

DMR3 – Gunas and Weapons

In the last two lectures we saw how the vimarsha shakti is responsible for all the manifestations. While there are numerous dimensions of manifestations, we are now looking into just one aspect of manifestations - the Guna aspect and going into the details.

When the initial spandana happened, that is when the iccA to create begins. At this stage, it is all still within. Nothing is created yet but the iccA to create has started. For creation to happen, the plan to create - the jnAnA to create has to settle in and then the action of creation - the kriyA - should happen. So, these iccA, jnAnA, and kriyA are all also still within.

At this still but active state, all of these guNAs and shaktis are all in the seed. This main vimarsha shakti is called Adi mahAlakShmi. At the state of Adilakshmi all the three guNas are present. The tamO aspect of this seed is mahAmAyA. The satva aspect of this seed is mahAvidyA. We saw Adilakshmi handling the rajO guNA aspect Herself. We saw the descriptions of Adilakshmi during the first week. Last week, we looked into the tatva aspects of the descriptions of mahAmAyA and mahAvidyA. But the beauty here is, these are still potential energies and not actual shaktis in action. They are at the causal state and so subtle but we looked at their gross description. That is the glory of our scriptures. They cater to the needs of all types of sAdhakAs.

Adilakshmi now asks these shaktis to get prepared for the creation and take it to the next level. Immediately, **mahAmAyA sprung out** of Her seed level and **took form of complete tamasic guNa shakti called mahAkAlI**. From **mahAvidyA sprung out a complete satva guNA shakti called mahAsarasvati**. From **Adilakshmi sprung out a shakti called mahAlakShmi**. As you can see, a pure rajO guNA shakti did not come out from the vimarsha bindu and it was handled by the Adilakshmi Herself. Even mahAlakShmi who came out of the bindu, is triguNAtmikA and not just rajO guNA.

What is this state? This state is the state of action. This is where the desire has happened, blueprint is complete, and action is ready to begin. From a tatvA perspective, you can loosely think this as something between sadashivA and IshvarA state. Remember we don't have a direct 1-1 matching with 36 tatvAs here.

At the state of Ishvara, creation has happened and there is a difference between the creator and creation recognized as idandA - This is I.

At the sadashiva state, creation has not happened but it is there within the creator but distinctly recognizable as ahandA - I am this. What are discussing now is the in-between state between the idantA and ahantA.

These three devatas are the main goddesses of DM. mahAkAli is tamO gunAtmikA. mahAlakshmi is triguNAtmikA. mahAsarasvatI is satvaguNAtmikA. They are not at the seed level but at the energy level that can manifest. From vedanta perspective this is called the unmanifested - avyaktaM.

Before I jump into these devatas, I thought I can dwell into the concept of guNAs further. We know satva, rajas, and tamO gunAs as qualities. Why is this important? VedantA and tantra shastrA - for that matter - all sanatana literatures agree on one thing - the prakRuti - the nature has these three guNAs in equal proportions. We know tamas is inertia/inactions, rajO is emotions/actions, and satva is good/intelligence. We don't know much beyond that isnt it? So lets get into that detail.

Why do we talk about these qualities when we are talking about creation? How are they related to creation?

Satva guNA represents the energy factors that are responsible for cognitive abilities. We should not assume that cognition is only there within humans. In fact, in DM Chapter 1, Medhas Rishi would clearly state that "jnAnamasti samastasya jantOrvishaya gOcarE" meaning every being has the cognitive ability. jnAnaM asti. How each being use this ability to make their living might be different. The potential use of it and its evolution dynamics may differ but the basic cognitive knowledge is present in every being to live. Even the Corona virus has the knowledge to mutate. When it knows that its basic form has the potential to be destroyed, it has a basic survival knowledge to mutate itself to live. It is an invisible being but still has those abilities. Again, just because you have cognitive ability - which is a product of satva guNA - does not mean that the result of such ability has to be good. In fact, at this level, there is nothing called good or bad. There is the ability and then there is the potential and then there is the use. How it is used for what purposes and for whose benefit are all different topics. Asuras for example still have to use their jnAnAm to destroy. So the satva aspect is applied to perform an extreme rajO kriyA.

rajO guNA represents the energy factors that are responsible for emotions. Emotions exists for all beings too. We are all emotional animals only. Just because a sadhu claims that he gets no anger, does not mean that he has no rajO guNA. In fact, compassion is also an emotion - which is there in most sAdhUs isnt it? Why am I giving this example? Because we incorrectly think rajO guNA to be bad. Without rajO guNA, there can be no life.

tamO guNA represents the energy factors that are responsible for materials/matter. Almost all matters that exist is a result of tamO guNA. Inertia is the key element here as we are dealing with matter mostly. Are matters important? Is inertia important? Is sleep important? In fact, the entire body of ours rejuvenates during the sleep only. We become totally energetic during sleep. So tamO guNA is key and needed for all beings and cannot be discarded as bad.

We have a panchIkaraNa concept in vEdAntA which talks about how the five bhUtAs mixed and in what proportions to form this whole Universe. If you are all interested in knowing about this

concept let me know and I will discuss about it in the next session. For now, we will stick with the guNAs.

The mixture of guNAs are the key in this dimension that we are looking at. But for this session we will only look at the tamO, rajO, and satva aspect seperately as the three prime Goddess of DM - mahAkAlI, mahAlakshMI, and mahAsarasvatI.

Let us first look at mahAkAlI - Her dhyAna shIOkA is

खड्गं चक्रगदेषुचापपर्वाञ्छूलं भुशुण्डीं शिरः
शङ्खं सन्दधतीं करैस्त्रिनयनां सर्वाङ्गभूषावृताम् ।
नीलाशमद्युतिमास्यपाददशकां सेवे महाकालिकां
यामस्तौस्त्वपिते हरौ कमलजो हन्तुं मधुं कैटभम् ॥

khaDgaM (sword), cakra, gadA, IShu (arrow), cApa (bow), parigAn (ulakkai, iron rod), shUlAM, bushuNDIM (a type of fire arm/missile), shiraH, shankaM

karaiH dadhatIM - has in Her hands
trinayanAM - three eyes
sarvA~ggabhuShA vRutAM - having ornaments all over the body
nIlAsmadyuti - vibrant/radiance like the blue gem (indra nIlAM)
AsyaM - face
pAdaM - legs
dashakaM - ten
mahAkAlIkAM - that mahAkAli
sEvE - worship

To wake vishnu from yOganidRA, to kill madhu and kaiTabhA, brahmA worshipped this mahAkAli.

This is the dhyAna shIOkA that we see in the mAAtmyaM. Let us ignore the story aspect of this and focus on that stUIA description alone. The tatvAs of the story will have to be a series in itself like LalitOpAkhyAnA. If GurumaNDalaM so wishes, we will pick it up sometime in the future. For now, we are focussing only on the Guna aspect of the manifestation of the vimarsha shakti and we will stay on that topic alone.

So this mahAkAlI - who is tamO guNAtmikA has 10 faces, 10 hands, and 10 legs. 3 eyes on each face - so 30 eyes in total. She dark blue in color and is sarvalankArabhUShitA. We also see that she has 10 different weapons in her hands. That is all.

There is another dhyAna shLOkA also for her.

योगनिद्रा हरेरुक्ता महाकाली तमोगुणा ।
मधुकैटभनाशार्थं यां तुषावाम्बुजासनः ॥

दशवक्त्रा दशभुजा दशपादाञ्जनप्रभा ।
विशालया राजमाना त्रिंशल्लोचन मालया ॥

स्फुरद्दशनदंष्ट्राभा भीमरूपापि भूमिप ।
रूपसौभाग्यकान्तीनां सा प्रतिष्ठा महाश्रियाम् ॥

खड्गबाणगदाशूलशङ्खचक्रभुसुण्डिभृत् ।
परिघं कार्मुकं शीर्षं निश्च्योतद्रुधिरं दधौ ॥

एषा सा वैष्णवी माया महाकाली दुरत्यया ।
आराधिता वशीकुर्यात् पूजाकर्तुश्चराचरम् ॥

The meaning is very similar. The weapons are also the same while the order might have changed, the list is the same.

As usual, we will look into these weapons and how they are related to mahAkAli -

10 hands - represents panca karmEndriyaM and pancajnAnEndriyaM

10 legs - panca bhUtaM and panca tanmAtrA (you stand upon these only). The basis of creation.

10 faces - The seven mAya tatvAs, ahaMkAra, buddhi and manas.

The prakRuti is missing here because that layer is created by AdilakShmi and mahAmAya stands on top of it with a tamO coating. So prakRuti is the base coat that Adilakshmi created.

The shiva tatvAs are not represented here because they are before creation. We are at the stage of creation and hence they are not represented.

gadA - represents dharma

shank - represents the shabdha brahmaN, consciousness, awareness etc.

cakraM - represents the cyclic nature of the Universe. At the creation level, the cyclic nature is established by the chakra. But at the saMhArA level, it also represents how to get out of this cyclic nature - cutting off the ahaMkAraM.

sword - represents the vikShEpa shakti

head - represents the AvaraNa shakti

bow - There are several explanations for bow and arrow. One is a astraM and one is a sastraM. One stays with you wherever you go. One leaves you in one direction.

The one that stays with you wherever you go is the AkAshaM or space. The one that leaves you and goes in only one direction is the time dimension isnt it? Once we lose the time, you dont have control. Until you spend it, you can decide how to spend it but once it is done, you can't recall it or change it. No time travel is possible. At least in the dimension that we currently live in. Remember these are given for our understanding only. The whole sthUla description is for us - pashujanAs only. You cannot argue that this is not true for gandharvAs, yakshas etc who can move between lokas and can do time travel. Gandharvas might be having a different dhyAna shloka or a different explanation for bow and arrow. Stop worrying about them and focus on what is needed for you. So, Bow represents space and arrow represents time. They both are jodi's only. One is useless without the other isnt it?

Now, we saw how SruShti is not possible without the time and space dimensions and we know that very well. We experience this in our normal jAgrat state. But from a saMhArA perspective, we also know we have to transcend the time and space dimension. You may question how is that represented by this **bow and arrow**. Whether you question or not, I cannot simply state some tatvam from one aspect and conveniently ignore the other aspect isnt it? Whatever tatva we claim for a weapon should satisfy all angles.

From a saMhAra perspective, how do we use the bow and the arrow? You fix a target, aim, and then shoot/release the arrow. Isn't? If you have seen the Guru's teaching the shishyAs how to use the bow and the arrow, it is very similar to the gun shooting range. You have a pointed target and then circles around it and you see how close you get to the point. The idea is to make you always aim the point and reach the point. Correct? Are you understanding now?

What is the point? That is the bindu!! That is the whole purpose of saMhAraM. Getting back to the bindu state. Identifying the target is the first step - which is the mumukShutvaM. Knowing your purpose. Then fixing the bow and arrow is attaining a Guru, following instructions, getting equipped with the right tools and techniques. Then focus. This is the mind control - ekAgra chintana. Absolutely no distraction. dhAraNam. Releasing is your savikalpa samAdhi and reaching the bindu is nirvikalpa samAdhi.

From now on, when you see all these dEvatAs with these big weapons, your contemplation should be different. If you see bow and arrow atleast, you should realize that it constantly reminds you to be a mumukShu and not to deviate from the path.

arrow –

parighaM - Iron rod - irumbu ulakkai - What can this represent? It represents hard work. Even for creation, it doesn't happen as soon you think of it. Even for vimarsha shakti, imagine the various process and manifestations it has to go through to create this whole jagat. Even at the advaita state, if we can realize these as mithyA, still the process of making this mithyA appear

real is also ShRuTi isnt it? That is not easy. It is hard work. You keep on working on it without giving up.

Similarly, in the samhAra krama, mumukShutvaM is not an easy task. It is not like passing a quarterly exam of an annual exam. It is not like, ok - I finished ganapati krama now, I am qualified for the next. I am not in 10th grade or I got the diKshA so I am a graduate. It is not like that at all. If that was the case, we should have stopped doing our anushtanas once we moved up the layer. Our education systems have spoiled us by kindling expectations.

Even if you have been cooking for years, each time you go before the stove, you have to start from the scratch. You may have some powders etc handy, based on your experience but there is still no guarantee that the outcome will be the same every time you cook. It is the same concept every time you sit for your meditation, japa, dhyAnA, etc. You have to keep on hitting it with patience and consistency. That is needed for creation and that is needed for salvation too. Consistency is the key and of course you have to hit the right ground. If you don't have any grain and if you keep on hitting - nothing can come out of it. That pre-qualifier is your nature, your thirst, your Guru, your path, your mantra, etc. etc. If that is set right, whether you have one mantra or a lakh mantra, does not matter. Just one devata is enough. More than enough in fact. If you simply hold tight to that one devata, that has all the powers to take you to mOkShA.

If you had listened to my mantrA lectures, I have talked about dOshAs, siddha ari mantrAs etc. I would have also told, for srividya mantrAs that we practice in the GurumanDalaM, none of those mantrAs have such dOshAs. That is the beauty of our upAsana dEvatAs in our paddhati. Every single dEvatA has the potential to grant mukti. So it is upto you to hold on to one, consistently work hard like the iron rod, hit the upAsana engine constantly and consistently, then just like the pestle, the ulakkai, the harder you hit, the bad things (all your sanchita karmAs - vAsanAs) would get out of it and only the good ones remain - which is nothing but AtmAnubhUti.

bhuShuNDI - buShuNDI is like a missile, a fire arm. That is the true meaning but the representation of that as a weapon in shilpa shAstra varies from axe type, ankusha type, etc. But the true meaning is a fire missile.

This is an interesting weapon. Imagine this as a fire ball that has the potential to reach great heights and reach farther destinations. We all know from the gross Universe creations how the Universes are formed from these giant nucleus fire pits and how new new worlds are thrown out. So from a creation perspective, it makes sense. But from a saMhAra perspective, what does this represent? What could be a fire ball that has the potential to reach great heights that can grant us mukti? What is the agni kunj? That is nothing but the kuNDaliNI shakti which is the fire ball that is sitting dormant within each of us. Sitting dormant is the tamO guNA isnt it? So tamO guNA mahAkAli is responsible for this to be dormant. But the same dormant shakti has the potential to reach great heights like a missile - reach the sahasrAra chakra and due to that shivashakti sAmarasyaM mukti can be attained.

shUlaM - triputI tatvaM - Object, Subject, and Action being one and the same. At the creation level, they are shown and perceived differently. But at the saMhAra level, the knowledge that they are one and the same is represented by the connection of the three limbs.

three eyes - represents sOmasUryAgni. This is common for all dEvatAs. sOmasUryA represents the masculine and feminine energies. The fire represents the base - primordial need to live and at the evolved level, this transforms to mumukShutvaM. While the masculine and feminine energies dont change, the agni is responsible for evolution. This is why the third eye metaphor is popular.

अग्निर्वायुश्च सूर्यश्च - aruNa prashnaM claims agni and vAyu combined makes sUrya. So agni is the bljaM for sUryA. and sUryA is the root for candra. So agni maNDalaM, then sUrya maNDalaM, and then candra maNDalaM that we do in puja krama depicts a proper evolution sequence. All the three are needed for our existence.

Now, after understanding these concepts of this mahAkAli svarUpaM, is there even a tinge of frightening represented here? She may look like a giant with 10 heads 10 arms, 10 legs and these fearful weapons.. but do you see how beautiful her true representation is? There is no trace of destruction here. Why? Her reason for existence itself is creation only. Those who have always wondered why didn't mahAkAli fight in the DM and why are we having the wonderful aiM bljaM which is creativity related to mahAkAli - do you have the answer now? There can be no other apt bljaM for mahAkAli isnt it?

From now on when you chant either the chandi mantraM or when you are reciting the first adhyAyaM of DM, you should think of how great this tamO guNA dEvata is and how she is responsible for all that has been created and even though she created these mithyAs, she is also compassionate to show us the path to come out of it.

Also, if you now google and see all the photos of mahAkAli with ten legs, ten hands and ten faces, you will realize that none of the photos really match what is given in the dhyAna shIOkaM. The only photo that is very very close to the dhyAna shIOka of mahAkAli is the one that was published by TrinyAs - mysore. I say close because the bhuShuNDi is shown like a corona virus gadA and not like a fire missile. I understand that it is difficult to represent it, but corona gadA is also not a right representation. Regardless, that photo is the best photo of all to represent mahAkAli.

Let us now look into the satva guNa svarUpiNI - mahA sarasvatI

Her dhyAna shIOka is -

घण्टा शूल हलानि शङ्ख मुसले चक्रं धनुः सायकं
हस्ताब्जैर्दधती घनान्तविलसच्छीतांशुतुल्यप्रभाम् ।

गौरीदेहसमुद्भवां त्रिजगतामाधारभूतां महा-
पूर्वामत्र सरस्वतीमनुभजे शुभादिदैत्यादिनीम् ॥

घण्टा (Bell) - शूला (thrishUlaM) - हला (plough) - शङ्ख (shankh) - मुसल (ulakkai) - चक्र (cakraM) - धनु (bow) - सायकं (arrow)

hastAbjai - In the lotus hands

dadhatIM - carries

ghanAntavilasacCitAMshutulyaprabhAM - Her radiance is like that of the moon shining in the autumn sky.

The rest is story related that we will ignore for this session.

We have to remember that satva guNA is cognitive abilities. The primary responsibility is knowledge, learning, and with that the natural expectation is the evolution and then finally mukti.

mukti cannot happen without jnAnA. jnAnA cannot happen when ajnAnA is present. ajnAnA cannot be removed as long as we are caught by the grips of mAyAdi ShatkaM - mAyA, kaLA, avidyA, rAgA, kAlA, niyati. These are superceded on the two main tatvAs - puruSHA and prakRuti. So mAyAdi ShatkaM along with puruShA and prakRuti is the key reason for our ajnAnA. This combination of 8 is represented by the eight hands. This is one theory.

The whole point of DM is to kill shumbA and nishumbA. Who are those? mamakArA and ahaMkArA. Even if you renounce everything and become a avadUtA, you can assume the mamakArA is gone but the ahaMkArAm might not leave you for 1000 years. ShAstrAs equate this ahaMkArAm to ahaM-madaM - it is a bOdai (nashA) - gives you a kick - and they have classified seven things that are responsible for this ahaMkArAm -

They are - kulaM (Family), vittaM (Money), shrutaM (Learning), rUpaM (physical appearance), shauryaM (Physical strength, Power), dAnaM (Charity), and tapas (Penance).

A famous scholar called kShEmEndra lived in kAshmIr around 11th century (some call him kShEmarAjA also) and he has written numerous tantric books and kAvyAs too. He has written a book called darpadalanaM. Darpa means arrogance - ahaMkArAm. dalanaM means destruction. In the introductory shIOkAs he says -

कुलं वित्तं श्रुतं रूपं शौर्यं दानं तपस्तथा ।
प्राधान्येन मनुष्यानां सप्तैते मदहेतवः ॥

अहंकाराभिभूतानां भातानामिव देहिनाम् ।

हिताय दर्पदलनं क्रियते मोहशान्तये ॥

So 7 types that results in ahaMkAraM plus mamaKaraM are the 8 that should be fought with to remove ajnAna. These 8 are represented by the 8 hands. This is one theory.

In the tatvAs, we see sthUla, sUkshma, and kAraNa dEhaM for jivAtmA and it is important to transcend these to reach the tatvAtitA state. With the creation, the sthUla and sUkSha sharIra and its respective Anava mala and mAyika mala should be addressed for the jivA to get to the state of shuddha tatvA. These sthUIA and sUkSha sharIraS are represented as follows -

The sthUla sharIraM or the gross body is also called as bhUta sharIraM. Why? It is made up of the panca bhUtAs only. The panca bhUtAs only gets further represented as panca tanmAtra, panca prANA, panca jnAnEndriyAs, panca karmEndriyAs, and even the dhAtUs (rakta, mAmsa, asti, majja, and shukla). So the base is the panca bhUtA only.

The sUkShma sharIraM is made up of antaHkaraNA - manO buddhi and ahaMkAraM.

These eight are called puryaShTakaM. These puryaShtakam is what we have as faculties to perform all our actions/karmAs. We fall because of these 8 and we raise because of these 8 only. So, to indicate this, mahAsarasvatI has 8 hands. This is another theory.

I can go on and on with multiple theories. But I guess you get the point. Regardless of whatever theory appeals to you, the basic concept is, She is here to help you get out of this creation. While mahAkAli is in full form to engage in creation, MahAsarasvatI's goal is to liberate. satva guNA as consciousness and jnAna can only do that isnt it? With that understanding, let us look into her weapons.

We saw most of her weapons already when we looked in mahAkAli. shUla, haLA, shaMka, cakraM, dhanu, sAyakaM are 6 common weapons. The only two that are different in mahAsarasvatI are ghaNTA and musala.

Why are there so much of common weapons? When we described mahAkAli, I described about the SRuShTI and also the saMhArA portions. The saMhArA portions that needed for removing ajnAna were taken for mahAsarasvatI representation. Now, you may question, if mahAkAli can grant all that, and represents both sRuSTI and saMhArA, why do we need two dEvatAs? Remember, AdimahAlakShmI is the one who is actually doing all this. So we don't need any of these dEvatAs if you can relate just with AdimahAlakShmI. So question why have this dEvata and that dEvata are questions that arise for those who are unable to see the whole picture of creation.

mahAkAli is primary there to create. So you are supposed to see the ShRuShTi perspective only. I peeled the onion further and explained to you the saMhArA representation of those weapons

as well to make you understand the beauty of representation of our iconography. God making is not an easy task isnt it?

Since that doubt is cleared, let us look into the weapons -

ghaNtA - Always represents the invitation of the positive/conductive forces. Drive away opposite energies. SatsanghaM is typically indicated. This is why in general practice, before the school begins, we ring the bell.. before any pUjAs, bell is rung. A way to inform everyone/force/energies that a group is going to meet.

shUla - triputI
hala - ulakkai

shaMka - shabda brahmaN

musala - plough. We saw this when we addressed vArAhI dhyAna shIOkam during LalitOpAkhyAnaM. Plough is typically used to dig the earth to make it conducive for farming and farm of seedlings. In our context, it digs the unresolved karmAs from the sanchita karma ground - which is the cause for this whole samsAra cycle. The key point here is, while new karmas are brought to the fore front, the ploughing of the field also represents the ploughing without any expectation. You simply perform your duties leaving the rest to Her. This way, the karmas would not have any impact on the jIva and will quickly get resolved.

cakraM - how to cut through the cyclic nature of this saMsAra cakraM.

dhanu and sAyakaM - time and space dimensions. We already saw this in detail in mahAkAlI section on how to see this from the saMhAra aspect.

There is another dhyAna for mahA sarasvatI -

गौरी देह समुद्भूता या सत्वैकगुणाश्रया ।
साक्षात्सरस्वती प्रोक्ता शुभासुरनिबर्हिणी ॥

दधौ चाष्टभुजा बाणमुसले शूलचक्रभृत् ।
शङ्ख घण्टां लाङ्गलं च कार्मुकं वसुधाधिप ॥

एष सम्पूजिता भक्त्या सर्वज्ञत्वं प्रयच्छति ।
निशुभमथिनी देवी शुभासुरनिबर्हिणी ॥

This also matches the weapons and the descriptions as the other dhyAna shIOkA we saw.

Hopefully you all would have got a better understanding of mahAsarasvati now. As you can see, Her focus as satvaguNAtmikA is to make you liberate. Extoll in Her bliss - The AnandaM. That AnandaM which is not just temporary but nityAnandaM - This nityAnandaM is nothing but brahmAnandaM - paramasukhadaM - and She is kevalaM jnAnamUrtIM. She wants us to reach the lakSha of tatvamasi - meaning tat state - the sat-chit-Ananda. The only one- brahmaN. who is constant - nityaM - just pure state without any blemishes - which remains as a sAkShI for everything that happens. That state which is apart from the GunAs - that satchidAnanda state - that AnAnda - represented by k - brahmaN - I - pRuthivi and IM - kAmakAlA - The jIvAtman realizing the brahman state remaining in the kAmakAlA Anandam - that kIIM bIjaM - how apt! How else can Her greatness be represented? It has to be kleeM.

We will look into her and the actual GunA mixtures during the next session. With the grace of the great GurumanDalam that we belong to, these are being revealed and I thank whole heartedly for using me as a tool in their mission. I only pray that my limitations don't become a hindrance for their mission and I dont have any other option but to pray to them only to remove those limitations as well.

Guru brahmA guru vishnu guru dEvO mahEshvaraH |
Guru sAkshAt para brahmA tasmai shrI guravE namaH ||