

Story 5 – Taming Fury
The avatara of Lambodara

*Lambodaraavathaaro vai krodhaasuranibarhana.
Aakhugah shakthibrhmaasan thasya dhaarakah ucchyathey.*

Vishnu appears as Mohini on several occasions in the puranas. In one story, Mohini comes to save Siva from Bhasmaasura. After Vishnu annihilates Bhasmaasura he reverts to his male form. This enrages Siva who wished to continue to see this beautiful Mohini form. Out of this fit of temper is born a creature black in complexion with shining coppery eyes. In haste this creature is dispatched to Shukracharya. It is Shukra that tells him of his identity and heritage. He is told then of his name as Krodhaasura, the asura of raging anger. Under the tutelage of Shukra, Krodha has his education. He marries Preeree (one who brings pleasure), the beautiful daughter of Shambhaasura.

After a few years of romantic life Krodha decides to pursue his life's purpose, that of conquering the three worlds. For that he once again resorts to Shukra who advises him to propitiate Surya bhagavan with the mantra "ghrini surya aadityaaya om".

Krodha spends a hundred divine years in worship and tapas. At the end, the divinity of the sun appears and grants him his desires. Krodha begins to establish a large kingdom in a manner very much like the asuras in previous stories. Meanwhile his wife bears him two children, Harsha (exhilaration) and Shoka (sorrow).

The troubled devas directly approach Lambodara. As soon as Lambodara agrees an ethereal voice informs Krodha of his impending doom at the hands of Lambodara. Immediately as advised by his ministers Krodha gathers a large army and gets ready to fight. Lambodara's presence serves as a laughing stock for this asura. With a huge pendulous belly roped by a snake, an elephant face that has three eyes, Lambodara appears riding on a small animal, the mouse.

Lambodara responds to his laugh and tells "You will soon find out what this ridiculous form of mine can do to you!" A fierce battle is staged where first Krodha's generals, Jhimbha, Maalyavaan, Raavana, Kumbhakarna, Bali and Raahu are killed. The nervous Krodha dares Lambodara to surrender to him. Lambodara intimidates him by stating his sole purpose that of annihilation of asuras like Krodha. He remarks "The precious boons gained from Bhaaskara (the divinity of the sun) have been grossly misused by you. I shall make sure that dharma is restored in all the three worlds. I am the indescribable

Paramaatma that resides in the bodies of all beings. How then can you ever defeat me?" Krodha replies "The Paramaatma has no birth nor is it perceivable with the senses. How then can you claim to be Paramaatma and be available to my eyes here in the battlefield?"

Lambodara replies "Listen to that knowledge having known which nothing else remains. Look to the left of my form. Here shines Siddhi the pursuit of which delusive forgetfulness. Creatures of this Sansar are all engaged in procuring this. In reality none attain it. On my right shines Buddhi that consumes Siddhi. I am the lord of both. Why the entire Sansar resides in my belly! I have no desire therefore to destroy daitya or devas. However dharma must be maintained. None can transgress that without incurring dire consequences for my will is the protection of dharma. If you care for your welfare then resort to me."

Convinced of the truth and of his folly Krodha falls at Lambodara's feet and pleads forgiveness. Lambodara assures him of a glorious life in Paataala where he really belongs and not anywhere else.

Reflections

Once again we see how an emotion like raging fury is hard to subjugate. It took a knowledgeable acharya like Shukra to determine this asura's identity.

The concept of time with regard to austerities is not the same as the calendar years. Time as we perceive is a measurement between experiences. Tapas, is an intense effort in inner growth of some form. Here ever so many minute experiences are involved at the same time while the effort in its basic goal remains the same. If then we can imagine time as an empty spool and both the tapas-year and calendar- year as separate threads, then one will find that even after the calendar year has been wound up the tapas years can go on further winding on that spool.

There is no guarantee as to what purpose the tapasvin will put his tapobala, strength gained from austerities. From this story we can gauge that tapobalam is of lasting value only if it coincides with Rrtam (Cosmic Order).

Anger or fury is connected with a person's likes and dislikes. This force is released when its pleasures are thwarted. Pleasure (Preeree) then becomes naturally the consort of anger. There is a temporary glow of joy when one rides on anger. This disappears fast like the fizz from a bottle of soda. The consequences that come in the form of hurts, disappointments, ruin etc ushers in sorrow. These then are the sons or byproducts of Krodha. His generals are all various asuras and raakshasaas featured in other pouranic stories. They are all known to resist goodness and promote adharma.

The term lamba or long in the name Lambodara, represents time whereas Maha in Mahodara, stands for space. Time and space is the length and breadth of the belly of the lord. The manifested world that we interact with, is measured by time and space. The very desire to conquer bhur-bhuvah-svarloka is an adharmic goal. These are rungs in the spiritual evolutionary ladder that are not meant for mere wishful conquering. These are planes of higher awareness. These states of consciousness will be arrived at by a sadhak during his course of sadhana. Self- improvement techniques that can be mastered only in time resulting in maturity and harmony are the only way. Modern man's attitude to get fast, get everything with no regard to developing his own mind-body will be of no use here.

In the conversation between Lambodara and Krodha it is interesting to notice how Ganesh leads the asura from the avatara itself to Paramatma and back. This is a reminder that in our daily lives every interaction we have with the immanent aspect of the divine must be alerted to connect us to the transcendent and vice versa.

The role of Siddhi and Buddhi is also very interesting. All of us are engaged in some form of siddhi (mastery). Blind hankering for siddhis results in delusion. By exercising

our buddhi , (selective thoughts followed by execution= wisdom) can we prove the lack of ultimate value in such a lopsided pursuit of siddhi.

Both daityas and devatas are an integral part of sansar. Wishing them away does not make them go. They too have a place here. The desire that brought on creation, the workings of this creation and its ultimate resolution are all representative of cosmic energy or force. This shakti brhman is what Lambodara represents. Iccha shakti, the power of will, kriya shakti, the power of execution and jnaana shakti, the power of Knowledge forms the triad of this power. Human beings too possess this triple force .It is beholden to us to channel their use in our daily lives via dharma.

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### Story 6- The Quenching of Lust The avatara of Vikata

*Vikato naama vikhyaathah kaamaasurapradaahakah.  
Mayuravaahanahschaayam souramaatmadharah smrithah.*

In the pouranic story about Vrinda (Thulasi), Vishnu assumes her husband Jaalandhara's (Shankhachuda's) form and breaks her chastity. It is Thulasi's chastity that is the main source of invincibility for her asuric husband. During that love encounter Vishnu is overcome by lust. After all Vrinda is the dharmapatni of Jaalandhara. Once Vrinda discovers that the person in her chambers is not her husband she curses him to become a stone. She in turn immolates herself due to shame. It is from then on that Vishnu receives worship in the form of the stone, saalagraama. At that moment of lust is born from Vishnu the creature called Kaamaasura, asura of lust. He too like the others ends up with Shukra as his teacher. As advised he practises tapas to the siva panchakshara mantra. At the end he gets the boon of trailokya vijaya. He marries Trishna (thirst or hankering) daughter of Mahishaasura and has two sons, Shoshana (emaciation) and Dushpoora (filled with the detrimental). Ministers that attend his court are Bali, Raavana, Shambara, Mahisha and Durmada. He fills his city with all that he desires. Then he sets about expanding his kingdom. His subjects are encouraged to actively engage in dishonesty, thievery, cheating and plundering.

The fearful devas approach Mudgala muni. He advises them to go to Mayurakshetra and invoke Vikata or Mayureshvara. Devas solicit the help of Vikata with austerities. A fierce battle takes place. When it is Kaamasura's turn to fight, surprisingly he finds that the club he aims at Ganesh, falls at his feet. The spear too ends the same way. Puzzled at this phenomenon he remembers Shukra's earlier warning, " You may conquer and be elated with your conquests but when you run into the lord, riding on the peacock, in the battlefield, you must surrender. He is producer of the cosmic tattvas, of srishti-sthithi-samhaara. No one can subdue him". Realizing that he has reached a futile end, the asura falls at Vikata's feet and surrenders. He too like the others is asked to work only within dharma and to remain in paataala.



into hysterical ridiculing laughter. Instantly an asura is born who inquires about his identity. She informs him that his birth is due to the feeling of maan, a strong feeling of what others do to belittle the "I" of oneself. This had occurred during the quarrel with her husband. It was this feeling that brought about the laughter. She calls him Mamaasura, the asura of my-worthiness. She advises him to resort to Ganesh with the mantra Om vakrathundaaya namah.

Mamaasura retires to the woods to engage in upasana. There he meets with Shambaraasura an adept asura who satisfies his eagerness to learn by teaching him many an asura vidya. He advises Mama to ask for conquest of trailokya from Ganesh.

Eventually he invokes Vighnaraaja with his intense tapas. Vighnaraaja warns him of the impracticality of his wishes however he grants him the fructification of his desire.

Mama sets upon starting a large kingdom called Nir- mama-puri. He marries Shambha's daughter Mohini (the delusory one). Preytha, Kaala, Kalaapa, Kalaaha and Dharmaha are chosen to be his ministers. His sons are Dharma and Adharma. With the help of a large army he conquers trailokya. Devas under the leadership of Vishnu pray to Vighnaraaja for help.

In the battle that ensues Vighnaraja causes the numbing of the weapons of Dharma and Adharma. Then he throws his lotus on to the field. The fragrance of the lotus causes massive swooning of the enemy. On awakening Mama trembling with fear breaks into a prayer of appeal and praise to the awesome lord. Vighnaraaja admonishes Mamaasura and warns him to leave seekers of the divine alone and free, to live their lives based on their dharma. He asks him to establish his reign only where there is a lack of worship and remembrance of the divine. He is further told that though he is a king he should remain a slave to bhaktas.

### **Reflections**

Maan is a type of pride directed at others therefore it indulges in haasya, or laughter, in this case contemptuous laughter. There is a preoccupation with oneself as one step higher than others. A sense of haughtiness prevails. This is the material on which all stand up comics of the entertainment industry thrive. It is this same power that fuels technologically forward nations to consider their way as the only sane way of living. This sense of maan is prone to getting easily slighted for it has an exaggerated opinion of itself. In the Raagamaala paintings of the Geetgovindam, the artist depicts Raadhaa twice the size of her sakhis in the episode where her maanam takes over.

This feeling of Mamatvam is wedded to delusion, appropriately Mohini the enticer, is his wife. From the womb of delusion both dharma and adharma can be produced. The ministers who represent corpse, time, instigation, loss of refinement and beauty and empty-of-dharma all go wonderfully together to form the city of Nirmamapuri "I am not responsible for my behavior".

*There is a peculiar robot like personality that is characteristic of modern man. He thinks just as the media wants him to think. He behaves in blind conformity to his surrounding and the current times. The "cool way" to be is to be the character less popular corpse that conforms blindly. We are tightly bound by the ticking of the clock on the wall that boasts a life of time management minus refinement. When all is peaceful around him instead of leaving things alone he still wishes to needle or instigate for fun or*



**Story 8- Assigning the only role for I-ness**  
**The avatara of Dhoomravarna**

*Dhoomravarnaavathaarascha ahaantaasura naashaka.  
Aakhuvaahanathaam praapthah shivaathmakah sa uchyathe.*

Brahma the creator once hands over the authority of ruling the kingdom of Karma to Surya. On obtaining this distinction Surya gets possessed by the awesome responsibility. He rationalises that even the Trimooortis are enslaved by their karmas therefore they too must be his slaves. At that moment he sneezes out a creature, asuric in nature. This asura too goes to Shukra and gets to know his identity as Ahantaasura, the asura of arrogance. Through tapas as advised he invokes Dhoomravarna through the mantra Om gum goum ganapataye vighnavinaashiney svaahaa. In addition to mastery of trailokya and freedom from death he also asks for devotion to Ganesh.

He establishes a large kingdom after marrying Mamata (sense of possession) daughter of Pramadaasua. He has two sons Shreshta, the finest and Garva, pride. His chief minister Adharma advises him to destroy all those engaged in seeking the divine. Once the boons were obtained, the giver of boons is conveniently ignored. Ahanta not only follows this advice but also destroys all places of worship and installs Ahanta's image instead. All are advised to worship him.

The frightened devas pray to Ganesh with the ekaakshari beejam, gaum. They appeal to him to tackle his perverted bhakta. As soon as Dhoomravarna agrees that night Ahanta has a dream of Dhoomravarna that scares him. His ministers underplay the role of dreams and Ahanta gets ready for battle. Naarada pays him a visit and relays Ganesh's warning. Ignoring this Ahanta enters the battlefield. There, Dhoomravarna throws his divine paasa or noose that swirls around all the asuras. Seeing this Ahanta asks Shukra why Ganesh the giver of his boon would do this to him. Shukra proves to him how seriously he has misused the boons by destroying those living a dharmic life. He suggests surrender to the boon giver.

As soon as Ahanta surrenders, the noose returns to Ganesh. Dhoomravarna advises him to stay away from places where devas are, where dharma is, where yagas are conducted and where teerthas and temples are. He is free to roam where devotion is lacking however if and when any devotee needed help he should render that help instantly.

**Reflections**

The last two stories have asuras that are forms of self -pride, one concerned with other people and the second concerning oneself. In the path of sadhana, pride is the last and hardest to get rid of. Pride can form very easily due to persistent attachment to one's sense of achievement= success in actions. The word karma is derived from the root kre to act. To act and act well and yet be not consumed by the very act we did is not so easy. There seems to be a left over of attachment to the act that binds us. We seem to carry the feelings with us that we are the choicest nation, the best culture or the most highly developed country etc. Thus the sense of possession triggered by an exaggerated sense of "I" in turn gives rise to the attitude that "I am the best".

There is a sense of My-ness, a binding connection to people, to wealth, to efforts, to legacies and missions that we may be connected with. With this power, the consequential establishment of rules, principles and guidelines solely based on a total preoccupation with one's own view can easily lead to Adharma. History has revealed how wonderful movements aimed at spiritual evolution have grown, to become monstrous despotic institutions, swaying an ungodly power, over the masses and over nations.

These days we are very aware of time management. Perhaps we should have Self-management in the same professional manner. Rather than do away with the sense of "I" it is better to manage it. In that way Ahanta becomes a Kshetrapaala, the protector of the holy site. The holy site being our own body-mind equipment.

Yagnasalas, kshetras and teerthas are meant to be places where traditions and rituals help us manage this "I" ness. Here our sense of self can easily be channeled towards the divine.

Dhoomra is an epithet of Siva where he is said to be deep red. It also represents the color of pralaya associated with the act of dissolution. This Dhoomravarna represents Shaiva brhman, the aspect of brhman involved with the final purification of man in his ultimate evanescence. An example of a ritual we have that facilitates this sort of purification is seen during the festival of Navaraatri. In our Bharatiya traditions we have the holy day of Mahaalaya that precedes autumnal navaraatri. On this new moon day we prepare ourselves for 10 days of worship of the Feminine Divine Principle. In order to prepare for this a self purification is necessary. The laya or dissolution here is that of the strong and arrogant sense of "I" and "Mine". The sadhak can safely assume that he or she has several areas where improvement is necessary. In order to give a jumpstart to this personal rehabilitation goal one observes the Mahaalaya Amavaasya. Another good example of personal rehabilitation of the "I", in the form of a 30 day upasana, is available during the Tamizh month of Margazhi in association with the Thiruppavai.

The sense of individuality when unchecked can noose us. The company of the good should refine this sense so that in critical moments it is this I-ness that comes to the rescue of the individual. The "I" in us will instinctively lean towards Sanathana Dharma. Herein lies the value of satsangam.

Thus this process of purification must go through a series of sievings. Each succeeding sieve should be finer than the one before. Ultimately when the individual aham turns towards the divine center residing in his self in an effortless, constant basis, then his center becomes the same as the cosmic center. His actions are in perfect harmony with cosmic rttm.

### **CONCLUSION**

In the Ganapati Upanishad we were given a container full of affirmation of the divine in and around us. By reciting the charged Sanskrit verses keeping in mind the thrust we can remind ourselves that there is indeed a Divine Purpose to Life. Vyashema deva hitam yadaayuhu – Towards this divine purpose may we direct all efforts that can be done in the remainder of our lifespan.



