

॥ श्रीः ॥

Devi Māhātmyam
Apr 2020 Discourse Series
Part - 1

By

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8njsQqepkg>

Bhaskara Prakasha Ashram

॥śrī sadgurucaraṇāravindābhyāṃ namaḥ ॥

॥ श्रीः ॥



śrī vimarśānandanāthaṃ satyāmbāsahitaṃ gurum |
hṛtpadmakarṇikā madhye bhāvayet sarvasiddhaye ||
śrī prakāśānandanāthaṃ vimarśāmbā sahitaṃ gurum |
hṛtpadmakarṇikā madhye bhāvayet sarvasiddhaye ||
śrī rāmānanda nāthaṃ rāmāmbā sahitaṃ gurum |
hṛtpadmakarṇikā madhye bhāvayet sarvasiddhaye ||

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Introduction

śrī gurubhyo namaḥ ||

śiva-śakti samārambhāṃ bhāsurānanda madhyamām |
asmāt śrī nātha paryantāṃ vande guru paramparām ||

guṃ gurave namaḥ ||
gaṃ gaṇapataye namaḥ ||
saṃ sarasvatyai namaḥ ||
duṃ durgāyai namaḥ ||
śrī mahālakśmyai namaḥ ||

This is the Divine Mother's caritram (story), "Devi Māhātmyam". Even this name is quite a beautiful name. It is known as Devi Māhātmyam because it relates the Mahima or Glory of the Devi. Which Devi's Mahima or glory does it speak of? [We will see in due course]. This (caritram) occurs in the middle of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇam, in thirteen chapters. Maḥarishi Mārkaṇḍeya tells us all this story made of 13 chapters. Many people have written bhāṣyams (explanations and expositions) and procedures for the pārāyaṇam of the Devi Māhātmyam.

But every maṇḍali or school has its own sampradāya or way of reciting (great texts). It is said that the knowledge for Divine Mother's ārādhana or worship is received through a sampradāya — that is to say, even though there are a multitude of books and tantrā-s that may contain the procedures to chant Devī Māhātmyam, for us and in our guru maṇḍalam, our Guru Śrī Vimarśānanda Nathendra Saraswatī Mahāswāmigaḷ has curated the steps and procedures based on the *experience* of how the worship has been conducted over generations - and placed it in our hands - so there would be no room for doubt. For this pārāyaṇam, there are kramas (specific procedures) — the "how-to recite" protocol, complete with modules/anga-s (constituent parts of the whole).

We are required to chant (in this order):

- kavacam/argalam/kīlakam
- rātrī sūktam / 108 navāksharī japam/ saptashatī nyāsam / the 13 chapters
- again 108 navāksharī japam / devi sūktam

Just for everyone's facility and access, in our parampara, we recite only tantrokta rātrī sūktam and tantrokta devi sūktam. Then comes rahasya trayam and kśamā prārthana - this is the procedure.

In this Devi Māhātmyam, if you look at what personally makes me happy, and gives me fulfillment/contentment is: no matter how many times we recite the pārāyaṇam, it always feels new each time. Every time we recite it, many new things will occur to us. We may not have seen

a *padam* or phrase in one way, and yet the next day it will reveal itself in a new meaning. Later in the 12th chapter of the Devi Māhātmyam, Mārkaṇḍeya will reveal what so many other Maharishis or great sages have already stated [about the special nature of the text].

- About 50 people have written *bhāṣya* (explanations) for the Devi Māhātmyam — according to older estimates. Now in this modern day and age, the explanations abound in many different foreign languages, many of them having been written so very well, each of them based on the [author’s] profound experience of the text.
- So, if you were to ask, “[What is the special nature of the Devi Māhātmyam \(that it has been expounded upon by so many\)? What is in it \(that makes it special\)?](#)” The answer is: [Whenever you read the Devi Māhātmyam, the text will offer the solution to the problem you are facing on that day.](#) That is what fills me with wonder. Whatever troubles we may be facing, whatever we may need, whatever we need to obtain, answers to why we have obtained this birth or *janma* [remember - we have obtained this human birth in this time after doing so much *sādhana* in our past lives], and in addition, the very reason for why we are engaged in *satkāryam* (good deeds) and are progressing along a good path — the Devi Māhātmyam holds the answer [to everything]. We begin to understand the reason for all of the above only when we read the Devi Māhātmyam.

People may think, “isn’t it after all just a story? What is so special about the battles between the devā-s and asurā-s?”. Let us look: as soon as the Siddha Kunjikā stotram is concluded, at the beginning of the Devyāh Kavacam, Mārkaṇḍeya Maharishi (who is recounting the story to us) has a doubt himself: he asks Brahma a question to get clarification. You need to pay attention here: why does he pose the query to Brahma? Brahma is the repository of the vedā-s and we have received all the vedā-s only because of Brahma. He is the causal principle / *kāraṇa* for everything (and the reason for the vedas to be revealed to us). He is the one who gave us all the śāstra-s. The story begins with Mārkaṇḍeya Maharishi offering salutations to Brahma and asking Brahma clarification for his doubts.

Kavacam

You are all very familiar with the verses in the kavacam:

[yadguhyam paramam loke, sarvarakṣākaram nruṇām |](#)
[yanna kasya-cidākhyātam tanme brūhi pitāmaha ||](#)

If you were to examine this, and were to ask what is the most important *padam* or phrase in this verse, [Mārkaṇḍeya] is asking Brahma for his doubt to be clarified - but, the doubt is phrased in this way: “In this world, for the people in this world, what is the most important thing or object?”

- “that which offers total and complete protection to humanity [[sarvarakṣākaram nruṇām](#)]”
- “that which offers security and comfort to humanity, that which is most **esoteric** (unknown like a secret), that which has never been uttered anywhere else until now— pray please reveal to me that ‘object’.”

What we learn from this dialogue is that even Mārkaṇḍeya Maḥarishi does not know this most important object/objective — and Brahma has to reveal it to the Maḥarishi — **thus, we must understand that this text is equivalent to the Vedas**. Brahma too is an actor / participant in the Devi Māhātmyam as we will see in the 1st chapter of the text later. When Brahma himself is facing a problem in that chapter, only the Devi Māhātmyam rescues Him from the difficult situation he is in.

So great is this Caritram of the Divine Mother - that Brahma gives his answer as soon as He is asked (the question by Mārkaṇḍeya). You may ask: we have the kavacam, followed by argalā stotram, followed by the kīlakam. What is the point and meaning of this [sequence]: The answer is: First and foremost, people need good health (ārogyam). Only when a person is well, can he or she carry out a task or any work properly. No matter how much intelligence he possesses, how much talent he may enjoy, how much know-how he may have regarding work, how many opportunities he has to work and earn a living, no matter how many people are awaiting his work and talent, even if he has the great motivation to do the work — if he does not possess good health, if he is not well, then he can do nothing. If he is in the hospital, what of it then? Therefore it goes to reason that his *health* has always got to be secure. “He should get protected!” What is the way to do this?

In addition to this, it is most important for any person to enjoy a long life, with contentment. It is not enough or useful for them to simply live a long time like a tortoise or a tree with a long lifespan. It is imperative that [there is a quality of life]: with the long life, the ārogyam is secure, i.e., the health is very good. *Āyur-ārogya-soubhāghya-bala-śrī-kīrti-bhāghya-dā* is ambā's nāmā or name! It is an “all-in-one” nāmā of hers: that is, there is no need to ask her for all of these things separately. We seek these as a “wholesale” deal from Her -- please give excellent health, conveniences, the ability to complete work well in such a way that there is fame and recognition, contentment for myself, contentment for all concerned, profit and benefit for myself and all. She confers all of this: this is a nāmā that comes in the aṣṭottaram for the Divine Mother.

So, [does it not follow] that we have the physical strength and stamina to be able to (properly) read/recite the Devyāh Kavacam? At least for that reason, should we not read this kavacam? And so He states: even though the kavacam is an *anga* (a constituent part of the entire Māhātmyam), if one were to simply do pārayaṇam of the Devyāh Kavacam alone, he or she will derive *all* the soukhyam (health, security and conveniences). So the (kavacam) is revealed and recited beautifully. There are more than 50 shlokams/verses in the kavacam. Everyone knows these well. The verses I'm about to recite are all shlokas that you can memorize and recite daily. So when [Brahma] recites the kavacam, even the very beginning is recited in a most excellent and compelling way: (Remember that it is Brahma who recites the Devyāh Kavacam) - He says:

“This is most **esoteric** (inaccessible, extraordinary, elusive) - it confers great help and benefit to ALL life forms - it is very sacred / divine — listen to it with great śraddhā (faith and sincerity).”

So saying Brahma begins reciting the Devyāh Kavacam. That means, “sarva bhūtopakāraḥ”

is in effect: because this will benefit ALL life forms, it follows that the Kavacam will benefit humanity. So Brahma has stated clearly that the Kavacam will not only confer benefit to mankind, but indeed confer the greatest Good to ALL living things. Brahma asks that the Rishi must protect this great esoteric (Kavacam).

After he counsels the Maharishi in this way, Brahma speaks of Nine Devis right away: First, He speaks of Śailaputrī -the Divine Mother's avatāram as Himavān's daughter — as a result of Mount Himavān's austerities, he is blessed with the Divine Mother incarnating as his daughter Umā.

The invocation goes: “prathamam śailaputrī ca dvitīyam brahmacāriṇī ”

Nava Durgā Devi

Śailaputrī

The name Śailaputrī means the “daughter of the Mountain” — or the child of the Mountain King (She is a Princess). What benefits do we get from Śailaputrī? The mere mention of this name will confer all manner of prosperity or aiśvaryam on us always.

Brahmacāriṇī

The second name “Brahmacāriṇī” evokes the notion of student, a child or youth engaged in studies. Imagine the way a disciplined student in his or her schooling days, would attend to his studies with great discipline and punctuality, and apply himself to the learning with great devotion and sincerity, and work hard and persevere in order to master the lessons - with the goal to ultimately be rewarded with scholarship and academic success, and to excel in one's studies and training, and beget Knowledge, such a student must invoke the blessings of “Brahmacāriṇī” — the name itself reveals this [paradigm].

Candraghaṇṭā

Next is the name Candraghaṇṭā... She is one who possesses the pure sound of the bell which is evocative of the blemish-less lustre of the Moon. Why is she called this way? The very minute we see the Moon, we feel happy. All children feel happy when they gaze at the Moon. Imagine the pleasing sound or nādam of the bell derived from the lustrous Moon with its cooling rays—in the same way, in life, if we are to enjoy pure and blemish-less happiness always, we need the Grace or anugraham of Mother Candraghaṇṭā. In addition, Candraghaṇṭā confers lāvaṇyam or lustrous beauty (and health) to us— physical beauty is referred to as ‘Candrabimba - like’ beauty.

Say, a child has toiled night and day as a student and worked hard to master his/her lessons - she or he is a scholar and a brahmacāriṇī or brahmacārī now — but tomorrow if he or she is to get married, they need to look beautiful and regal. And so, we need to seek Mother Candraghaṇṭā's blessings.

Kūṣmāṇḍā

Next, we encounter a very important name of the Divine Mother: Kūṣmāṇḍā - let us look at why this is so: Kūṣmāṇḍā's Grace will ensure that the child is kept safe from disease and ailments. Tāpatrayās should not afflict this child or sādḥaka. Devi Kūṣmāṇḍā is said to reside in our stomachs. Generally speaking, all ill health begins with the stomach: with eating the wrong things, indigestion, etc.

There are three types of tāpatrayās (suffering): ādidaiṽka (suffering caused by karmic factors), ādhiboutika (suffering caused by external physical factors such as earthquakes, etc.), and ādyātmika (suffering as a result of internal factors like diseases). Whether we invite the suffering onto ourselves, or the suffering is inflicted on us, or the suffering is as a result of prārabdha karma, Kūṣmāṇḍā Devi will protect you from the tāpa and help you.

Skandamātā

Next is Skandamātā - a beautiful name of Mother Pārvati. There is no greater parākramaśālī than Subrahmaṇya (Skanda) who is devasenādhīpati — He is the repository of (Brahma)Jñānam — the Divine Mother begets Subrahmaṇya as her little child and is seen with Him in her lap or hip always — (the bhāvana is that) She never puts him down. If you've seen a mūrti or sculpture of Skandamātā, you will see that She always has Skanda in her arms or lap. What is the significance? To have someone as wise and valorous as Subrahmaṇya as your child is a most excellent soubhāghyam — uttering Skandamātā's name will confer such a soubhāghyam on the sādḥaka.

In addition, the vedas speak of sanatkumāra taking form as Skanda, Lord Śiva's son... as sanatkumāra, Subrahmaṇya innately possesses six guṇas or attributes including aishvarya or ultimate prosperity—Skandamātā's Grace will result in us begetting the six attributes of Skanda. Why is this relevant? While doing daily pārayānam of the Devi Mahātmyam, it does not matter whether or not you fully understand the meaning of what you recite — if you were to chant the Devi Mahātmyam in a dedicated and resolute way, in the proper meter, you will get all the attributes -- in short, you will get *everything*.

Kālarātrī

So in this way, we see nine special names: after Skandamātā come the names Kālarātrī, Kātyāyanī... The name “Kālarātrī” is a beautiful name. If you ask who that is, remember “Kālā” or “Time”. Kālā refers to the agent of Time and hence represents mortality and finitude. Know that Kālarātrī Devi is the Divine Mother who has the ability to destroy even “*oozhi kaalam*” or the ultimate God of Time (Kāladeva) who comes at the moment of Praḷaya or the Great Dissolution of this Universe. In other words, if we ask “Who is the most powerful in this universe?” We would say, “Mahākālā” or Time. The One who can destroy even Mahākālā is the Divine Mother Kālarātrī!!! So you can then appreciate and understand the Glory of the Divine Mother!

MahāGowrī, Siddidātrī, Kātyāyanī

Subsequently, Brahma mentions “Mahāgowrī” as the eighth name of the Devi in the kavacam—

I must explain this padam (Mahāgowrī) to you as this name is pleasing to the Divine Mother Herself: because it was Lord Paramaśiva that gave Her this name. There are times where we mock our respective spouses by funny names, and sometimes this results in *kopataapam* (misunderstanding and conflict). The story goes that once upon a time, Śiva addresses Devi as “Kālī” in a mocking way, which resulted in the Divine Mother feeling cross and sad - and as a result she undertook severe austerities to change her appearance to a whitish appearance (*gouram* refers to white-ness)— and an amused Śiva then addresses her as “Mahāgowrī” — thus asserts the Kālī purāṇam. The Devi’s sensitivity led to her undertaking intense austerities, and attaining a different appearance. The result is this special appellation of Mahāgowrī, a name given and used by Śiva Himself with great love [refers to this Play of the Mother] . The ninth name in the Kavacam “Siddhidātrī” makes a reference to attainment of Siddhis or powers: every siddhi that one would want to attain, is granted to the sādḥaka, when he or she invokes Divine Mother Siddhidātrī. Only two stanzas:

prathamam śailaputrī ca dviṭīyam brahmacārīnī |
trīṭīyam candraghaṇṭeti kūṣmāṇḍeti caturthakam ||
pancamam skandamāṭeti ṣaṣṭham kātyāyanīti ca |

Look at the name “Kātyāyanī”: Devi was born to Kātyāyana Maḥarīshi as his daughter, as a result of his intense austerities or tapas.

saptamam kālarātrīti mahāgowrīti cāṣṭamam ||

Navadurgā Prasādam

Remember I mentioned that the name “Mahāgowrī” was given to Her by Lord Śīva Himself? The Goddess Annapūrṇā Devi in Kāśī is Mahāgowrī. There was a renowned Swāmi in Kāśī by the name of Satchidānanda Sarasvati - who had gotten sanyāsam from Mahātapovanam; and was a disciple of Sringeri Mahāsannidhānam Śrī Śrī Candraśekhara Bhāratī Mahāswāmīji. Swāmi Satchidānanda Sarasvati had a special fondness for me - he was aware that I recited the Devi Māhātmyam in Kāśī every day. He sent for me one day - and told me, “You recite the Devi Māhātmyam every day — and I have been aware and listening — I want to give you something — but I am a sannyāsī - so what I can really offer you? —but there is something — tomorrow, do your recitation after 11 a.m.”

I was used to starting my recitation every day between 8 and 8:30 a.m., given that it would take me a good 3 to 3.5 hours to recite the whole Caṇḍī — it was right after I had first fully learned the Caṇḍī (back in 1961). But Swāmi was insistent I do the pārāyaṇam later the next day. Then he explained:

“In this Kāśī Kśetram, the nine Devīs you encounter in the Devyāh Kavacam all have special temple shrines dedicated to them. The residents of Kāśī make it a point to visit one Devi (in the navadurgā pantheon) every day over nine days during Navarātri. Tomorrow, have your shower, and show up here by 5 a.m. We can leave at 5, and we can both set out by foot — and I can take you to all the nine shrines one after the other and still bring you back here by 10:30, 11 a.m.”

Imagine, it was 15-20 kilometers by foot —I agreed of course, as it was such a special blessing. Today if you ask me for the locations [of these nine shrines], I don't know the locations — and I don't even know if there are any people to take us there to those shrines. You may try and find out if there are people (or some way to visit the shrines). I received this rare blessing (Bhāghyam) almost as soon as I had started to recite the Devi Māhātmyam regularly.

The reason I'm sharing this anecdote with you now is because: even as soon as you intend to learn and recite the Devi Māhātmyam, you will all receive the Abiding Grace of Ambālī in full (paripūrṇa anugraham). This is an assured fact. If you ask how I am so sure: it is believed that (much in the same way that Hanumān will sit, listening, beside you, as a shrota when you recite the Rāmāyaṇam), the Divine Mother will be listening to your recitation of the Devi Māhātmyam. Because she is the Divine Mother, (please know that) She will always embrace the recitation as being excellent, whether or not the recitation has been accurate or inaccurate — even if it contains inaccuracies. Much in the way that a mother will complete the homework for the child, the Divine Mother will *render whole and complete* any effort on your part to chant Her Glories. So all you need is to do the pārayaṇam with bhakti and śraddhā (faith and purity of intent).

Once again, the Divine Mother Mahāgowrī that we encounter in the Devyāh Kavacam is Divine Mother Annapūrṇā in Kāśī —I believe the Divine mother enshrined in the Durgā Mandir [in Kāśī] is indeed Kūsmāṇḍā Devi...

Why Recite Kavacam, Argalam, Kīlakam

So now... if you ask why we should recite the Devyāh Kavacam, the reason is as follows: Kavacam, argalam and kīlakam are recited (one after the other) as a triad. Kavacam means “protective gear” or armor — like bullet-proof vests worn by soldiers in the army, which protect the soldiers from bullets. “Argalam” means “lock” or “latch” (like we see on a door or gate); and “kīlakam” means “key” or “nail” (Āṇī in thamizh refers to “nail” or “key”).

What is the use of the above triad?

1. First the protective armor is the kavacam.
2. The suffering that results from our transgressions results in impressions and obstacles to the sādhana: this suffering and these obstacles are destroyed by the argalā stotram.
3. Reciting the kīlakam gives us the “phalam” (result) or the fruits of the great recitation effort (that is, the recitation of the whole Devi Mahātmyam which is yet to come).

Imagine, we have a job: but we need to earn an income. The service itself is great — but we need to make sure we are able to feed the family through our work. You require the minimum salary for sustaining day to day activities. We have this need, don't we? So this salary, this result for the work, is conferred on us by the kīlakam.

To those who may say: we have not even started reading the story in the Devi Māhātmyam [why the focus on these sections]?... the answer is: we need to be well [before we can engage in the

upāsanā]. So again, the Devyāh Kavacam offers protection while doing the sādhanā, argalā stotram removes impressions and hardship we have incurred as a result of our transgressions; kīlakam offers the assurance of full benefit for the recitation (that is yet to come). So the three are necessary even before we begin chanting the story.

You may have heard of various Kavacams: Kanda Śaṣṭi Kavacam, Navagraha Kavacam... What is unique about the Devyāh Kavacam is that: Very poignantly, and beautifully, from the get-go, every organ that could potentially be afflicted by an ailment--every outward and internal organ, [every modality and mental apparatus] — is addressed specifically by a different agent or amśa of the Divine Mother in the Kavacam.

[This is very] much like we see specialists for various ailments: if there is pain in the heart, we see the heart specialist. If there is something ailing the skin, we see a skin specialist. For our eyes, we see an eye specialist. In the same way, the Divine Mother has appointed a separate specialist devatā for every part of us — invoking them would be enough to take care of the part of the body they are specifically responsible for. As you read progressively, you will see all organs that could potentially be afflicted by ailments are covered, right down to the hair follicles on our skin.... In addition, the other important remedies that we encounter in this kavacam - when you travel outside, you need protection from all the directions — and so there is a devatā or Divine mother assigned to offer protection from each direction and quarter: You will notice that the Kavacam includes the **aṣṭha mātrikās** - they will be sitting all around the sādhanaka. Note that They will not be sitting alone — they will be seated with their armaments and with or on their vehicles (Brāhmī on Hamsa (swan mount), etc)...

[brāhmī-hamsa samārūḍhā sarvābharāṇa-shobhitā ||...
nānābharāṇa shobhāḍhyā nānāratnopashobhitāha ||](#)

And so they all wait to shower their Full Grace on you — their assignment is to protect you from the outside, from every nook and corner. This is because, a threat could come to you from anywhere outside, just as the threat can arise from within you. Thus, the Devyāh Kavacam offers a complete protection in every sense: a protection from within and without.

So the Divine Mother has provided protection from everything that could afflict you from within the body, and from outside. Remember, the Divine Mother confers armaments to all her divine embodiments; and She protects you through the divine armaments and weaponry (āyudham) of the aṣṭha mātrikās. These armaments exist to confer Total Protection on you:

[shankham cakram gadām śaktim, halam ca musalāyudham ||
kheṭakam tomaram caiva paraśum pāśameva ca ||](#)

The job of all the armaments is to protect you. I'm not going through the word for word meaning of every verse. If you were to read the verses yourself, you would follow the meaning and intent of the verses yourself easily. They are fairly apparent.

Furthermore, we see the clear statement: “The devotee (bhakta) shall be protected by all the devatās - if anyone causes him/her trouble (in case he/she is confronted by enemies), those enemies shall be destroyed. So too shall his/her loved ones be protected.” All this too is covered

in the Devyāh Kavacam:

daityānām dehanāsāya bhaktānām abhayāya ca |

In the Kavacam, you also see an account of where in the body, the various devatās reside (i.e., the devatās responsible for the various organs and faculties). You know, in most nations, there is a rule to wear a helmet when you are driving a scooter. In fact in the US, even a child riding a bicycle wears the helmet. Why? To protect the head in case of an accident. And a mother will always advise the child to wear the helmet, whenever he goes out--even if going nearby. Even if the child is on a bike, this is required. Imagine that when you chant the Kavacam, (1) it acts as a shield when you go outside; (2) whatever activity or intent motivated you to go out in the first place is successful, and (3) everything happens to your heart's (desire and) content. Who will have the heart to offer such a concession (but the Divine Mother)? Devi also says, even if you cannot chant the kavacam, at least think about (or meditate on) the kavacam in your mind!

All of us want prosperity in terms of land, house, etc. and all of us want to enjoy a peaceful life. Devi guarantees that we will have all of that and more. During our life, we will beget good children and grandchildren. As we age, Mahārishi Mārkaṇḍeya assures that we will never suffer an untimely death. He assures us that we will get Mokṣa (Liberation), or Sāyujyam (Union with the Supreme Self) and be in the abode of Devi--just as Lord Śiva gets to be with Devi all the time. Kavacam has the power to ward off influences from evil things. Mahārishi also says: when you chant Kavacham, don't look for Devi outside. Just keep Her in your heart. Then your reputation will grow, you will enjoy greater rewards and wealth. You see, even though Mārkaṇḍeya Mahārishi asked Brahma, to give that one thing that will be useful for humans, Kavacam goes beyond that and takes us all the way to Mokṣa or Liberation.

I humbly request all of you to chant Kavacam whenever things are troubling you: the troubles could be related to health, to your employment, may be in the form of neighbours, or enemies etc. Whatever the problems are, if you offer prārthana sincerely to Devi, all your problems will go away. Mahārishi says, don't start a day without chanting Kavacam. Then all your wishes will be fulfilled. It is capable of bestowing wealth, and great reputation to you. Let me tell you this: When you are heading out with the mind of accomplishing certain things, chant Kavacam--and your goal will be accomplished successfully. All of you are all advancing in your lessons very well. Please teach your children the kavacam. It will give them health and happiness.

Argalam

As I already told you, chanting argalam removes all our past sins (*pāpam*). One beauty of this stotram is that we say "Give, Give, Give" so many times to Devi. If you plead with someone to give you something, they may not budge the first few times. But eventually they will give you

what you are looking for, (even if it is) just to dispose of you after that! So in every verse: we are asking for a healthy body (physique that looks majestic like a king or queen). It is important to have a good rūpam as that helps you to accomplish your desires. Next we ask for success in everything we do-- and we ask that every success will bring us name and a great reputation. Now, as we do our work, obstacles can come our way. We ask Devi to take care of those obstacles for us. Do you notice how many times we keep asking her, “Give, Give, Give”!

I would say, you should teach kīlakam to your children. After all, they need good health. You need to be in good health. After that, you need education/knowledge. Without education, how will they lead their lives? (vidyAvantam...).

Now you want to be well-known for your knowledge (“yaśas-vantam”). [You want to be known as an expert]. Finally, you want a good remuneration or materials gains. (“lakshmīvantam”). Isn’t this what we want for our children? The next important verse is “Give me good children.” [Also,] “I don’t want to depend on them, so please grant me financial independence.” Let their desires be fulfilled as well.

You need to understand that it is very important to have a clear idea of what you want to ask God. Imagine you asking for an elephant, you getting it, you then needing to feed it--then it grows and hits the neighbor’s wall, at which point the neighbor complains, and [you find yourself] dealing with a case! Do you see what I am saying? So, having clarity about what you want is very important. Ask just what you need, [clearly and] beautifully when the opportunity comes.

Remember early on, I told you that kīlakam is like a door latch. You know that whatever key you had used to lock, is what you need to use again to unlock. So Ambal has to unlock that door to let all our old papams out and let in the new punyam. So Argala stotram is an important stotram to chant in one’s life. Recall that chanting Argala stotram is good for children. It not only gets them good health, wealth but also a good spouse. Maharishi says, you will get a spouse who will be in such a sync with your child that whatever he/she thinks, the spouse will get that into action! (manOvrittAnusArinIm ...). The two will beget good children/offsprings. Finally, the two together will cross this ocean of human life - such is the kind of life partner, you want for your child. In fact this is the last slokam of Argalam. The Maharishi says that before chanting Devi MAhAtmyam, one should chant Kavacam, Argalam. That is a prerequisite to realizing the full benefits of Devi Mahaatmya parayanam.

Kīlakam

Kīlakam is a key, or a nail. Just as a nail leaves indelible marks, we want whatever we get to be long-lasting. So with Kavacam, we are putting on protective gear. With Argala stotram, we are getting rid of all our sins. With kīlakam, we will have positive benefits accrue and not leave us.

I have been listening to all your chanting. My heart is so full of joy, on hearing it. All of you are chanting with so much of Bhakthi and Shraddha. When you are reading, read it aloud such that

someone sitting next to you can hear it. If you wonder why I am saying this, Maḥarishi talks about this specifically in kīlakam.

sanaistu japyamAneasmin stotre sampattiruccakaiH |
bhavatyeva samagrApi tataH prArabhyamevatat |

If you chant in a low voice, you get sampath. But if you say it out loud, you get all kinds of wealth. **So starting from now on, chant aloud!** You might wonder, why say loud? The main reason is then others have a chance to hear. Ambal says later in Devi MAhAtmyam that anyone who listens to the chanting gets as much benefit and part of that will come back to you! Secondly, it allows for someone to note mistakes and gives you a chance to correct them. For example, there is a phrase: bhAryA rakshathu bhairavi - which means let Bharavi protect my wife. But if by mistake, we say, “bhakshathu bhairavi”, it means “ eat my wife” and that changes the whole meaning. So Maḥarishi indicates in kīlakam that we should chant it loudly. Like Kavacham and Argalam, kīlakam is also to be chanted before Devi MAhAtmyam pArAyaNam.

We will stop here. Next wednesday, I will take you through the first chapter.

Sri Gurubhyo Namaha, Sri Maatree Namaha
Sarve Janaha Sukhino Bhavantu

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