgets what that imaginary world was like, but at other times there have been incidents wherein he has got new insight and new inspiration while he was dreaming. This is how Vishnu sustains and nourishes the creation created

by Brahma. For all practical purposes, a dreaming man appears to be in a state resembling the state of Samadhi, or a state when an aspirant is in deep meditation and engrossed in contemplation, because he remains aloof and oblivious to the external world, and remains absolutely motionless. But this state is temporary, because he would revert back or wake up to the Jagrat state. That is why Lord Vishnu, who represents this quality of Raj, is depicted as perpetually reclining contemplatively on the bed of the coiled legendary serpent floating on the celestial ocean of milk called Kshirsagar. Since without a vision and imagination one cannot grow, develop and rise, Vishnu is regarded as a maverick player of fantastic tricks in order to sustain and enhance his interests of looking after the creation. Out of these Trinity Gods, it is Vishnu who assumes so many forms and adopts so many tricks to do the needful.

The third quality of Tam is represented by Shiva, and that is why he shows certain traits which are so typical of this quality—viz. being short tempered, and destroying at the shortest notice; his external behaviour and attire also represents the excess of this lowest quality in him. The Sushupta state that he represents stands for being totally oblivious of the external world, and remaining in total bliss. This is exactly how Shiva has been depicted—he remains in a perpetual state of meditation, completely indifferent to the external world, unconcerned and detached from the attractions of the enchanting outside when he can find complete bliss inside his own bosom. The Tam quality marks the presence of ignorance in a greater ratio, and this is depicted by Shiva when he remains ignorant of the niceties of worldly behaviour, notwithstanding his exalted stature of being the greatest amongst the Gods.

²Swaha and ³Swadha—the word ‘Swaha’ means to offer anything, to dispense, to distribute. The offerings made to the fire sacrifice meant for the Gods is done by saying Swaha, while those meant for the dead ancestors is done by saying Swadha. According to the Purans, these two are the divine wives of the Fire God. Swaha takes the offerings made for the Gods in the fire sacrifice to them, while Swadha is responsible for taking the offerings made for the dead ancestors in the fire sacrifice to them.]

जगन्मोदकरीं मृदुदृशीं त्वां महेशीं क्रीडास्थाने स्वागतां भुवनेशीं शत्रुस्त्वं मित्ररूपा च दुर्गा
दुर्गस्य त्वं योगिनामन्तरेऽपि एकाऽनेका सूक्ष्मरूपाविकारा ब्रह्माण्डानां कोटिकोटिप्रसूतम् ॥६॥

You provide happiness, joy and delight to the world by casting your sweet, enchanting, pleasant and reassuring glance everywhere. You have come to the playground (i.e. the battlefield) out of your own free will. I welcome you, oh the divine consort of Mahesh (i.e. Parvati who is the divine consort of Shiva) and the Lord-mistress of the entire world. You are both the enemy as well as the friend of a creature (depending upon the nature of the creature and its deeds). You are the Durga of the fortress called Durg (i.e. you are the protector of your devotees who seek refuge and shelter with you even as citizens seek protection of a fort when attacked by an enemy). You reside in the inner-self (i.e. heart or bosom) of ‘Yogis’ (ascetics). You are non-dual and only ‘one’ of your kind (i.e. you are

without a second or parallel) as well as multifarious, having countless forms and names. You have a subtle form that is most minute and so miniscule or miniature in form that it is impossible to perceive it without the eyes of wisdom and enlightenment. You are without any faults or blemishes or shortcomings of any kind that are usually associated with all in this creation. You are the creator or producer of millions of Universes (6).

एकोऽहं विष्णुः कः परो वा शिवाख्यो देवाश्चान्ये स्तोतुमीशा भवामः ।

त्वं स्वाहा त्वं स्वधा त्वं च वौषट् त्वं चोङ्कारस्त्वं च लज्जादिबीजं त्वं

च स्त्री त्वं च पुमान् सर्वरूपा त्वां नमामि बोधये नः प्रसीद ॥७॥

How can I, Vishnu, Shiva, or any other God can ever be able to sing the hymns of your praises? You personify 'Swaha' ¹(स्वाहा), 'Swadha' ²(स्वधा), 'Vaushat' ³(वौषट्), 'Omkar' ⁴(ओङ्कारस्त्वं), 'Lajja' ⁵(लज्जा), and other such syllables and symbols that are cryptic essence of the forces of Nature, its essential virtues, and the various religious sacraments ordained by the scriptures. They mark the essential grace and dignity of those who are righteous and noble creatures in this universe. You represent all forms of life--such as the female, the male as well as all other forms of existence. [This is because the entire creation is but your manifestation, and since you are non-dual by nature, it follows that whatever in visible is nothing but the various images or forms of the same entity. Therefore, all are fundamentally the same even as drops of water collected from different sources such as a river, a pond, a well, an ocean and the drain consists of the same molecule of water made up of two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen.]

I reverentially bow before you. I am invoking you and seeking to wake you up (or make you conscious towards your responsibilities). Be kind and pleased with me (7).

[Note--¹Swaha and ²Swadha have been explained in verse no.5 above.

The word ³'Vaushat' refers to a cryptic word pronounced at the time of making offerings to Gods or the spirits of dead ancestors.

The word ⁴'Omkar' refers to the divine ethereal form of cosmic sound represented by the word OM. According to the Upanishadic thinking, this entire manifest world has been incorporated in this word OM; it is the subtlest of the five elements that form the basic building blocks of life in this creation; it is synonymous with the supreme transcendental Brahm and the closest to him. It is the word used as a suffix and a prefix during any religious chanting or singing of hymns to invoke the powers and blessings of the supreme Being. It consists of three letters, viz. A, U and M. The first letter A represents the initiation of the creation, the letter U of its development and expansion, and the letter M its conclusion. The combined pronunciation of the word OM represents the Universe in its entirety.

The word ⁵'Lajja' means to have the virtues of having shame, dignity, honour, prudence, bashfulness, modesty, good name and fame which should not be compromised at any cost.]

त्वं वै देवर्षिर्देवताकालरूपा त्वं वै मासस्त्वमृतुशायने द्वे ।

कव्यं भुङ्क्षे त्वं यथा स्वधा तद्वत् स्वाहा हव्यभोक्त्री स्वयं देवि ॥८॥

The celestial sages, the Gods as well as Kaal (Death) are your different forms. Even the months, seasons and the two 'Ayans'¹ are nothing else but your varied forms. Oh Goddess! In the form of 'Swadha'² you partake of the 'Kavya' (the offering of food to dead ancestors), while as 'Swaha' you accept the 'Havya' (offering made to the sacrificial fire meant for the Gods) yourself (8).

[Note :-¹ The two *Ayans* referred above are the two mythical celestial paths taken by the Sun God— one north of the equator and another to the south of the equator. The former is called Uttarayan, and the latter is called Dakshinayan respectively. The Uttarayan falls during the period from December 22 to June 21 and is called the summer solstice, while the Dakshinayan falls during June 21 to December 22 and is called the winter solstice.]

²Here 'Swadha' means the daughter of Prajapati Daksha and 'Swaha' means the divine consort of the Fire God. See also footnote of verse no. 4-5 of this Canto.]

त्वं वै देवाः शुक्लपक्षे प्रपूज्यास्त्वं पित्राद्याः कृष्णपक्षे प्रपूज्याः ।

त्वं वै सत्यं निष्कलं च स्वरूपं त्वां वै नत्वा बोधयामि प्रसीद ॥९॥

You are the one who is worshipped as a Male God during the bright lunar fortnight, and as a deified form of dead ancestors, called Pattars, during the dark fortnight of the moon. You are the eternal, sublime and absolute Truth which is without any taints, blemishes or faults of any kind that might scar your divinity and holiness. I bow before you and most earnestly invoke you to become conscious towards your responsibilities and bless me. Be pleased and benevolent upon me (9).

[Note--See chapter 6, canto 40, verse no.15 also.]

चन्द्रार्काग्निविलोचने नीचं नीचमुच्चं नत्वा याति मुक्तिं त्वत्पादध्यानयोगात् ।

त्वत्पादाब्जं चार्चयित्वा तु मुक्तिं को वा न प्राप्नोत्युत्तमां देवि सूक्ष्मम् ॥१०॥

Oh Goddess who resides in a microcosmic subtle form (as the soul of the creation) ! The sun, the moon and the fire are your three eyes. You can uplift the most wretched, miserable and downtrodden ones and elevate them to a higher stature. Such persons bow before you and obtain liberation and deliverance by concentrating (meditating) on your holy feet and worshipping them (i.e. by seeking their refuge and shelter). Who cannot obtain the supreme state of emancipation and salvation by worshipping your lotus-like holy feet? (10).

[Note :- 'He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty'

--Bible, gospel of St. Luke, 1/52-53.]

स्थूलमुच्चं नीचं नीचमुच्चं कर्तुं समर्था त्वं तु काले शक्तिरूपा भवानि त्वां नत्वाहं बोधये नः प्रसीद।

त्वं वै शक्ति राघवे रावणे च रुद्रादौ वापीहास्ति या त्वं सा त्वं

शुद्धं वामकेन प्रवर्ध त्वां नत्वा बोधये नः प्रसीद ॥११॥

ॐ तत्सद् ब्रह्मणे नमः ॥

You have the potential of making those who are superior into humble beings, and vice

versa. Oh Bhawani! You are a personification of the cosmic energy and dynamism called 'Shakti', and assume different forms according to the needs of the circumstances. I bow before you and invoke you. Be pleased with us. The life-giving energy that is present in Raghav (Sri Ram), Ravana, Rudra (Shiva) as well as the rest of the whole world is none other but you. [That is, the soul or Atma present in the entire creation is your form as pure all-pervading consciousness. It is you that gives life to all the living beings.] You are what you are (i.e. there is no doubting or confusions or debates or discussions about your eternal, universal, supreme and transcendental nature and absolute truthfulness). Make the glories of the noble and the righteous one (i.e. Sri Ram) rise and shine by using your tricks that are unconventional and maverick, and therefore incomprehensible. And there is no time to delay it any further; so act immediately. I bow before you most reverentially and invoke you. Be kind and graceful upon us (11).

Om! Salutations to the supreme, truthful and absolute Brahm!' [Here, Brahm refers to Goddess Durga.]

[Note :- Please also see verse nos. 21-22 below.]

श्री महादेव उवाच

अनेन वेदसूक्तेन स्तोत्रेण मुनिसत्तम । संस्तुता ब्रह्मणा देवी प्रबोधं प्राप चण्डिका ।१२॥

प्रबुद्धायां च देव्यां स ब्रह्मा लोकपितामहः । अञ्जलिर्देवतैः सार्धं प्रार्थयामास वाञ्छितम् ।१३॥

Lord Shiva said to Narad— 'Oh the most exalted sage! When Brahma had prayed frantically and sincerely to the Goddess using these Veda-sanctified 'Stotras' (hymns), the Goddess of war called 'Chandika' woke up (i.e. became conscious of her responsibilities towards taking the side of righteousness, and care for the welfare of the world) (12).

When she became conscious, Brahma, the grandfather of all creation, along with other Gods, prayed to her with hands joined together in humility for the fulfilment of their desires' (13).

ब्रह्मोवाच

देविं त्वं बोधिताऽस्माभिरकालेऽपि सुरोत्तमे । हिताय सर्वभूतानां राक्षसानां वधाय च ।१४॥

जयाय रामचन्द्रस्य संग्रामेऽतिसुदारुणे । यावद्दशानने युद्धे सपुत्रगणबान्धवः ।१५॥

पतिष्यति जगच्छत्रुस्तावत्त्वां जगदम्बिकाम् । पूजयामो महादेवी राघवस्य जयार्थिनः ।१६॥

त्वं प्रसन्ना यदि शिवे तदा पूजां प्रगृह्य च । निपातय महाशत्रुकुलं देवि दिने दिने ।१७॥

Brahma prayed to Goddess Chandi (on behalf of all the Gods)— 'Oh Goddess! You are the most exalted amongst all the Gods and superior to all of them. For the sake of the welfare and well being of the world, for the destruction and elimination of the (evil, sinful and wicked) demons, and for the victory of Sri Ram (who represents righteousness, auspiciousness and holiness) in the ferocious, uncompromising and cruel war, we have woken you up (from your sleep), though this is not the proper time when you usually rise. Till the time the enemy of the whole world, the 10-headed Ravana, does not die in battle along with his sons, kith and kins, we shall continue to worship you. Oh Jagdamba (i.e. the mother of the world)! Oh the great Goddess! We pray to you for the victory of Sri Ram

(14-16).

Oh Shive (i.e. the divine consort of Lord Shiva)! If you are indeed pleased with us then you should accept our worship daily and continuously. You should continue to destroy the enemy hordes on a day-to-day regular basis' (17).

श्री देव्युवाच

पतिष्यत्यद्य संग्रामे कुम्भकर्णो महाबलः । सहितः सैनिकैर्भीमैर्महाबलपराक्रमः ॥१८॥
 एवमेनां समारभ्य नवमीमसितां शुभाम् । यावच्छुक्ला तु नवमी तावदेव दिने दिने ॥१९॥
 पतिष्यन्ति न सन्देहो राक्षसा रणमूर्धनि । अमावस्यानिशायां तु मेघनादे हते सति ॥
 रावणोऽपि च संतप्तहृदो राममेष्यति ॥२०॥

The Goddess replied to Brahma— 'The most strong, powerful, majestic and brave Kumbhakarn shall be killed, along with his army of ferocious, brave and valiant soldiers, today in battle (18).

Starting from the 9th day of this dark fortnight of the lunar month of Ashwin till the 9th day of the forthcoming bright fortnight of this month (Ashwin), the demons will be killed daily in the battlefield. There is no doubt about it. During the night of the dark moon (i.e. the middle of the month; six days from now), Meghnad (the son of Ravana) will be killed. This will make Ravana extremely dismayed, distressed, peeved and hopeless. As a result of extreme exasperation, he will come to face Sri Ram in battle personally' (19-20).

[Note :- See also Chapter 12, Canto 46, verse nos. 2-3.]

श्री ब्रह्मोवाच

सन्दोहरूपायै लोकत्रयतिमिरापहारकपरमज्योतीरूपायै
 असदभिलाषयुक्तसंदूषितदोषापसारणपरमामृतरूपायै
 मूर्तिमत्कोटिचन्द्रवदनायै दुर्गादेव्यै सर्ववेदोद्भवनारायण्यै
 जन्यशरीरे परमात्मरूपायै प्रसीद ते नमो नमः ॥२१॥

Brahma prayed to the Goddess once again, 'You are a treasury of bliss and happiness, are the remover/dispeller of the darkness of (ignorance, evils, sins, vices etc. of) the three worlds, are the embodiment/image/personification of the supreme light (of knowledge, truth and enlightenment). You are the remover of all faults, blemishes and shortcomings associated with, arising from and pertaining to false expectations, hopes, yearnings and desires, and are the personification and image of the supreme elixir of life called 'Amirt'. Your face resembles millions of moons personified. You are Goddess Durga. You are described and extolled by all the Vedas as the divine female cosmic part called 'Narayani' (of the Viraat Purush Narayan), and you pervade in the body of all the creatures in the form of their supreme soul or 'Atma'. Be pleased with us. I bow repeatedly before you (21).

[Note :- Please also see verse nos. 3-11.]

ॐ करारूपे प्रणवस्वाहास्वरूपे ह्रींस्वरूपिणि अम्बिके

भगवत्यम्ब त्रिगुणप्रसूते नमो नमः । सिद्धिकरे स्फ्रे ।
अमर्षवशमापन्नो युद्धार्थं समराजिरे ॥२२॥

Om salutations! You are ferocious and fierce in form, are a personification of the cosmic fire that engulf and annihilates everything, are the seed word 'Hring', are a mother, are the supreme Lord as well as the one from whom the whole world consisting of the three qualities (Sat, Raj and Tam) is born. I bow reverentially before you repeatedly. You are an image/emboiment of all achievements and successes, and you represent the divine Tantrik word 'Sfre'. I pray to you for victory in battle and successful completion of this endeavour' (22). [Please see verse nos. 3-11 also.]

श्री देव्युवाच

देवान्तकप्रभृतिभिर्महाबलपराक्रमैः । ततस्तेषु हतेष्वेवं वीरेषु रणमूर्धनि ॥२३॥
देवान्तकादिषु तथा क्रोधसंरक्तलोचनः । स योत्स्यति महावीरो रावणो लोककण्टकः ॥२४॥

The Goddess said once again— 'Accompanied by the most strong, brave, courageous, valiant, valorous, majestic and famous battle-hardened demons such as Devantak and others, Ravana will come angrily in the battlefield. Thereafter, on the death (23) of Devantak and other demons, the most brave and valiant Ravana— who is like a thorn for the world— shall fight himself with eyes red with anger and full of indignation (24).

तयोस्तु दारुणं युद्धं रामरावणयोस्तदा । भविष्यति यथा कैश्चिन्न दृष्टं न श्रुतं क्वचित् ॥२५॥
तत्रापि शुक्लसप्तम्यामारभ्य नवमीदिनम् । यावद्घोरतरं युद्धं भविष्यति तयोर्महत् ॥२६॥

Then will follow such a tumultuous and ferocious battle between Sri Ram and Ravana the like of which had neither been ever seen nor been heard by anyone till date (25).

Their fierce, no-holds-barred duel will commence from the 7th day of the bright lunar fortnight in the month of Ashwin and last till the 9th day (26).

तस्यामारभ्य सप्तम्यां नवमीं यावदेव हि । मृण्यय्यां प्रतिमायां तु पूज्याहं विधिवत्पुरा ॥२७॥
भवद्भिः समरे रामचन्द्रस्य जयकाङ्क्षिभिः । अनघैरुपचारैस्तु यथाहैर्बलिभिस्तथा ॥२८॥

All of you who are desirous of victory for Sri Ram in the war should consecrate a clay/mud idol of my form and start worshipping me in the proper, sanctified way from the 7th day (of the bright lunar fortnight) till the 9th day (27-28).

स्तोत्रैर्वेदपुराणोक्तैः स्तोतव्या भक्तिभावतः । सप्तम्यां पत्रिकायां तु वेशनं मूलयोगतः ॥२९॥
कर्तव्यं विधिवद्देवास्ततो रामधनुःसरम् । अष्टम्यां पूजिताहं तु प्रतिमायां सुशोभने ॥३०॥

My worship should be done using divine, holy and sanctified 'Stotras' (hymns) as per the Vedic traditions and with due devotion. On the 1st day of worship, i.e. the 7th day of the month of Ashwin, the scriptures (of the Goddess) should be recited (in order to consecrate the image), and Sri Ram's bows and arrows should be duly worshipped so as to consecrate them and infuse them with my divine powers. On the next day, i.e. on the 8th day, I should be worshipped in my auspicious and consecrated charming and auspicious image (29-30).

अष्टमीनवमीसन्धौ वत्स्यामि शिरसो रणे । रावणस्य सुदुष्टस्य भूयो भूयो दुरात्मनः ॥३१॥

ततः सन्धौ क्षणेऽहं तु पूजितव्या विधानतः । विपुलैरुपचारैस्तु मांसशोणितकर्दमैः ॥३२॥

ततः शत्रुं बलिं दद्यात्कृत्वा पिष्टमयं मम । नवम्यां पूजिताहं तु बलिभिर्विधैरपि ॥३३॥

During the intervening period of the 8th and the 9th day, I shall abandon (i.e. step down from) the head of the wicked and pervert Ravana (i.e. cease to be his patron Goddess who has been giving him protection till now) and come to the battlefield (31).

Hence, during that auspicious and fateful moment, I should be properly worshipped as per established traditions and by adopting all possible measures including the offering of sacrifices (32).

Thence, the enemy should be sacrificed in a token manner. Similarly, I should also be elaborately worshipped on the 9th day (33).

[Note :- Regarding sacrifice of animals, please also see Chapter 12, Canto 46, verse nos. 15-22.]

अपराह्ण रणे वीरं पातयिष्यामि रावणम् । दशम्यां मां प्रपूज्याथ प्रातरेव सुरोत्तमाः ॥३४॥

मूर्तिर्विसर्जनीय तु स्रोतःसु सुमहोत्सवैः ॥३५॥

एवं पञ्चदशाहेषु कृत्वा च सुमहोत्सवम् । निवृत्तिं प्राप्स्यथ सुरा हते तस्मिन्दुरात्मनि ॥३६॥

I shall kill that brave Ravana in the battle in the afternoon (of the 9th day). Oh the most exalted Gods! On the 10th day, my image should be duly worshipped in the morning (34), and my clay idol should then be immersed (in great rivers or any available water body) during the afternoon hours (35).

In this way, my worship should be done for fifteen consecutive days with due devotion and celebration (i.e. from the 9th day of the dark lunar fortnight till the 9th day of the bright fortnight in the month of Ashwin), and as a result, when that wicked demon (Ravana) will be killed, all of you will be peaceful and happy, as well as be liberated from his tyranny and horrors' (36).

Thus ends Canto 45 of Devi Puran Mahābhagwat-Rāmāyan describing the Gods' prayers to Goddess Durga for Sri Ram's victory and her prophesy regarding the death of the demons. It also describes, in the words of the Goddess herself, how she should be worshipped in order to ensure success in vanquishing one's enemy.

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Chapter 12; Canto 46

The Goddess further describes in detail how to worship her during the 'Navratra' period for 9 days, besides enumerating the benefits of such worship.

श्री देव्युवाच

एवं महोत्सवो देव्या अकालेऽस्मिन्समागते । त्रैलोक्यवासिभिः कार्यो मत्तृप्त्यै प्रतिवत्सरम् ॥१॥

नवम्यामार्द्रायुक्तायां बिल्वे मां परिपूज्य च । सम्बोध्य भक्तिः शुक्लां नवमीं यावदेव हि ॥२॥

प्रत्यहं पूजयिष्यन्ति ये तु लोकत्रये सुराः । तेषां प्रसन्ना नित्यं तु पूरयिष्ये मनोरथान् ॥३॥

The Goddess told Brahma and other assembled Gods— 'In this way (Canto 45, verse nos. 27-34), when the time for offering formal worships and doing religious rituals is not favourable, and when adversities and misfortunes make their presence felt, the residents of the three worlds should organise the worship of the great Goddess with celebration and festivities every year in order to please me (1).

Oh Gods! Anyone in the three worlds (the subterranean, the terrestrial and the celestial worlds) who starts to worship me with due devotion and reverence daily under the shade of the Vilwa tree (the wood apple tree) during the incumbency of the constellation called 'Ardra' from the 9th day of the dark fortnight of the moon (in the month of Ashwin, roughly end of September) till the 9th day of the bright lunar fortnight of the same month (i.e. a total of 15 days), I am pleased with them and show my grace upon them by fulfilling all their desires (2-3).

न शत्रुः प्रभवेत्तस्य न वा बन्धुवियोजनम् । न दुःखं न च दारिद्र्यं मत्प्रसादाद्भविष्यति ॥४॥

ऐहिकं यन्मनोऽभीष्टं यच्च पारत्रिकं तथा । सम्पदं लभते सर्वा मत्प्रसादात्सुरोत्तमाः ॥५॥

By my grace, such a person (who worships me) has no enemy (i.e. there is no one who dare oppose him); his glory, fame and majesty are never diminished; his kith and kin do not suffer the agonies of separation from him (as on his untimely death); he does not have to suffer any sort of sorrows, miseries and troubles as well as from poverty, wants, shortages and deficiencies of any kind (4).

By my grace and benevolence, he obtains all the desired objects of this terrestrial as well as of the heavenly worlds (5).

पुत्रायुर्थनधान्यादिवृद्धिस्तेषां दिने दिने । भविष्यत्यचला लक्ष्मीर्मा भक्त्या यजतामपि ॥६॥

न व्याधयो भविष्यन्ति न च तान् ग्रहपीडकाः । पीडयन्ति न तेषां तु नापमृत्युर्भविष्यति ॥७॥

Those who worship me with devotion and sincerity shall see/witness the signs of worldly wellbeing as indicated by such benchmarks as all round prosperity and material wellbeing, betterment of their offspring (i.e. sons), a long life and general enhancement of wealth/property by each passing day (i.e. each day will bring new and greater happiness and carefreeness to them). They shall acquire stable wealth and prosperity (6).

They shall not suffer from any diseases, tormented by malignant stars, and suffer from untimely death (7).

[Note :- 'Therefore, take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or wherewithal shall we be clothed?... but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you... take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself'

--Bible, gospel of St. Matthew, 6/31, 33-34.]

न भीती राजतो वापि दस्युतो वा भविष्यति । सिंहव्याघ्रादिजन्तुभ्यो न वा भीतिर्भविष्यति ॥८॥

यास्यन्ति वशतां भूयो हासयिष्यन्ति शत्रवः । विजयश्च रणे नित्यं भविष्यति न संशयः ॥९॥

He shall not suffer from the fear of (prosecution and harassment from) the realm's king, of the fear from dacoits/robbers (of being looted by them), and the fear (of being eaten by)

lions, tigers and other wild animal. The enemies of those who worship me shall be subdued by them, and such enemies shall be destroyed (i.e. eliminated, vanquished, defeated, crushed, conquered, humiliated) in front of them. They shall always obtain victory in war. There is no doubt about it (8-9).

न तेषां दुष्कृतं किञ्चित्संस्थास्यति सुरोत्तमाः । नापदश्च तथा तेषां प्रभवन्ति कदाचन ।१०॥

सम्प्राप्नोति नरः सौख्यं मत्प्रसादान्मदरुचकः । अन्ते प्राप्स्यति मल्लोकं सत्यं सत्यं न संशयः ।११॥

Oh the most exalted Gods! All their sins and their consequences (bad results) are eliminated, and no adversities ever appear to torment them (10).

Those persons who worship me get happiness by my grace and benevolence, and they acquire my divine abode at the end (i.e. upon their death). This is the truth; there is no doubt about it (11).

अश्वमेधादियज्ञानां कोटिनामपि यत्फलम् । तत्फलं समवाप्नोति कृत्वार्चा वार्षिकीमिमाम् ।१२॥

मोहाद्वा द्वेषतो वापि यो मामस्मिन्महोत्सवे । न पूजयति मूढात्मा स भवेद्योगिनीपशुः ।१३॥

The reward of doing millions of ‘Ashwamedh Yagyas’ (horse sacrifices) is obtained by anyone who performs this annual worship of mine (12).

Under the influence of ‘Moha’ (delusions, misconceptions, ignorance etc.) or due to ‘Dwesh’ (enmity, ill-will, hatred, jealousy, malice, envy etc.), if anyone foolishly does not worship me during this festive season (of Navratra, or the nine auspicious nights), he shall become fodder for my Yoginis (i.e. they shall be punished by my female attendants called Yoginis) (13).

पूजयिष्यन्ति ये मर्त्ये स्वर्गे वापि रसातले । तेषां परं हि तुष्टाहं वाञ्छितानि दिने दिने ।१४॥

संविधास्यामि सर्वाणि सत्यमेव सुरोत्तमाः । सात्त्विकं भावमाश्रित्य येऽर्चयिष्यन्ति मां जनाः ।१५॥

न तैर्बलिः प्रदातव्यो न देयं सामिषान्नकम् । कर्तवया मे महापूजा मम प्रीतिमभीप्सुभिः ।१६॥

Those who worship me anywhere— in the netherworld called the Rasatal, in the terrestrial world called the Martya (mortal world), or in the celestial world called Swarga (the heaven)— I shall be pleased with and benevolent upon them, and I shall fulfil all their desires on a day-to-day basis (i.e. regularly and steadily) (14).

Oh the most exalted Gods! Those who worship me with a ‘Satwic’ tendency (i.e. with a noble, selfless, pure, cool, righteous, contented and compassionate temperament of mind), should not offer animal sacrifices or offer flesh/meat as an offering of food to me. If the worship is done with devotion, sincerity and humility, there is no doubt that I shall be very pleased with those who have the desire to please me (15-16).

निरामिषैस्तु नैवेद्येः स्तोत्रैर्वेदाङ्गसम्भवैः । विपुलैर्जपयज्ञैश्च विप्राणां भोजनैस्तथा ।१७॥

सुसमाहितचित्तैस्तु हिंसादिपरिवर्जितैः । राजसं भावमापन्नैर्मम सम्प्रीतये तु वै ।१८॥

कर्तव्येयं महापूजा नानाबलिभिरादरात् । छागमेषादिमहिषैः सामिषान्नैस्तथैव च ।१९॥

स्तोत्रैस्तु जपयज्ञाथैर्विप्राणामपि भोजनैः । दुष्टशत्रुविनाशादिधनधान्यादिवर्धनम् ।२०॥

My worship should be done by the offering of sweet-meats not involving any form of violence and cruelty, i.e. it should be vegetarian in nature. It should be accompanied by the

singing/chanting of the sacred hymns from the Vedas and Vedangs (the various branches of the main Vedas), the repetition of holy Mantras (a process called doing Japa), and the performance of various relevant fire sacrifices called Yagya. After that, Brahmins should be fed with the sanctified food.

Those with a Rajsic tendency of mind (i.e. with the second quality producing worldly desires, passions, stormy nature, expansion tendencies, desire to sustain etc.) can also please me with their worship (17-18). They (who wish to worship me according to the Rajsic procedure) should do my great worship by adopting various means and measures such as offering of various (animal) sacrifices involving goat, buffalo, pig etc., and offering their meat as food during the sacrifice (19). Besides that, they should recite the various ‘Stotras’ (devotional hymns), do ‘Japa’ (repetition of Mantras), perform Yagya (do fire sacrifices), and offer food to Brahmins. Such sort of worship offered to me by them destroys their wicked enemies, and provide them with enhanced wealth, prosperity and fame (20).

संग्रामे विजयं पुत्रदाराद्यैहिकमुत्तमम् । परत्र च परं सौख्यं सम्प्राप्य च परं पदम् ॥२१॥

तामसी तु ममार्चा या नैतयोस्तुल्यता तु सा । अतः सा तु न कर्तव्या शान्तैश्च ज्ञानशालिभिः ॥२२॥

Those who worship me by the above mentioned methods obtain victory in war, acquire excellent wife and sons, and after having enjoyed all the pleasures and comforts of the sense objects pertaining to this world, they become eligible to attain the supreme state of existence, or a grand stature obtained by ascending to my abode, and obtaining bliss and happiness as a consequence (21).

Those who wish to worship me by the ‘Tamsic’ method (3rd and most lowly form of worship; it is indicative of a mind which is pervert, wicked, violence loving, depraved, sensual etc.) should know that it has no scriptural or religious sanctity, no validity and no auspicious effects whatsoever as compared to these two forms of worship described above (i.e. the Satwic and the Rajsic forms of worship). Hence, peace loving, erudite and wise persons should not worship me in the Tamsic way (22).

[Note to verse nos. 18-22 :- (i) There are basically three categories of people; these categories are different from the four castes in the society. While the latter depends on the birth in a particular caste, the former has more to do with the mental setup, qualities, temperament and outlook of the person. The former three categories of inborn nature and inherent temperaments prevalent in all the creatures in greater or lesser quantum are the following :- Satwic, Rajsic and Tamsic. The Satwic category is the best and it encompasses such noble characteristics as, inter-alia, coolness of head, peace, contentedness, humility, devotion, wisdom, mercy, compassion, creativity, selflessness, service, righteousness, virtuousness, holiness and nobility of thought and action etc. The second category Rajsic covers such qualities as passions, stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, worldly desires, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, desire to sustain etc. The third quality called Tamsic is the most degrading and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person leading to sins, vices, perversions, greed, avarice, haughtiness, pride, lust, attach-

ments, yearnings, intoxication, wild behaviour, promiscuity, evils, utter disregard for anything which is righteous, ethical and noble etc.— i.e. in brief, immoral, denigrating and depraved behaviour marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness of misdemeanours.

(ii) In ancient Indian tradition, the kings and the ruling class belonged to the caste called 'Kshatriya', and their main job/vocation was giving protection and providing sustenance to their subjects belonging to the other three castes. To do this, they had to wage wars—some in defense and some in aggression because they wanted to expand their area of influence. But wars nevertheless involved bloodshed which any peace loving soul of Satwic tendency would abhor. So a king could be Satwic by temperament but Rajsic by occupation and compulsion. Those who were Satwic were prescribed the non-violent method of worship and sacrifices to Goddess Durga during peace times as described in verse nos. 15-17½, while those of Rajsic bearings were to do worship requiring animal sacrifices as described in verse nos. 17-21, specially in preparation for and during wars. Even today it is observed that the army is non-vegetarian in its food habits because the soldiers cannot kill their enemies in battle—as is required of them because of their vocation as a soldier—if they avoid killing and instead show mercy and compassion on their enemies. Perhaps this is the reason why meat-eating is never looked down in army; in fact, it is a normal diet amongst the Kshatriya class. Though mercy and compassion are indeed supremely good qualities, they are not meant for the battlefield unless the enemy surrenders and relents. The world would have been a 'heaven-on-earth' if this quality prevailed in the battlefield! However, since Sri Ram was at war with a vicious, unforgiving, cruel and formidable enemy (Ravana), and a lot was at stake (e.g. the very existence of the world and its peace), and it was a no-holds-barred, fierce and uncompromising war, the second category of worship—animal sacrifice symbolising the death of the enemy—was prescribed for him by the Goddess. And this was precisely what Brahma and other Gods did as is evident in verse nos. 33.

Verse nos. 21-22 clearly states that the worship should not have an element of worldly sensual enjoyment because drinking and feasting on meat is the Tamsic form of worship which is specially prohibited by the Goddess. The main thrust in worship is the element of purity of thought, action and object of worship, not merely satisfying sensual pleasures and gratification of the taste buds on the pretext of worship, whether they be with devotion or not.

Further, the Brahmins were not supposed to eat meat, so the inference of verse nos. 19-20 is clear that the animals sacrificed were not meant for human consumption, but were to be offered to animals or birds of prey such as dogs/jackals/vultures etc. It is wrongly interpreted that the meat offered during the sacrifice was meant for human consumption. Because, had it been so, Brahmins would have surely objected to it. The Goddess Durga herself bars such food and practices in verse no.15, 16 and 22.]

यजध्वं रामचन्द्रस्य संग्रामे जयहेतवे । रिपोर्निधनमिच्छन्तो महिषैश्छागमेषकैः ॥२३॥

पूजयध्वं प्रतिदिनं शुक्ला सा नवमी सुराः । महानवम्यां छागादिबलिभिर्विपुलैरहम् ॥२४॥

For the victory of Sri Ram in the war and the death of his enemy— a desire that all of you have— you must worship me daily till the 9th day of the bright lunar fortnight. Oh Gods! On the 9th day called 'Mahanavmi', a sacrifice of goat etc. should be offered to me (because of the fact that Sri Ram belongs to the Kshtriya class, and this is the time of war. See note to verse no.22 above.) (23-24).

युष्माभिः पूजितव्या वै शत्रुविध्वंसकारिणी । ततस्तुष्टा महावीरं रावणं लोककण्टकम् ॥२५॥

अजेयं शत्रुभिः संख्ये पातयिष्यामि निश्चितम् । नवम्यां बलिदानेन प्रीतिर्मे महती भवेत् ॥२६॥

You should offer worship to me who am the crusher and vanquisher of enemies. When I shall be pleased and satisfied with that worship, I shall slay that most brave, strong, valiant and valorous as well as invincible and undefeatable enemy Ravana who is like a thorn for the whole world. This is certain. The sacrifice offered to me on the 9th day (Mahanavmi) gives immense pleasure and satisfaction to me (25-26).

अतो देयो बलिस्तत्र मम प्रीतिमभीप्सुभिः । भक्त्या वाप्यक्ष बाभक्त्या जानता वाप्यजानता ॥२७॥

कर्तव्या वार्षिकी पूजाऽवश्यं लोकत्रये मम । बलिश्चापि प्रदातव्यः प्रत्यहं सुरसत्तमाः ॥२८॥

Such offering made to me with devotion and reverence is very pleasing to me. Oh the exalted Gods! Whether one is a devotee or not, a wise person or not, all the creatures of the three worlds (i.e. the entire world) should worship me annually by offering of sacrifices (27-28).

असमर्थैरपि सदा नवम्यां देय एव हि । यथाष्टाम्यां बलिर्देवा महायज्ञफलप्रदः ॥२९॥

महाष्टाम्यां मम प्रीत्यै उपवासः सुरोत्तमाः । कर्तव्यः पुत्रकामैस्तु लोकैस्त्रैलोक्यवासिभिः ॥३०॥

Even as the offering of sacrifices on the 8th day (of the bright lunar fortnight of the month of Ashwin) gives rewards which are equivalent to the performance of great sacrifices (called Mahayagya), a similar benefit is obtained by offering of sacrifices on the 9th day as well (29).

Oh the most exalted Gods! The worship and sacrifices offered to me on the 8th day gives immense satisfaction to me. Those in the three worlds (i.e. the whole world) who are desirous of having sons should fast on this day (30).

अवश्यं भविता पुत्रस्तेषां सर्वगुणान्वितः । पुत्रवद्भिर्न कर्तव्य उपवासस्तु तद्दिने ॥३१॥

अष्टम्यामुपवासात् नवम्यां बलिदानतः । फलं महत्तरं ज्ञेयमश्वमेधादियागतः ॥३२॥

By observing fast, they get a virtuous son endowed with all the good qualities one expects from a good son. Those who already have a son (i.e. do not desire to have more) should not observe fasting on that day (31).

The great fruits (rewards, benefits, blessings) obtained by doing fasting on the 8th day and offering sacrifices and worships on the 9th day should be regarded as being greater than (or better than, superior to) doing the 'Ashwamedh Yagya' etc. (horse sacrifices)' (32).

श्री महादेव उवाच

एवं निशम्य वचनं जगदम्बिकाया ब्रह्मादयः सुरगणा जगदीश्वरीं ताम् ।

शत्रोर्जयाय बलिभिर्विधैर्विधानाद्भक्त्यार्चयन्नुदिनं नवमीदिनान्तम् ॥३३॥

Lord Shiva said to Narad— 'Hearing these words of Jagdamba (literally the mother of the world), Brahma and other Gods began worshipping the Goddess daily by offering sacrifices to her and observing all the minutest details of ritualistic worship with due devotion and reverence and pleading/praying humbly to her till the 9th day called 'Navami' (i.e. the 9th day of the bright lunar fortnight of the Hindu month of Ashwin) for obtaining victory over the enemy' (33).

Thus ends Canto 46 of Devi Puran Mahābhagwat-Rāmāyan describing the good effects of Goddess' worship; how and when to do it.

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Chapter 13; Canto 47

Slaying of Kumbhakarn, Atikaya & Meghnad; Sri Ram's fervent worship of the Goddess; Ravana's death and Sri Ram's victory

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

इन्द्राद्यास्त्रिदशाः स्वर्गे मर्त्ये च परमेश्वरः । पूजयित्वा महादेवीं सर्वलोकमहेश्वरीम् ॥१॥

संग्रामे पातयामास विशिखै रावणानुजम् । हताश्च वानरैर्घोरा राक्षसा लक्षकोटयः ॥२॥

Lord Shiva said to Narad— 'The Gods in the heaven and the supreme Lord Parmeshwar (i.e., Sri Ram) in the mortal world (the earth)— all of them worshipped the great Goddess and mother of the whole world, the great Goddess Durga (1).

In the battle, he (Sri Ram) killed (literally fell to the ground, pulled down, trounced) the younger brother of Ravana (i.e. Kumbhakarn). The fierce monkeys also killed thousands and millions of demons (2).

राक्षसैश्च हताः संख्ये वानरा बहुकोटयः । प्रावर्तयन्नदीं घोरां शोणितौघतरङ्गिणीम् ॥३॥

मुण्डमाला च विपुला बभासे तत्र नारद । श्रुत्वा तु रावणो युद्धे निहतं भ्रातरं बहु ॥४॥

The demons also killed many millions of monkeys. As a result, a river of blood swirled and flowed there (3), while numerous skulls rolled everywhere. Ravana heard about the death of his brother (Kumbhakarn) in the war (4).

रुरोद शोकसंतप्तहृदयोऽथ मुमोह च । ततोऽतिकायो बलवांस्तमाश्वास्य महारणे ॥५॥

चकार यात्रां कृष्णायां दशम्यां भीमविक्रमः । रामस्तु समरे हत्वा कुम्भकर्णं महाबलम् ॥६॥

प्रययौ भगवान् ब्रह्मा देवीं यत्रार्चयन्मुने । प्रणम्य च महात्मनं ब्रह्माणं जगतः पतिम् ॥७॥

He (Ravana) wept bitterly and was overwhelmed with immense dismay, anguish, distress and sorrows. He fainted due to shock.

Thereafter, the demon Atikai— who was powerful, most strong and valiant as well as ferocious and relentless in battle (5)— consoled and reassured Ravana. That most brave one (Atikai) started for the battlefield on the 10th day of the dark fortnight of the moon.

Meanwhile, after having killed Kumbhakarn (verse no. 2) in the battle, the most valiant and strong Sri Ram (6) went to the place where Lord Brahma was worshipping the Goddess. There, he bowed before the great Brahma who is the Lord of the world (7).

कथयामास संग्रामे निहतं रावणानुजम् । ब्रह्मापि कथयामास देव्या यत्कथितं पुरा ॥८॥

पूजाविधानं शत्रूणां निधनं च दिने दिने । तच्छ्रुत्वा वानरैर्नानाविधिं पूजोपहारकम् ॥९॥

He (Sri Ram) informed him (Brahma) about the death of the younger brother of Ravana (i.e. Kumbhakarn) in the battle. Brahma too informed him what the Goddess had foretold earlier (in Cantos 45-46) (8) regarding the methods of worship, its daily observance, and other relevant matters pertaining to the killing of the enemy. Hearing it, he (Sri Ram) asked the monkeys to bring all the necessary items needed to do worship of the Goddess in a proper way (9).

आनाय्य भगवान् रामो दशम्यां प्रातरेव हि । पूजां प्रवर्तयन्भक्त्या बलिभिर्विपुलैरपि ॥१०॥

प्रणिपत्य महादेवीं पुनर्युद्धाय निर्ययौ । अतिकायस्तु दुर्धर्षः कम्पयन्धरणीतलम् ॥११॥

चालयन् सकलां पृथ्वीं रथनेमिस्वनेन च । समायातोऽपि विपुलैः सैनिकैः परिवारितः ॥१२॥

Then, on the morning of the 10th day (of the dark fortnight of Ashwin), Sri Ram worshipped the Goddess with great devotion and offered ritualistic sacrifices to her (10).

Then he bowed before the great Goddess and went for battle once again. Meanwhile, the most formidable and ferocious Atikai shook the earth (11) and made it tremble as his chariot rolled down clattering noisily into the battlefield, accompanied by a large number of demon soldiers (12).

तस्मिन् समागते घोरं राक्षसानां दुरात्मनाम् । प्रावर्तत महायुद्धं वानरैर्भयदायकम् ॥१३॥

गदाभिः परिघैर्वृक्षैः पाषाणैर्वानरर्षभाः । राक्षसान् पातयामासुः शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ॥१४॥

शस्त्रास्त्रैर्विधैस्तद्वानरानपि राक्षसाः । संग्रामे पातयामासुर्महाबलपराक्रमाः ॥१५॥

As soon as he (Atikai) came, a fierce and horrifying but gallantly fought battle ensued between the monkeys and the sinful and wicked demons (13). They (the monkeys) used battle clubs, spears/spikes/lancets, large trees and huge boulders/rocks to attack the enemy, and they killed hundreds and thousands of demons (14).

Similarly, the most strong and powerful demons used various types of weapons, arms and armaments to counter attack them, and fell their most gallant, strong and brave opponents (the monkeys) in the battlefield (15).

ततो धनुः समादाय भ्रातरौ रामलक्ष्मणौ । पातयामासतुः संख्ये राक्षसान्भीमविक्रमान् ॥१६॥

स चापि राक्षसश्रेष्ठो निनदन् समराजिरे । वानरान्पातयामास शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ॥१७॥

Then Sri Ram and Laxman took up their bows and felled (killed) the innumerable demons—who were exceptionally strong, brave, powerful and valiant—in the battlefield (16).

At this, the superior most demon (Atikai) was annoyed and he made a thunderous roar in the battlefield as he fell (killed) hundreds of thousands of monkey warriors in retaliation (17).

ततः समभवद्युद्धमतुलं लोमहर्षणम् । रामलक्ष्मणयोस्तेन राक्षसेन दुरात्मना ॥१८॥
प्रहस्तप्रमुखाश्चान्ये ये च वीरा महाबलाः । तैः सार्धं वानरेन्द्रेण युद्धं चासीत्पुदारुणम् ॥१९॥

Soon, a most thrilling and hair-raising duel ensued between that evil demon on the one hand, and Sri Ram and Laxman on the other (18).

The other brave and strong chief warriors, such as Prahast etc., started fighting ferociously and viciously with the king of monkeys (i.e. Sugriv) (19).

यथा प्रवृत्तिं तेषां तु युद्धं घोरतरं महत् । दिवारान्त्रं मुनिश्रेष्ठ पश्यतां भयदायकम् ॥२०॥
यथा नालोकितं कैश्चिद्देवैर्वा यक्षकिन्नरैः । कदाचिदन्तरिक्षे च कदाचिद्धरणीतले ॥२१॥

Oh the most exalted sage (i.e. Narad)! In consonant with the natural temperament and bearing of those demons, that most horrifying, awful, gallantly fought and ferocious war raged on day and night continuously. It instilled fear and terror in those who beheld it (20).

None of the Gods, Yakshas (semi gods; the legendary guards of Kuber's treasury) or Kinnars (celestial dancers and singers; semi gods with the head of a horse) had ever witnessed such a spectacular and devastating war being fought either in the heavens or on the surface of the earth (21).

महास्त्रशस्त्रविक्षेपैर्गदासिपरिघोत्तमैः । त्रिशूलैर्पट्टिशैर्वापि बभूव तुमुलं महत् ॥२२॥
दिनेऽपि समभूद्रात्रिर्निशीथेऽप्यभवद्दिनम् । अनभ्रेऽप्यभवद्दृष्टिर्वायुश्च तुमुलो ववौ ॥२३॥
वज्रावपातः शतशो बभूव समराङ्गणे । एवं समभवद्युद्धं दिनत्रयमनुत्तमम् ॥२४॥

Great weapons of war— such as missiles, catapults, excellent war maces, batons and clubs, swords of various types, spikes, lancets and tridents, battering rams etc.— were liberally used in the great war (22).

It became dark in the day and it became bright in the middle of the night. It rained without clouds in the sky, and a strong wind blew with a howling sound (23).

There were thunderbolt strikes hundreds of times in the battlefield. In this way, the war continued uninterrupted for three consecutive days (24).

ततो रात्रौ त्रयोदश्यां चतुर्थेऽहनि लक्ष्मणः । जघान तं महावीरमतिकार्यं महेषुभिः ॥२५॥
अन्ये च राक्षसश्रेष्ठा राघवेण महात्मना । निहताः समरे केचिद्धानरैरपि चापरे ॥२६॥

On the 4th day of battle with Atikai, i.e. on the 13th day of the dark lunar fortnight, Laxman was able to slay the most courageous and brave, most valiant and valorous Atikai in the night using a volley of most potent arrows (25).

The great soul Raghav (i.e. Sri Ram) killed many other great demons in the battle. Some demons were killed by the monkeys (26).

हनुमदङ्गदाद्यैश्च निहता बहवो रणे । दुद्रुवुश्च भयात्केचिद्रामो हृष्टमना बभौ ॥२७॥
वानराः स्मूर्महाहर्षाश्चक्रुर्जयजयध्वनिम् । बभूव नभसः पुष्पवृष्टिश्च महती ततः ॥२८॥

Many other demons were killed by Hanuman, Angad etc. in the battlefield. Some demons

were so terrified that they fled from the battlefield. Sri Ram was extremely delighted (27).

The monkeys were also exhilarated and ecstatic; they applauded the victory in a jubilant exultation of 'Jai-Jai' (which is an exclamatory word signifying triumphant victory over the enemy; it also means a spontaneous chorus of such applauding words as 'hail, hail'; 'glory, glory!'). There was a heavy shower of flowers raining down from the sky (28).

रामोऽपि भ्रातरं दोर्भ्यामालिङ्ग्य परमादृतः । मर्ध्यवघ्नाय हृष्टात्मा ब्रह्मणोऽन्तिकमन्वगात् ॥२९॥

प्रातः सम्पूजयामास देवीं बिल्वे सुरेश्वरीम् । ततः प्रणम्य भूयोऽगाद्युद्धाय रणमूर्धनि ॥३०॥

Sri Ram most affectionately embraced his brother (Laxman) by his outstretched arms and showed due honour to him by smelling his head (as a gesture of honour and respect, of brotherly love and affection, and to show thanks to him).

After that, he went to Brahma with a cheerful and delighted heart (to inform him about the good news of Atikai's death) (29).

He (Sri Ram) worshipped Goddess Sureshwari (the Goddess of the Gods) the next morning under the Vilwa Tree (the wood apple tree), bowed reverentially before her, and then came back to the battlefield (with renewed vigour and enthusiasm). [This was the 14th day of the dark lunar fortnight of Ashwin] (30).

रावणोऽथ समाकर्ण्य निहतं तं महाबलम् । रक्षायै विनियोज्यैव पुरस्य तनयं मुने ॥३१॥

मेघनादं महावीरं स्वयं युद्धाय निर्ययौ । तदाऽऽसीत्सुमहद्युद्धं भयदं ह्यतुलं मुने ॥३२॥

रक्षसां वानराणां च यमराष्ट्रविवर्धनम् । रामेण लक्ष्मणेनापि युद्धं तस्याभवन्महत् ॥३३॥

Oh sage (Narad)! When Ravana heard about the death of that brave demon (Atikai), he appointed his brave and valiant son Meghnad to take care of the security of the city and protect it, and he himself came out for battle. A most gallantly fought, fierce and horrifying battle ensued (31-32) between the demons and the monkeys. It was so slaughtering and caused so many deaths that it literally expanded the kingdom of Yam, the patron God of death, i.e. so many monkeys and demons died that the population of the kingdom of Yam was greatly enhanced. A terrible battle also commenced directly between Ravana on one side, and Sri Ram and Laxman on the other (33).

तत्र वीक्ष्य समीपे तु विभीषणममर्षतः ॥३४॥

मयदत्तां महाशक्तिं जग्राह स निशाचरः । जाज्वल्यमानां तां शक्तिं विभीषणवधोद्यताम् ॥३५॥

When he (i.e. Ravana) saw Vibhishan standing by their side (i.e. near Ram and Laxman), he was extremely peeved and exasperated; he became furious with anger and indignation. That demon lifted the 'Mahashakti', the great and potent weapon empowered with the quality of infallibility and which was given to him by the demon 'Maye Danav', to kill Vibhishan with it (34-35).

लक्ष्मणस्त्रातुकामस्तं सम्मुखे तस्य संस्थितः । सा शक्तिस्तेन निःक्षिप्ता प्रबिभेद रसातलम् ॥३६॥

लक्ष्मणो मूर्च्छितश्चापि पपात धरणीतले । तं समादातुकामः स लक्ष्मणं राक्षसेश्वरः ॥३७॥

पस्पर्श बाहुभिः क्षिप्रं क्रुद्धस्तं पवनात्मजः । मुष्टिना ताडयामास सुदृढं विपुलोरसि ॥३८॥

To protect him (Vibhishan), Laxman stood before him like a human shield. That 'Shakti'

(which was a form of energised missile) wounded him (Laxman) and entered the earth (36).

Laxman fainted and fell to the ground by its impact. Then the king of demons (Ravana) tried to lift Laxman up in his arms with a desire to take him away (37).

But no sooner did he (Ravana) touch the latter (Laxman), the son of the Wind God (i.e. Hanuman) swiftly punched him on his broad chest angrily with his clenched fist (38).

स तेन ताडितो वीरः पपात रुधिरं वमन् । मूर्च्छितो घूर्णनयनो निश्चेताः स्वरथोपरि ॥३९॥

ततः संज्ञामनुप्राप्य धनुरुद्यम्य वेगतः । मारुतिं हन्तुकामोऽसावभ्यधावत रावणः ॥४०॥

With the fierce blow (of Hanuman), that brave one (Ravana) vomited blood, and his eyes turned in circles as he swooned. He fainted and collapsed in his chariot (39).

When he regained consciousness, he lifted his formidable bow and dashed towards Maruti (Hanuman) to kill him (40).

ततः संवीक्ष्य दुर्धर्षं मारुतेरन्तकोपमम् । श्रीरामो धनुरुद्यम्य रावणं चेदमब्रवीत् ॥४१॥

अद्य राक्षसराज त्वां निशितैः सायकोत्तमैः । पातयिष्यामि दुष्टात्मन्यदि नोत्सृजसे रणम् ॥४२॥

इत्युक्त्वा स महाबाहुर्बाणं धनुषित सन्दधे । ततो भयाद्रणं त्यक्त्वा रावणः पुरमाययौ ॥४३॥

Thence, seeing that he (Ravana) was eager and determined to somehow kill Maruti (Hanuman) at any cost, Sri Ram lifted his own formidable bow and said to that ferocious Ravana (41), 'Oh king of demons! Oh the sinful one! If you do not run away, i.e. beat a hasty retreat and escape from the battlefield forthwith, I shall kill you by my most excellent and potent arrows' (42).

Then Sri Ram mounted his arrow on the bow, seeing which Ravana was so terrified with fear that he ran away from the battlefield and went back to his city (42).

तमाश्रास्य रणे प्रायादिन्द्रजिह्नीमविक्रमः । तेनाभवन्महद्युद्धं लक्ष्मणस्य महात्मनः ॥४४॥

सुघोरं भयदं सर्वलोकसम्मोहकारकम् । ततो रात्रावमोघास्त्रैर्लक्ष्मणस्तं दुरासदम् ॥४५॥

पातयामास संग्रामे त्वमायां मुनिपुङ्गव । ततो विलप्य बहुधा देवान्तकमुखैर्वृतः ॥४६॥

Thereafter, after having consoled Ravana, the extremely valiant and valorous Indrajit (Meghnad, his son) proceeded towards the battlefield. There was a terrible duel between him and the great Laxman (44).

That duel was fought most fiercely and gallantly between the two warriors. It was very fearsome, awe-inspiring and mysterious for all those who witnessed it. Then, during the night of the dark moon of Ashwin, Laxman used his infallible and specially empowered (charged) formidable weapon to kill and fell that invincible and fierce demon in the battlefield.

Oh the most exalted sage (Narad)! He (Ravana) most gravely mourned for him (Meghnad, his son) in various ways. Thereafter, he was surrounded by a number of demons, such as Devantak and other chief demon warriors (45-46).

स्वयं पुनः समायातः संग्रामे राक्षसेश्वरः । प्रतिपत्तिथिमारभ्य यावच्च नवमीतिथिम् ॥४७॥

बभूव तुमुलं युद्धं रामरावणयोर्महतं । अतुल्यं वचनातीतं सर्वलोकभयङ्करम् ॥४८॥

तत्र षष्ठीतिथिर्यावत्तावत्सैन्यं दिने दिने । विनष्टं राक्षसेन्द्रस्य विपुलं संख्ययोज्झितम् ॥४९॥

The king of demons reappeared in the battlefield accompanied (literally, surrounded) by the chief demon warriors. Starting from the 'Pratipada day' (i.e. the 1st day of the bright lunar fortnight of the month of Ashwin) till the 9th day called 'Navami' of the same fortnight (47), a most awe-inspiring, formidable, unmatched, fearsome, no-holds-barred, closely fought, gallant and indescribable war raged between Sri Ram and Ravana, a war that was at once most horrifying and unrelenting in its ferocity and viciousness (48).

By the time the 6th day arrived, innumerable warriors of the demon king (Ravana) were being eliminated (i.e. destroyed, decimated or killed) on a daily basis (49).

तस्यां षष्ठ्यां विनिर्माय मृण्मयीं प्रतिमां शुभाम् । सायं कृत्वाधिवासं तु ब्रह्मा लोकपितामहः ॥५०॥

पत्नीं प्रवेष्ट्यां सप्तम्यां देवीं तां समपूजयत् । पत्नीप्रवेशमात्रेण सर्वसंहारकारिणी ॥५१॥

रावणस्य वधार्थाय श्रीरामधनुराविशत् । महाष्टम्यां ततो देवीं प्रातरेव जगत्पिता ॥५२॥

On that 6th day of the bright lunar fortnight of Ashwin, Brahma, the grandfather of creation, made an auspicious clay idol of the Goddess and consecrated it that evening with due humility and devotion (50).

He then duly worshipped the consecrated idol on the 7th day. Merely by invoking her in a symbolic manner (by means of worshipping of an idol), the all-destroying (51) Goddess (Durga) subtly entered the bow of Sri Ram with the express purpose of killing Ravana. Thereafter, on the 8th day, the father of the world (i.e. Brahma, the creator) worshipped the Goddess in the morning (52).

भक्त्या सम्पूजयामास विपलैरुपहारकैः । ततः प्रसन्ना तस्मिन् स दिनसंधौ महेश्वरी ॥५३॥

प्रविष्ट्या रामचन्द्रेषु रावणस्य शिरांसि च । प्रविच्छेद मुनिश्रेष्ठ शतधा स रणाजिरे ॥५४॥

He (Brahma) worshipped the Goddess with great devotion and utmost humility in a number of ways by making different types of offerings. The Goddess was pleased with that worship, and during the noon time, Goddess Maheshwari (53) entered the arrow of Sri Ram. Oh the most exalted sage (Narad)! Then he (Sri Ram) shattered the head of Ravana into hundreds of pieces by using that arrow in the battlefield (54).

सोऽपि भीतो भगवतीं सस्मार दशकन्धरः । यदा तत्याज बाणान्स राघवो निधनेच्छया ॥५५॥

तस्माद्भूयो बभूवुश्च देहमात्राच्छिरांसि च । न जहौ समरे प्राणान् छेदितोऽपि महेषुभिः ॥५६॥

चकार तुमुलं युद्धं पूर्वाहणे नवमीदिने । अतीवभयदं सर्वदेवानां दिवि पश्यतम् ॥५७॥

After that, when Sri Ram shot volleys of arrows at him with a wish to bring about his final death, the 10-headed one (i.e. Ravana) became so terrified with fear that he too remembered and tried to invoke Goddess Bhagwati to protect him (55).

As a result, new heads immediately cropped up from his beheaded torso and he did not die in the battlefield in spite of him being pierced, perforated and peppered by Sri Ram's arrows (56).

On the next day, that is on the 9th morning, Ravana saw the Gods standing and watching the war from the sky. (This made him very vehement, wrathful, annoyed, peeved

and extremely exasperated). So he vehemently fought fearlessly and most gallantly that day a battle that was extremely bone-chilling, terrible, fierce and horrifying to the core (57).

महानवम्यां तस्यां तु ब्रह्मा लोकपितामहः । देवीं सम्पूजयामास नानाबलिभिरादरात् ॥५८॥
 सुरम्यैर्धूपदीपाद्यैर्नैवेद्यैर्विविधैरपि । ततो देवी भगवती या विद्या मुक्तिदा स्वयम् ॥५९॥
 सैवाविद्यास्वरूपेण रावणं समुपागमत् । ततो न देवीं सस्मार न वा भक्तिञ्च तत्र वै ॥६०॥

On that 9th day called 'Mahanavmi' (of the bright lunar fortnight in the month of Ashwin), the grandfather of creation, Brahma, most reverentially and fervently worshipped the Goddess by offering numerous sacrifices to her (58) using pleasantly perfumed incense, auspicious lamps/lights, food-offerings such as sweet-meats etc. That Goddess Bhagwati, who is a personification of 'Vidya' (wisdom, erudition, sagacity, knowledge, intellect, discrimination etc.) and is the one who provides emancipation and salvation to the creatures who worship her (59), surreptitiously assumed the form of 'Avidya' (literally, the opposite of Vidya; symbolising ignorance, delusions, misconceptions, misguidance, corrupted wisdom and intellect, haughtiness, perversion, denigration of mind, et.al) and came near Ravana. She cast her magical spell of delusions upon Ravana, thereby corrupting his intellect and wisdom. By her deluding and misleading spell, he was so much overwhelmed with confusion and distraction that he, for some time, did not remember the Goddess with devotion. [That is, for some interminable moments, he forgot to remember and invoke her to give him protection. He became so proud of his own invincibility and strength of arm that he thought he could win the war without her help. And this was the opportunity that the Goddess was waiting for.] (60).

[Note :- Verse nos. 56 and 60, when read together, explain why Ravana was killed. Earlier he had remembered her, and despite the best of efforts of Sri Ram to kill him, he could not do so which is very clear from verse no. 56, whereas in verse no. 60 he made the fatal error of forgetting her. See also Chapter 8, Canto 42, verse no. 33, and chapter 2, Canto 36, verse nos. 85-87 in this context.]

तस्यासीन्मुनिशार्दूल मोहितस्य च मायया । अमर्षवशमापन्नो युयुधे राघवेण वै ॥६१॥
 ब्रह्मास्त्रजालसंघैः स दर्शयन् शक्तिमात्मनः । तथैव राघवश्चापि ब्रह्मास्त्रनिवहैर्मुने ॥६२॥

Oh great sage who is like a lion (i.e. most senior) among his peers (i.e. sage Narad)! Being ensnared by the magical, hallucinating spell of delusions cast upon him by the Goddess, Ravana became proud of his own strength, invincibility, power and valour. He exhibited his own prowess and potential in war by using a huge variety of weapons in his arsenal which were collectively called various forms of 'Brahmastras' to shower Sri Ram with them, and to cover and tie him up with them (61-62).

ताडयामास दुर्धर्षं रक्षसामधिपं रणे । एवं प्रहरतोः क्रोधात्परस्परजयैषिणोः ॥६३॥
 व्यतीतमभवन्मध्यन्दिनं श्रीरामरक्षसोः । ततोऽपराह्णे रामस्तु संध्याय परमेश्वरीम् ॥६४॥

Oh sage! Similarly, Sri Ram too continued to attack the invincible and formidable king of demons with a wide range of weapons in the battlefield. In this way, both of them angrily

fought with each other in order to win victory over his opponent. By and by, the middle of the day passed (i.e. noon passed and now it was afternoon). Thence, during the afternoon hours, Sri Ram finally invoked the supreme Goddess Parmeshewari (63-64).

प्रणम्य प्रार्थयामास वधार्थं तस्य रक्षसः । ब्रह्मापि प्रणिपत्येनां देवीं भक्त्या पुनः पुनः ॥६५॥

प्रार्थयामास नाशाय रावणस्य दुरात्मनः । ततो देवी स्वयं प्रादादमोघं शस्त्रमुत्तमम् ॥६६॥

He (Sri Ram) bowed reverentially before her and prayed fervently to her to kill the demon. Meanwhile, Brahma also prostrated before the great Goddess repeatedly with due devotion and sincerity (65) for the destruction of the sinful, pervert and wicked-hearted Ravana. The Goddess then herself provided the excellent and the most potent as well as infallible weapon to him (that should be used for the final demise of Ravana) (66).

वधार्थं राक्षसेन्द्रस्य ज्वलत्कालाग्नितेजसम् । ब्रह्मा तदस्त्रमानीय प्रीत्या परमया युतः ॥६७॥

श्रीरामाय ददौ शीघ्रं रावणस्य विघातिने । सर्वशक्तिमयं चारुवेगं कालान्तकोपमम् ॥६८॥

That weapon was specifically meant for the killing of the demon king. It was glowing and spewing fire which resembled the all-annihilating fire of the dooms-day . Brahma immediately came to Sri Ram and most delightedly gave it to him for the express purpose of destruction of Ravana. That weapon was majestic and all-powerful; it was most swift and similar to the wrath of Kalantak (who is the Yam God, the God of death). [Yam is called Kalantak because he brings about the end of the world.] (67-68).

ज्वलन्तं तेजसा वीक्ष्य मुमुदे रघुनन्दनः । ततः संस्मृत्य तां देवीं तदस्त्रं राघवो मुने ॥६९॥

सन्ध्यायाकर्णकोदण्डं तूर्णं चिक्षेप तं प्रति । ततस्तदस्त्रं निर्भिद्य हृदयं दुष्टचेतसः ॥७०॥

Seeing that formidable weapon which was burning and glowing with radiant energy, Raghunandan (Sri Ram) became extremely exhilarated (because now he was certain that he would be able to kill the demon). Oh sage (Narad)! Thereafter, Raghav (Sri Ram) invoked the Goddess (69) and aimed the weapon at Ravana, pulled the string of his formidable bow right back upto his ears, and finally shot that weapon at Ravana. Soon thereafter, that weapon pierced through the heart of that fellow who was evil and pervert as well as whose thoughts were vile and wicked (70).

प्राणाम् जग्राह वेगेन विवेश च धरातलम् । ततः पपात संग्रामे रथाद्धेमपरिष्कृतात् ॥७१॥

पश्यतां सर्वदेवानां रावणो देवकण्ठकः । चालयन्वसुधां सर्वां क्षोभयन् सरितां पतिम् ॥७२॥

It ended his life and swiftly entered the earth. Thence, he (Ravana) fell down from his golden chariot and collapsed on the battlefield (71) even as all the Gods watched in stunning amazement. When Ravana, who was like a thorn for the Gods, fell, the earth shook violently, and the ocean churned, heaved and splashed as if agitated and greatly tormented by some calamitous subterrenean volcanic occurrence or an earthquake (71-72).

त्रासयन् सर्वभूतानि राक्षसांश्च विषादयन् । वानरा हर्षसम्पन्नान्श्चक्रुर्जयजयध्वनिम् ॥७३॥

त्रैलोक्यवासिनश्चान्ये हते तस्मिन् दुरात्मनि । बभूव पुष्पवृष्टिश्च रामोपरि सुगन्धिदा ॥७४॥

All the creatures became mortally terrified when the earth shook, and the demons were overwhelmed with remorse and sorrow on the death of Ravana, their benefactor and king. All the monkeys and other residents of the three worlds (the subterranean, terrestrial and celestial worlds) became exhilarated and ecstatic with tremendous joy, and all of them broke out in a spontaneous chorus of 'Glory-glory; Hail-hail'! Sri Ram was showered with a torrent of fragrant flowers raining down from the sky (73-74).

रामाज्ञया तु देवेन्द्रो ववर्षाप्यमृतं यदा । तदा सञ्जीविता भूयो वानरा ये हता रणे ॥७५॥

विभीषणस्तु बहुधा भ्रातृशोकेन दुःखितः । रुरोद सान्त्वयामास तं रामो भगवान् स्वयम् ॥७६॥

On the instructions of Sri Ram, Indra poured (rained) Amrit, the elixir of life, from the sky. All the monkeys who had died in the war were revived back to life (75).

Vibhishan was very distressed and anguished at the death of his brother, and mourned for him gravely. At this, Lord Ram himself consoled him (76).

रावणस्य च संस्कारं कृतवान् स विभीषणः । ततः सीतां समानीय लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितः ॥७७॥

श्रीरामो हर्षमापन्नो वानरैश्च समन्वितः । प्रायात्सम्पूजिता यत्र ब्रह्मणा जगदीश्वरी ॥७८॥

After that, Vibhishan performed the last rites of Ravana. Thence, Sita was called back (from her confinement in the Ashok grove in Lanka), and accompanied by Laxman (77) and other monkeys, Sri Ram cheerfully went to the place where Brahma was offering worship to the Goddess called Jadishwari (literally, the great Queen and the Goddess of the world) (78).

[Note :- Kumbhakarn was slayed by Sri Ram on the 9th day of the dark lunar fortnight of the Hindu month of Ashwin— verse no. 2.; Atikai on the 13th day of that fortnight— verse no. 25; and Meghnad during the dark-moon night on the 15th day of the month— verse no. 45— by Laxman. Sri Ram slayed Ravana on the 9th day in the afternoon of the bright lunar fortnight of the month of Ashwin— verse no. 58, 64-71. See also appnx no. 1.]

Thus ends Canto 47 of Devi Puran Mahābhagwat-Rāmāyan describing the epic war between Ram and demons, the death of Ravana, and the victory for Sri Ram.

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Epilogue

Chapter 14; Canto 48

Sri Ram and the Gods thank the Goddess; the necessity and importance of worship during the 'Navratra' period

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

श्रीरामस्तु ततो दवीं भक्त्या परमया युतः । प्रणम्य दण्डवद्भूमौ तुष्टाव प्रीतमानसः ॥१॥

अन्ये च त्रिदशश्रेष्ठास्तत्रागत्य महामुने । तुष्टुवुश्च महादेवीं सृष्टिस्थित्यन्तकारिणीम् ॥२॥

तैः संस्तुता महादेवी पूजिता भक्तिभावतः । विपुलैर्बलिभिः प्रीता बभूव जगदम्बिका ॥३॥

Lord Shiva said to Narad— "Then Sri Ram paid his tributes to the Goddess by prostrat-

ing before her with due devotion and humility, and prayed to her with a cheerful heart (1).

Oh great sage (Narad)! Other Gods also arrived there and together they praised the great Goddess, who creates, sustains and annihilates the world (2), with great devotion and humility. The great Goddess Jagdamba became pleased by their worship and devotion (3).

प्रहर्षश्च महानासीन्मुने त्रैलोक्यवासिनाम् । तत्र देव्या महोत्साहे स्वर्गे मर्त्ये रसातले ॥४॥

ननृतुर्वानराः सर्वे जगुर्गीतं मनोहरम् । श्रीरामो मुमुदे देव्याः प्रसादात्पूर्णमानसः ॥५॥

Oh sage (Narad)! When the Goddess was pleased as above, all the Gods and the inhabitants of the three worlds—the celestial world called the Swarga (the heaven), the terrestrial world called the Martya (mortal world), and the nether world called the Rasatal—became extremely ecstatic with joy and exhilaration (4).

The monkeys danced with joy and sang pleasant melodious songs in celebration of the unique victory. Sri Ram was exhilarated and overwhelmed with satisfaction and gratitude when he found that the Goddess was contented and happy (5).

एवं महामहोत्साहे गते तु नवमीतिथौ । श्रीरामस्य तथान्येषां देवानामपि नारद ॥६॥

दशम्यां पूजयित्वा तु प्रातरेव पितामहः । व्यसृजज्जलधौ मूर्तिं ततः स्वगृहमाययौ ॥७॥

Oh Narad! In this way, after the expiry of the day of ‘Navami’ (i.e. the 9th day of bright lunar fortnight of Ashwin), which was a day of great festivities and rejoicings (because of the great victory) by Sri Ram and the Gods (6), on the next day which was the ‘Dashmi day’ (i.e. 10th day of the bright lunar fortnight), the grandfather (Brahma) worshipped and honoured the Goddess in the morning, and then immersed the consecrated idol in the ocean. Thereafter, all of them returned to their respective abodes (the Gods to the heaven, and the creatures who lived on the surface of the earth as well as the subterrenean world to their respective habitats) (7).

लङ्केश्वरं ततश्चक्रे रामचन्द्रो विभीषणम् । ततः श्रीमान् रघुश्रेष्ठः सीतया लक्ष्मणेन च ॥८॥

पुष्पकं रथमारुह्य वानरेश्वरसंयुतः । सहितो वानरैः सर्वै राक्षसेशसमन्वितः ॥९॥

वेष्टितैस्त्रिदशैश्चापि भल्लूकैः कोटिकोटिशः । पुरःप्रवेशने यात्रां चक्रे नत्वा महेश्वरीम् ॥१०॥

Sri Ram Chandra thereafter made Vibhishan the king of Lanka. After that, the honourable one who is the best in the clan of king Raghu (Sri Ram), boarded the plane called ‘Pushpak’. He was accompanied on the plane by Sita, Laxman, the king of monkeys (Sugriv) along with other chief monkey warriors, as well as the king of demons (Vibhishan) (8-9).

Surrounded by Gods and millions of bears, Sri Ram bowed most reverentially before Goddess Maheshwari and began his journey (by air) back to his city (of Ayodhya) (10).

इत्येवं मुनिशार्दूल भगवान्पुरुषोऽव्ययः । स्वयमाराधयामास शरत्काले विधानतः ॥११॥

अन्येषां का कथा वत्स देवानां यक्षरक्षसाम् । नराणां सिद्धगन्धर्वपन्नगानां महामते ॥१२॥

Oh the senior most amongst the sages who is literally like a lion amongst his peers (i.e. sage Narad)! When Lord Ram—who is the personified form of the eternal, imperishable

and faultless Lord having neither a beginning nor an end--had worshipped, adored and honoured the Goddess himself and payed his obeisance to her during the season marked by the onset of winter, according to the established traditions (11), then oh dear son, what more can be said of others such as Gods, Yakshas (semi gods; guards of the treasury of Gods), demons, humans, Siddhas (mystics; the attained ones), Gandharvas (semi gods, celestial musician), the legendary 'Naags' (subterranean as well as terrestrial serpents and other reptiles who are said to be endowed with mystical powers), and other great souls. [In other words, when the supreme Lord of creation personified as Sri Ram had worshipped the great Goddess himself, then it is understood that all the other creatures of this creation, including the Gods, should offer their worship to her.] (12).

नास्ति देव्या समो लोके समाराध्यतमो मुने । यस्तां मोहान्न सेवेत स पापात्मा न संशयः ।१३॥

न तस्य विद्यते स्थानं कुत्रापि मुनिसत्तम । यस्तत्सपर्यालोपं वै करोति च स पापकृत् ।१४॥

Oh sage! No one is more worthy of admiration, worship, praise, adoration, honour and offering of sacrifices to in this world than is the Goddess. That person who does not worship her is indeed a sinful soul. There is no doubt about it (13).

Oh the most exalted sage! That person who tries to prohibit or prevent her worship and adoration, or prosecutes those who do so, commits a very sinful and contemptible act, and he will find no place anywhere to hide or take shelter/refuge in this world (14).

तस्माच्छाक्तोऽथ वा शैवः सौरो वा वैष्णवोऽथवा । अवश्यं पूजयेद्देवीं शारदीये महोत्सवे ।१५॥

बलिभिर्मत्स्यमांसाद्यैश्छागकासरमेषकैः । प्रीतये जगदीश्वर्यास्तथान्यैरुपचारकैः ।१६॥

No matter whether one is a follower of the 'Shakti cult' (i.e. those who worship Goddesses), or is a worshipper of Shiva or Vishnu, or is a worshipper of the Sun God— all of them should worship the Goddess during the 'Sharda Mahostav' (the festival season commencing from the 1st day of the bright lunar fortnight of the Hindu month of Ashwin corresponding with mid or end of September, to the 10th day of the month which is roughly end-September or the beginning of October. [This period corresponds to the Navratra period which corresponds to the famous Indian festival called Dusshera celebrated through the country.] (15).

As per the traditions and norms prescribed for the worship of the Goddess of the world (based on the tendency, temperament, requirements of the worshipper as well as the circumstances), the worship should be done by offering sacrifices and various methods of worship as ordained by the scriptures and traditions (16).

[Note :- Animal sacrifice (बलिभिर्मत्स्यमांसाद्यैश्छागकासरमेषकैः) is prescribed in verse no. 16. But, to be careful, one must not take it too literally for the spirit and essential requirements for such sacrifice has been described by the Goddess herself in chapter 12, Canto 46, verse nos. 15-22, and this author's footnote at the end of the verse.]

वित्तशाठ्यं न कर्तव्यं कर्तव्यं सर्वथादृतैः । अवश्यं यजनं देव्याः शारदीये महोत्सवे ।१७॥

गृह्णाति चण्डिका यस्माद् दुष्टान् वै पशुरूपकान् । तस्मात्पशुबलिर्देवो देवीभक्तिपरायणैः ।१८॥

अन्यैरपि महायज्ञे देव्यां प्रीतिमभीप्सुभिः । देव्यर्चनरता ये च प्रतिसंवत्सरं मुने ॥१९॥

Oh sage (Narad)! In this process, one must not be miserly and thrifty, and try to cut corners. Those persons who worship, honour and adore the Goddess each year during the ‘Sharda Navratra’ festival period with devotion and humility and by offering of (animal) sacrifices, they would have no fear from any wicked person or animal (or in other words, any person who is savage like an animal), because the Goddess, in the form of ‘Chandi’ (the ferocious, blood-thirsty Goddess of the battlefield) will devour such fears. Celebration of the festival in various other ways pleases the Goddess extremely (17-19).

तदाज्ञावशागाः सर्वे देवा इन्द्रपुरोगमाः । किमन्यद्बहुनोक्तेन सत्यमेव महामुने ॥२०॥

नास्ति लोकत्रये पुण्यं देव्या अर्चनसम्भवात् । य इदं शृणुयाद्भक्त्या रामायणमनुत्तमम् ॥२१॥

देव्या विस्तृतमाहात्म्यं महापातकनाशनम् । स देव्याः पदवीं याति ब्रह्मादीनां सुदुर्लभाम् ॥२२॥

Oh great sage (Narad)! Even all the great Gods, including Indra, their king, become obedient to such a person (who worships the Goddess with devotion). What is the use of saying more? Whatever I have said is the truth (20).

There is no greater reward for righteousness, virtuousness and doing noble deeds as well as taking noble actions than the reward obtained by worshipping the Goddess. Those persons who attentively listen to this excellent Ramayan with devotion (21) as well as to the detailed importance of worshipping the Goddess and singing her glories, which together can destroy/eliminate even the greatest of sins, become eligible to attain the most honourable and highest stature of finding residence in the abode of the Goddess, which is most difficult even for Brahma and other Gods to attain (22).

इत्युक्तं ते मुनिश्रेष्ठ यथा स भगवान् हरिः । सम्भूय मानुषं देहं समाश्रित्य धरातले ॥२३॥

शत्रोर्निधनमन्विच्छन्नकालेऽपि विधानतः । देवीं सम्पूजयामास भूयः किं श्रोतुमिच्छसि ॥२४॥

Oh the most exalted sage (Narad)! I have told you in detail about the way Lord Hari (Vishnu) had assumed a human form and had taken birth on this earth (23).

He had duly worshipped the Goddess for the death (elimination/destruction/vanquishing) of his enemy though it was not the proper time to worship her— and he succeeded in doing so. Now, what do you wish to hear?’ (24).

Thus ends Canto 48 of Devi Puran Mahābhagwat-Rāmāyan describing the Sri Ram's thanks giving to the Goddess, his return to Ayodhya and the importance of hearing and reading this Ramayan with devotion.

Appendix - 1

Important dates mentioned in Devi Puran (Mahabhogwat)— Ramayan

1. Chapter 4, Canto 38, verse 21— Sri Ram goes to the forest exile on the 10th day of the bright lunar fortnight of the month of Ashwin (roughly end of September— beginning of October).
2. Chapter 5, Canto 39, verse 14— Hanuman enters Lanka during the evening hours and searches for Sita for seven consecutive nights.
3. Chapter 5, Canto 39, verse 38— Sri Ram leaves Kishkindha for Lanka with the monkey army on the 10th day of the bright lunar fortnight of the month of Shrawan (roughly end of July and beginning of August).
4. Chapter 6, Canto 40, verse 6-7— The Bridge was constructed in six hours (two Prahars) between noon and sunset on the full moon day of the month of Shrawan (late July-early August).
Hence, the time taken between Sri Ram's departure from Kishkindha and the construction of the bridge across the ocean was five days. [The 10th day of bright lunar fortnight of Shrawan till the full moon night— i.e. the 15th day of Shrawan. 15-10=5 days.]
5. Chapter 6, Canto 40, verse 10— Sri Ram crossed the ocean and reached Lanka on the 13th day of the dark lunar fortnight of the month of Bhado (the month following Shrawan).
6. Chapter 6, Canto 40, verse 15-23— Sri Ram decides to worship the Goddess in order to obtain victory over his enemy. He started the worship on the 1st day (प्रतिपदा- -'Pratipada') of the dark lunar fortnight of Bhado on the shores of the ocean near the northern edge of the bridge. Then he crossed it and reached Lanka on the 13th day. The worshipping of the Goddess ended on the evening of the 15th day, i.e. the last day of the dark lunar fortnight of Bhado, and the war commenced in right earnest that very night. See also Chapter 6, Canto 40, verse nos. 16-17, footnote.
7. Chapter 6, Canto 40, verse 22— The war starts after sun-set of the dark lunar moon night of the month of Bhado (roughly end of August).
8. Chapter 6, Canto 40, verse 24-25— Demon Akampan killed on the 1st day of war by Hanuman (i.e. the 1st day of the bright lunar fortnight of Bhado).
9. Chapter 6, Canto 40, verse 27-28— Demon Dhumraksha was killed on the 2nd day of war by Sri Ram (i.e. the 2nd day of the bright fortnight of Bhado).
10. Chapter 6, Canto 40, verse 29-32— Ravana's maternal uncle Prahast arrived for battle in the night of the 2nd day after Dhumraksha was killed (See S.No. 9 above). He was killed in the late hours of that night.
11. Chapter 6, Canto 40, verse 33— Meghnad (Indrajeet, son of Ravana) arrives for

- battle in the late hours of that same night, or very early in the pre-dawn hours.
12. Chapter 6, Canto 40, verse 39— Ravana arrives in the morning of the following day which was the 4th day of war, i.e. the 4th day of the bright lunar fortnight of Bhado.
 13. Chapter 7, Canto 41, verse 1-2— Kumbhakarn prepares for battle. Now, there seems to be a break in the sequence of days in the war because Kumbhakarn was killed much later. In all probabilities, the intervening period was used by both the sides to redefine their strategies, arrange for reinforcements, heal their wounds, re-group and rearm themselves for the next and final phase of war. This intervening period was used by Brahma to propitiate the Goddess to intercede on Sri Ram's and Gods' behalf.
 14. Chapter 13, Canto 47, verse 1-2 & 7-9— Kumbhakarn was killed by Sri Ram on the 9th day of the dark lunar fortnight of the month of Ashwin in the 2nd phase of war. See also Chapter 11, Canto 45, verse 18-20 in this context where the Goddess prophesies his death on the 1st day of the 2nd phase of war, i.e. the 9th day of 'Krishna Paksha' (dark lunar fortnight) of Ashwin.
 15. Chapter 13, Canto 47, verse 6, 10-12, 23-26— Demon Atikai was killed on the night of the 4th day of battle of the 2nd phase of war on the 13th day of the dark lunar fortnight of Ashwin after a 4-day battle beginning from the 10th day (verse nos. 10-12) of the dark lunar fortnight.
 16. Chapter 13, Canto 47, verse 33-37— Laxman faints when attacked by Ravana when the former tried to protect Vibhishan — it was the 5th day of battle during the 2nd phase of war, i.e. the 14th day of the dark lunar fortnight of Ashwin.
 17. Chapter 13, Canto 47, verse 44-46— Laxman kills Meghnad during the dark moon night of the month of Ashwin. It was the 7th day of the 2nd phase of the war. See also Canto 45, verse 20.
 18. Chapter 13, Canto 47, verse 46-49, 70-71— Ravana's 3rd and final phase of war started on the 'Prati-pada' day, i.e. the 1st day of the bright lunar fortnight of Ashwin, and culminated with his death on the 9th day called 'Mahanawami'. See also Canto 45, verse 24-26 and 33-34.
 19. Chapter 14, Canto 48, verse 8— Vibhishan was made the king of Lanka on Vijaya Dashmi day (i.e. the 10th day of the bright lunar fortnight of Ashwin). This was also the day when Brahma had immersed the consecrated image of Goddess Durga which he had been worshipping for the past nine days into the ocean as per instructions given by the Goddess herself. This marked the beginning of the tradition of the observance of the Dusshera festival in India. In fact, the entire tradition of observing of Navratra fasting, offering of sacrifices and other religious sacraments in the country has its genesis in this Ramayan.
 20. Chapter 14, Canto 48, verse 9-10— Sri Ram starts on his journey back to Ayodhya by the air route aboard the plane called 'Pushpak'.

Appendix - 2
Sri Ramkavach
Invocation

अस्य श्रीरामकवचस्य अगस्त्य ऋषिः, अनुष्टुप् छन्दः, सीतालक्ष्मणोपेतः
श्रीरामचन्द्रो देवता, श्रीरामचन्द्रप्रसादसिद्धचर्थं जपे विनियोगः ।

This Stotra (a sacred hymn) called Ram Kavach had been envisioned and enunciated by sage Agastya. Its patron God/deity is Lord Ram along with Sita and Laxman. Those who chant (i.e. repeat) it with devotion, please Lord Ram, and they obtain all success and accomplishments in this world.

[Note :- The word *Kavach* means 'body armour'. Ramkavach is a prayer asking Lord Ram to protect the devotee's body from any harm from any force which is opposed or inimical to the devotee.]

Prayer

आजानुबाहुमरविन्ददलायताक्षमाजन्मशुद्धरसहासमुखप्रसादम् ।
श्यामं गृहीतशरचापमुदाररूपं रामं सराममभिराममनुस्मरामि ॥१॥
शृणु वक्ष्याम्यहं सर्वं सुतीक्ष्ण मुनिसत्तम ।
श्रीरामकवचं पुण्यं सर्वकामप्रदायकम् ॥२॥

Sage Agastya said to sage Sutikshan— 'I meditate upon Lord Ram along with Sita. Lord Ram's arms stretch up to his knees, his eyes are broad like the petals of a lotus, his face effuses/radiates undiluted and uncorrupted pure happiness and bliss right from his birth, his complexion is dark, beautiful and enchanting, he holds a bow and an arrow, his form and temperament are magnanimous, benevolent and graceful, and he is the provider of all happiness, comfort and bliss to all (1).

Oh the most exalted Sutikshan! Listen, today I shall tell you the most purifying and holy Stotra called 'Ram Kavach' which can bestow the fruit of fulfilment of all wishes (2).

अद्वैतानन्दचैतन्यशुद्धसत्त्वैकलक्षणः । बहिरन्तः सुतीक्ष्णात्र रामचन्द्रः प्रकाशते ॥३॥
तत्त्वविद्यार्थिनो नित्यं रमन्ते चित्सुखात्मनि । इति रामपदेनासौ परब्रह्माभिधीयते ॥४॥

Oh Sutikshan! Everywhere in this world— outside as well as inside— it is Lord Ram who subtly shines and universally pervades as an embodiment of the non-dual Supreme Being, who is a personification of eternal bliss, and who is a treasury or a fount of all the noble virtues of righteousness, auspiciousness and other such exemplary and excellent qualities that exist (3).

The eager spiritual seekers, who aspire to know and learn about the essence of the supreme Soul called Parmatma, perpetually dwell in a plane of existence which is characterised by eternal and supreme bliss, happiness and tranquility; they derive and experience immense bliss in such a state. This state of supreme, eternal and sublime bliss enjoyed by realised souls is personified as Lord Ram who is no one else but the supreme

Brahm himself (4).

जय रामेति यन्नाम कीर्तयन्नभिवर्णयेत् । सर्वपापैर्विनिर्मुक्तो याति विष्णोः परं पदम् ॥५॥
श्रीरामेति परं मन्त्रं तदेव परमं पदम् । तदेव तारकं विद्धि जन्ममृत्युभयापहम् ।
श्रीरामेति वदन् ब्रह्मभावमाप्नोत्यसंशयम् ॥६॥

The person who does 'Kirtan' (singing in a melodious tone the divine 'Mantras' and hymns of Lord Ram) using the words 'Jai Ram' (glory to Lord Ram; salutations to Lord Ram; hail Lord Ram) himself, and lets others hear it as well— he is liberated from all sins, their tormenting consequences and other entrapments of the deluding world, and at the same time he attains the supreme abode of Lord Vishnu (5).

'Lord Ram'— this is the best of all the Mantras (which are group of divine and sublime letters or words having stupendous spiritual prowess). This is the ultimate form of meditation that bestows the fourth (highest) state of sublime bliss to its adherents. It removes the fear of death and re-birth, and it is also known as the 'Tarak Mantra'¹ (i.e. the Mantra which delivers the creature from the entangling web of this artificial, humdrum, deluding world of birth and death, and provides emancipation and salvation to his soul). The person who pronounces 'Lord Ram' is sure to obtain the high state of existence which is being one with the supreme Brahm (6).

[Note--¹The 'Tarak Mantra' of Lord Ram is elaborately described in Ramottartaponishad of the Atharva Veda tradition which is exclusively dedicated to Lord Ram, as well as in Tarak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition which is dedicated to the subject of emancipation and salvation. The Tarak Mantra preached by Lord Shiva is that group of esoteric, ethereal and holy words, syllables or phrases that have stupendous magical and divine powers that can achieve miracles, and one of them is the ability to give liberation and deliverance to even sinful creatures who can never expect to find emancipation themselves. It gives freedom from miseries, fears, torments and other misfortunes that devour a creature. It liberates a creature from the cycle of birth and death, the miseries and fears associated with this world, with old age, death and their accompanying horrors etc. (Atharva-shikhar Upanishad, 2/1,49; Advai-tarak Upanishad, 3; and Jabal Upanishad, canto 1. The ascetic/Yogi achieves liberation and deliverance by concentrating his internal thoughts at a point between the eyebrows where he realises the supreme, transcendental existence of Brahm, and he mentally one with Brahm after this realisation (Advai-tarak-2,3). According to Ramottartaponishad, the divine emancipation and salvation providing Mantra is 'OM RANG RAMAYE NAMAHE' (Ramottartaponishad, 2/3). Atharva-shikhar Upanishad, 44 says that 'OM' is that Tarak Mantra.]

ध्यानम् / Concentration/Meditation on Lord Ram

अथ ध्यानं प्रवक्ष्यामि सर्वाभीष्टफलप्रदम् । नीलजीमूतसंकाशं विद्युद्गर्गाम्बरावृतम् ॥१॥
कोमलाङ्गं विशालाक्षं युवानमतिसुन्दरम् । सीतासौमित्रिसहितं जटामुकुटधारिणम् ॥२॥

Now I shall describe to you the sublime and divine form of Lord Ram by concentrating

and meditating upon which all the wishes of the devotee can be fulfilled. 'His (Lord Ram's) body has a dark complexion resembling a rain-bearing cloud; he wears a body-wrapping yellow silk garment (called 'Pitambar') which dazzles and simmers with the splendour and glint of lightening (1).

All the parts of his divine body are tender/soft/delicate, and his eyes are large and broad. He is most beautiful, handsome, enchanting and youthful, has Sita and Laxman by his side, and has a crown of matted hairs on his head (2).

सासितूणधनुर्बाणपाणिं दानवमर्दनम् । सदा चोरभये राजभये शत्रुभये तथा ॥३॥

ध्यात्वा रघुपतिं युद्धे कालानलसमप्रभम् । चीरकृष्णाजिनधरं भस्मोद्भूलितविग्रहम् ॥४॥

He (Lord Ram) holds a sword, a quiver, a bow and an arrow in his hands, and he is the slayer of the demons. Whenever there is a fear arising from the king, thieves, the enemy etc. (3), one should remember/invoke Lord Ram who is very powerful and potent like the fire-of-death raging in the battlefield.

[His reassuring form in the battlefield of Lanka will drive away all fears is as follows :-] He is wearing garments made of birch as well as a dark-coloured hide of deer. His body is smeared with ash (of the fire sacrifice) (4).

आकर्णाकृष्टशरकोदण्डभुजमण्डितम् । रणे रिपून् रावणादींस्तीक्ष्णमार्गणवृष्टिभिः ॥५॥

संहरन्तं महावीरमुग्रमैन्द्ररथस्थितम् । लक्ष्मणाद्यैर्महावीरैर्वृतं हनुमदादिभिः ॥६॥

His arms, general demeanours and looks are adorable and glorious as well as reassuring with the arrow mounted on the bow with its string pulled taught right back upto his ears (ready to shoot the arrow at the enemy who might be tormenting his devotee). He appears to be relentlessly slaying Ravana and other enemies in the battlefield with a torrent of sharp arrows (5).

At this time, he is in a very aggressive, determined and relentless mood, endowed with stupendous dynamic powers, energy and strength. He has mounted the chariot sent for his use by Indra (the king of Gods). He is surrounded by the brave Laxman, Hanuman and others who are the best amongst warriors (6).

सुग्रीवाद्यैर्महावीरैः शैलवृक्षकरोद्यतैः । वेगात् करालं हुकारैर्भुङ्क्त्वा महारवैः ॥७॥

नदद्भिः परिवादद्भिः समरे रावणं प्रति । श्रीराम शत्रुसंघान् मे हन मर्दय खादय ॥८॥

भूतप्रेतपिशाचादीन् श्रीरामाशु विनाशय । एवं ध्यात्वा जपेद्रामकवचं सिद्धिदायकम् ॥९॥

Sugriv and other brave warriors accompany him with huge rocks, boulders and trees in their hands. They move ahead fiercely with a swift speed, giving out a bone-chilling, blood-cuddling, terrifying and shrill war-cry (7) to attack Ravana and others in the battlefield. Thereafter, that person who is seeking Lord Ram's protection should pray to him in the following manner— 'Oh Lord Ram! Slay my enemies, destroy them, annihilate them (8), and swiftly destroy all the ghosts, phantoms, evil spirits etc.' In this way, one should remember and invoke Lord Ram and pray to him. After that, one should repeat the following Stotra called 'Ramkavach' which bestows upon the devotee successes, fulfilments of desires and accomplishments of all kinds (9).

स्तोत्रम् / Stotras

सुतीक्ष्ण वज्रकवचं शृणु वक्ष्याम्यनुत्तमम् । श्रीरामः पातु मे मूर्ध्नि पूर्वे च रघुवंशजः ॥१॥
दक्षिणे मे रघुवरः पश्चिमे पातु पावनः । उत्तरे मे रघुपतिः पायाद्दशरथात्मजः ॥२॥

Sage Agastya said to Sutikshan— 'Oh Sutikshan! Listen. I shall narrate to you the impregnable armour which is as strong as the Vajra (the weapon of Indra which is said to be made up of the hardest material in existence). Let Lord Ram have his benevolent grace upon me and bestow his protective umbrella on my head. Let the one born in the clan of Raghu protect me from my eastern flank (1).

Let Raghavar¹ protect me from the south direction, Paawan² (the pure, holy, august one) from the west, and the son of Dasrath, Raghupati³, from the northern side (2).

[Note--¹The word *Raghavar* has two components--viz. Raghu which refers to the descendents of king Raghu of the Sun dynasty to which Lord Ram belonged, and Var which means one who is obtained as a boon or blessings or favour from the Gods; it also has other connotations such as fulfillment of some wish, a solicitation, a gift of a deity; someone who is better and excellent, someone who is the eldest; and someone who is beautiful. All these epithets apply to Lord Ram. He was obtained by king Dashrath when he had done severe Tapa (austerity and penance) to please Lord Vishnu, and had then asked the boon that the Lord become his son himself. Dashrath belonged to the kings of the Sun dynasty, especially Raghu who was a direct ancestor of Lord Ram. Lord Ram was gifted with all the characteristics of an excellent human being; he was the foremost prince of that dynasty, and without doubt he was the eldest in creation being an incarnation of the Viraat Purush, the cosmic Lord of creation from whom even Brahma the creator was born.

²The word *Paawan* means someone who is auspicious, who is purifying and pure himself, who is holy and sacred, who is good, immaculate, untainted, uncorrupt, pleasant, sweet and charming. Obviously, all these virtues apply to the Lord also.

³The word *Raghupati* means the lord and the most senior member of the Raghu's clan, which indeed Ram was.]

भ्रुवोर्दूर्वादिलश्यामस्तयोर्मध्ये जनार्दनः । श्रोत्रे मे पातु राजेन्द्रो दृशौ राजीवलोचनः ॥३॥
घ्राणं मे पातु राजर्षिर्गण्डौ मे जानकीपतिः । कर्णमूले खरध्वंशी भालं मे रघुवल्लभः ॥४॥

Let the one who has a dark complexion like the dark-green Durba grass (*Agrostis linearis-grass*) cast his protective umbrella over my eyebrows, while the point above my nose and between the eyebrows be protected by Janardan (the one who is benevolent and gracious towards humble and lowly creatures). Let my ears be protected by Rajendra (King of kings), and my eyes by Rajivlochan (one with a lotus-like eye) (3).

Let my nose be protected by Rajarshi (the sage amongst kings), my cheeks by Janki Pati (beloved Lord of Sita), my ear-lobes by Khar-Dhwanshi (the one who slayed the demon named Khar), and my forehead by Raghuvallav (the dear Lord of the Raghus) (4).

जिह्वां मे वाक्पतिः पातु दन्तवल्ल्यौ रघूत्तमः । औष्ठौ श्रीरामचन्द्रो मे मुखं पातु परात्परः ॥५॥

कण्ठं पातु जगद्वन्द्यः स्कन्धौ मे रावणान्तकः । धनुर्बाणधरः पातु भुजौ मे वालिमर्दनः ॥६॥
सर्वाण्यङ्गुलिपर्वाणि हस्तौ मे राक्षसान्तकः । वक्षो मे पातु काकुत्स्थः पातु मे हृदयं हरिः ॥७॥

Let my tongue be protected by Vakpati (the Lord of speech), the two rows of my teeth be protected by Raghuttam (the most exalted, noblest and excellent of the Raghus, the members of the Raghu dynasty), my lips by Ram Chandra (the Lord who is like the moon), and my mouth by Paratpar (the one who is supreme, almighty, eternal and beyond comprehension) (5).

Let my throat be protected by Jagdwandhya (the Lord who is lauded and honoured by the world), my two shoulders by Ravanaantak (the one who had brought to end the cruel Ravana), and my arms by the one who holds a bow and an arrow (i.e. Lord Ram in his traditional form). Let Vaali-Mardana (the one who slayed Vaali, the elder brother of Sugriva) (6) protect the joints of my fingers; let Rakshantak (the one who was like the Death God known as Kaal for the demons) protect my hand; let Kakuthstha (one who belongs to the clan of king Kakushta) protect my chest, and let Hari (another name for Lord Vishnu) protect my heart (7).

स्तनौ सीतापतिः पातु पार्श्वे मे जगदीश्वरः । मध्यं मे पातु लक्ष्मीशो नाभिं मे रघुनायकः ॥८॥
कौसल्येयः कटिं पातु पृष्ठं दुर्गतिनाशनः । गुह्यं पातु हृषीकेशः सक्थिनी सत्यविक्रमः ॥९॥

Let the two sides of my chest be protected by Sita-Pati (the Lord of Sita), my two sides (flanks) by Jagdishwar (the Lord of the world), my abdominal area by the Lord of Laxmi (Vishnu), and my navel by Raghunayak (the leader of the Raghu's clan) (8).

Let my waist be protected by Raghunandan (the son of Raghu's clan), my back (spine etc.) by Durgati-Nashan (the one who is the eliminator or destroyer of misfortunes, miseries, troubles and tribulations of all kinds), my private parts by Hrishikesh (another name of Vishnu), and my thigh-bones by Satyavikram (the one who is famed for his truthfulness and who is truly valiant and valorous, brave and courageous) (9).

ऊरू शार्ङ्गधर पातु जानुनी हनुमत्प्रियः । जङ्घे पातु जगद्व्यापी पादौ मे ताटकान्तकः ॥१०॥
सर्वाङ्गं पातु मे विष्णुः सर्वसंधीननामयः । ज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि प्राणादीन् पातु मे मधुसूदनः ॥११॥

Let my thighs be protected by Shaarangdhar (the one who holds the bow called Shaarang), my knees by Hanumatpriye (the one who is dear to Hanuman), my calves by Jagadwyapi (the one who pervades the whole world; one who is omnipresent and all encompassing), and my legs by Tadkaantak (the one who had killed the demoness Tadka) (10).

Let all my body parts be protected by Vishnu, all my joints by Anamaye (one who is without any faults and shortcomings; one who is free from all diseases, mental and bodily, physical and spiritual), and my sense organs as well as my life by Madhu-Vinaashak (the one who had destroyed or killed the demon named Madhu) (11).

पातु श्रीरामभद्रो मे शब्दादीन् विषयानपि । द्विपदादीन् भूतानि मत्सम्बन्धीनि यानि च ॥१२॥
जामदग्न्यमहादर्पदलनः पातु तानि मे । सौमित्रिपूर्वजः पातु वागादीनीन्द्रियाणि च ॥१३॥

Let gentleman and noble Lord Ram protect my words and speech. All those 2-legged creatures who have any dealings with me (i.e. my kith and kin)— let all of them be pro-

tected (12) by Jamdagna-Maha-Darpa-Dalan (the one who had crushed the great haughtiness, pride, ego, arrogance and vanity of sage Parashuram; i.e. Lord Ram). Let Laxman's elder brother (Lord Ram) protect the organs of my speech (i.e. tongue/mouth) and other sense organs (13).

रोमाङ्कुराण्यशेषाणि पातु सुग्रीवराज्यदः । वाङ्मनोबुद्ध्यहंकारैर्ज्ञानज्ञानकृतानि च ॥१४॥

जन्मान्तरकृतानीह पापानि विविधानि च । तानि सर्वाणि दग्ध्वाशु हरकोदण्डखण्डनः ॥१५॥

Let all my hairs and their roots be protected by Sugriv-Rajpad (the one who gave kingdom to Sugriv; or the one who restored the kingdom of Kishkindha to Sugriv; i.e. Lord Ram). All the misdeeds and sins that I might have done/committed willingly or unwillingly by my mind, speech or intellect due to my haughtiness, arrogance, ignorance and stupidity (14) during this life or any of my previous lives— let all of them be soon burnt to ashes by Harkodnanda-Khandan (the one who broke the strong and formidable bow of Lord Shiva in Janakpur to marry Sita; i.e. Lord Ram), and let him (Lord Ram) protect me from all the directions/sides (15).

पातु मां सर्वतो रामः शार्ङ्गबाणधरः सदा । इति श्रीरामचन्द्रस्य कवचं वज्रसम्मितम् ॥१६॥

गुह्याद्गुह्यतमं दिव्यं सुतीक्ष्ण मुनिसत्तम । यः पठेच्छृणुयाद्वापि श्रावयेद्यः समाहितः ॥१७॥

स याति परमं स्थानं रामचन्द्रप्रसादतः । महापातकयुक्तो वा गोघ्नो वा भ्रूणहा तथा ॥१८॥

Let the one who holds the bow known as Sharang always protect me.'

(Then sage Agastya said to Sutikshan—) This protective, robust, potent and powerful divine shield of Lord Ram called 'Ramkavach' is as strong, impregnable and invincible as the Vajra (the infallible weapon of Indra) (16).

Oh the most exalted sage Sutikshan! At the same time however, this most divine, holy and secret Stotra is very difficult, formidable and inaccessible for all and sundry (who lack conviction, faith, belief, trust and devotion). Those who read it, listen to it with sincerity and attention, or tell it (i.e. preach it) to others (17) — they attain the supreme abode of the Lord by the grace of Sri Ramchandra, notwithstanding their being most sinful and vile, such as their being a killer of cows or being an abortionist¹ (18).

[Note --¹This stanza means that even those who are so pervert and sinful that they have no compunction at killing innocent, docile and harmless creatures such as cows, and even an unborn, harmless and hapless child still in the mother's womb, can expect to obtain pardon from the horrendous consequences of their misdeeds if they sincerely ask the Lord for forgiveness and seek his protection, but such request must come with a caveat, and that is they would reform themselves for good. To understand any ancient text correctly, the verses must be interpreted in the proper perspective. In the present context they mean that even if a person has committed a horrific sin which is normally unpardonable, but if he sincerely wishes to repent for it, then he will be forgiven by the Lord, because being a human, it is not so much wrong to commit any sin as it is to repeat it again and again willingly, not having any regrets and remorse for it, even justifying it, and not willing to atone for it. This

willingness or wish for sincere atonement for the sins, a sense of deep regret and contrition, a firm determination not to repeat it, a desire to confess, is what is implied in these verses. The forgiveness by Lord Ram means that he is ready to overlook the misdemeanours of the creature if he decides to improve himself for good and become a righteous human being in future, instead of continuing to have animal-like instincts.]

श्रीरामचन्द्रकवचपठनाच्छुद्धिमाप्नुयात् । ब्रह्महत्यादिभिः पापैर्मुच्यते नात्र संशयः ॥१९॥

भोः सुतीक्ष्ण यथा पृष्टं त्वया मम पुरा शुभम् । तथा श्रीरामकवचं मया ते विनिवेदितम् ॥२०॥

Such a person becomes purified and purged of all his sins by (sincere, honest and faithful) recitation or reading of this shield-like Stotra called Ramkavach so much so that he can be freed from the great sin of killing a Brahmin. There is no doubt about it (19).

Oh Sutikshan! I have told you about this Ramkavach in exactly the same way as you had wanted to know about it' (20). [Anand Ramayan, Manohar Kand, 13.]

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ॐ नमो भगवते उत्तमश्लोकाय नम आर्यलक्षणशीलव्रताय नम उपशिक्षितात्मन उपासितलोकाय नमः
साधुवादनिकषणाय नमो ब्रह्मण्यदेवाय महापुरुषाय महाराजाय नम इति ॥ (श्रीमद्भा० ५/१९/३)

We salute and bow before Lord Ram who is 'Onkar' personified. He has all the qualities, temperaments and characteristics of a virtuous and noble person (called Arya), and he is steadfast towards upholding them. He is self-restrained, is diligently engrossed in the welfare of the Lokas (the world at large), and is like a benchmark for all the auspicious and noble qualities, virtues, temperaments and characteristics which make a man pious and saintly. He is most devoted to Brahmins (i.e. to those who are learned, wise, erudite, enlightened, elderly and preceptors of the society). We repeatedly bow and pay our obeisance to such a great and noble Lord Ram who is a great human and king par-excellence. (Srimad Bhagwat 5/19/3).

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Appendix - 3

Similarity between Hindu and Christian forms of Worship and Theological Doctrines

There is a marked similarity between the ritualistic sacrifices and formal prayers offered to the supreme Goddess Parvati in her form as Durga — who is none other than the supreme Brahm known by another name (see Canto 42, verse nos. 57-61 and Canto 45, verse no. 3 of the main text)— by Brahma in ‘Devi Puran (Mahabhagwat) Ramayan’, and the process of ritualistic worship sanctified in Christianity. The Truth— if it is to be the absolute and irrefutable ‘truth’--has to be the same, and without doubt the same, notwithstanding different cultures and environments as well as languages and customs where that truth is applied. The supreme Truth may be known by different names, but nonetheless it would not change its uniqueness as being 'one and the only truth'.

So an attempt is made below to sample some quotations from the Holy Bible regarding prayers and theological doctrines pertaining to the Lord God as well as some selected prayers and offerings made during the Holy Mass, because, as it would be observed, there is a stark similarity between them and those offered by Brahma on behalf of Lord Ram in our story of Devipuram (Mahabhagwat) Ramayan :-

1. Lord’s assurance to his devotees who worship him and pray to him (quotations from the Holy Bible) — (a) For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the time of salvation (II Corinthians, 6/2). (b) God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes (Revelation, 7/17), (c) As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you (Isaiah, 66/13). [Compare this with Goddess Durga's assurance to the Gods in Canto 46 verse nos. 2-22.]
2. And why should we seek his intervention in the time of insurmountable distress and miseries (as the Gods and Brahma had done when the earth was tormented by the demons) :- The answer is (a) With God nothing shall be impossible (gospel of St. Luke, 1/37), (b) The things that are impossible with men are possible with God (gospel of St. Luke, 18/27), (c) I know that you can do anything (Job, 42/2). [See Canto 36, verse nos. 69-72, 74-76 of the main text.]
3. The Lord assures his devotees when they pray to him with the above conviction and faith in the following words :- Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for me (Jeremiah, 32/27). [See Canto 41, verse nos. 13-15; Canto 42, verse nos. 9-11; Canto 46, verse nos. 14-15 of the main text.]
4. With this promise from the Lord, the devotee derives immense courage and strength, and he says :- (a) My help cometh from the Lord which made the heaven and the earth (Psalm, 121/2), (b) If God be for us, who can be against us (Romans, 8/31).

[Compare this with how Sri Ram and the Gods felt reassured in Devi Puran Ramayan. See Canto 42, verse nos. 66-67; Canto 44, verse nos. 17-20; Canto 47, verse nos. 9-10, 52-54, 64-70; Canto 48.]

5. But, the Lord requires total surrender to him and humility :- (a) Of him, and through him and to him are all things (Romans, 11/36), (b) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above (Epistle of James, 1/17), (c) We are (but only) his workmanship (Ephesians, 2/10), (d) Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's... (I Corinthians, 6/20). [Compare this with Canto 36, verse nos. 43, 71; Canto 41, verse nos. 15; Canto 42, verse nos. 55-61.]
6. The Lord comes rushing to help his devotees, for :- (a) He is not far from any one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being (Acts, 17/28), (b) O God! Be not far from me; O my God! Make haste for my help (Psalm, 71/12). [Compare this with Brahma's and Sri Ram's earnest plea to Goddess Durga on the 'Astami' day of the last leg of war between Sri Ram and Ravana to act immediately and help in slaying Ravana. The Goddess had then assured them that Ravana would be done in the next day i.e. the Mahanavami day at noon. See main text of Ramayan Canto 45, verse nos. 18-21, 23-34; Canto 47, verse nos. 64-70]
7. Regarding the 'voice in the heaven' (Akashvani) as in Canto 1, verse nos. 20-22 of the main text, the Christian scripture says— 'God thundereth marvellously with his voice, great things doeth he which we can't comprehend' (Job, 12/10).
8. Now, let us have a peek at the form the prayers should take :-
 - (a) Forsake me not, O Lord! O my God! Be not far from me (Psalm, 38/21),
 - (b) Make haste for my help (Psalm, 71/12),
 - (c) Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.//Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.// Make me to hear joy and gladness.// Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit. (Psalm, 51),
 - (d) Out of depths, have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee,// I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in this word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.// For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. (Psalm, 130),
 - (e) Lord, my God, You are truly magnificent! You are arrayed in beauty and majesty, Clothed with Light as with a garment.// You have made all things with wisdom, The earth is full of your creations.// Send out your spirit, and they will be created, And you

will renew the face of the earth. Let there be glory to the Lord for ever!// I will sing to the Lord all my life, I will sing a song to my God as long as I live. May my speech be pleasing to Him, As for me, I will rejoice in the Lord. (Psalm, 103),

- (f) Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in the firmament of His power! Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His greatness! Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the psaltery and harp. Praise Him with the timbrel and dance. Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipes; Praise Him upon the crashing cymbals, Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Hal-lelujah! (Psalm, 150).

[Note :- This particular prayer is significant in the context of the tradition of doing 'Kirtan' (a collective recitation of the glory of the Lord) in Hinduism.]

- (g) Remember, Lord, your people, especially those for whom we now pray. Remember all of us gathered here before you. You know how firmly we believe in you and dedicate ourselves to you. We offer you this sacrifice of praise for ourselves and those who are dear to us. We pray to you living and true God, for our well-being and redemption (the Prayer for the Living— the Eucharistic Prayer). [Compare with Gods' prayer to the Goddess and offering of sacrifices.]

- (h) Look with favour on these offerings and accept them as once you accepted the gifts of your servant Abel, the sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith, and the bread and wine offered by your priest Melchisedech (Prayer for God's acceptance of the Sacri-fice). [Compare this with sacrifices to the Goddess in the main text— Canto 46, verse nos. 14-22; Canto 48, verse nos. 13-22.]

- (i) Almighty God, we pray that your angel may take this sacrifice to your altar in heaven. Then, as we receive from this altar the sacred body and blood of your Son, let us be filled with every grace and blessing. (Prayer for God's grace and blessing)

[Note :- The first 'prayer for the living' is like the prayer offered by Brahma and the Gods for the benefit of Sri Ram, while the second 'for acceptance of sacrifice by the God' is similar to the sacrifices offered to Goddess by Brahma so that she be pleased. This is similar to Brahma beseeching the Goddess to show her grace upon the Gods by killing Ravana.]

- (j) Father in heaven, it is right that we should give you thanks and glory: you alone are God, living and true. Through all eternity you live in unapproachable light. Source of life and goodness, you have created all things, to fill your creatures with every blessing and lead all to the joyful vision of your light. Countless hosts of angels stand before you to do your will; they look upon your splendour and praise you, night and day. United with them, and in the name of every creature under heaven, we too praise your glory as we sing (say) : All Holy,, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. (the Eucharistic Prayer— IV, preface)

[Note :- It is very similar to the tone and tenure of the prayer offered by Brahma and Sri Ram to the Goddess lauding her glories in Canto 48, verse nos. 1-5 of the

main text. Besides, the divine and splendid abode of the Goddess and her being surrounded with myriads of Yoginis, Gods, angels etc. are also reflected in this prayer. See also Canto 43, verse nos. 45-82 of the main text in this context.]

- (k) Benediction (a prayer of Solemn Blessing)— (i) O Saving Victim, opening wide The gate of heaven to man below Our foes press on from every side, Thine aid supply, Thy strength bestow. (ii) To Thy great Name be endless praise, Immortal Godhead, One in Three; Oh, grant us endless length of days in our true native land with Thee. Amen.
- (l) Down in adoration falling, Lo! The sacred Host we hail; Lo! O'er ancient forms departing, Newer rites of grace prevail; Faith for all defects supplying, Where the feeble sense fail. To the everlasting Father, And the Son who reigns on high, With the Holy Spirit proceeding forth from each eternally, Be salvation, honour, blessing, Might and endless majesty. Amen. (Eucharistic Blessing). [See main text of Ramayan, Canto 1, verse nos. 25-37; Canto 42, verse nos. 57-61 in this context.]
9. Finally, since, 'the joy of the Lord is your strength' (Nehemiah 8/10), therefore, 're-joyce in the Lord, ye righteous (one)' (Psalm 97/12).

[Note :- When Sri Ram expressed his doubt about the Goddess helping him in the face of the fact that Ravana had been worshipping the Goddess even prior to Sri Ram, this is the very reason that Brahma had given for the certainty with which the Goddess will kill Ravana— for Sri Ram was righteous while Ravana was unrighteous. See Canto 36, verse nos. 35-36, 78-89; Canto 42, verse nos. 26-33, 70-73 of the main text of Devi Puran Mahabagwat Ramayan. The similarity is very striking indeed!]

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The universal truth will be the same if it has to be the 'universal truth'. A simple illustration from daily life will be easy to comprehend and relate with. The water molecule H₂O has two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen. Whether that molecule is found in sweet milk, sour curd, salty ocean, vaporised rain-bearing cloud, steam or even in mosquito infested drain or the human body full of excreta as well as in the sparkling stream of the mountain— it will nonetheless remain H₂O molecule and free from all the extraneous factors such as the sugar in milk, the bacteria causing sourness in curd, the salt/minerals of the ocean, the invisible moisture of the cloud, the filth and muck of the drain, the mucous and the slush inside the human body or the rocks and pebbles in the mountain. This is the enlightened view. The more humdrum, foolish and ignorant view is to say that the water is sweet, salty, dirty, clean, solidified ice or invisible moisture, a dark cloud, a sparkling clean stream, mucous of the human body or the stinking water of the drain. The absolute reality, therefore, is quite different from what we generally perceive it to be. That is why enlightened soul see no distinction between a leprosy patient and a charming lady, or between a flower in the garden and the lotus in the dirty pond! The truth about the Lord is the same irrespective of the language used. [See Ramayan main text Canto 1, verse nos. 25-28; Canto 43 verse nos. 34-44.] *__*__*__*

Appendix--4

Prayer

My beloved and dearest Sri Ram!

Your glory shines like the mid-day sun in the spotless sky of winter— welcoming, comforting, soothing and warm. It removes the haze cast by fog and mist of ignorance, delusions and falsehoods collectively called Maya.

Your benevolence, munificence, benediction, benefaction, compassion and mercy pours down like the life-giving rain which sustains the very life on this earth which would have otherwise withered, scorched, cracked and parched due to the heat of the various torments, miseries, sorrows, troubles and distresses that it is subjected to.

Your peaceful, calm and serene but at the same time all encompassing, all pervading, all engulfing subtle presence is akin to the full moon's light which sprays down on the earth like the soothing elixir in a balmy summer night to provide succour and solace to the frayed and agitated heart which is churned like the legendary ocean, fretting and fuming, foaming and frothing, and sincerely yearning for peace, rest and tranquility.

Pure-consciousness and bliss is your nature, love is your form, wisdom and truthful knowledge of reality is your essence, and the myriad world— ever changing, full of contradictions, microscopic as well as macrocosmic, animate as well in animate, colourful as the rainbow as well as dark and lifeless as the grave— is your revelation.

The basic ingredients that form the cosmos like its building blocks— the earth, the fire, the water, the air, the space— are simply your projected, extended forms. They are your revelation; they are your proofs.

You alone are the cause of, the moving factor of and the truthful reality (not the virtual reality of today's computer age) of every life, every movement and every event, whether minutest oscillation of a subatomic particle or of the vast fathomless cosmos along with the complex factors that govern their movement.

Yours is the natural and inherent dynamic power that flows and pulsates through this and that; it manifests as the maverick play of this boundless cosmos. Wherever one goes, wherever one looks, he finds nothing else except you. The green and blue mountains, the fragrant blooming multicoloured flowers blossoming on majestic tress, the ripe-succulent-sweet fruits, the violet-indigo-blue-green-yellow-orange-red (VIBGYOR) colours of the rainbow, the bright light emanating from the sun lighting up all the corners of the realm, the sun itself, the life on earth, under the sea and in the sky, in their deep recesses--all of them are your revelation.

Your voice can be heard in the chirping of birds, the roar of a tiger, the gurgling of rippling water of a brook meandering through a crevice amongst rocky shades of a moun-

tain and a swirling river which waters the meadows, the heaving ocean splashing against the shores, the howling wind passing through tall palm fringes, the thundering and clapping of clouds, the racket of cricket and the hooting of the owl in a dense forest, the screaming calmness of outer space where some distant, far-off star is rumbling ready to explode to extinction, or where another is being born, the cracking sound of huge glaciers as they split, and the pattering of the rain drops on the tin roof of the cottage— all the sounds are the various ways you are heard of.

You spontaneously express your self and your will every moment.

You are the most primary and primordial Supreme Being who is the all encompassing, absolute, infinite, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent Lord, who is most stupendous, most magnificent, most majestic, most glorious, most honourable, most worthy, most enlightened and most auspicious, most stern as well as tender, most secret as well as most well known, most extraordinary as well as most humdrum and routine, and most distant as well as most near. How marvellous and spectacular indeed!

You express yourself fluently through and in every sacred tradition and lore, every scripture and hymn, every prophet, angel and saint, and every fruitful image of reality.

You worship Goddess Durga (in Devi Puran Mahabhagwat-Ramayan) in order to show honour and respect to your infinite, almighty, stupendous cosmic energy which is both constructive as well as destructive like the power of the atom. How wonderful! What a magnificent amalgam of opposite forces! But oh Lord! If words could have been potent enough to define even a fraction of your illuminated-Self, the Vedas, which are said to have been pronounced by Brahma himself, wouldn't have thrown in the towel saying ultimately, 'Neti-neti' (not this, not that).

I think the simplest and the best word to sum up all your charismatic characteristics is 'indescribable'. Yet oh Lord, you become so easy to realise with sincere love and devotion imbued with the juice of emotional tears. That's the only language needed to read your book, I suppose.

And my dear Ram, so much you have done for me that an ocean of ink and a life time of writing wouldn't suffice to say as simple a word as 'Thanks'. This thanks-giving is merely a gesture of profound gratitude, not even a token-repayment of your debt upon me. I am so privileged and feel the gladness of Hanuman's heart when he had been selected by you to take the signet ring to Sita over and above the head of so many others who were more senior to Hanuman according to the epic story of the Ramayana.

That you have chosen me to do your job— of converting your glorious stories into the English language so that it can reach the farthest corners of the globe— fills me with unbound exhilaration and thrill as well as humility of the highest kind.

Glory to you! Glory to your munificence, benevolence, magnanimity and compassion!

Glory to your love and affection towards those who are yours!

Glory to your blissful, eternal, infinite cosmic form as pure Consciousness!

Glory to your illuminated-Self!

Glory to Lord Sri Ram, the Supreme Lord, the Supreme Being!

Amen!

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About the Author

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia left home when he was approximately 29 years of age due to an inner call of his heart that told him to devote his life in the service of his beloved Lord God, Sri Ram. Worldly attractions did not enchant him at all. So, he didn't marry, and after his father's death he came and settled permanently in Ayodhya, the holy town in India associated with Lord Ram.

Presently he works as an honorary manager of a world famous Kanak Bhavan Temple at Ayodhya, and spends his time writing in English so that the world can access the wonderful nectar of metaphysical, spiritual and devotional philosophy that is contained in Indian scriptures for which they are so renowned.

His series on 108 Upanishads in English, together with Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan & Devi Puran Ramayan, and Valmiki's Adbhut Ramayan have been published by a reputed publisher of India. Details can be had by contacting the author by email given below.

The rest of his Books are in various stages of production.

Genre of Writing: Spiritualism, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Religious, Devotional and Theological.

My Books are available for order online both in 'e-book' format and 'paper-back book' format at following websites—

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