

Author's Note

# Sri Durga Chandrakalastuti

P.G. KRISHNAMOORTHY



*Eighteen Verses which condense the essence of Devi  
Mahatmyam and have been found to provide  
solace to the devout.*

## Author's Note

I have made a humble attempt to give, in simple English, the meaning of the 18 Sanskrit verses known as *Durga Chandrakalastuti*. As a layman, I have experienced certain phenomena which led me to the firm belief that chanting these 18 verses did help me to tide over serious difficulties, and it continues to be a source of strength to me to face life as it comes.

Even as a boy of five, I had been introduced to portions of Chapter 5 and Chapter 11 as well as some other *slokas* of *Durga Saptasati* because my father used to chant them as a part of his religious routine. As I grew up, during my school days and in later years, I had frequently read the commentary on *Devi Mahatmyam* given by the late Sri G. S. Srinivasa Iyer (published by R. S. Vadhyar and Sons, Palghat). It was, however, in 1976, that I came across the composition *Durga Chandrakalastuti*.

When I first read it, the simple verses which contained the essence of *Devi Mahatmyam*, together with the description of the greatness of Devi in capsule form, gripped me. At that time, I had a physical ailment; a number of domestic problems had also cropped up. I started chanting the verses, as instructed (*Sandhyayoranusandheya*), and within a matter of days, I experienced remarkable relief.

Recently, a friend who had some problems, casually asked me how I had kept up my composure despite difficulties. When I explained to him my faith in this composition, he, being of a religious bent of mind, expressed a desire to learn it by heart and to know the general import of the *slokas*. When I had completed writing their meaning and a brief explanation of the allusions, he felt that I should get it printed for the benefit of others. It is under these circumstances that I have ventured to publish the translation. I am quite sure that the spirit behind the attempt will be appreciated and the faults, if any, will be excused.

I dedicate this to the Mother Devi, to the saint who gave the *Durga Saptasati* to the world, to Sri Appayya Dikshitar who composed the *Durga Chandrakalastuti* and to the devotees of Devi.

PGK

(Note: *Durga Chandrakalastuti* has been published by Sri Sarada Peetham, Sringeri, 577 139, Karnataka with a commentary by Sri Appayya Dikshitar in Sanskrit.)

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## INTRODUCTION

*Sri Durga Chandrakalastuti* is a sacred composition in praise of Devi. Sri Appayya Dikshitar, the composer of the hymns, lived about 300 years ago in south India. He was a great devotee of Lord Siva and a staunch proponent of the *Advaita* philosophy. Besides commentaries on several religious texts, he also composed several hymns for the worship of Lord Siva and Devi.

The composition, *Durga Chandrakalastuti*, comprises 18 verses, including the couplet as *phalasaruti* (narration of the benefit of chanting the hymns). It is based mainly on the sacred text *Durga Saptasati* in *Markandeya Purana*. In about 11 verses, the essence of *Devi Mahatmyam* is given. The legend behind *Durga Saptasati* is as follows:

Surata, a virtuous king, who ruled over an extensive territory and looked after his subjects as his own family is attacked by enemies and loses most of his kingdom. His vile and avaricious ministers and vassals usurp his power and loot his treasury. Dejected, he mounts his horse and goes alone to the forest under the pretext of going on a hunting expedition. There he is offered hospitality by the great sage Medhas (Vasishtha).

### Mental Agony

Despite the serene atmosphere he continues to suffer mental agony at the loss of his kingdom and the infidelity of his subjects. One day he meets a *vaisya* (trader) by name *Samadhi* who also narrates a similar tale of woe. *Samadhi's* wealth has been misappropriated by his own kith and kin and he, too, is constantly plagued by grief.

Both the king and the *vaisya*, however, find that despite all this betrayal, their minds still long for the company of their relatives and earlier friends as well as recovery of their possessions. The two, therefore, approach the sage Medhas for enlightenment on the cause of this attachment.

The sage replies that this is the act of Devi who, with her *Maya*, induces feelings of affection and attachment in them. While She is creator and protector, She also acts as destroyer of the universe when the time comes.

The sage then narrates the various *avatars* or manifestations the Devi takes to destroy evil and establish righteousness. He describes the destruction of the *Asuras*, Madhu, Kaitabha, Mahisha, Rakthabeeja, Nisumbha and Sumbha and their followers, and explains how the Divine Mother, Devi, had made a promise to protect Her worshippers and the universe from all kinds of calamities and oppression by evil forces.

Surata and *Samadhi* are advised to worship Devi and seek Her blessings for redressal of their grievances. They move over to the banks of a river nearby and after making icons of Devi from the earth on the river bank, offer worship to Her.

### Kingdom Regained

Very soon, Surata regains his kingdom and rules happily for a long time. He is reborn as Surya's son and becomes the eighth Manu under the name Savarni to rule over the earth. *Samadhi* secures the gift of complete detachment and *divya jnana* (enlightenment). (Incidentally, there is a temple of Devi on the banks of a rivulet at Pozhali in South Kanara, Karnataka. It is believed to be the place where *Surata* and *Samadhi* worshipped Devi.)

In *Durga Chandrakalastuti*, there are allusions to many instances of Devi alleviating the sufferings of people. These are briefly indicated while giving the meaning of the *slokas*.

Sri Appayya Dikshitar's compositions have been chanted or sung by devout persons to tide over difficulties and to attain peace of mind. The 17th verse of *Durga Chandrakalastuti* describes how the enlightened devotee seeks just one goal—the supreme bliss of *moksha*, and not worldly pleasures even when tempted.

But, for common people the first step towards godliness comes from a need to overcome immediate problems and difficulties. And for this, the great composer advocates chanting of the verses both in the morning and evening. A large number of persons, when confronted with dangers and calamities, have found them melting away. The verses are simple, easy to learn, well sequenced and take little time to chant.

श्रीः

॥ दुर्गाचन्द्रकलास्तुतिः ॥

## Sri Durga Chandrakalastuti

वेधोहरीश्वरस्तुत्यां विहर्त्रीं विन्ध्यभूधरे ।  
हरप्राणेश्वरीं वन्दे हन्तीं विबुधविद्विषाम् ॥ १ ॥

1. I bow to Parvati, the beloved consort of Siva, who sports happily in the Vindhya mountain, who is worthy of worship by the three deities, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, and who destroys the enemies of the good and knowledgeable people.

In this invocatory verse, the reference is implied that Brahma the creator, Vishnu the protector, and Siva the destroyer of the universe had prayed to Devi (Durga) on various occasions to destroy the *Asuras*, who were using their powers acquired by penance, to trouble and torment the pious and the good. (The prayers by Brahma, Vishnu and Siva are found in *Saptasati*, *Hari-vamsa* and *Varahapurana* respectively.)

अभ्यर्त्थनेन सरसीरुहसम्भवस्य त्यक्तोदिता भगवदक्षिपिधानलीलाम् ।  
विश्वेश्वरी विपदपागमने पुरस्तान्माता ममास्तु मधुकैटभयोर्निहन्ती ॥ २ ॥

2. *May the Divine Mother, the Goddess of the universe who, in answer to the prayer of lotus-born Brahma, desisted from Her game of closing the eyes of the Lord (Vishnu), appeared and destroyed the Asuras Madhu and Kaitabha, come before me to remove my difficulties.*

This verse refers to the first chapter of *Devi Mahatmyam (Durga Saptasati)*. When the entire universe was submerged under water and Lord Vishnu was in his *Yoga Nidra* (sleep), two demons, Madhu and Kaitabha, arose out of the discharge from Vishnu's ears. They threatened to kill Brahma who had been born in a lotus which had blossomed from Vishnu's navel. Brahma praised Devi who was responsible for Vishnu's slumber and prayed that Vishnu be roused and induced to kill the demons, which he achieved by a ruse. Devi is extolled for being responsible for the destruction of the *Asuras*.

प्राङ्निर्जरेषु निहितैर्निजशक्तिलेशैः एकीभवद्भिरुदिताऽखिललोकगुप्त्यै ।  
सम्पन्नशस्त्रनिकरा च तदायुधस्थैर्माता ममास्तु महिषान्तकरी पुरस्तात् ॥ ३ ॥

3. *To protect the world, the Divine Mother took shape as a single entity by combining the part of Her power which She had vested in all the Devas and Gods and used also the power of their weapons to destroy Mahishasura. May She appear before me.*

In the second chapter of *Devi Mahatmyam*, it is stated that Mahishasura, a powerful demon, had defeated the Devas, and unseated Indra, Varuna and others from their positions. The Gods went to Siva and Vishnu and prayed to them for the destruction of Mahisha. Their powerful one-pointed combination resulted in the emergence of Durga who, using the weapons of the Devas, killed Mahishasura.

The belief is that the powers of the Gods and their weapons were bestowed on them by Devi and she withdrew them into one force to destroy the demon. This is again made clear in the 10th chapter of *Devi Mahatmyam* during Devi's fight with Sumbhasura. He scoffs at Devi saying that She depends upon others' powers to fight with him to which She replies, "I am the only power in this world; who else is there different from me? See how they merge in me." Taking all powers into Herself, She kills Sumbhasura.

प्रालेयशैलतनयातनुकान्तिसम्पत् कोशोदिता कुवलयच्छविचारुदेहा ।  
नारायणी नमदभीप्सितकल्पवल्ली सुप्रीतिमावहतु शुम्भनिशुम्भहन्ती ॥ ४ ॥

4. *May Mother Narayanee, born out of the copious glow from the body of Parvati, the daughter of Himavan, whose body has resplendence like the Kuvahaya flower, who confers upon devotees all their desired boons and who killed the demons Sumbha and Nisumbha, give me happiness.*

The demon, Sumbha, and his younger brother, Nisumbha, performed severe penance and obtained vast powers from Brahma. Using these powers, they harassed all the three worlds and usurped the positions of the Gods. The latter, led by Brahma and Vishnu, sang in praise of Devi, remembering her promise to help them in times of difficulties.

The prayers reached Parvati, the daughter of Himavan and consort of Siva. Her entire body quivered in response and the resulting glow took the form of a beautiful damsel. This damsel destroyed the troops and nephews of the *Asuras* and finally, Nisumbha and Sumbha. The worlds were thus rid of the menace. This part appears in chapters 5 to 10 of *Devi Mahatmyam*. This episode has led to the emergence of a deity Kausiki, an aspect of the "sareera kosa" of Parvati.

विश्वेश्वरीति महिषान्तकरीति यस्याः नारायणीत्यपिच नामभिरङ्कितानि ।

सूक्तानि पङ्कजभुवा च सुरर्षिभिश्च दृष्टानि पावकमुखैश्च शिवां भजे ताम् ॥ ५ ॥

5. *I pray to the Mother who has been praised by Brahma, the sages, the God of Fire and others through Suktas (mantras) that describe Her as "Visweswari, Mahishanthakari" and "Narayanee".*

In the *Devi Mahatmyam*, at various stages, Brahma and the Devas are cited as praising Mother and entreating Her to protect them from the torments of the *Asuras*. In the first chapter there is a description of Brahma being threatened by Madhu and Kaitabha. In the fourth chapter after the destruction of Mahishasura, Devas, led by Indra, praise Devi. In the fifth chapter the story of how the Devas praise Devi in their desire to get protection from Sumbha and Nisumbha, who had driven them out of their positions and were tormenting them, is given. In the 11th chapter, after Sumbha's destruction and rout of the *Asuras*, all the Devas, right from Agni, praise Devi. She blesses them and promises to come to their rescue whenever they remember her.

उत्पत्तिदैत्यहननस्तवनात्मकानि संरक्षकाण्यखिलभूतहिताय यस्याः ।

सूक्तान्यशेषनिगमान्तविदः पठन्ति तां विश्वमातरमजस्रमभिष्टवीमि ॥ ६ ॥

6. *I constantly praise the Mother of the Universe, who is known through Suktas describing her genesis and whose annihilation of Asuras has been praised by the Gods who sought and secured protection against evil. The Suktas are chanted by great scholars in Vedanta for the well-being of all.*

The Suktas referred to here are those contained in the first, second and third Charitas of *Durga Saptasati*. In the 12th chapter of *Devi Mahatmyam*, the benefits derived from reading the sacred text have been described in detail.

ये वैप्रचित्तपुनरुत्थितशुम्भमुख्यैः दुर्भिक्षघोरसमयेन च कारितासु ।  
आविष्कृतास्त्रिजगदार्तिषु रूपभेदाः तैरम्बिका समभिरक्षतु मां विपद्भ्यः ॥ ७ ॥

7. *May the Mother who, assuming different forms, removed the difficulties of the world by way of terrorism, famine, etc. created by Asuras Vaiprachithas, Sumbha and others, protect me from dangers.*

In the concluding verse of the 11th chapter of *Devi Mahatmyam*, the Mother promises to the Gods that She would protect them from dangers and remove their difficulties. She forecasts the problems to be created by *Asuras* born to *Viprachithi* and says that She would assume a ferocious form and eat them up; Her teeth would become red in this process and She would, therefore, be known as *Raktadantika*.

Later She would alleviate the sufferings of people caused by drought by filling the earth with vegetation to sustain life till the onset of the rains. She would then be known as *Sakambhari*.

Again, She would, as *Durga*, kill the *Asura* known as *Durgama*; as *Bheema*, She would swallow demons ravaging the Himalayas; as *Bhramari*, She would kill the *asura* known as *Aruna*. Although *Devi* (Mother) exists eternally, She assumes different forms and powers and uses several weapons each time to destroy the evil forces and to confer good on humanity.

सूक्तं यदीयमरविन्दभवादिदृष्टम् आवर्त्य देव्यनुपदं सुरथस्समाधिः ।  
द्वावप्यवापतुरभीष्टमनन्यलभ्यं तामादिदेवतरुणीं प्रणमामि देवीम् ॥ ८ ॥

8. *I pay my respect to the Devi, the consort of Siva, whose praise, as indicated in the mantras discovered by Brahma and other Devas, when sung repeatedly, secured for Surata and Samadhi, the fulfilment of desires incapable of being attained by others.*

The story of *Devi Mahatmyam*, as given in the *Durga Saptasati*, is given in the introduction to this translation.

माहिष्मतीतनुभवञ्च रुरुञ्च हन्तुंआविष्कृतैर्निजरसादवतारभेदैः ।  
अष्टादशाहतनवाहतकोटिसंख्यैः अम्बा सदा समभिरक्षतु मां विपद्भ्यः ॥ ९ ॥

9. *May the Mother who appeared with an army of women, 18 crores strong, to kill Mahishasura, and with another army of nine-crore women to kill the asura*

known as Ruru, protect me always from dangers.

The reference is to the *Varaha Purana* in which the following description of the episode is given:

When Lord Siva was seated in his position on Kailasa Parvata, Brahma visited him and narrated the troubles caused by *asuras*. Vishnu also arrived there. From the glances of the three on one another, there emerged a power in the form of a woman. At their command, the woman divided herself into three separate forms. One representing the *sattvik* form entered the body of Brahma. The form representing *rajo guna* of Vishnu destroyed Mahisha and his forces. The third *tamasic* part, known as Roudri, destroyed the asura Ruru.

एतच्चरित्रमखिलं लिखितं हि यस्याः सम्पूजितं सदन एव निवेशितं वा ।  
दुर्गञ्च तारयति दुस्तरमप्यशेषं श्रेयः प्रयच्छति च सर्वमुमां भजे ताम् ॥ १० ॥

10. I worship the Devi, the writing of whose story, or performance of the worship of whose story (script), or even keeping the sacred script of whose story in the house, completely removes insurmountable difficulties and gives all prosperity.

The *Varaha Purana* describes the fruits of listening to, writing and keeping in the house, the *Devi Charitam*.

यत्पूजनस्तुतिनमस्कृतिभिर्भवन्ति प्रीताः पितामहरमेशहरास्त्रयोऽपि ।  
तेषामपि स्वकगुणैर्ददतीं वपूंषि तामीश्वरस्य तरुणीं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ ११ ॥

11. I seek refuge in the Devi, by whose worship, singing of whose praise and namaskara (obeisance) to whom, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva are pleased and who is giving them their forms out of her *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamo* gunas.

The worship of Devi is said to please all the Gods and hence gives protection against all evils and brings prosperity. In the fourth chapter of *Durga Saptasati*, it is stated that, while praising Devi after She slays Mahishasura the Gods say that she is called "Swaaha" because worshipping her pleases the Gods and "Swadha", as it pleases the departed forefathers (*Pitru ganas*).

कान्तारमध्यदृढलग्नतयाऽवसन्नाः मग्नाश्च वारिधिजले रिपुभिश्च रुद्धाः ।  
यस्याः प्रपद्ये चरणौ विपदस्तरन्ति सा मे सदाऽस्तु हृदि सर्वजगत्सवित्री ॥ १२ ॥

12. May the Mother of the Universe, by seeking refuge at whose feet people caught in the midst of a forest or drowned in mid ocean or attacked by enemies are saved, always remain in my mind.



This verse and the next one indicate in brief the promise of the Mother in the 12th chapter of *Devi Mahatmyam* to protect Her devotees from various kinds of difficulties (vide slokas 25 to 28). Reference is also to the *Harivamsa*, where Vishnu tells Devi of different difficulties of people she has alleviated. *Varaha Purana* also refers to this aspect.

बन्धे वधे महति मृत्युभये प्रसक्ते वित्तक्षये च विविधे च महोपतापे ।

यत्यादपूजनमिह प्रतिकारमाहुःसा मे समस्तजननी शरणं भवानी ॥ १३ ॥

13. *May Bhavani, the Mother of all, the worship of whose feet is said to be the wayout when faced with imprisonment, threat of death, loss of wealth and various dangers, be my refuge.*

बाणासुरप्रहितषन्नगबन्धमोक्षः तद्बाहुदर्पदळनादुषया च योगः ।

प्राद्युम्निना द्रुतमलभ्यत यत्प्रसादात् सा मे शिवा सकलमप्यशुभं क्षिणोतु ॥ १४ ॥

14. *May the Mother, who is the embodiment of all auspicious things and with whose help and blessings, Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumna, was freed from the shackles of Nagapasa created by Banasura and was united with Usha, quickly destroy all inauspicious forces ranged against me.*

The story relating to this verse is described in *Harivamsa*:

Sri Krishna's grandson through Pradyumna was Aniruddha. Banasura was an *asura* with tremendous power gained by worshipping Siva, which he was misusing. His daughter Usha fell in love with Aniruddha. She managed to bring him over to her palace with the help of her maid.

Coming to know of this, Banasura bound Aniruddha with *Naga Astra*, a weapon which takes the shape of a serpent. By worshipping Devi, Aniruddha was freed from the grip of the *Naga Astra*. Meanwhile, Krishna who heard of the imprisonment of his grandson, attacked and killed Banasura. The couple, Usha and Aniruddha, were united in happy wedlock.

पापः पुलस्त्यतनयः पुनरुत्थितो माम् अद्याऽपि हर्तुमयमागत इत्युदीतम् ।

यत्सेवनेन भयमिन्द्रियाऽवधूतं तामादिदेवतरुणीं शरणं गतोऽस्मि ॥ १५ ॥

15. *I seek refuge in Parvati, the consort of Siva, by worshipping whom Rukmini got over the fear that, as in her previous birth, Ravana had again come to abduct her.*

The story behind the verse is as follows:

Rukmini's *swayamvara* (marriage to a prince of her choice) had been announced. Rukmini, her brother wanted her to marry Sisupala, a cruel prince, and an enemy of the Pandavas and Krishna. Rukmini, however, had

set her heart on marrying Krishna and had sent him a message to this effect that she would marry none other. Krishna had promised to come and claim her in marriage.

But when the day of her marriage dawned she heard that Sisupala had already arrived to claim her hand. She was seized by a fear that he might take her away by force, especially as he had her brother's support. (Rukmini, like Sita, was an incarnation of Lakshmi and hence the comparison of Sisupala to Ravana who abducted Sita.) At this hour of trial Rukmini visited the family deity, Parvati, for worship. On her way back, Krishna arrived and took her away after defeating Sisupala, Rukmi and others. This story appears in the *Bhagavata Purana*.

यद्धानजं सुखमवाप्यमनन्तपुण्यैः साक्षात्तमच्युतपरिग्रहमाश्वापुः ।

गोपाङ्गनाः किल यदर्चनपुण्यमात्रान् सा मे सदा भगवती भवतु प्रसन्ना ॥ १६ ॥

16. *May the Devi, the joy of meditating on whom can be had only by those who have done (endless) good deeds and by worshipping whom Gopis achieved an early union with Krishna, be pleased with me.*

The story behind this is from the *Bhagavata*. The *Gopis*, maidens in the kingdom of cowherds where Krishna grew up, had a craving to be united with Him. They worshipped Devi and attained their aim. The allusion is to the fact that worship of Devi brings quick results. The verse also implies that one can worship the Devi only if there is a background of *punya*, i.e., past penance and good deeds.

रात्रिं प्रपद्य इति मन्त्रविदः प्रपन्नान् उद्बोध्य मृत्यवधिमन्यफलैः प्रलोभ्य ।

बुद्ध्वा च तद्विमुखतां प्रतनन्नयन्तीं आकाशमादिजननीं जगतां भजे ताम् ॥ १७ ॥

17. *The devotees of Devi, when they worship Her with the mantras, "Ratrim Prapadye," etc., desire no boon other than complete moksha. But the Mother tests them by offers of worldly prosperity and happiness. When She finds that they have no desire for enjoyment and that they seek only moksha, She confers the boon on them. I worship the Mother who performs all these deeds.*

देशकालेषु दुष्टेषु दुर्गाचन्द्रकलास्तुतिः ।

सन्ध्योरनुसन्धेया सर्वापद्विनिवृत्तये ॥ १८ ॥

18. *Whenever and wherever one encounters adversities (this composition) Durga Chandrakalastuti should be chanted both in morning and evening to overcome them.*

॥ सर्वतंत्रस्वतंत्रश्रीमदप्पय्यदीक्षितैः प्रणीतः ॥

## The Seven Mothers



Brahmi



Mahesvari



Indirani



Kali



Kamari



Varahi



Narayani

# Thirumular's Path of Bliss

T.N. VENKATARAMAN, I.A.S.

*A total surrender to Sakti to secure release from the cycle of births and deaths is advocated by this Tamil saint in his verses to preserve the Agamas of Lord Siva.*

The first reference to Thirumular occurs in the *Thiruthondathogai*, by the Saivaite saint Sundaramurthy Nayanar. Sekhizhar, the author of the immortal *Periya Puranam* dealing with the lives of Saivaite saints, gives an account of Thirumular in 28 stanzas.

Sekhizhar describes him as a great *Siva yogin* and disciple of *Nandi* who spent many years in *Kailasa* in meditation. Once he travelled south to meet an old friend, Agasthiya. In the course of his travels he reached a small village named Sathanur on the banks of the Cauvery. He was known as Thirumular then. He happened to see some heads of cattle grieving over the death of a cowherd, Moolan. The saint took pity and using his *siddhi* powers, kept his body on the branch of a tree and entered the body of Moolan. Moolan got up and went home, but the soul in the body was that of the saint.

But in due course the saint, disinterested in domestic life, came back and searched for the body on the tree, but it had disappeared. Con-

sidering this to be the will of God, the saint in the body of Moolan repaired to a nearby tree, under which he sat in meditation for 3,000 years. Every year, he delivered one *mantiram* and thus *Tirumantiram*, comprising 3,000 *mantras* in nine *tantirams*, was born. The saint became known as Thirumular.

According to one *purana*, the great Saivaite saint Thirugnana-sambandar was visiting the Thiruvaduthurai temple, when he experienced the vibration of *Tirumantiram*. He was instrumental in unearthing the work.

**Siva's disciple**

*Tirumantiram* is a comprehensive work encompassing religion, spirituality and mysticism. It seeks to lead the aspirant, step by step, to transcend all *tattvas*, for a total surrender unto Godhead, that is, *Paraparam*. With humility, saint Thirumular submits that all that he has done is to reveal the teachings of wisdom imparted to him by *Nandi*, the principal disciple of Lord Siva. Lord Siva himself had expounded these doctrines to His

consort, when She requested Him to enlighten the souls about the various paths to attaining *mukti*. The sayings of Lord Siva have come down to us as the *Agamas*. According to saint Thirumular, the *tantirams* of his work expound the Agamic doctrines.



The age of Thirumular has not been correctly determined. According to scholars it could be between sixth A.D and ninth A.D. It is obvious that *Tirumantiram* is a very ancient work, giving us the quintessence of the nine most important *Agamas*. "God created me well, so that I may render unto Tamil well", says saint Thirumular.

The nine *tantirams* of *Tirumantiram* deal with doctrines like birth and death, knowledge about God (*Pati*), Soul (*pasu*), and bondage

(*Pasa*), details about *Charya*, *Kriya*, *Yoga* and *Gnana* paths, the paths of love and righteousness and the experience of a realised soul.

There is no doubt that saint Thirumular himself adopted all those paths, became one with God, and experienced great happiness which he wanted to share with the world through his work. He himself says, "Let the world get the happiness that I am blessed with."  
**Sakti and Grace**

The Supreme is one and the only one. It has infinite intelligence, power, grace and mercy. The Supreme is also the abode of infinite love. Its power reveals itself in grace that is Sakti. Thirumantiram describes the beauty and the power of Sakti that is grace in many places.

One that is supreme which is above everything else is known as *Paraparam*. It is infinite intelligence and has Sakti, that is grace, as its aspect. That Sakti is known as *Paraparai*. These are the natural stages of Sivam in its supreme aspects.

Parapara Sivam desires to create the world, the universe and all the *tattvas* in order that the souls may go through their cycle of *karma*, mature and shed the *Anavamala* (ignorance). This is the stage of *Adi Sivam* and *Adi Sakti*. *Adi Sivam* fulfils His desire to create the world through the power and grace of *Adi Sakti*.

In its pristine state, *Adi Sakti* is *Gnana swarupa*. When *Adi Sakti* desires to set the process of creation in motion, that aspect is known as *Ichha Sakti*. The knowledge of the

art of creating is embedded in Her *Gnana Sakti*. When desire and knowledge combine, and activate the process of creation, the *Kriya Sakti* aspect of *Adi Sakti* predominates. At that very instant, the aspect of *Adi Sivam*, that is *Nada*, envelops the whole creation. He is then known as *Nada* and *Sakti* is known as *Bindu*.

In stages, *Sakti* reveals Her intelligence and creative aspects in appropriate proportions through *Sadasivam*, *Maheswara*, *Rudra*, *Vishnu* and *Brahma*. She is the source of the five *butas* and the *Tanmatras*.

#### Lila Concept

The concept of *Lila* or play, used by many mystics, also finds expression in *Thirumular*. *Saint Manickavasakar* also uses this expression. Creation, maintenance, dissolution, concealment and blessing are the various features of this supreme play. The Lord and His consort engage themselves in this play so that the great cycle of creation and dissolution may be gone through for the benefit of the innumerable souls who have to cross the ocean of *samsara* and reach the Great Bliss. This play is essential for the proper functioning of the cosmic order. It also helps individual souls to experience the fruits of their action and in their eventual upliftment to the feet of the Lord through His grace.

In the words of *Thirumular*,

"He and She are engaged in play  
That produces all that is there.  
Cosmic Order and its division  
set in motion.

The auspicious act fills the Universe."

Graceful *Sakti*, who sets in motion the five cosmic acts, is beyond comprehension by mind, speech or any one instrument of perception. She has no qualities of Her own and yet Her devotees see a 1,000 qualities in Her. In the eyes of the blessed, She is the effulgent fire. To those who have given their love unto Her, She reveals Herself in whatever form they may contemplate upon.

#### Many Forms

*Saint Thirumular* perceives *Sakti* in many forms. He sees Her in *mantra rupa* and *yantra rupa*. She is the source of five *butas*. She is *Akasha*, Fire, Sun, Moon, Torrential rain of grace. She has 10 faces. She is the abode of the four *vedas* and six *Angas*. She is the source of life, education and enlightenment for the souls. When the souls lie in dormant darkness filled only by *Anavamala* (ignorance), She gives them the bodies and all avenues of experience and brings them under the realm of Her *maya sakti* and helps them to mature and reach enlightenment. *Sakti* is inseparable from *Siva* and is transcendent and immanent in all the souls.

In the words of *Thirumular*,

"There is no *Deva* who does not know Her.

No sacrifice is possible without Her grace."

The five cannot do anything, without Her grace. Without Her help, no eternal Bliss is possible." *Thirumular's* description of *Sakti* as *Mother Tripurasundari* is ecstatic.