

CHAPTER 2

SLAUGHTER OF THE ARMIES OF MAHISASURA

Meditation of Mahalakshmi



I resort to Mahalakshmi, the destroyer of Mahisasura, who is seated on the lotus, is of the complexion of coral and who holds in her (eighteen) hands rosary, axe, mace, arrow, thunderbolt, lotus, bow, pitcher, rod, sakti, sword, shield, conch, bell, wine-cup, trident, noose and the discus Sudarsana.

The Rishi said:

1-3. Of yore when Mahisasura was the lord of asuras and Indra the lord of devas, there was a war between the devas and asuras for a full hundred years. In that the army of the devas was vanquished by the valorous asuras. After conquering all the devas, Mahisasura became the lord of heaven(Indra).

4-5. Then the vanquished devas headed by Brahma, the lord of beings, went to the place where Siva and Vishnu were. The devas described to them in detail, as it had happened, the story of their defeat wrought by Mahisasura.

6-8. 'He (Mahisasura) himself has assumed the jurisdictions of Surya, Indra, Agni, Vayu, Candra, Yama and Varuna and other (devas). Thrown out from heaven by that evil-natured Mahisa, the hosts of devas wander on the earth like mortals. All that has been done by the enemy of the devas, has been related to you both, and we have sought shelter under you both. May both of you be pleased to think out the means of his destruction.'

9. Having thus heard the words of the devas, Vishnu was angry and also Siva, and their faces became fierce with frowns.

10-11. The issued forth a great light from the face of Vishnu who was full of intense anger, and from that of Brahma and Siva too. From the bodies of Indra and other devas also sprang forth a very great light. And (all) this light united together.

12-13. The devas saw there a concentration of light like a mountain blazing excessively, pervading all the quarters with its flames. Then that unique light, produced from the bodies of all the devas, pervading the three worlds with its lustre, combined into one and became a female form.

14-15. By that which was Siva's light, her face came into being; by Yama's (light) her hair, by Vishnu's light her arms; and by Candra's (light) her two breasts. By Indra's light her waist, by Varuna's (light) her shanks and thighs and by earth's light her hips.

16-18. By Brahma's light her feet came into being; by Surya's light her toes, by Vasus (light) her fingers, by Kubera's (light) her nose; by Prajapati's light her teeth came into being and similarly by Agni's light her three eyes were formed. The light of the two sandhyas became her eye-brows, the light of Vayu her ears; the manifestation of the lights of other devas too (contributed to the being of the) auspicious Devi.

19. Then looking at her, who had come into being from the assembled lights of all the devas, the immortals who were oppressed by Mahisasura experienced joy.

20-21. The bearer of Pinaka (Siva) drawing forth a trident from his own trident presented it to her; and Vishnu bringing forth a discus out of his own discus gave her. Varuna gave her a conch, Agni a spear; and Maruta gave a bow as well as two quivers full of arrows.

22-23. Indra, lord of devas, bringing forth a thunderbolt out of (his own) thunderbolt and a bell from that of his elephant Airavata, gave her. Yama gave a staff from his own staff of Death and Varuna, the lord of waters, a noose; and Brahma, the lord of beings, gave a string of beads and a water-pot.

24. Surya bestowed his own rays on all the pores of her skin and Kala (Time) gave a spotless sword and a shield.

25-29. The milk-ocean gave a pure necklace, a pair of un-decaying garments, a divine crest-jewel, a pair of ear-rings, bracelets, a brilliant half-moon(ornament), armlets on all arms, a pair of shining anklets, a unique necklace and excellent rings on all the fingers.

Visvakarman gave her a very brilliant axe, weapons of various forms and also an impenetrable armour. The ocean gave her a garland of unfading lotuses for her head and another for her breast, besides a very beautiful lotus in her hand. The (mountain) Himavat gave her a lion to ride on a various jewels.

30-33. The lord of wealth (Kubera) gave her a drinking cup, ever full of wine. Sesa, the lord of all serpents, who supports this earth, gave her a serpent-necklace bedecked with best jewels. Honoured likewise by other devas also with ornaments and weapons, she (the Devi) gave out a loud roar with a decrying laugh again and again. By her unending, exceedingly great, terrible roar the entire sky was filled, and there was great reverberation. All worlds shook, the seas trembled.

34-46. The earth quaked and all the mountains rocked. 'Victory to you,' exclaimed the devas in joy to her, the lion-rider. the sages, who bowed their bodies in devotion, extolled her. Seeing the three worlds agitated the foes of devas, mobilized all their armies and rose up together with uplifted weapons. Mahisasura, exclaiming in wrath, 'Ha! What is this?' rushed towards that roar, surrounded by innumerable asuras. Then he saw the Devi pervading the three worlds with her lustre. Making the earth bend with her footstep, scraping the sky with her diadem, shaking the nether worlds with the twang of the bowstring, and standing there pervading all the quarters around with her thousand arms. Then began a battle between that Devi and the enemies of the devas, in which the quarters of the sky were illumined by the weapons and arms hurled diversely. Mahisasura's general, a great asura named Ciksura and Camara, attended by forces comprising four parts, and other (asuras) fought. A

great asura named Udagra with sixty thousand chariots, and Mahahanu with ten millions (of chariots) gave battle. Asiloman, another great asura, with fifteen millions (of chariots), and Baskala with six millions fought in that battle. Privarita with many thousands of elephants and horses, and surrounded by ten millions of chariots, fought in that battle. An asura named Bidala fought in that battle surrounded with five hundred crores of chariots. And other great asuras, thousands in number, surrounded with chariots, elephants and horses fought with the Devi in that battle.

47-48. Mahisasura was surrounded in that battle with thousands of crores of horses, elephants and chariots. Others (asuras) fought in the battle against the Devi with iron maces and javelins, with spears and clubs, with swords, axes and halberds. Some hurled spears and others nooses.

49-58. They began to strike her with swords in order to kill her. Showering her own weapons and arms, that Devi Chandika very easily cut into pieces all those weapons and arms. Without any strain on her face, and with gods and sages extolling her, the Isvari threw her weapons and arms at the bodies of the asuras. And the lion also which carried the Devi, shaking its mane in rage, stalked among the hosts of the asuras like a conflagration amidst the forests. The sighs which Ambika, engaged in the battle, heaved became at once her battalions by hundreds and thousands. Energized by the power of the Devi, these (battalions) fought with axes, javelins, swords, halberds, and destroyed the asuras. Of these battalions, some beat drums, some blew conches and others played on tabors in that great martial festival. Then the Devi killed hundreds of asuras with her trident, club, showers of spears, swords and the like, and threw down others who were stupefied by the noise of her bell; and binding others with her noose, she dragged them on the ground. Some were split into two by the sharp slashes of her sword, and others, smashed by the blows of her mace, lay down on the ground; and some severely hammered by club vomited forth blood.

59-61. Pierced in the breast by her trident, some fell on the ground. Pierced all over by her arrows and resembling porcupines, some of the enemies of devas gave up their lives on that field of battle. Some had their arms cut off, some, their necks broken the heads of others rolled down; some others were torn asunder in the middle of their trunks, and some great asuras fell on the ground with their legs severed.

62. Some rendered one-armed, one-eyed, and one-legged were again clove in twain by the Devi. And others, though rendered headless, fell and rose again.

63. Headless trunks fought with the Devi with best weapons in their hands. Some of these headless trunks danced there in the battle to the rhythm of the musical instruments.

64-65. The trunks of some other great asuras, with their swords, spears and lances still in their hands, shouted at the Devi with their just severed heads, 'Stop, stop'. That part of earth where the battle was fought became impassable with the asuras, elephants and horses and chariots that had been felled.

66-67. The profuse blood from the asuras, elephants and horses flowed immediately like large rivers amidst that army of the asuras. As fire consumes a huge heap of straw and wood, so did Ambika destroy that vast army of asuras in no time.

68-69. And her carrier-lion, thundering aloud with quivering mane, prowled about in the battlefield, appearing to search out the vital breaths from the bodies of the enemies of devas. In that battlefield

the battalions of the Devi fought in such a manner with the asuras that the devas in heaven, showering flowers, extolled them.

Here ends the second chapter called 'Slaughter of the armies of Mahisasura' of Devi-mahatmya in Markandeya-purana, during the period of Savarni, the Manu.