

## CHAPTER 1

### THE SLAYING OF MADHU AND KAITABA

#### *Meditation of Mahakali*



I resort to Mahakali, who has ten faces, ten legs and holds in her hands the sword, disc, mace, arrows, bow, club, spear, missile, human head and conch, who is three-eyed, adorned with ornaments on all her limbs, and luminous like a blue jewel, and whom Brahma extolled in order to destroy Madhu and Kaitabha, when Vishnu was in (mystic) sleep. Markandeya said (to his disciple Krasustuki Bhaguri): 1-3. Savarni, son<sup>1</sup> of Surya, is called the eighth Manu. Listen , while I describe in detail about his birth, how Savarni, illustrious son of Surya, became the lord of the (eighth) Manvantara<sup>2</sup> by the grace of Mahamaya<sup>3</sup>

4-5. In former times there was a king named Suratha, born of the Chitra dynasty, ruling over the whole world in the period of Svarocisa. He protected his subjects duly like his own children. At that time the kings, who were the destroyers of the c, became his enemies.

6-7. He, the wielder of powerful weapons, fought a battle with the destroyers of Kolas, but was defeated by them though they were a small force. Then he returned to his own city, and ruled over his won country. Then that illustrious king was attacked by those powerful enemies.

8-9. Even in his own city, the king, (now) bereft of strength, was robbed of his treasury and army by his own powerful, vicious and evil-disposed ministers. Thereafter, deprived of this sovereignty, the king left alone on horse-back for a dense forest, under the pretext of hunting.

<sup>1</sup> Savarni was so called because he was the son of Savarna, Surya's wife. He became King Suratha in the second (Svarocisa) manvantara.

<sup>2</sup> One cycle of creation is divided into fourteen manvantaras. The period ruled over by one Manu is called a Manvantara. There are, therefore, fourteen Manus as follows: Svayambhuva, Svarocisa, Uttama, Tamasa, Raivata, Caksusa, Vaivasvata, Savarni, Daksha-savarni, Brahma-savarni, Dharma-savarni, Rudra-savarni, Deva-savarni, and Indra-savarni.

<sup>3</sup> One of the names of the Divine Mother.

10-11. He saw there the hermitage of Medhas- the supreme among the twice-born - inhabited by wild animals which were peaceful, and graced by the disciples of the sage. Entertained by the sage, Suratha spent some time moving about in the hermitage of the great sage.

12-16. There then overcome with attachment, he fell into the thought, 'I do not know whether the capital (which was) well-guarded by my ancestors and recently deserted by me is being guarded righteously or not by my servants of evil conduct. I do not know what enjoyments my chief elephant, heroic and always elated, and now fallen into the hands of my foes, will get. Those who were my constant followers and received favor, riches and food from me, now certainly pay homage to other kings. The treasure which I gathered with great care will be squandered by those constant spendthrifts, who are addicted to improper expenditures.'

17-19. The king was continually thinking of these and other things. Near the hermitage of the Brahmana he saw a merchant, and asked him: 'Ho! Who are you? What is the reason for your coming here? Wherefore do you appear as if afflicted with grief and depressed in mind?' Hearing this speech of the king, uttered in a friendly spirit, the merchant bowed respectfully and replied to the king.

*The merchant said:*

20-25. 'I am a merchant named Samadhi, born in a wealthy family. I have been cast out by my sons and wife, who are wicked through greed of wealth. My wife and sons have misappropriated my riches, and made me devoid of wealth. Cast out by my trusted kinsmen, I have come to the forest grief-stricken. Dwelling here, I do not know anything as regards good or bad of my sons, kinsmen and wife. At present is welfare or ill-luck theirs at home? How are they? Are my sons living good or evil lives?'

*The king said:*

26-28. 'Why is your mind affectionately attached to those covetous folk, your sons, wife and others, who have deprived you of your wealth?'

*The merchant said:*

29-34. 'This very thought has occurred to me, just as you have uttered it. What can I do? My mind does not become hard; it bears deep affection to those very persons who have driven me out in their greed for wealth, abandoning love for a father and attachment to one's master and kinsmen. I do not comprehend although, I know it. O noble hearted king, how it is that the mind is prone to love even towards worthless kinsmen. On account of them I heave heavy sighs and feel dejected. What can I do since my mind does not become hard towards those unloving ones?'

*Markandeya said:*

35-38. Then O Brahmana, the merchant Samadhi and the noble king together approached the sage (Medhas); and after observing the etiquette worthy of him and as was proper, they sat down and conversed (with him) on some topics.

*The king said:*

39-45. 'Sir, I wish to ask you one thing. Be pleased to reply to it. Without the control of my intellect, my mind is afflicted with sorrow. Though I have lost the kingdom, like an ignorant man- though I know it- I have an attachment to all the paraphernalia of my kingdom. How is this, O best of sages? And this merchant has been disowned by this children, wife and servants, and forsaken by his own people; still he is inordinately affectionate towards them. Thus both he and I, drawn by attachment towards objects whose defects we do know, are exceedingly unhappy. How this happens, then, sir, that though we are aware of it, this delusion comes? This delusion besets me as well as him, blinded as we are in respect of discrimination.' The Rishi said:

46-49. Sir, every being has the knowledge of objects perceivable by the senses. And object of sense reaches it in various ways. Some beings are blind by day, and others are blind by night; some beings have equal sight both by day and night. Human beings are certainly endowed with knowledge, but they are not the only beings ( to be so endowed), for cattle, birds, animals and other creatures also cognize (objects of senses).

50-58. The knowledge that men have, birds and beasts too have; and what they have men also possess; and the rest (like eating and sleeping) is common to both of them. Look at these birds, which though they possess knowledge, and are themselves distressed by hunger are yet, because of the delusion, engaged in dropping grains into the beaks of their young ones. Human beings are, O tiger among men, attached to their children because of greed for return help. Do you not see this? Even so men are hurled into the whirlpool of attachment, the pit of delusion, through the power of Mahamaya ( the Great Illusion), who makes the existence of the world possible. Marvel not at this. this Mahamaya is the Yoganidra, of Vishnu, the Lord of the world. It is by her the world is deluded.

Verily she, the Bhagavati, the Mahamaya forcibly drawing the minds of even the wise, throws them into delusion. She creates this entire universe, both moving and unmoving. It is she who, when propitious, becomes a boon-giver to human beings for their final liberation. She is the supreme knowledge, the cause of final liberation, and eternal; she is the cause of the bondage of transmigration and the sovereign over all lords.

*The king said:*

59-62. 'Venerable sir, who is that Devi whom you call Mahamaya? How did she come into being, and what is her sphere of action, O Brahmana? What constitutes her nature? What is her form? Wherefrom did she originate? All that I wish to hear from you, O you supreme among the knowers of Brahman.'

*The Rishi said:*

63-71. She is eternal, embodied as the universe. By her all this is pervaded. Nevertheless she incarnates in manifold ways; hear it from me. When she manifests herself in order to accomplish the purposes of the devas, she is said to be born in the world, though she is eternal. At the end of a kalpa when the universe was one ocean( with the waters of the deluge) and the adorable Lord Vishnu stretched out on Sesa and took the mystic slumber, tow terrible asuras, the well-known Madhu and Kaitabha, sprung into being from the dirt of Vishnu's ears, sought to slay Brahma; Brahma, the father of beings, was

sitting in the lotus( that came out) from Vishnu's navel. Seeing these two fierce asuras and Janardhana asleep, and with a view to awakening Hari, (Brahma) with concentrated mind extolled Yoganidra, dwelling in Hari's eyes. The resplendent Lord Brahma extolled the incomparable Goddess of Vishnu, Yoganidra, the queen of cosmos, the supporter of the worlds, the cause of the sustentation and dissolution alike (of the universe).

72-74. Brahma said: 'You are Svaha and Svadha. You are verily the Vasatkara and embodiment of Svara. You are the nectar. O eternal and imperishable One, you are the embodiment of the threefold mantra. You are half a matra, though eternal. You are verily that which cannot be uttered specifically. You are Savitri and the supreme Mother of the devas.

75-77. 'By you this universe is borne, by you this world is created. By you it is protected, O Devi and you always consume it at the end. O you who are (always) of the form of the whole world, at the time of creation you are of the form of the creative force, at the time of sustentation you are of the form of the protective power, and at the time of the dissolution of the world, you are of the form of the destructive power. You are the supreme knowledge as well as the great nescience, the great intellect and contemplation, as also the great delusion, the great devi as also the great asuri.

78-81. 'You are the primordial cause of everything, bringing into force the three qualities. You are the dark night of periodic dissolution. You are the great night of final dissolution, and the terrible night of delusion. You are the goddess of good fortune, the ruler, modesty, intelligence characterized by knowledge, bashfulness, nourishment, contentment, tranquility and forbearance. Armed with sword, spear, club, discus, conch , bow, arrows, slings and iron mace, you are terrible (and at the same time) you are pleasing, yea more pleasing than all the pleasing things and exceedingly beautiful. You are indeed the supreme Isvari, beyond the high and low.

82-87. 'And whatever of wherever a thing exists, conscient( real) or non-conscient (unreal), whatever power all that possesses is yourself. O you who are the soul of everything, how can I extol you (more than this)? By you, even he who creates, sustains and devours the world, is put to sleep. Who is here capable of extolling you? Who is capable of praising you, who have made all of us- Vishnu, myself and Shiva- take our embodied forms? O Devi, being lauded thus, bewitch these two unassailable asuras Madhu and Kaitabha with your superior powers. Let Vishnu, the Master of the world, be quickly awakened from sleep and rouse up his nature to slay these two great asuras.'

*The Rishi said:*

88-95. There, the Devi of delusion extolled thus by Brahma, the creator, in order to awaken Vishnu for the destruction of Madhu and Kaitabha, drew herself out from His eyes, mouth, nostrils, arms, heart and breast, and appeared in the sight of Brahma of inscrutable birth. Janardana, Lord of the universe, quitted by her, rose up from His couch on the universal ocean, and saw those two evil(asuras), Madhu and Kaitabha, of exceeding heroism and power, with eyes red in anger, endeavoring to devour Brahma. Thereupon the all-pervading Bhagavan Vishnu got up and fought with the asuras for five thousand years, using his own arms as weapons. And they, frenzied with their exceeding power, and deluded by Mahamaya, exclaimed to Vishnu, ' Ask a boon from us.'

*Bhagavan (Vishnu) said:*

96-98. 'If you are satisfied with me, you must both be slain by me now. What need is there of any other boon here? My choice is this much indeed.'

*The Rishi said:*

99-101. Those two(asuras), thus bewitched (by Mahamaya), gazing then at the entire world turned into water, told Bhagavan, the lotus eyed One, 'Slay us at the spot where the earth is not flooded with water.'

*The Rishi said:*

102-104. Saying 'Be it so', Bhagavan(Vishnu), the great wielder of conch, discus and mace, took them on His loins and there severed their heads with His discus. Thus she (Mahamaya) herself appeared when praised by Brahma. Now listen again the glory of this Devi. I tell you.

Here ends the first chapter called 'The slaying of Madhu and Kaitabha' of Devi mahatmya in Markandeya purana, during the period of Savarni, the Manu.