

Divya Darshan

Contributors:

Pt Narayan Bhatt
Smt Lalita Singh
Pt Jagdish Maharaj

Durga Puja: Issue

Publisher
Hindu Heritage Society
ABN 60486249887
83 Medley Avenue
Liverpool NSW 2170

NA TU MAM SHAKYASE DRASHTUMANENAIV SVACHAKSHUSHA I

DIVYAM DADAMI TE CHAKSHU PASHAY ME YOGAMESHWARAM

Your external eyes will not be able to comprehend my Divine form. I grant you the Divine Eye to enable you to behold Me in my Divine Yoga. **Gita Chapter 11.**

This issue includes:

- Shravan Month
- Raksha Bandhan
- Krishna Janmastami
- Mahalaya, Shradhya
- Navaratri celebrations
- **Devi Bhagwat**
- Methodology and Rewards
- Knowledge, Activity and Strength".
- Maya and illusion
- Ardha Narishwar
- Lalitambika
- Ma Durga Chalisa & Arati



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. - Durga Saptasati.

Our ancients have prescribed the worship of Maha Kali, Maha Lakshmi and Maha Saraswati during these Navaratri (nine nights). Durga is the embodiment of all powers. Durga represents the combination of all the powers of body, mind and soul. Maha Kali symbolises destruction of evil with the help of these powers. Maha Kali and Maha Durga are not elsewhere. They reside in every man. When the mind and the senses, instead of following the dictates of conscience, follow wicked qualities, man becomes a slave to evil habits and turns wicked. The main purpose of celebration of Navaratri is to annihilate cruelty and wickedness in man to bring forth the principle of the Atma in pristine form. - Satya Sai BABA

Shravan Maas (Shiva month)

July 04 to August 2nd 2012 - according to lunar calendar.

July 04 to August 17 2012- according to solar calendar.

As per the ancient scriptures, Shravan Maas, which falls in July or August, is a very auspicious month. In the Vedas, Shravan month is described as "Nabhas." Shravana Nakshatra comes on the full moon day during this period and is the birthstar of Vishnu. So, this month is called "Shravan Maas." Each day of this month is a very auspicious time to worship many deities, including Lord Shiva, Gowri, Krishna and Goddess Lakshmi. Special prayers and rituals are performed in Shiva temples. Mondays (Somvar) of Shravan month are specially observed times to worship the austere Lord Shiva with austerity.

During the entire month of Shravan Maas, visiting the Shiva Temple in the evening and offering flowers and abhishekam gives a long and prosperous life.

The Rudra-bhishekam is the primary way to worship Lord Shiva. It is well-known that Lord Shiva is an abhisheka-priya (lover of ablutions). In this puja, Lord Shiva is worshipped in his Rudra form. It is hailed in all Vedic scriptures as one of the greatest pujas to remove all evils, to attain all desires, and for all around prosperity. This puja is particularly performed for the sake of washing away one's sins and afflictions for bringing peace, prosperity and happiness, along with family togetherness. Performing this puja for Lord Shiva is an excellent remedy for all doshas and for all-around success in all areas of life.

In the Shravan month, the Shiva linga should be worshipped with water, milk, curd (yogurt), sugar, ghee, honey, flowers, and especially (bel patra) bilwa leaves.

During Shravan Maas, Rudrabhishekam is performed at pradosham (sunset) to worship Lord Shiva as he performs the holy dance in Kailasam. All devatas assemble there to watch this holy event, and offer their prayers to him. According to the Vedas and ancient scriptures, thinking and meditating during pradosham (sunset) time is considered most sacred. The one who worships Lord Shiva at pradosham will get the benefits of having worshipped all devatas at one time. This is the most important among the pujas performed to the graceful Lord Shiva.

Shravan Shanivar is an auspicious day to worship Lord Shani (Saturn). According to the Puranas, Lord Shani (Saturn) gave a boon to Dasarath (Lord Rama's father) that those who worship Lord Shani on Shravan Shanivar (Saturdays in the month of Shravan Maas) will not be affected by him. Also, he will bless the people who are affected by Sade Sate and Shani dasa.

Somvar Vrath (Monday fasting) or Upavaas (doing puja while fasting)

Upavaas means Upa = nearby, vaas = to live or stay. This means we need to be near God while chanting mantras, visiting the Temple, or doing such holy activities.

Somvar Vrath (Monday fasting) is dedicated to Lord Shiva. Fasting gives the digestive system a rest and opens the physiology to more subtle energies. Fasting on Mondays of Shravan Maas and Karthikmaas, which fall in August and November, is done by many to appease Lord Shiva and get prayers and wishes fulfilled. It is believed that observing Somvar Vrath will help to attain prosperity and a long, peaceful family life. Those who fast during Shravan Maas, go to the temple, and attend Rudrabhishekam:

- Attain the virtues received by visiting the twelve Jyothirlingas.
- Minimize the effects of an afflicted moon.

- And those, whose birth star is Shravana Nakshatra, receive the benefits of a healthy mind and good spirit.

Somvar Vrat begins at sunrise on Monday. Usually those devotees observing the Vrat, visit a Lord Shiva Temple in the morning and the evening. After attending the evening Rudrabhishekam, people break the fast and eat a light supper. Those who cannot fast (children, elders, and sick people) can do a partial fast that includes a single meal taken after noon (no breakfast). They can also eat fruit or sabudana (tapioca dish) and visit the Lord Shiva Temple.

Vrats of the month of Shravan

At the mention of the month of *Shravan*, one remembers the *vrats*. It is difficult for the common people to perform conducts according to the *Vedas*. To overcome this difficulty, the *Purans* make a mention of *vrats*. In this, the special *vrats* fall in the month of *Shravan*. For example:

- *Jivantikapujan*
- *Varadalakshmi vrat*
- *Kajjali Trutiya*
- *Budhi Teej*
- *Pithori Amavasya*

Due to the *vrats* falling in the month of *Shravan*, benefits are acquired at an individual and social level. This explains the importance of *vrats* and our heads bow with devotion at the holy feet of the Sages who created these *vrats*.

1.1 Jivantikapujan

This *vrat* is observed on every Friday of the Hindu lunar *Shravan* month. The deity associated with this *vrat* is Jivantika, that is, Jivati Devi. This deity protects small children. In this *vrat*, on the first Friday of *Shravan*, women draw a picture of deity Jivati on the wall with sandalwood and worship it. Nowadays printed picture is worshipped. Five married women (*suhagan*) having children, are invited to the house and after applying turmeric and vermilion on their forehead milk, sugar and roasted grams are given to them as holy sacrament (*prasad*).

1.2 Varadalakshmi vrat

This *vrat* is observed on the last Friday of the bright fortnight (*Shukla Paksha*) of *Shravan*. In the ritual of this *vrat*, a metal pot (*kalash*) is placed and Sri Varadalakshmi is invoked into it. The *Shrisukta* is recited and the devi is worshipped. Thereafter a *naivedya* of 21 *anarasasis* offered to her. Thereafter, *brahmin*, married women (*suhagans*) and celibates (*Brahmacharis*) are offered *upayan*, that is, gifts.

In South Bharat, Varadalakshmi *vrat* is observed on the last Friday of the bright fortnight (*Shukla Paksha*) of the *Ashadh* month. People believe that in the temples

of Tiruvadi, Tiruvayur and Tiruputtur, Goddess Lakshmi herself worshipped Lord Shiv. Therefore these temples have special significance for the observance of this *vrata*. Begetting a son, prosperity and obtaining wealth and grains are the fruits of observing this *vrata*.

1.3 *Kajjali Trutiya*

This *vrata* is observed on *Shravan Krushna Trutiya*. The deity associated with this *vrata* is Srivishnu. This *vrata* is also known as '*Satudi Teej*'. At some places this *vrata* is observed on *Bhadrapad Krushna Trutiya*. But realistically it should be observed on *Shravan Krushna Trutiya* only.

1.4 *Budhi teej*

Elderly women sing various songs sitting on the swing. They are called *kajari*. The women observing this *vrata* consume only one meal. In this *vrata*, some other old woman is paid obeisance by touching her feet and sugar candies (*batases*) are gifted to her. In her place dry fruits, sweets etc. are given to the woman observing the *vrata*.

1.5 *Pithori Amavasya*

The *Amavasya* in the month of *Shravan* is known as *Pithori Amavasya*. In this *vrata*, the sixty four *Yoginis* are worshipped. A fast is observed for the whole day of *Shravan Amavasya*.

Earlier, in this *vrata* idols were made from flour (*peeth*). The food prepared to be offered as *naivedya* is also prepared from flour. Therefore this *vrata* is known as *Pithori Amavasya*. The children of the women observing the *vrata* of *Pithori Amavasya* are blessed with a long life.

2. *Shravani ritual*

It is also known as *Upakarma* or *Rishitarpan*. The ritual of *Shravani* is associated with the learning of the *Vedas*. Two rituals performed associated with the learning of *Vedas* are

- *Utsarjan* ritual, that is, giving up of the *Vedas*
- *Upakarma* ritual, that is, accepting of the *Vedas*

Upakarma vidhi is performed before commencing learning of *Vedas*. On the day of *Shravani* the sequence of studies for the next year is determined only after performing the *Upakarma vidhi*. If the learning of *Vedas* is to be discontinued, the *Utsarjan vidhi* is performed.

2.1 *Utsarjan ritual*

On the day of *Shravani*, the presiding *brahmin* takes his seat after ablutions in the morning. A sacrificial fire pit is created for *Utsarjan-karma* (temporary giving up of the *Vedas* for earning a living) and a similar one for *Upakarma* (resuming learning of the *Vedas*). First a ring of *Darbh* (holy grass) is worn and along with uttering of the *desh-kal*, resolve (*sankalp*) is made.

- After this *panch-gavya* is consumed. *Panch-gavya* is a mixture of milk, curd, ghee, cow's urine and cowdung.
- Then ritualistic worship of Mahaganapati is done.
- *Utsarjan hom* (fire sacrifice) is then performed.
- Thereafter, oblations of ghee and cooked rice are offered to the deities in the sacrificial fire.

Ritualistic Bathing: In ritualistic bathing, the body is purified by bathing using holy ash (*bhasma-snan*), cowdung (*Gomay-snan*), mud (*mruṭṭika-snan*) and water.

- The body benefits from the Absolute Fire Element (*Tej-tattva*) by applying holy ash.
- The body benefits from the Absolute Air Element (*Vayu-tattva*) by applying cowdung.
- By applying mud the body benefits from the Absolute Earth Element (*Pruthvi-tattva*).
- Also due to application of the frequencies of the principles of holy ash, cowdung and mud on the body, a covering is formed and the black covering is removed.
- Then holy grass (*durva*), sesame seeds and mud is placed on the head along with uttering of *mantras*.

Spiritual experiences: Some spiritual experiences of the seekers who participated in the *Shravani* ritual with spiritual emotion:

1. Black energy going out of the body through yawning and burping
2. Experiencing lightness in the body
3. Fragrance emanating from the body
4. Mind becoming stable and introverted
5. Enhancing of concentration of the mind

It is clear from the above points that by purifying the body ritualistically in this way together with uttering of *mantras*, the mind also starts getting purified.

Worshipping the Sages and giving offerings (*tarpan*) to the Sages:

Here eight betel-nuts (*suparis*) are placed on a short wooden stool. Then the seven Sages namely Kashyap, Atri, Bhardwaj, Gautam, Jamdagni, Vasishtha, Vishwamitra and Arundhati are invoked and worshipped.

After this, by keeping the sacred thread on both the shoulders, offerings (*tarpan*) are given to the Sages.

Seven circles are created from the region of the Sages. These circles become one at the *nirgun* level to form a flow. This flow is emitted towards the Earth and is attracted at the place of the ritualistic worship of the Sages. Through this flow fountains of frequencies of *Chaitanya* spread in the environment. The people present there benefit from it.

2.2 Upakarma ritual

In this ritual oblations are offered in the sacrificial fire. In this balls are made from the barley flour and offered in the fire. Then the person participating in the *Shravani* ritual swallows the balls made from barley flour without chewing.

2.3 Adorning a new sacred thread (yagyopaveet)

In the ritual of adorning the sacred thread, first the sacred thread is enriched by uttering *mantras*. By uttering the *mantras* with spiritual emotion the vibrations of spiritual energy emitted from the four *Vedas* are attracted towards the sacred thread and they revolve around it in an activated form.

The sacred thread is held in the hands and the *Gayatri mantra* is uttered. Then with prayers and spiritual emotion it is adorned. Then the old sacred thread is discarded. The subtle effect of adorning the sacred thread is as follows:

1. Through this spiritual energy is activated in the sacred thread and it gets charged with this energy.
2. Spiritual emotion is awakened in the person who adorns the sacred thread
 - 2a. The person achieves communion with God.
3. A flow of God's blessings in the form of *Chaitanya* is attracted towards the person.
 - 3a. *Chaitanya* is activated in his body.
4. A flow of Divine Energy of Knowledge is attracted.
 - 4a. A spiral of Energy of Knowledge is created at the *Adnya chakra* of the person who wears the sacred thread
5. Through the spiral of Energy of Knowledge a flow of Energy of wisdom (*pradnya-shakti*) spreads at the place of *Anahat-chakra* of the person.
 - 5a. A spiral of Energy of wisdom is created in the person's body.

6. A flow of Divine *Chetana-shakti* is attracted towards the person.

6a. Through this flow a spiral of *Chetana-shakti* is created in his body.

6b. Flows of *Chetana-shakti* spread in his body.

6c. Also particles of *Chaitanya*-like energy spread in his body. Due to the *Chetana-shakti* generated in the body, the person acquires the energy to study the *Vedas*.

7. The seven *Kundalini chakras* in his body get activated.

8. A protective sheath is created around the body.

9. He is protected from negative energies.

With this one can understand how a person is benefitted from the frequencies of the Divine Principle by wearing the sacred thread.

Raksha Bandhan

RAKSHA BANDHAN is called Avani Avittam in South India. This falls on the full moon day of the month of Sravan (August-September). It is an important Hindu festival. Hindus wear a new holy thread and offer libations of water to the ancient Rishis on this day.

Recitation of the *Vedas* on this great day is highly beneficial. This festival is also known as Upakarmam, and is specially sacred to the Brahmins, who have been invested with the sacred thread.

When a Brahmin boy is invested with this thread, symbolically his third eye, or the eye of wisdom, is opened. The holy festival of Upakarmam reminds one who wears the sacred thread of its glorious spiritual significance. Brahmins also offer libations of water to their ancestors, to whom they owe their birth; to the great Rishis, to whom they are highly indebted for their spiritual knowledge; and to the *Vedas* themselves. The true Hindu never forgets his benefactors!

The followers of the four different *Vedas* have their Upakarmam on different days.

On this day, Sachi, the consort of Indra, tied a holy thread or amulet around the wrist of Indra, when he was defeated by the demons. Then Indra, the king of gods, gained victory over the demons by the power of this protection (Raksha means "protection"). He then recovered the lost city of Amaravati.

In North India, on this day, an amulet known as a Raksha or Rakhi, is tied round the wrist of brothers by the sisters as a protection from evil during the coming year. Brahmins and Purohits similarly tie amulets round the wrists of their patrons and receive gifts. A Mantra is recited when the Rakhi or the silken thread is tied. The silken thread is charged with the power of the Mantra, which is as follows:

**Yena baddho balee raajaa daanavendro mahaabalah;
Tena twaam anubadhnaami rakshey maa chala maa chala.**

"I am tying on your hand this Raksha, with which the most powerful and generous King Bali himself was bound; O Raksha, don't go away; don't go away."

The power of this Mantra protects the wearer from evil influences.

Raksha Bandhan

Raksha Bandhan :- Festival of Rakhi or Raksha bandhan is one of the most important festivals of Hindu brother and sister and celebrated with lots of jubilation. Raksha bandhan festival is associated with the very special relationship between brothers and sisters, on this day sisters tie a rakhi or decorative thread on the wrist of their brothers and in return brothers pledges to protect their sisters when the need arises. Marked by rakhi tying and traditional pooja ceremony, the festival of Raksha bandhan in India reinforces the protective bond and firms the loving fraternal relationship between brother & sister. Sisters wait throughout the year for this special day that lets them to express their unconditional feelings of affection and care to their brothers.



When is Raksha Bandhan?

The festival of Rakhi is celebrated every year on the full Moon Day of Shraavana (July-August) Month. As Rakhi festival is celebrated according to the Hindu calendar, hence the month of the English calendar changes every year.

This year Raksha Bandhan will be celebrated on Thursday 2nd of August 2012.

What is Rakhi Ceremony?

On the festive day everyone gets ready very early to celebrate the occasion. After praying to God, the sisters perform the aarti of their brothers and put 'tika' and 'chawal' on their forehead, praying for their wellbeing. Sisters tie a Rakhi thread on the wrist of brother and brothers pledges to take care of her, in any condition. On this festive occasion gifts are exchanged and special Rakhi Recipes like Ghevar, Vermicelli Kheer, Malpua, Kesar Burfi, Pista Sandesh & Rava Laddoo are prepared.

Rakhi Celebrations

Rakhi is celebrated in different parts of India in different ways as well as where ever Hindus live, but the significance remains the same.

Rakhi in India (West): In the Western Region, the festival is known as Nariyal Purnima and as a ritual coconuts are thrown into the sea on this day. The festival marks the beginning of the fishing season.

Rakhi in India (South): In South India, this festival is called Avani Avittam. It is an important day for the Brahmins where they first take a holy bath and then change their holy thread (Janeyu) chanting the mantras. They take a vow to perform their duties as prescribed in the holy books and adopt a good conduct and dignity.

Rakhi in India (North): In North India, Rakhi Purnima is also called Kajri Purnima or Kajri Navami, when wheat or barley is sown. Goddess Bhagwati is worshiped and farmers seek her blessings for a good crop.

Rakhi in India (East): The great Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore initiated the 'Rakhi Utsava' (Rakhi

tying ceremony) in Shanti Niketan to maintain universal brotherhood long back in 1905 at the time of Bengal Partition. But the custom is continued till date by the students of the Shanti-Niketan.

Krishna Janmastami

Janmashtami is celebrated to welcome and enjoy Lord Krishna's birth. The birth of Lord Krishna took place when the various planets were in auspicious places. It is said that God chooses a particular time, as to when he will take birth as a human and the planetary systems are adjusted accordingly.



Auspicious Nakshatra (Constellation)

Around the time of Bhagwan Krishna's birth, Rohini Nakshatra was predominant as it is considered to be quite auspicious. This is so because it is under the supervision of Brahma, the creator of Universe. Sri Krishna was born in the month Of Sravana more than 5000 years ago.

Born in Dwapur Yug (Iron Age)

According to some scholars, Krishna was born on Wednesday, the eighth day of second fortnight in Sravana month in the year of Visvvasu around 3227 BC, also known as Dwapur Yug. July 19th 3228 BC to be more accurate. He lived for 125 years and disappeared on February 18th 3102 BC on the new moon night of Phalgun. His death was the onset of the current corrupt age known as Kaliyug.

Universal Happiness of all Forms of Life

From the time, Devki conceived Sri Krishna, she began to glow and exude divine light. The prison walls glowed with the aura of the new born infant. Atmosphere of peace and happiness prevailed all over, Forests were all green and full of trees with all kinds of beautiful flowers, rivers were all swollen due to joy, peacocks began to dance in sheer joy, people in all villages started being happy.

Objective of Krishna's Birth

The main objective of Lord Krishna's birth was to free Mother Earth from the wickedness of demons. Playing an important part in Mahabharata (legendary battle in Kurukshetra) and propagating the theory of bhakti and good karma were other important objectives.

Events Before The Birth of Sri Krishna

The people of Mathura were extremely unhappy with the wicked king Kansa who put his father, king Ugrasen in prison and declared himself the king of Mathura. It was to put an end to his evil ways and other demons that Lord Vishnu decided to take birth on Earth in human form. According to Akashvani (heavenly voice) at the wedding of his beloved sister Devki, Kansa got to know that the eighth child of his sister will take birth to kill him. So, in turn he rushed to kill his sister. Kansa gave up the idea of killing after being assured by Vasudev that he will handover all his children to him. He put them in Prison. Kansa killed all the six infants as soon as they were born. The seventh child (Balram) was saved due to divine intervention, when he was transferred from Devki's womb to that of Rohini's (other wife of Vasudev).

Events During the Birth of Lord Krishna

Lord Krishna was born in a prison cell in the captivity of King Kansa. He took birth in divine form with lotus like eyes, his palms bearing the signs of a lotus and discus. He had a swastika sign on his sole. Wearing a yellow colored silk cloth, adorned with precious diamond earrings and a crown made of emeralds. Soon after the birth, a chain of events astonished Vasudev, when he saw the gates of the cell flow open and all the guards fast asleep. He immediately thought of Nand, his

close friend in Gokul and decided to handover his child to him in order to save him from the clutch of Kansa.

River Yamuna Bows To The Feet of Sri Krishna

The night of birth was witnessed by heavy rains which led to River Yamuna being in floods. As soon as the feet of Lord immersed in the river, the flow became normal and Yamuna made way for the Lord. Sheshnag, the serpent formed an umbrella to save the new born baby from rain.

Exchange of the Babies

Vasudev kept his child next to fast asleep Yashoda and took the baby girl lying with him back to Mathura. The baby girl is believed to be the sister of Lord Vishnu.

Disappearance of The Divine Child

On hearing the news of birth of the eighth child of Devki and Vasudev, Kansa rushed to the prison-cell and lifted the baby girl to kill her despite pleadings from Devki. However, instead of hitting the stone, the child flew in the air and announced that the annihilator of Kansa was born and in safe hands.

Krishna later grew in Gokul and finally killed his maternal uncle, King Kansa.

Source: <http://www.happywink.org/janmashtami/birthlord-krishna.html>

Mahalaya / Pitri Paksha

The Hindu festival Pitr-Paksha 2012 starts on Sunday 30 September and lasts a fortnight until Monday 15 October.

The dark fortnight which falls during the Hindu calendar months of Ashvin and Bhadrapad (September to October) is known as Pitr-Paksha, or Mahalaya Paksha. This fortnight is a time for performing rites, Shraaddha, to deceased ancestors to keep their souls gratified for years.

Why one has to do shraaddha/paksha?

Having born on shresta karma bhoomi bharatha, one has to get discharged from mainly four Runaas viz., Pitru Runa, Deva Runa, Rushi Runa and Acharya Runa. Pitru Runa can be discharged in the following ways – by getting a male child, by maataa-pitru seva, and by performing pitru yagna.

Why Paksha will be observed during this period – for pitru devatagalu, one month of Human period is equal to one day, and shukla paksha is the day and Krishna paksha is the night for them. What we are giving as Thila Tarpana and Pinda pradhana during the said period will be sufficient for them throughout the year. That is why one is performing Paksha during the period.

Who has to do paksha?

All those who have lost their fathers must do Paksha.

Where Paksha/Shradha to be done?

It is better to do it in a kshetra. If not possible at least in your house. Now-a-days, because of non availability of requirements for Shradha in house, (eg – Fuel, water) it can be done in Rayara Mutts also.

Items required for Paksha-

Aggistike, Charcoal, Dharbe (Kusa grass), plain rice, Rice (nivedita annam), ghee, curds, honey, milk, Black Sesame, water, Tulsi Leaves, Pavitra (Made of darbha), Vishnu padam (Foot print of Sri Maha Vishnu), Plantain Leaves, Fruits, Panchapatre, Uddrane, Villedede, Adike, Dakshine., yajnOpaveeta, gopichandana, donne. During Shraddha time, better avoid conversation with other relations, mobile calls.

Steps for Shraddha/Paksha -

Achamana, Pavitradharana, punarachamana, Yavodaka, tilodaka, Amantrana for darbe brahmanaru, paada prakshalana, Asana, arghya, antaryaami pooja, Avaahana, gandha, mandala, paatraasadana, darbe brahmana bhojana, pinda pradana, pinda pooja, bhojana niyama, pinda visarjana, brahmana visarjana, brahmana suvasini bhoori bhojana sankalpa, brahmana bhojana, taking ashirvaada from brahmanaas, yajamaana bhojana, telling krishnarpana.

Specified dates for Paksha -

Actually Paksha has to be done on all the 15 days. (On Ekadashi without rice). Atleast Tila tarpana must be given on all the days during paksha maasa. If one is not able to do paksha on all the days, they have to select a day, usually the day of his father's death day. Suppose his father has died on Dwiteeya, then on Dwiteeya day itself shraddha to be done. If it is inconvenient for him to do it on Dwiteeya, then he can do it on any day other day except the following days – Navami (meant for Avidhava – for those have died as muthaide), Ekadashi (Upavasa), Dwadashi (meant for Yathigalu), Chaturdashi (Ghata Chaturdashi – meant for accident victims). They can do it on other days. For those who have died on Pournami day, Paksha to be done paadya or other convenient day.

If during this entire period, it is not possible to do the paksha, then you can do it during Thula maasam i.e. When Surya enters Kanya rashi (upto Ashwayuja bahuLa panchami) .

Shraddha

From The Mahabharata

Anusasana Parva, Section CXXV, Translated by Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli

Addressing Yudhishtira, Bhishma said: Listen to me with concentrated attention, O king, as I explain to thee, O Bharata, these mysteries appertaining to who are truly deserving of honour and worship, after the same manner in which the holy Vyasa had explained them to me in days of yore. The subject is a mystery to the very deities, O monarch. Yama of stainless deed, with the aid of vows well-observed and Yaga meditation had acquired the knowledge of these mysteries as the high fruit of his penances.

Once upon a time, a celestial messenger, coming to the court of Indra of his own accord, but remaining invisible, addressed the chief of the deities in these words:

At the command of those two deities who are the foremost of all physicians, and who are endued with every desirable attribute, I have come to this place where I behold human beings and Pitris (deceased ancestors) and the deities assembled together. Why, indeed, is sexual congress interdicted for the man who performs a Shraddha and for him also who eats at a Shraddha (for the particular day)? Why are three rice-balls offered separately at a Shraddha? Unto whom should the first of those rice-balls be offered? Unto whom should the second one be offered? And whose has it been said is the third or remaining one? I desire to know all this.

After the celestial messenger had said these words connected with righteousness and duty, the deities who were seated towards the east, the Pitris also, applauding that ranger of the sky, began as follows.

The Pitris said: Welcome art thou, and blessings upon thee! Do thou listen, O best of all rangers of the sky! The question you have asked is a high one and fraught with deep meaning. The Pitris of that man who indulges in sexual congress on the day he performs a Shraddha, or eats at a Shraddha have to lie for the period of a whole month on his vital seed.

As regards the classification of the rice-balls offered at a Shraddha, we shall explain what should be done with them one after another. The first rice-ball should be conceived as thrown into the waters. The second ball should be given to one of the wives to eat. The third ball should be cast into the blazing fire. Even this is the ordinance that has been declared in respect of the Shraddha. Even this is the ordinance that is followed in practice according to the rites of religion. The Pitris of that man who act according to this ordinance become gratified with him and remain always cheerful. The progeny of such a man increases and inexhaustible wealth always remains at his command.

The celestial messenger said: Thou hast explained the division of the rice-balls and their consignment one after another to the three (viz., water, the spouse, and the blazing fire), together with the reasons thereof. [Note: The reason is the declarations in the scriptures to that effect.]

Whom does that rice-ball which is consigned to the waters reach? How does it, by being so consigned, gratify the deities and how does it rescue the Pitris? The second ball is eaten by the spouse. That has been laid down in ordinance. How do the Pitris of that man (whose spouse eats the rice-ball) become the eaters thereof? The last rice-ball goes into the blazing fire. How does that ball succeed in finding its way to thee, or who is he unto whom it goes? I desire to hear this, - that is, what are the ends attained by the rice-balls offered at Shraddha when thus disposed of by being cast into the water, given to the spouse, and thrown into the blazing fire!

The Pitris said: Great is this question which thou hast asked. It involves a mystery and is fraught with wonder. We have been exceedingly gratified with thee, O ranger of the sky! The very deities and the munis applaud acts done in honour of the Pitris. Even they do not know what the certain conclusions are of the ordinances in respect of the acts done in honour of the Pitris. Excepting the high-souled, immortal and excellent Markendeya, that learned Brahmana of great fame, who is ever devoted to the Pitris, none amongst them is conversant with the mysteries of the ordinances in respect of the Pitris. Having heard from the holy Vyasa what the end is of the three rice-balls offered at the Shraddha, as explained by the Pitris themselves in reply to the question of the celestial messenger, I shall explain the same to thee. Do thou hear, O monarch, what the conclusions are with respect to the ordinances about the Shraddha. Listen with rapt attention, O Bharata, to me as I explain what the end is of the three rice-balls.

That rice-ball which goes into water is regarded as gratifying the deity of the moon. That deity, thus gratified, O thou of great intelligence, gratifies in return the other deities and the Pitris also with them. It has been laid down that the second rice-ball should be eaten by the spouse (of the man that performs the Shraddha). The Pitris who are very desirous of progeny, confer children on the woman of the house. Listen now to me as I tell thee what becomes of the rice-ball that is cast into the blazing fire. With that ball the Pitris are gratified and as the result thereof they grant the fruition of all wishes unto the person offering it. I have thus told thee everything about the end of the three rice-balls offered at the Shraddha and consigned to the three (viz., water, the spouse, and the fire).

That Brahman who becomes the Ritwik at a Shraddha constitutes himself, by that act, the Pitri of the person performing the Shraddha. Hence, he should abstain that day from sexual congress with even his own spouse.[Note: The Brahmana who becomes the Ritwik and eats at a Shraddha

becomes a Pitri of the person performing the Shraddha. Hence, when his identity has been changed, he should, on that day, abstain from sexual congress with even his own spouse. By indulging in such congress, he incurs the sin of adultery.]

O best of all rangers of the sky, the man who eats at Shraddha should bear himself with purity for that day. By acting otherwise, one surely incurs the faults I have indicated. It cannot be otherwise. Hence, the Brahmana who is invited to a Shraddha for eating the offerings should eat them after purifying himself by a bath and bear himself piously for that day by abstaining from every kind of injury or evil. The progeny of such a person multiply and he also who feeds him reaps the same reward.

From Manu Smriti

Whatever a man, full of faith, duly gives according to the prescribed rule, that becomes in the other world a perpetual and imperishable (gratification) for the manes.

The days of the dark half of the month, beginning with the tenth, but excepting the fourteenth, are recommended for a funeral sacrifice.

As the second half of the month is preferable to the first half, even so the afternoon is better for the performance of a funeral sacrifice than the forenoon.

Let him not perform a funeral sacrifice at night, because the night is declared to belong to the Rakshasas, nor in the twilight, nor when the sun has just risen.

At all rites in honour of the manes the word SWADHA is the highest benison. [Note: During Agni-Hotra or Havan ceremony, oblations are offered to the gods with the word SWAHA but to the manes during funeral sacrifice, the word SWADHA must be used.]

The manes are always pleased with offerings made in open, naturally pure places, on the banks of rivers, and in secluded spots.

How Sraddha and Tarpan benefit the departed souls

By Swami Shivananda, Divine Life Society, Rishikesh

Sraddha is the name of the ceremonies performed by relatives to help the Jiva (individual soul) who has cast off his physical body in death. A Jiva who has cast off his physical sheath is called a Preta. The part of the Sraddha performed to help him at this stage is called the Preta Kriya.

Gifts to deserving Brahmanas for the benefit of the Pitris, in the proper time and place and with faith, are known as Sraddha. Sraddha gives satisfaction to the Pitris. By the offering of the sixteen Sraddhas, the son helps his father to dwell in joy with the Pitris. The son should perform the Sapindikarana rites for his father. Performance of Sraddha and Tarpan relieves the hunger and thirst of the departed soul during its journey to the Pitri Loka.

Those who go to hell are extremely oppressed by hunger and thirst. Performance of Sraddha and offerings of rice and oblations to them, relieve their sufferings. Hence, performance of Sraddha is indispensable. Those who dwell in heaven also get satisfaction, strength and nourishment.

Performance of Sraddha in honour of the manes or forefathers is indispensable. Sraddha must be performed with faith, devotion and reverence. The son who does not perform Sraddha and Tarpan is an ungrateful son. He goes to hell. The sacred scriptures declare: "He who does not perform Sraddha takes his next birth in the lowest caste. He leads a miserable life and suffers from poverty.

The two classes of Pitris

Immediately after death, the Jiva obtains the Ativahika body which is made up of fire, air and space. Later on, it may have a Yatana Deha for suffering the tortures of hell if it had done great sins on the earth-plane, or a celestial body for enjoying the pleasures of heaven if it had virtuous actions while living in the world. In the Yatana Deha the air-element preponderates: while in the celestial body, the element of fire is dominant. It takes one year for the Jiva to reach the Pitri Loka.

There are two classes of Pitris, viz., the Celestial Pitris who are the lords of the Pitri Loka, and the Human Pitris who go there after death. Brahma is the paternal grandfather of all. Kasyapa and the other Prajapatis are also Pitris, as they are the original progenitors. Pitri Loka or the Abode of the Pitris is also called by the name Bhuvan Loka.

The word Pitris primarily means the immediate ancestors, viz., father, mother, etc. Sraddha proper is performed for three generations of Pitris, or to all Pitris. Three cakes are offered to the father, the grandfather and the great grandfather. Two Brahmins are fed first. Seven generations can mutually influence one another by the giving and receiving of food.

Pitri-paksha and the Mahalaya Amavasya

The dark fortnight of the month of Asvayuja is known as the Pitripaksha or the fortnight of the month specially sanctified for offering oblations to the departed ancestors. And the last day, the day of the new moon, is considered as the most important day in the year for performing obsequies and like rites.

Now, ordinarily, the orthodox Hindus offer oblation of water-Tarpan-Arghya- to the departed every new-moon day. The prescribed rites are also performed every year on the anniversary of the day of death. This is the Sraddha ceremony. What then, is the special import of these observances particularly during the Asvayuja Krishna Paksha? The reason is that such ceremonies done during this fortnight have a very special effect. The offerings reach the Pitris immediately and directly, due to a boon from Lord Yama.

Due to the grace of Lord Yama, it came to be so ordained that such rites done at this particular period acquired the following unique merits. Offerings made at this time reached all departed souls, whether they were kins directly in the line of the offerer or not. Even those who died without progeny received these oblations given on this Pitri-paksha Amavasya day. All those who had failed to do deeds of charity and Anna-Dana (gift of food) and were thus denied these comforts in the Pitri Loka, benefited by these ceremonies.

Those deceased whose date of death is not known and whose annual Sraddha cannot be done, they also get these oblations of Pitri Paksha. Souls whose life was cut off by violent accidental or

unnatural death and to whom, therefore, offerings cannot reach in the ordinary course, to them, too, the Ptripaksha offerings reach directly. All these the boon of Lord Yama made possible from the time the great Karna performed the Asvayuja-Paksha rites.

The Hindus now observe this Paksha with great faith, with strict regulation, taking bath thrice, with partial fasting, etc. On the new-moon day, Sarvapitri (all ancestors)Amavasya, the full rites are done and plenty of charity given.

Propitiation of Departed Spirits

The day of Mahalaya Amavasya is the day of great significance and importance to all Hindus. It is the annual festival for propitiating the spirits of our ancestors, with devout prayers for peace. The Hindu Itihasas (histories) say, that on the Mahalaya Amavasya, there is a conjunction of the sun and the moon and that the sun enters the sign Virgo (Kanya). On this day, the departed manes, i.e., our ancestors, leave their abode in the world of Yama and come down to the world of mortals and occupy the houses of their descendants.

The fortnight preceding the new moon is specially consecrated for the propitiation of such departed spirits. The ceremonies performed in honour of the manes or ancestors during each day of this fortnight are considered to be equal to those performed at Gaya. The principle in all such rites is the worship of the departed souls and the satisfaction of their wishes so that they might be in peace during the rest of the year.

Mahalaya Amavasya

The dark fortnight of Aswayuja (September-October) is known as the Mahalaya Paksha or the fortnight specially sacred for offering oblations to the departed ancestors. The last day of this period, the new moon day, is considered as the most important day in the year for performing obsequies and rites.

The renowned hero of the Mahabharata, Karna, when he left the mortal coil, ascended to the higher worlds and the great charity he had done here was returned to him hundredfold. But, it was all gold and silver; there was no food, as he had not done any food-charity! He prayed to the god of death. So, he was sent back to earth for fourteen days, to make up for this deficiency.

For fourteen days, he fed Brahmins and the poor, and offered oblations of water. On his return to the higher regions, he had food in plenty. It is these fourteen days that are commemorated in the Mahalaya Paksha. Due to the grace of the god of death, it has been ordained that offerings made during this period benefit all the departed souls, whether they are connected to you or not.

Charity in the form of food is important during this observance. Life depends upon food. You cannot preach religion to empty stomachs. This human body is the most important vehicle for realising God. How precious must food be which keeps the body fit for Yoga! The gift of food is the greatest gift. Therefore, give food in plenty, not only during the Mahalaya fortnight but all through the year. Om Tat Sat Brahmarnamastu

More information is available on www.hinduism.co.za

Navaratri Celebrations-Methodology and Rewards

Navaratri functions are held for nine days twice every year during the first half of 'Asvayuja' and 'Chaitra' months from 'Pratipad' to 'Dasami'. The Navaratra festivals in Asvayuja month are known as Sarat Navarathras and the Chaitra month festivals are popularly known as Vasanta Navarathras. The preparation for Sarat Navaratri in the Autumn season commencing from Asvayuja Pradhama Tithi actually starts from Bhadrapada Amavasya itself with one meal of 'Homa Anna' or 'Sacred Agni Prasada'.

At a designated Place in the center of a Hall, a raised platform made of bricks, called 'Vedi' of six feet wide and one and half feet height be arranged. On the Pratipad Tithi of Asvayuja, the Person(s) concerned sponsoring the Navarathras must arrive clean and composed, having already performed their 'Sandhavandanam' or daily pujas and should seek the blessings of Brahmanas appointed (either nine, or five or three or atleast one) after presenting them new clothes and Dakshina. 'Swasti' Mantras followed by Veda Parayana would be recited. An Idol of nicely decorated Durga Devi seated on a Lion, with either four or eighteen hands, with symbolic arms and jewellery be installed as also a Pot of Sacred River Water placed over an 'Yantra' (diagram) representing Grandhis (Chambers) of Trinity and relevant Demi-Gods and Planetary Heads, while rendering the relevant Mantras. With various Worship Materials in place, the Puja would commence along with the Mantram 'Om Hrim Srim Chandikaya namah'. Proceedings with Sacrificial Animals, [* not so much in India now, but in vogue in Nepal during Dussera Festival Days] for propitiating of Gods and Almighty Shakti, would follow. 'Arthies' (Camphor cum oil soaked cotton vick lamps shown to Deity) are performed, accompanied by instrumental music, singing and dance in praise of Maha Devi Bhagavati. 'Bala Kanya Bhog' or Prasad

(Food material offered to Deity) to Virgins of the ages of two to ten would follow. The virgins of two years are named Kumaris, three years are Trimurthies, four years are Kalyanis, five years are Rohinis, five years are Kalikas, six years are Chandika, seven years Sambhavi, eight years Durga and Nine years as Subhadra. Blessings of these Virgins provide removal of problems, wealth, longevity, happiness, health and Peace. The procedure for the evenings too is similar in the Sandhya Puja viz. the 'Arti" Worship to Goddess accompanied by instrumental music, 'Shodasa Upacharas' or Sixteen kinds of worship ranging from holding an Umbrella to the Diety, hand fanning, showing a mirror, camphor lighting, Veda Recital, Singing and dancing in praise of Amba, 'Naivedyam' or offering varieties of food, and 'Parikrama' or taking the Deity around the worship place, or a temple or surrounding areas and so on. At the end, Bhajans (Group Singing), Purana Pravachana (Lectures on the Mysteries of Goddess), 'Harikathas'(Musical renderings of Stories of Religious nature) and so on are performed. Special worship is arranged on the 'Saptami', 'Durga Ashtami', and ' Maha Navami' days ie. the seventh, eighth and the ninth days of the Festival. Devotees not quite involved in the previous days too would like to invariably perform Worship as per their choices in their own Puja Places in their own residences, or Temples or Specially built up (improvised) Group 'Mandaps' for community worship.

Saptami is described as the day when Maha Bhagavati takes a 'Saakar' or Bodily Incarnation to destroy the Demon 'Mahisha Asura' who had the form of a Buffalo, creating havoc to the World. The following day, popular as 'Durga Ashtami', Maha Bhagavati in the Incarnation as Durga Devi looks fierce and angry with the Demon and prepares for a violent battle with him and fellow Demons and massacres them all. It is also believed that Bhadra Kali was incarnated in a furious and gruesome form to devastate the 'Yajna' that was performed by Daksha Prajapati, the father of 'Maha Sati', the better half of Lord Siva and the Kali Incarnation was surrounded by innumerable 'Yoginis' or the multiple permutations of Sixty Attendants of Bhadra Kali who created mayhem at the Yajna and killed Daksha and his followers. On Maha Navami Day, Maha Bhagavati in the forms of fury and destruction punished the evil forces and brought back Her own Creation to normalcy and established balance of power. Thus the two days of Durga Ashtami and Maha Navami are the days of the Grand Finale of the Navarathras, which are remembered for the relief, climactic joy

and devotion experienced by the humans and Gods alike. The day next day falling on Vijaya Dasami is the day of high celebration and gratitude to Maha Bhagavati for Her 'Leelas' or Playful Actions that remain complex forever in human minds, soaked deep in the grip of Maya or Illusion!

Whoever observes Navarathri Pujas with devotion are certain to reap benefits- Dharma (Virtue), Artha (Prosperity), Kama (Worldly fulfillments) and Moksha (Eternal Bliss) with the blessings of Maha Bhagavati. Even those who committed unpardonable misdeeds earlier- 'Pancha Patakas' or heinous acts viz. killing Sages and Brahmanas, stealing gold or valuables, drinking and gambling, adultery or association with perpetrators of sins-would be spared if only the Navaratra Worship is performed with faith.

Veda Vyasa described to King Janamejaya the illustration of how Lord Ramachandra had conquered the indomitable Ravana, when the latter had kidnapped Bhagavati Sita by deception in disguise as a Fake Sage and on securing tip offs that She was in Lanka under Ravana's custody. In fact, the earlier forest life of Lord Rama was a dismal experience consequent on his Step mother Kaikeyi's demand to send away Lord Rama and Lady Sita to forest life for fourteen years. Sri Rama had to invade Ravana's Lanka to recover Sita, with the help of King Sugriva of Kishkindha and his Monkey brigade including Heros like Lord Anjaneya, Jambavanta and Angada. It was at that critical time that Maharshi Narada met Lord Rama and advised Him to perform Navaratra Pujas to fulfill the objective of destroying the unbeatable Ravana and his entire followers and for recovering Sita Devi. (In fact, Ravana was seeking Maya Sita Devi, as real Sita in her earlier birth was an ascetic daughter of a Sage and Ravana was reproached by her when he made advances to her. He caught her hairs and she felt her body became impure and cursed that she would destroy him and his clan in her next birth and ended her life in Yoga Fire. As Sita Devi as the wife of Sri Rama, she gave away her Maya (Illusion) to Ravana and he actually stole away a poisonous serpent in the form of Maya Sita in the 'Ashoka Vana'!) Narada told Sri Rama that in the past, Navaratras were observed in sincerity by Indra, many other Demi-Gods as also Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara and obtained their Blessings from Maha Devi to fulfill their own wishes and prayers. As advised by Narada Maharshi, Lord Rama performed the Navaratras and secured Bhagavati Devi's blessings. The battle was fought killing Rakshasas and the mighty Indrajit, Kumbhakarna and Ravana by Sri Rama as an instrument of Devi Bhagavati.

Devi Bhagavatam (Devi Puranam)

Emphasizing the Holiest Name of Maha Devi Bhagavati, Suta Maha Muni addressed a congregation of Sages headed by Saunaka Muni at 'Naimisaranya', the Forest of Naimisa as the Kali Yuga had no access to that Sacred Place, since the 'Manomaya Chakra' (The Wheel of Mental Illusion) created by Brahma occupied the entire World excepting the Naimisa Forest. The outer rim of the Wheel became thin and would stop rolling further and hence the Forest was chosen as the Sanctified one.

The unfolding of the subject matter was that of Devi Bhagavata Purana, originally recited by Krishna Dvaipayana Maharshi Veda Vyasa, who described it as Maha Purana, elevating its status above the Eighteen Main Puranas, viz. Agni Purana, Bhagavata Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Brahma Purana, Brahmanda Purana, Brahma Vivarta Purana, Garuda Purana, Kurma Purana, Linga Purana, Matsya Purana, Markandeya Purana, Narada Purana, Padma Purana, Skanda Purana, Siva Purana, Vamana Purana, Varaha Purana, and Vishnu Purana. Maharshi Veda Vyas divided the Maha Purana of Devi Maha Bhagavata into Twelve 'Skandas' (Volumes) containing three hundred Chapters totalling eighteen thousand Stanzas. The Maha Purana describes how Devi Bhagavati, the Primeval Energy, empowered 'Maha Purusha' to create the Universe. The five major Characteristics covered in the Purana are 'Sarga' (Creation of the Universe) by 'Maha Purusha' or the Primeval Energy, 'Prati Sarga' (Secondary Creation), Dynasties of Solar and Lunar Kings, 'Manvantaras' beginning from Swayambhu Manu and the subsequent Manus, and Portrayal of Manus and other Kings.

Devi Bhagavata 'Phala Sruti' (Benefits of Reading and Hearing)

While Devi Bhagavati gave half a 'Sloka' or Stanza to Maha Vishnu (converted as a toddler on a banyan leaf floating on water at Pralaya) that '*all being witnessed was Her Maya and nothing else is eternal.*', Lord Brahma Himself expanded the other half of the Stanza into Koti (Crore) Stanzas and to teach his Son Suka Muni, Veda Vyasa transcribed a condensed version of Devi Bhagavata as a Maha Purana into Eighteen Thousand Stanzas in Twelve Cantos.

At the 'Phalasruti' at the end of Devi Bhagavata Vyasa blessed those who read, hear or cogitate (Pathanam, Sravanam and Mananam) with excellent guidance, prosperity, contentment,. Vyasa said that the readers of Devi Bhagavata were eligible for success in life, good offspring, knowledge and expansion of outlook in life. He assured that Devis Lakshmi, Sarasvati and Parvati symbolising wealth, wisdom and Energy respectively would stay together in the house of that person who would read Devi Bhagavata. No evil spirit could dare enter the premise of that devotee. Even small fevers and indispositions, let alone longstanding and nagging diseases would be ever suffered by such readers. Even a few pages of the Glories of Devi Bhagavati by reading or hearing Devi Bhagavata would certainly ensure purity of blood and digestive system, warding off blood pressure and diabetes among others. Indeed during the Navarathras, one's own reading or hearing from a good Brahmana would yield excellent well being and happiness.

***'Na mantram no yantram thadapi cha na jane stutimaho /
na cha-ahvaanam dhyanam tadapi cha na jane stuti kadha /
na jane mudraasthe tadapi cha na jane vilapanam /
param jane Matha thwad- anusaranam klesa haranam.'***

(From Devyaparadha Kshamapana Stotram by Sri Adi Sankaracharya)

I am not conversant with Mantras, Yantras, Hymns of Praise, Invocations, Meditation, Stories of Your Glories, 'Mudras'(Signs) and implorations ; yet I know that if I follow You, I will certainly overcome my tribulations.

NAVARATRI (nine nights) - DURGA.

The nine days' worship is divided into three days worship for each of the three goddesses-

1. Kali, the goddess of strength for protection and valour.
2. Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth.
3. Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge.

Three days are allotted to indicate the discipline and training to be practised at the three levels of personality namely physical, mental and intellectual to achieve the goal set for each type of worship. The nine days of spiritual discipline and training are only symbolical. In actual practice, the time required to achieve such discipline will run into many months if not a few years.

VIJAYADASHMI.

The tenth day, Vijayadashmi, is the day of victory, representing the day of enlightenment when all vasanas are destroyed and the knowledge of the Self has dawned in the individual. The individual is said to have attained God-realisation. The triumph of having moved from the ignorant state of JIVAHOOD (embodied soul) to the enlightened state of SHIVAHOOD. This day marks the triumph of spirit over matter, of victory of divine qualities over evil qualities, of the removal of ignorance by the light of wisdom and knowledge.

The victory of Durga is the triumph of the aggressive good over evil, the destruction of vasanas / subtle impressions, desires, and the realisation of the divine Self.

In modern language, Saraswati represents pure science and Lakshmi represents applied science. Thus Lakshmi flows from Saraswati. First comes the worship of Saraswati through scientific research and then acquisition, assimilation and distribution of knowledge. This is followed by the worship of Lakshmi through the application of knowledge in all fields of human development and welfare.

THE LEGEND.

The goddess Durga was created by the three gods - Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara - for overpowering the demons. A fierce light came out of the mouths of the three gods. All that light united and became one. It was a huge mount of light, throwing flames on all sides. That united light grew into a female form known as Durga - Mahamaya. Siva gave her a trident like his own. Vishnu gave her a counterpart of his own chakra. Varuna gave the conch, Agni gave the missile named shakti. Vayu gave bow and arrow, Indra gave vajra and bell. Yama gave danda and the sea gave the noose. Brahma gave rudraksh beads and the ascetics gave water pot. Vishwakarma gave her weapons of sorts and powerful amulets. The Himalayas gave her a lion to ride upon. Thus armed and adorned, the goddess sent forth a loud cry that filled all space, and the echo reverberated with terrible noise, striking terror all round.

The demons sent their most powerful representative Mahishasur in the form of a buffalo to fight Durga. The buffalo represents the lower animal instincts in human beings in an aggressive form. The goddess represents the higher, nobler tendencies also in an aggressive form - the form of Durga.

THE DEMONS.

The 16th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is entitled "The yoga of the division between the divine and the demoniacal".

- Ch.16-Verse 4: The Lord says: "Hypocrisy, arrogance, self-conceit, anger and also harshness and ignorance, belong to one who is born in a demoniacal state".
- Ch.16-Verse 7: "The demoniacal know not what to do and what to refrain from; neither purity nor right conduct nor truth is found in them".
- Ch.16, Verse 8: "They say: 'this universe is without truth, without a moral basis, without a God, brought about by a mutual union with lust for its cause, what else?'
- Ch.16, Verse 11: "Giving themselves over to immeasurable cares ending only with death, regarding gratification of lust as their highest aim, and feeling sure that that is all".
- Ch.16, Verse 12: "Bound by a hundred ties of hope, given over to lust and anger, they try to obtain by unlawful means hoards of wealth for sensual enjoyment".
- Ch.16, Verse 17: "Self-conceited, stubborn, filled with the pride and intoxication of wealth, they perform sacrifices (to deceive the world and not out of faith and sincerity) out of ostentation, contrary to scriptural ordinances.
- Ch.16, Verse 18: "Given over to egoism, power, haughtiness, lust and anger, these malicious people hate Me in their own bodies and those of others".

"TRIPLE IS THE GATE OF THIS HELL"

Ch.16, Verse 21: "Triple is the gate of this hell, destructive of the self - LUST, ANGER and GREED - therefore one should abandon these three".

Ch.16, Verse 22: "A man who is liberated from these three gates to darkness, practises what is good for him and thus goes to the Supreme goal".

(When these gates to hell are abandoned, the path to salvation is cleared for the aspirant. He gets the company of sages, which leads to liberation. He receives spiritual instructions and practises them. He hears the scriptures, reflects, meditates and attains self-realisation).

Ch.16, Verse 23: "He who, having cast aside the ordinances of the scriptures, acts under the impulse of desire, attains neither perfection nor happiness nor the supreme goal".

Ch.16, Verse 24: "Therefore, **let the scripture be the authority in determining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done**".

(He who desires the welfare of the Self should not disregard the commands of the sacred scriptures. A man who is anxious to attain eternal bliss should respect the Vedas, and the Smritis, which lay down the codes of right conduct. He should readily renounce whatever the scriptures ask him to abandon, and accept whatever he is directed to accept. Treat the scriptures with great respect'.)

(Swami Shivananda, Divine Life Society, Rishikesh.)

How people celebrate this event.

A special ritualistic worship of the Mother is conducted during Navratri festival, which includes the recitation of the Durga Saptashati.

Devotees initiate themselves of the Navarna Mantra japa which is, **AIM HREEM KLEEM CHAAMUNDAAYAI VICHCHE**, or the Mantra of their own tutelary Deity.

Mata **Durga** is worshiped for the first three days, Mata **Lakshmi** for the next three days, and Mata **Saraswati** for the last three days. Many sacred verses from the scriptures are recited and many Kirtans are sung such as Devi Jaagran (over night Devi bhajans). The Durga Saptashati or the Devi Mahatmya is recited and explained in discourses.

Earnest spiritual aspirants fast with milk and fruits only on all the nine days, or at least once in each of the three three-day periods.

On the Navami or Vijaya Dasami day, people observe Kanya Puja. Nine girls below the age of ten are worshipped as the embodiment of the Divine Mother. They are fed sumptuously and amongst other things, presented with new clothes.

On this last day of Navratri, a grand havan is conducted, with recitation of the Durga Saptashati and other verses in praise of the Divine Mother.

(Quoted from www.hinduism.co.za)

Durga – The Goddess Of Righteousness

Worshipping God in the form of Mother is a unique feature of Hindu religion. Through the ages, the doctrine of the Motherhood of God has established a firm root in Hinduism. When a devotee worships God as Divine Mother, he or she appeals to Her tenderness and unconditional love. As a child feels safe and secure in the lap of its mother, a devotee feels safe and secure in the presence of the Divine Mother. Sri Ramakrishna Pararnaharnsa, one of the greatest Indian sages of modern times, worshipped the Divine Mother Kali all through his life. He established a personal rapport with Her and was always conscious of Her presence by his side. Hindus worship the Divine Mother in many popular forms such as Durga – the goddess of righteousness (she is called Durga because she slayed arch-demon Durg, son of Ruru), Bhadrakali – the auspicious power of time, Amba or Jagdamba – Mother of the world, Annapurna – Giver of food in plenty, Sarvamangala – well-wisher of everyone, Bhairavi- power of death, Chandi- killer of demons, Lalita or Lakshmi- Goddess of beauty and prosperity, Saraswati- Goddess of music and learning, Kumari – the virgin, most pure and Uma or Bhavani (consort of Lord Shiva)- Giver of existence. The metaphor is that she is well-wisher of all but cruel to the demonic i.e., to the proud ego of man.

Mythological significance : The birth of Mother Goddess has an interesting origin. It has found mention in the Skanda Purana, in Chandi, itself a part of the Markandeya Purana, the Brahmanda Purana and also in the famous epic, the Mahabharata. According to these mentions, in the ancient times, Lord Shiva, pleased with the devotion of the demon-king, 'Mahishasura' blessed him with a boon that no man or God would be able to kill him. Empowered with the boon, Mahishasura started his reign of terror over the world. People were killed mercilessly and even the Gods were driven out from heaven. The Gods went to Lord Shiva for the protection from the demon-king. Knowing their plight, Lord Shiva, became very angry. This anger came out in the form of energy from Shiva's third eye and concentrated to form a female deity. All the Gods who were present there contributed their share of energy to this Goddess and thus Durga, the eternal mother, was born. Riding a lion, she attacked Mahishasura. After a fierce battle, Durga transformed into Devi Chandika, the most ferocious form of the Goddess, and beheaded Mahishasura.

In 'Ramayana', Lord Rama went to Lanka to rescue his abducted wife, Goddess Sita, from the grip of demon-king, Ravana. Before starting for his battle with Ravana, Rama wanted the blessings of Devi Durga. While worshipping He proposed to please the Goddess with one hundred NeelKamal or blue lotuses. But He could gather only ninety nine of them. He finally decided to offer one of his eyes, which resembled blue lotuses. Durga, being pleased with the devotion of Rama, appeared before him and blessed him with the success. The battle started on the Saptami (seventh day) and Ravana was finally killed on the Sandhikshan i.e. the crossover period between Ashtami (eighth day) and Navami (ninth day). Ravana was cremated on Dashami. Since the period of this worship was different from the conventional period (during the spring - Basanta), this puja is also known as Akal-Bodhan - a worship (Bodhan) in an unconventional time (A-Kaal). According to a Bengali myth, Daksha, the king of the Himalayas, and his wife, Menaka, had a daughter called Uma. Uma, right from her childhood, started worshipping Lord Shiva as her would-be-husband. Lord Shiva, being pleased with the worship of Uma, came to marry her. Daksha was against their marriage but could not prevent it to happen. A little time later, Daksha arranged a 'yagna' where everyone except Lord Shiva was invited. Uma, feeling ashamed of her father's behaviour and shocked by the attitude metted towards her husband, killed herself. There was no end to his anguish when Lord Shiva came to know about this. He lifted the body of Uma on his shoulders and started dancing madly. With the supreme power dancing with wrath, the World was on the verge of destruction. Then Lord Narayana came forward as a saviour and used his 'Chakra' to cut Uma's body into pieces. Those pieces started falling off from the shoulder of the dancing Shiva into different parts of the World. Shiva was finally pacified when the last piece fell off from his shoulder. Lord Narayana, however, revived Uma to new life. The places where the pieces had fallen are known as the 'Shakti Piths' or energy pits. Kalighat in Kolkata, Kamakshya near Guwahati and

Vaishnav Devi in Jammu are three of these places. Ever since peace was restored, Uma, with her four children, Ganesh, Kartick, Saraswati and Laxmi and her two 'sakhis' - Jaya and Bijaya, comes to visit her parent each year during the season of 'Sharatkal' or autumn when Durga-Puja is celebrated. Thus the other name of Durga-puja is "Sharodotshob".

Celebrations In Bengal, the nine-day festival, Durga-Puja is celebrated with great reverence and gusto. It begins with the commencement of Mahalaya. It signifies the termination of Pitri-Paksha and the beginning of Devi Paksha, thus ushering in the season of religious festivals. Several important rituals are performed on this auspicious occasion. It is said that Devi Durga begins her journey from her husband's abode in Kailash to her paternal home on this day. Maharaja Krishnachandra of Nadia introduced the tradition of worshipping clay images in Bengal early in his reign. Since then months before the festival, a special clay image of the goddess is made showing her in the act of killing the demon Mahishasura. The clay for the image is brought from ten places of work - of a farmer, weaver, painter, carpenter, musician, drummer, blacksmith, sweeper, bricklayer and a prostitute. Durga is also called Sarba Jananni, a goddess for all, and is shown riding her mount, the lion. The image of Durga is lavishly decorated. For nine days, she is worshipped. On Vijayadashami, the tenth day, when the goddess was victorious by killing evil asura, her clay image is immersed in the ocean or river. This immersion symbolises Durga's return to her husband Lord Shiva on the conclusion of her annual visit to her parental home. . The worship of God as Mother has had a significant impact on Hindu beliefs. It not only signifies the victory of good over evil but also offers a unique reverence to womanhood.

by Ashok Kumar Jha

Triguna mayi Devi

The Ken Upanishad, part three, known as Yaksha Prashna says: "The supreme power of God is manifested as **KNOWLEDGE, ACTIVITY** and **STRENGTH**".

The Bhagavad Gita describes the same in different words. Ch.14,Verse 5.

"Purity, passion and inertia- these qualities, born of nature, bind fast in the body".

These three qualities are known as gunas – Sattwa - Rajas and Tamas.

Each of these three gunas is represented by a colour. Sattwa is white (colour of purity). Sattwa is represented by that aspect of Mata Durga we worship as goddess Saraswati. Saraswati wears white. Sattwa binds by attachment to happiness and knowledge. Sattwa is luminous and healthy. (Gita Ch.14-Verse 6.)

The colour of Rajas is red, represented by that aspect of Mata Durga we worship as goddess Lakshmi. She wears red. Rajas is of the nature of activity, passion and ambition - the source of thirst for physical enjoyment. Rajas binds one by attachment to action. (Gita Ch.14. Verse 7.)

The Rajasic person runs after power, position, name, fame, comforts and involves himself in endless activities to acquire material wealth.

When we worship goddess Lakshmi for spiritual wealth, she bestows on her devotees the inexhaustible divine wealth or Daivi Sampat (which is described in the Gita, Ch.16, Verses 1,2 and 3). Divine wealth or the wealth of 26 divine qualities, brings with it material prosperity as well.

Tamas is black, represented by that aspect of Mata Durga we worship as goddess Kali. She is sometimes depicted in dark blue.

Tamas is born of ignorance, deluding all embodied beings. Tamas binds fast in heedlessness, sleep, indolence, laziness (Gita Ch.14 Verse 8). Tamas is that binding force with a tendency to lethargy (lack of energy, vitality), sloth and foolish actions. It causes non-discrimination or delusion. It binds one who associates the Self with the body. A tamasic person acts under the compulsion of the body. He has no power of judgment. His actions are not guided by reasons. His senses are dull.

These are all basic animal qualities, the lower diabolical nature in man. We pray to Mata Kali, as Durga the terrible, as supreme power and force, to destroy all our impurities, our vices, our defects. She is to fight and annihilate these demons. This is the 'strength' aspect of shakti as mentioned in the Upanishad. Mata Kali is the power that guides and protects the devotee's spiritual practice from its many dangers and pitfalls. Mother Kali represents the ferocious and destructive aspect of TIME.

In contrast with creative force in nature, this power is ever active, disintegrating forms and structures. It drives heavenly bodies back into their nebulous state.

In the Kenopanishad, part three, (Yaksha Prashna), 12th Mantra, the Divine Mother is described as a woman wonderously fair, daughter of the snowy mountain Himavat, her name Hemavati or Uma.

She is the energy aspect of the Lord. Her other name is Durga. This cosmic energy or shakti is the omnipotent power of the Lord. We call her Durga, the Divine Mother.

Lower states of ignorance and egoism are typified by or personified as demons with such names as Dhumralochan, Chanda and Munda, which should be destroyed by the sudden burst of energy and rough handling. Dumralochan (the smoky-eyed, a person whose understanding is clouded by ignorance) stands for the grosser state of ignorance and egoism. Munda means the low. Munda is the low profile of our egoism. Chanda means fierce. Chanda is the more horrible and fierce side of it. Shumbha and Nishumbha signify more enlightened aspects of egoism. Shumbh means to shine.

Mahishasur stands for ignorance and stubborn egoism. Raktabij represents the more subtle states of desire which multiply endlessly to create more problems.

DURGA - THE SOLE REFUGE OF MEN WHEN ATTACKED BY ROBBERS

**From the Mahabharata
Virata Parva, Section VI:
Translated by Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli**

"And while Yudhishtira was on his way to the delightful city of Virata, he began to praise mentally the Divine Durga, the Supreme Goddess of the Universe, the giver of prosperity, the enhancer of the glory of the worshipper's family, and the destroyer of Asuras. Divine Durga always rescues the worshipper sunk in sin, like a cow in the mire, who in the hours of distress calls upon that eternal giver of blessings for relieving him of their burdens.

O Thou that has slain the Mahishasura, that Thou art praised and worshipped by the gods for the protection of the three worlds. Thou art the great Kali, capable of going everywhere at will and bestowing boons on Thy devotees. Thou art ever followed by Brahma and the other gods. By them that call upon Thee for the relief of their burdens, and by them also that bow to Thee at daybreak on earth, there is nothing that cannot be attained in respect either of offspring or wealth. And because you rescue people from difficulties when they are afflicted in the wilderness or sinking in the great ocean, it is for this that Thou art called DURGA by all. Thou art the sole refuge of men when attacked by robbers or while afflicted in crossing streams and seas or in wilderness and forests. Those men that remember Thee are never prostrated, O great Goddess.

Thou art Fame, Thou art Prosperity, Thou art Steadiness, Thou art Success; Thou art the Wife, Thou art men's Offspring, Thou art Knowledge, and Thou art the Intellect. Thou art Beauty, Forgiveness, Mercy and every other thing. You dispel, worshipped by your devotees their fetters, ignorance, loss of children and loss of wealth, disease, death and fear. And they in the world who will recite the Mother's attributes and achievements will be freed from their sins. And they who will invoke Her in exile or in the city, in the midst of battle or of dangers from foes, in forests or in inaccessible deserts, in seas or in mountain fastnesses, there is nothing that they will not obtain in this world".

ESTABLISHING THE EXISTENCE OF MAYA.

By Sri Shankaracharya.

1. The Supreme Self (or Ultimate Reality) who is Pure Consciousness perceived Himself by Selfhood (i.e. Existence with "I" - Consciousness). He became endowed with the name "I". From that arose the basis of difference.

2. He exists verily in two parts, on account of which, the two could become husband and wife. Therefore, this space is ever filled up completely by the woman (or the feminine principle) surely.

NOTE: The above two verses explain how the One Ultimate Reality which is of the nature of non-dual Existence - Consciousness became the cause of the universe of multiplicity. The first creative impulse in the Supreme Self is the pure "I" consciousness. This brings in duality in the One Transcendent Reality, which is symbolically expressed as husband-wife representing Pure Consciousness and its Creative Energy. This Creative Energy is the effective cause as well as the material cause of the entire universe which is stated to be filled with it.

3. And He, this Supreme Self thought (or reflected). Thence, human beings were born. Thus say the Upanishads through the statement of sage Yajnavalkya to his wife.

NOTE: The primal manifestation of the creative energy of Pure Consciousness is the "I" - consciousness which results in duality. From that arises thought or ideation of multiplicity, which gives rise to the entire universe of beings.

4. From the experience of bliss for a long time, there arose in the Supreme Self a certain state like deep sleep. From that (state) Maya (or the illusive power of the Supreme Self) was born just as a dream arises in sleep.

NOTE: The non-dual Supreme Self is of the nature of Pure Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. Just as a dream arises in sleep and produces various objects, an inscrutable power called MAYA manifests in the quiescent, blissful state of the Supreme Self and this produces the bewildering variety of objects and phenomena constituting the universe.

The concept of Maya is central to Advaita Vedanta (or non-dual conception of the Ultimate Reality as propounded in Vedic literature).

5. This Maya is without the characteristics of (or different from) Reality or unreality, without beginning and dependent on the Reality that is the Supreme Self. She, who is of the form of the THREE GUNAS (qualities or energies of nature) brings forth the Universe with movable and immovable objects.

NOTE: Maya is not real, since it disappears on the dawn of knowledge of the Supreme Self. Maya is not unreal, since such a thing would never appear at any time. Maya is equated with Nature or

the visible universe consisting of the three modes of energy - Sattwa or harmony, Rajas or activity and Tamas or inertia. Maya is the inscrutable cause which depends on the Supreme Self which is the Ultimate Reality. Nature is its apparent effect.

6. (Objection): As for Maya, it is invisible (or not experienced by the senses). How can it produce a thing that is visible or experienced by the senses? How is a visible piece of cloth produced here by threads of invisible nature?

Note: The purport is that it is as impossible for the visible universe to be produced from invisible Maya as it is for a visible piece of cloth to be produced from invisible threads.

7 (Reply): As there is the emission of the generative fluid on to a good garment on account of the experience of copulation in a dream, the pollution of the garment is seen as real on waking while the copulation was not true, the man in the dream was real (while) the woman was unreal and the union of the two was false (but), the emission of the generative fluid was real, so does it occur even in the matter in hand.

NOTE: In this example, an unreal cause (viz., copulation in a dream) produces a real or visible effect (viz., seminal emission). Similarly, the apparent world could arise from the undefinable Maya.

8. Thus Maya is invisible (or beyond sense-perception). (But) this universe which is its effect is visible (or perceived by the senses). This would be Maya which, on its part, becomes the producer of joy by its own destruction.

NOTE: When the illusive power, Maya, disappears, what remains is Pure Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

9. Like night (or darkness) Maya is extremely insurmountable (or extremely difficult to be understood). Its nature is not perceived here. Even as it is being observed carefully (or being investigated) by sages, it vanishes like lightning.

NOTE: By enquiry into and contemplation on the nature of the Ultimate Reality, Maya and its effects vanish and there is the spontaneous absorption of the mind in undifferentiated Being-Consciousness. There is no entity (called Maya or by any other appellation) other than the Supreme Self.

10. Maya (the illusive power) is what is obtained in Brahman (or the Ultimate Reality). Avidya (or nescience or spiritual ignorance) is said to be dependent on Jiva (the individual soul or individualised consciousness). Mind is the knot which joins Consciousness and matter. That mind is to be as imperishable until liberation.

NOTE: Avidya is nescience or spiritual ignorance which makes the soul forget its real nature which is Eternal, Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss, identical with the Ultimate Reality and impose upon itself separateness, embodiment and the state of a doer or enjoyer. Mind is the entity which is the link between matter and Consciousness and is the field of operation of Avidya. It is synonymous with worldly existence and it disappears on the dawn of liberation or intuitive perception of Reality. Just as Maya, the inscrutable illusive power of the Ultimate Reality, gives rise to the universe of multiplicity, Avidya is the cause of the world perceived by the individual soul.

11. Space enclosed by a pot, or a jar or a hut or a wall has their several appellations (eg., pot space, jar space etc.). Like that, Consciousness (or the Self) covered here by Avidya (or nescience) is spoken of as jiva (the individual soul).

12. (Objection): How indeed could ignorance become a covering (or an obscure factor) for Brahman (or the Supreme Spirit) who is Pure Consciousness, as if the darkness arising from the night (could become a concealing factor) for the sun which is self-luminous?

NOTE: The darkness of the night on the dawn of the sun. The very nature of Brahman is Pure Intelligence or Consciousness. How could it be covered by ignorance which is antithetical to it?

12. (Reply): As the sun is hidden by clouds produced by the solar rays but surely, the character of the day is not hidden by those modified dense collection of clouds, so the Self, though pure, (or undefiled) is veiled for a long time by ignorance. But its power of Consciousness in living beings, which is established in this world, is not veiled.

"What if you sleep, and what if in your sleep you dreamed, and what if in your dream you went to heaven and there plucked a strange and beautiful flower, and what if when you awoke you had the flower in your hand? Ah, what then?" - Coleridge

The Lord on account of Maya is perceived as manifold.
Brhadaranyaka Upanishad Ilv 19.

Maya.

From Vivekachudamani
By Sri Sankaracharya

Veiling power and projecting power of Maya.

Maya can be destroyed by the realisation of the pure Brahman, the one without a second, just as the mistaken idea of a snake is removed by the discrimination of the rope. She has her gunas as rajas, tamas and sattva, named after their respective functions. - **Verse 110.**

Rajas has its Viksepa-Sakti or projecting power, which is of the nature of an activity, and from which this primeval flow of activity has emanated. From this also, mental modifications such as attachment and grief are continually produced. - **Verse 111.**

Lust, anger, avarice, arrogance, spite, egoism, envy, jealousy, etc.,- these are the dire attributes of Rajas, from which the worldly tendency of man is produced. Therefore Rajas is a cause of bondage. - **Verse 112.**

Avrti or the veiling power is the power of Tamas, which makes things appear other than what they are. It is this that causes man's repeated transmigrations, and starts the action of the projecting power (Viksepa). - **Verse 112.**

Absence of right judgment, or contrary judgment, want of definite belief, and doubt- these certainly never desert one who has any connection with this veiling power, and then the projecting power gives ceaseless trouble. - **Verse 115.**

Maya - From Svetasvataropanisad Ch.4, verse 10.

Know that Nature (Prakriti) is Maya, and that the great God is the Lord of Maya.

The whole world is filled with beings who form His parts.

From Bhagavad Gita Ch.18, verse 61.

The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing all beings, by His illusive power (Maya), to revolve as if mounted on a machine.

Maya.

A few extracts from the writings of Swami Nikhilananda.

Why does the non-dual soul appear in a manifold form? What is the cause of this multiplicity in the universe? How does the One become the many, and the Absolute become the relative? In answer, Vedanta says that this is due to the identification of the soul, or the Absolute, with material upaadhis, or limiting adjuncts. What is the cause of this identification?

Vedanta explains this as MAYA or ignorance.

The finite human mind cannot comprehend the exact relationship between the One and the many, Reality and appearance, the Absolute and the relative.

From the standpoint of the relative, there is no Absolute. The Absolute is a mystical experience characterised by the absence of duality.

That is why Vedanta calls this apparent identification of the Absolute with the relative by the name of MAYA. It is an inscrutable power that inheres in Brahman, or the Godhead. Under the influence of this cosmic ignorance, the all pervading, eternal, and infinite spirit forgets its real nature. It is something like a man going to sleep, which first makes him oblivious of himself and then creates the fantastic dream world. It is also a well known fact that on account of ignorance one sees water in the desert, as in the case of a mirage. As long as the sleep and the illusion last, the experience of the dream and the mirage appear to be real. On account of maya, the infinite soul, or the Godhead, identifies itself with the finite, material forms and becomes individualised.

Furthermore, it superimposes upon itself the attributes of the material form with which it is identified. Thus the birthless, deathless, immortal soul, which is of the nature of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, appears to be finite, phenomenal being subject to hunger and thirst, pain and pleasure, birth and death, good and evil, and the other pairs of opposites.

As long as ignorance lasts, these relative characteristics appear to pertain to the soul and to be real. All the individualised, finite beings one sees in the universe are manifestations of the non-dual soul through maya; but as maya has no absolute reality, the individual soul created by it not, ultimately speaking, real. As, in spite of the perception of the illusory mirage, the real nature of the desert is not affected, so, in spite of the perception of illusory birth and death, the soul is always of the nature of light, infinity, bliss, and immortality.

Maya and illusion

By Swami Vivekananda

The foremost disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa - Excerpts

Almost all of you have heard of the Maya. Generally it is used, though incorrectly, to denote illusion, or delusion, or some such thing. But the **theory of Maya forms one of the pillars upon which the Vedanta rests**; it is therefore, necessary that it should be properly understood.

We read in the **Svetasvatara Upanisad**:

"Know nature to be Maya and the Ruler of this Maya is the Lord Himself."

When the Hindu says the world is Maya, at once people get the idea that the world is an illusion. This interpretation has some basis, as coming through the Buddhistic philosophers, because there was one section of philosophers who did not believe in the external world at all. But the Maya of the Vedanta, in its last developed form, is neither idealism nor Realism, nor is it a theory. It is a simple statement of facts- what we are and what we see around us.

The minds of the people from whom the Vedas came were intent upon following principles. They had no time to work upon details or to wait for them; they wanted to go deep into the heart of things. Something beyond was calling them, as it were, and they could not wait.

The Vedantist has proved beyond all doubt that the mind is limited, that it cannot go beyond certain limits- beyond time, space and causation. As no man can jump out of his own self, so no man can go beyond the limits that have been put upon him by the laws of time and space. Every attempt to solve the laws of causation, time and space would be futile, because the very attempt would have to be made by taking for granted the existence of these three.

What does the (following) statement of the existence of the world mean, then?

"This world has no existence."

What is meant by that? It means that it has no absolute existence. It exists only in relation to my mind, and to the mind of everyone else. We see this world with the five senses but if we had another sense, we would see in it something more. If we had yet another sense, it would appear as something still different. It has therefore, no real existence; it has no unchangeable, immovable, infinite existence. Nor can it be called non-existence, seeing that it exists, and we have to work in and through it. It is a mixture of existence and non-existence.

We find that Maya is not a theory for the explanation of the world; it is simply a statement of facts as they exist, that the very basis of our being is contradiction, that everywhere we have to move through this tremendous contradiction, that wherever there is good, there must also be evil, and wherever there is evil, there must be some good, wherever there is life, death must follow as its shadow, and everyone who smiles will have to weep, and vice versa.

Now can this state of things be remedied. We may verily imagine that there will be a place where there will be only good and no evil, where we shall only smile and never weep. This is impossible in the very nature of things; for the conditions will remain the same. Wherever there is the power of producing a smile in us, there lurks the power of producing tears. Wherever there is the power of producing happiness, there lurks somewhere the power of making us miserable.

THE FATHER AND MOTHER OF THE UNIVERSE.

Who are our universal parents? Our divine Father and our divine Mother?

Bhagavad Gita, Ch. 14, Verse 3.

"My womb is the great Nature (Prakriti or MAYA). In that I place the germ (embryo of life). Thence is the birth of all beings".

Bhagavad Gita, Ch. 14, Verse 4

"Whatever forms are born , O Arjuna, in any womb whatsoever, the great Brahma (Nature) is their womb and I am the seed-giving father."

(Explanation by Swami Shivananda, Divine Life Society, Rishikesh):

Prakriti (Nature), made up of the three qualities (Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas), is the material cause of all beings.

In the great Prakriti, I place the seed for the birth of Brahma (the creator, also known as Hiranyagarbha or Ishwar or the conditioned Brahman); and the seed gives birth to all beings. The birth of Brahma (the creator) gives rise to the birth of beings.

The primordial Nature (prakriti) gives birth to Brahma, who creates all beings.

Gita, Ch.14, Verse 4.

"Whatever forms are produced, O Arjuna, in any womb whatsoever, the great nature is their womb and I am the seed giving father". (I am the father; the primordial Nature is the mother).

Gita, Ch.13, verse 26.

"Wherever a being is born, whether unmoving or moving, know thou Arjuna, that it is from the union between the field and the knower of the field". (Purusha is the knower of the field; Prakriti is the field; Shiva is another name for the knower of the field and Shakti is the field; Spirit is another name for the knower of the field and Matter (Prakriti) is the field).

Gita, Ch. 7, Verse 4.

"I am endowed with two Shaktis, namely the superior and the inferior natures; the field and its knower (spirit is the knower of the field; matter is the field.) I unite these two".

Gita Ch.7, Verse 6.

"Know these two- my higher and lower natures- as the womb of all beings. Therefore, I am the source and dissolution of the whole universe".

Gita, Ch.13, Verse 29.

"He sees, who sees that all actions are performed by nature alone, and that the Self is action less".

(The Self is the silent witness).

Gita, Ch.9, Verse 17.

"I am the father of this world, the mother, the dispenser of the fruits of actions and the grandfather; the one thing to be known, the purifier, the sacred monosyllable (AUM), and also the Rg, the Sama and the Yajur Vedas".

Maya/ Shakti

From the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa:

The truth established in the Vedas, the Puranas and the Tantras is but one Satchdananda. In the Vedas it is called Brahman, in the Puranas it is called Rama, and in the Tantras it is called Shiva. One Satchdananda is called Brahman, Rama and Shiva.

The formless God is real, and equally real is God with form. It is like an infinite ocean, water everywhere, to the right, left, above, below. Water enveloped in water. It is the water of the great cause, motionless. Waves spring up when it becomes active. Its activities are creation (Brahma), preservation (Vishnu) and dissolution (Shiva).

Brahman is where reason comes to a stop. There is the instance of camphor. Nothing remains after it is burnt- not even a trace of ash.

Brahman is beyond mind and speech, beyond reason and logic. A salt doll entered the ocean to measure its depth; but it did not return to tell others how deep the ocean was. It melted in the ocean itself.

Like butter and buttermilk, one finds that Satchidananda Itself has become the universe and the living beings. The blood and semen are thin liquids, and out of them comes such a big creature as man. Everything is possible for God. First of all reach invisible Satchidananda and then coming down, look at the universe. Everything is its manifestation. It is God alone who has become everything. The world by no means exists apart from him.

The non-dualistic philosophy of Vedanta says that the acts of creation, preservation and destruction, the universe itself and all its living beings are the manifestations of Shakti, the divine power or MAYA.

If we reason it out, we realise that all these are as illusory as a dream. Brahman alone is the reality, and all else is unreal. Even this very Shakti is unsubstantial, like a dream.

But though you reason all your life, unless you are established in samadhi (deep meditation), you cannot go beyond the jurisdiction of Shakti. Even when you say, "I am meditating" or "I am contemplating", still you are moving in the realm of Shakti; within its power.

Brahman(Shiva) and Shakti are identical. It is like fire and its power to burn. One cannot conceive of the sun's rays without the sun. Thus one cannot think of Brahman without Shakti, or of Shakti without Brahman. One cannot think of the Absolute without the relative, or of the relative without the Absolute.

The primordial power (Adyashakti) is ever at play. She is creating, preserving and destroying in play, as it were. This power is called Kali. Kali is verily Brahman and Brahman is verily Kali. It is one and the same reality. When we think of it as inactive, that is to say, not engaged in the acts of creation, preservation and destruction, then we call it Brahman. But when it engages in these activities, then we call it Kali or Shakti. The reality is one and the same; the difference is in name and form.

In the Vedas, the creation is likened to the spider and its web. The spider brings the web out of itself and then remains in it. God is the container of the universe and also what is contained in it. After the creation the primal power (shakti) dwells in the universe itself. She brings forth this phenomenal world and then pervades it.

Bondage and liberation are both of her making. By her maya, worldly people become entangled in worldly maya, and again through her grace they attain their liberation. She is called the saviour, and the remover of the bondage that binds one to the world.

The sky appears blue at a distance; but look at it closely and you will find that it has no colour. The water of the ocean looks blue at a distance, but when you go near and take it in your hand, you find that it is colourless. Men are deluded through her maya and have become attached to the world.

Bondage and liberation are of the mind alone. It is all a question of the mind. The mind will take the colour you dye it with. If you are in bad company, then you will talk and think like your companions. On the other hand, when you are in the company of devotees, you will think and talk only of God.

If a person repeats the name of God, his or her body, mind and everything become pure. Have faith in His name.

The bridging of the gulf between the Supreme Reality and our relative world is provided by MAYA, the divine mother

The Upanishads describe the Absolute (the Supreme Reality) as being beyond the grasp of our senses, mind and intellect; being extremely subtle.

Gita, Ch.13, Verse 31.

"Being without beginning and devoid of any qualities (attributes), the Supreme Self, imperishable, though dwelling in the body, neither acts, nor is tainted".

The relative world of the senses and mind, the world we see and experience, this world of multiplicity; how does this world originate from the Supreme non-dual principle?

This bridging of the gulf between the Supreme Reality and our relative world is provided by prakriti or maya or nature called Adyashakti, the Divine Mother. (Absolute and relative, nitya and lila).

KALI, THE MOTHER OF TIME.

As the Mahanirvana Tantra says: "To facilitate concentration of mind and for the speedy fulfilment of aspirations, the glorious Kali, the mother of TIME, who is really without form, is invested with forms consistent with her attributes and activities".

Gita, Ch.11, Verse 32.

"I am the mighty world destroying Time, now engaged in destroying the world".

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SHIVA EMBLEM.

As explained by Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa:

"Do you know the significance of the Shiva emblem? It is the worship of the symbols of fatherhood and motherhood. The devotee worshipping the image prays, 'O Lord, please grant that I may not be born into this world again; that I may not have to pass again through a mother's womb.'"

Explanations drawn from the writings of Sri Shankaracharya

"The Supreme Reality is Pure Consciousness. The primal manifestation of the creative energy of Pure Consciousness is the I-consciousness which results in duality. Thus He exists verily in two parts, on account of which, the two could become husband and wife representing Pure Consciousness and its creative energy"

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 4 - 14,

The wife of sage Yajnyavalkya, she herself, a soul far advanced in the spiritual path, says to her husband:

"Constituted as we are, we need something concrete to fix our minds on and stir our imagination before we can think of subtler ideas".

Therefore for purposes of meditation and other spiritual practices for less advanced aspirants, the scriptures provide more concrete representations of Reality, which are within their reach..

ARDHANARISHWAR

How is it possible for another person to know what idea or thought I have in my mind? Is it possible for me to make that idea come out of my mind and make it enter the mind of another person? To do that, I will have to summon the help of Mother Saraswati (Vak Devi) the goddess of speech (also goddess of learning), or use the written word to communicate. This power or shakti when combined with the static thought, makes it possible for the thought or idea to travel.

This is a miraculous power or shakti. If I am speaking to an audience of fifty people, this power becomes manifold or multiplies and with my each thought enters the minds of all fifty people. If my talk is broadcast via satellite and if there are a million listeners, this shakti becomes a million fold. Its capacity is unlimited.

This combination of the product of human consciousness (thought) with Shakti makes manifestation of things possible. The clothes we wear, the chair on which we seat, the books we read, the computers we use; all these were first conceived as ideas in the human mind. The chairman of a big corporation conceives of an idea that a fifty story sky-scraper building should be built. He conveys this idea, using his power (shakti) of speech, to the board of directors who approve it.

The idea is then conveyed with the aid of Mother Saraswati (speech or written words) to the financiers, to the architect, to the contractors, to the labourers on site. The result is the manifestation of a fifty story building. The thought became a thing. Thoughts are things. Examine everything that surrounds one in the house.

Everything before being made existed as thought or idea before becoming a stove, table, clock, calendar, screw-driver, soap powder.

This is at the human level of microcosm.

At the cosmic level of macrocosm, the combination of Shiva and Shakti (Spirit and Matter) makes possible the manifestation of the universe. The dynamic shakti functions on the static Shiva. The substratum is Shiva and the vibrant manifestation is shakti. Like the screen (the substratum) and the projected image upon the screen.

Shiva and shakti are inseparable aspects of the one Reality, like the whiteness in milk; like the brilliance in diamond and like the word and its meaning. Just as heat is inherent in fire, the power inherent in God (Shiva) is maya (shakti). The manifest universe is the display of shakti or maya.

Man is constituted of both Shiva and Shakti. The persisting personality in him is Shiva and the perishing form is shakti. The being in him is Shiva and the becoming in him is shakti. The awareness or consciousness is Shiva and the physique is shakti. The sentient Shiva manifests

Himself through the insentient matter viewed as shakti. The insentient physique enshrines and nurtures the sentient in man. In other words, mother Nature nurtures what is sentient in man. Shakti rears the Shiva in man. Therefore, worshipful attitude towards Shakti is incumbent upon man evolving in Shivahood.

Theology abounds in terms such as Uma-Maheshwar, Lakshmi-Narayana, Radha-Krishna, Sita-Rama, Shiva-Shakti, Purusha-Prakriti, Ardhanarishwar, spirit and matter. These are all indicative of the fact that existence is a mixture of the sentient and the insentient.

The divine power is addressed as Amba in Kashmir and Bhavani in Rajasthan. Gujarat calls her Kalyani and Mithila invokes her as Uma.

Her other names used everywhere are Durga, Chamundi, Saraswati, Bhagavati, Meenakshi, Kamakshi, Lakshmi, Kali etc.

The male and the female elements coexist even in the vegetable kingdom which is still in the primitive stage of evolution. In the feathered kingdom as well as in the animal kingdom, the male and the female do jointly contribute to the formation of the progeny. If humanity was viewed as a unit it is found to be constituted with half- man , half-woman. The entire creation is evidently the embodiment of the masculine and the feminine principles. Shiva is therefore adored as Ardhanarishwar (ardha = half; nari = woman; Ishwar =Lord). The sentient and the insentient are the two categories that constitute nature. Nothing exists outside the pale of these two.

Life in its original state is called Shiva. The apparently insentient body or the vehicle through which it manifests itself is called shakti. It is because of the interplay of life and matter that nature is able to reveal itself in all its splendour and glory.

Gita, Ch.13, Verse 29,:

The Lord says: "He sees, who sees that actions are performed by nature alone, and that the Self is actionless".

Thus the powers and activities of all beings are manifestations of nature (shakti) alone. Without Durga (shakti), Shiva has no expression; and without Shiva, Durga has no existence. Shiva is the silent witness. He is motionless and absolutely changeless.

He is not at all affected by the cosmic play. It is Durga who does everything. She is the power by which the whole universe is permeated and energised. She is the personification of all wealth, power, beauty and virtue. It is she who bestows wealth- both material and spiritual- dispels difficulties and annihilates the evil ones.

The 13th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is the Yoga of discrimination of the Kshetra and the Kshetrajna. The body is called Kshetra, the field. There is an intelligent principle that not only resides in the body but also cognises and governs it. The sages designate that discerning principle as Kshetrajna.

Kshetra is called Prakriti or matter.

Kshetrajna is called Purusha or Spirit.

Prakriti or matter is insentient. Purusha or Spirit is sentient.

From The Gita, Ch.13, Verse 2:

"Know me as the kshetrajna in all kshetras. The knowledge of kshetra and kshetrajna is deemed by Me as true knowledge".

Therefore true knowledge is the understanding of both matter and Spirit. The knowledge pertaining to Prakriti or matter is classified as Aparā Vidya or the lower knowledge and that pertaining to the Purusha or Spirit as Para Vidya or the knowledge superior.

The Mother's grace is boundless. Her compassion is illimitable. Her knowledge is infinite. Her power is immeasurable. Her splendour is indescribable. Approach her with an open heart. Lay bare your heart to her with frankness and humility. Make a total unreserved self-surrender to her. Worship her with faith and unflinching devotion.

Introduction to Sri Lalitambika

Sri Vidya is the worship of Srimadh Lalita Mahatripurāsundari and is one of the Dasa Maha Vidyas. The blessings of the Divine Mother, goodwill of Her countless devotees and the abundance of grace and blessings of the great Masters in the Universe, made it possible to bring out this web-site to serve humanity. SRIMADH LALITA MAHATRIPURASUNDARI is the Universal

Spiritual Energy constantly active in creation, sustenance and dissolution of universe. She is also the single benevolent force lifting devotees from samsara (cycle of births and deaths). She is the omniscient, omnipotent, benevolent and adorable Mother.

SRIMADH LALITA MAHATRIPURASUNDARI is in a truth beyond the distinctions of sex and even beyond personality. Howsoever we approach Her, so does She accept us. SRIMADH LALITA MAHATRIPURASUNDARI (Shakti) and Mahadev Tripurasundarar (Shiva) are complement of each other. Together they are the Cosmic Whole and what transcends it. They are factually one and inseparable.

Sri-chakra is the logical and diagrammatic representation of Shiva-Shakti and its cosmic manifestations. The central dot is SRIMADH LALITA MAHATRIPURASUNDARI. In its three dimensional form, it is known as Sri-Meru.

Worship of SRIMADH LALITA MAHATRIPURASUNDARI - DIVINE MOTHER, who is called by other names and forms such as ATHI PARASAKTHI , Sri Raja Rajeswari, Sri Kamakhya, Sri Kamakshi, Sri Kameswari etc., is the highest form of worship of the ultimate divine energy. This puja takes the Worshipper away from Idol worship to ultimate and real Ideal worship - from the gross form to the subtlest abstract worship. No samskaras, complexities or grossness are formed in this worship of the Divine Mother in its true ENERGY form.

In every other form of Puja there is duality - the worshipper and the worshipped. But in worship of the Divine Mother through Aavarana Puja, this duality is lost. The worshipper, the worship and the worshipped become one. In the Aavarana Pooja, the Worshipper takes the mahashakti (his own breathing) which is remaining in his heart as kundalini shakti, through his nostrils, installs the same on Sri-chakra or Meru and the puja is performed. After puja is over, he takes back the mahashakti from the Sri-chakra or Meru back into his heart and re-installs the same there. This means that the Worshipper worships him-self, as he is no different from the Divine Mother - Ultimate reality. In due course, the Worshipper begins to understand clearly that he is no different from the Divine Mother nor there is any duality. Most important fact is that no effort is made by the Worshipper to raise the Kundalini Shakti, as in the case of Hata Yoga. Divine energy automatically raises up without any physical effort of the Worshipper.

Another important factor is that the Puja does not distinguish caste, creed, colour or religion. Every worshipper of the Divine Mother is expected to ensure that he does not do this puja with an empty stomach, as empty stomach cannot realize God. The only qualification required is the will to reach the reality. The motto "Love all. . Serve all" becomes the center of the Worship.

The Dasa (Ten) Mahavidyas

In Tantra, worship of Devi-Shakti is referred to as a Vidya. Of the hundreds of tantrik practices, the worship of the ten major Devis is called the Dasa Mahavidya. These major forms of the goddess are described in the [Todal Tantra](#). They are Kali, Tara, Maha Tripura Sundari (or Shodasi-Sri Vidya), Bhuvaneshvari, Chinnamasta, Bhairavi, Dhumavati, Bagalamukhi, Matangi, and Kamala. These ten aspects of Shakti are the epitome of the entire creation. Chapter 10 also outlines their consorts, although Dhumavati, the widow form, is not allocated a consort.

There are several "levels" at which these Devis can be worshiped with the prescribed Mantra and Yantra. Like a simple worship of the yantra with the mantra recitation, as a remedial astrological measure, elaborate worship with all tantrik rituals for attaining various siddhis associated with these tantras and for spiritual salvation.

Successful sadhana of these Vidyas gives several boons to the practitioner. The Tantrik-Yogi who has control over his senses and positively inclined uses the boons to guide people and for the benefit of mankind. The ones whose head starts spinning with success use them for the gratification of the senses, gather a bunch of disciples around them and become fake gurus.

The last chapter of todala Tantra equates Vishnu's ten incarnations with the ten Mahavidyas as follows:

"Shri Devi said: Lord of Gods, Guru of the universe, tell me of the ten avatars. Now I want to hear of this, tell me of their true nature. Paramesvara, reveal to me which avatar goes with which Devi.

"Shri Shiva said: Tara Devi is the blue form, Bagala is the tortoise incarnation, Dhumavati is the boar, Chinnamasta is Nrisimha, Bhuvaneshvari is Vamana, Matangi is the Rama form, Tripura is Jamadagni, Bhairavi is Balabhadra, Mahalakshmi is Buddha, and Durga is the Kalki form. Bhagavati Kali is the Krishna murti." (Todalatantra, chapter 10)

The worship of these is also prescribed as an astrological remedy – for the 9 planets and the Lagna as follows:

Kali for Saturn, Tara for Jupiter, Maha Tripura Sundari (or Shodasi-Sri Vidya) for Mercury, Bhuvaneshvari for Moon, Chinnamasta for Rahu, Bhairavi for Lagna, Dhumavati for Ketu, Bagalamukhi for Mars, Matangi for Sun, and Kamala for Venus.

The tantrik worship of these most powerful Vidyas must be practiced only under the guidance of a siddha Guru.

**Kali Tara mahavidya Sodashi Bhuvaneshwari.
Bhairavi Chhinnamasta cha vidya Dhumavti tatha.
Bagala siddha vidya cha Matangi Kamalatmika.
Etaaha dasamahavidyaaha gupta vidyaaha prakeertitaaha.**

Maa Durga Aarti'

sarva mangala maangalye, shive sarvaartha saadhike |
sharaNye tryambike gauri, naaraayaNi namoastute ||

**JAI AMBE GAURII MAIYAA, JAI SHYAAMAA GAURII
NISHADINA TUMAKO DHYAAVATA, HARI BRAHMA SHIVAJII**

Glory to you, O divine Mother Gauri, glory to you, O Parvati, who are so rich in maiden grace (virgin beauty), the object of daily meditation by Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva!

**MAANGA SINDUURA VIRAAJATA, TIKO MRIGA MADAKO
UJJVALASE DAUU NAINAA, CHANDRAVANA NIIKO**

O Ambe! On your forehead is a resplendent mark of vermilion along with a mark of musk (signifying good luck). Your twin eyes are bright and your face beautiful as the moon.

**KANAKA SAMAANA KALEVARA, RAKTAAMBARA RAAJE
RAKTAPUSHPA GALAMAALAA, KANTHAHAARA SAAJE**

Your body with a tinge of gold is splendidly dressed in red attire; on your throat lies a wreath of red blossoms like a beautiful necklace.

**KEHARI VAAHANA RAAJATA, KHADAGA KHAPPARA DHAARI
SURA NARA MUNIJANA SEVATA, TINAKE DUKHA HAARI**

Your vehicle, the lion, is, O Mother in keeping with your splendid form; you bear a sword and a skull in your hands, and on you attend the gods, men, hermits and your votaries whose grief you drive away.

**KAANANA KUNADALA SHOBHITA, NAASAAGRE MOTII
KOTIKA CHANDRA DIVAAKARA, SAM RAAJATA JYOTII**

You are adorned with rings on your ears and with pearl on the tip of your nose, your radiance looks as splendid as that of myriad of suns and moons.

**SHUMBHA NISHUMBHA BIDAARE, MAHISHAASURA GHAATII
DHUUMRA VILOCHANA NAINAA, NISHADINA MADAMAATII**

O slayer of the demon Mahisha, you tore apart the bodies of Shumbha, Nishumbha and Dhumravilochana. (In the battle waged against them) your eyes reflected a frenzy of fury everyday and night.

**BRAHMAANII RUDRAANII, TUMA KAMALAA RAANII
AAGAMA-NIGAMA BAKHAANII, TUMA SHIVA PATARAANII**

You are the beloved consort of Brahma, Rudra and Vishnu. The Vedas and the Shastras describe you as the queen consort of Shiva,

**CHAUSATHA YOGINII GAAVATA, NRITYA KARATA BHAIRON
BAAJATA TAALA MRIDANGA, AURA BAAJATA DAMARUU**

Sixty-four Yoginis chorus your praise and glorify you, while Bhairava (Shiva) dances in tune to the accompaniment of the sound of tambour (mridanga) and drum (damaru).

**TUMA HO JAGA KII MAATAA, TUMA HII HO BHARTAA
BHAKTANA KII DUKHA HARTAA, SUKHA SAMPATI KARTAA**

You are mother of the universe, its sustainer, reliever of your devotees' affliction and bestower of happiness and prosperity.

**BHUUJAA CHAARA ATI SHOBHITA, VARA MUDRAA DHAARII
MANAVAANCHITA PHALA PAAVATA, SEVATA NARA NAARII**

The four arms you have adorned your person, while the hand raised in benediction reveals your benign aspect. Those among [men and women](#) who wait on you and worship you have all their cherished wishes ever fulfilled.

**KANCHANA THAALA VIRAAJATA, AGARU KAPUURA BAATII
BHAALAKETU MEIN RAAJATA, KOTIRATANA JYOTII**

In a golden platter are beautifully laid aloe and camphor, both of which have lighted (to be waved before you); in the radiance of your forehead is reflected the splendour of a myriad gems.

Durga chalisa and Arati also available on the links below;

<http://indif.com/nri/chalisan/durgachalisa/durgachalisa.asp>

Shri Durga Chalisa.

Namo Namo Durge Sukh Karani ! Namo Namo Ambe Dukh Harani !!
Nirakar Hai Jyoti Tumhari ,Tihu Lok Pheli Ujayari !!
Shashi Lalat Mukh Mahavishala , Netra Lal Brikutee Vikrala !!
Roop Matu Ko Adhik Suhavey , Darash Karat Jan Ati Sukh Pavay !!
Tum Sansar Shakti Laya Kina ,Paalan Hetu Anna Dhan Dina !!
Annpurna Hui Jag Paala , Tum Hi Aadi Sundari Bala !!
Pralay Kaal Sab Naashan Haari , Tum Gauri Shiv Shankar Pyari !!
Shiv Yogi Tumharey Guna Gaven , Brahma Vishnu Tumhe Nit Dhyaven !!
Roop Saraswati Ko Tum Dhaara ,De Subuddhi Rishi Muni Ubaara !!
Dharyo Roop Narsimha Ko Amba , Pargat Bhayee Phaad Kar Khamba !!
Raksha Kari Prahlad Bachayo , Hiranakush Ko Swarg Pathayo !!
Lakshmi Roop Dharo Jag Mahi , Shri Narayan Anga Samahi !!
Ksheer Sindhu Mein Karat Vilaasa , Daya Sindhu Deejay Man Aasa !!
HingalaaJ Mein Tumhi Bhavani , Mahima Amit Na Jaat Bakhani !!
Maatangi Dhumavati Mata , Bhunvenshwari Bagla Sukh Daata !!
Shri Bhairav Tara Jag Taarini , Chinna Bhaal Bhav Dukh Nivarini !!
Kehar Vaahan Soh Bhavani , Laangur Veer Chalal Agavaani !!
Kar Mein Khappar Khadag Virajey ,Jaako Dekh Kaal Dar Bhaajey !!
Sohay Astra Aur Trishula ,Jate Uthata Shatru Hiya Shoola !!
Nagarkot Mein Tumhi Virajat , Tihu Lok Mein Danka Baajat !!
Shumbh Nishumbh Daanav Tum Maarey , Rakt Beej Shankhan Sanhaarey !!
Mahishasur Nripa Ati Abhimaani , Jehi Agha Bhaar Mahi Akulani !!
Roop Karaal Kali Ko Dhaara , Sen Sahit Tum Tihi Sanhaara !!
Padi Bheed Santan Par Jab Jab , Bhayee Sahay Maatu Tum Tab Tab !!
Amar Puri Aru Basava Loka , Tab Mahima Sab Raheyn Ashoka !!
Jwala Mein Hai Jyoti Tumhari ,Tumhe Sada Pujey Nar Nari !!
Prem Bhakti Se Jo Yash Gaavey , Dukh Daaridra Nikat Nahi Aavey !!
Dhyavey Tumhe Jo Nar Man Laai , Janam Maran Taako Chhuti Jaai !!
Jogi Sur-Muni Kahat Pukari , Yog Na Ho Bin Shakti Tumhari !!
Shankar Aacharaj Tap Keenhon , Kaam Krodh Jeet Sab Leenhon !!
Nishdin Dhyan Dharo Shankar Ko , Kaahu Kaal Nahi Sumiro Tumko !!
Shakti Roop Ko Maram Na Paayo , Shakti Gayee Tab Man Pachtaayo !!
Sharnagat Hui Kirti Bakhaani , Jai Jai Jai Jagdamb Bhavani !!
Bhayi Prasan Aadi Jagdamba , Dayi Shakti Nahin Kin Vilamba !!
Moko Maatu Kasht Ati Gero , Tum Bin Kaun Harey Dukh Mero !!
Aasha Trishna Nipat Sataven , Moh Mahadik Sab Binsaven !!
Shatru Naash Keejay Maharani , Sumiro ekachita Tumhen Bhavani !!
Karo Kripa Hey Maatu Dayala , Ridhi Sidhi De Karahu Nihala !!
Jab Lagi Jiyoon Daya Phall Paoon , Tumharo Yash Mein Sada Sunaon !!
Durga Chalisa Jo Koi Gaavey , Sab Sukh Bhog Param Pad Paavey !!
Devidas Sharan Nij Jaani , Karahu Kripa Jagdamb Bhavani !

108 divine name of mother Durga.

- 1 Om Durgayai namah
- 2 Om Shivayai namah
- 3 Om Maha-lakshmyai namah
- 4 Om Maha-gouryai namah
- 5 Om Chandikaye namah
- 6 Om Sarva-gynayai namah
- 7 Om Sarva-lokeshayai namah
- 8 Om Sarva karma-phala-pradayai namah
- 9 Om Sarva teerdha-mayai namah
- 10 Om Punyayai namah
- 11 Om Deva-yonaye namah
- 12 Om Ayoni-jaayai namah
- 13 Om Bhume-jaayai namah
- 14 Om Nirgu-nayai namah
- 15 Om Aadhara-shaktyai namah
- 16 Om Aanee-shvaryai namah
- 17 Om Nirgu-nayai namah
- 18 Om Niramham-karayai namah
- 19 Om Sarva-garva-vimar-dhinyai namah
- 20 Om Sarva-loka-priyayai namah
- 21 Om Vaanyai namah
- 22 Om Sarva-vidyadhi-devataayai namah
- 23 Om Parvatyai namah
- 24 Om Devamatre namah
- 25 Om Vanee-shayai namah
- 26 Om Vindya-vasinyai namah
- 27 Om Tejo-vatyai namah
- 28 Om Maha-matre namah
- 29 Om Koti-surya-sama-prabhayai namah
- 30 Om Deva-tayai namah
- 31 Om Vahni-rupayai namah
- 32 Om Sate-jase namah
- 33 Om Varna-rupinyai namah
- 34 Om Guna-shayayai namah
- 35 Om Guna-madhyayai namah
- 36 Om Guna-traya-vivarji-tayai namah
- 37 Om Karma-gynana-pradayai namah
- 38 Om Kantayai namah
- 39 Om Sarva-samhara-karinyai namah
- 40 Om Dharma-gynanayai namah
- 41 Om Dharma-nistayai namah
- 42 Om Sarva-karma-vivardhi-tayai namah
- 43 Om Kamakshmai namah
- 44 Om Kama-samhartyai namah
- 45 Om Kama-krodha-vivarji-tayai namah
- 46 Om Shan-karyai namah
- 47 Om Sham-bhavyai namah
- 48 Om Shan-tayai namah
- 49 Om Chandra-suryagni-lochanayai namah
- 50 Om Suja-yayai namah
- 51 Om Jaya-bhumi-shtayai namah
- 52 Om Jaahnavyai namah
- 53 Om Jana-puji-tayai namah

- 54 Om Shastrasyai namah
- 55 Om Shastra-mayyai namah
- 56 Om Nityayai namah
- 57 Om Shubhayai namah
- 58 Om Chandhrardha-mastakayai namah
- 59 Om Bharatyai namah
- 60 Om Bramaryai namah
- 61 Om Kalpayai namah
- 62 Om Karalyai namah
- 63 Om Krushana-pingalayai namah
- 64 Om Bramhai namah
- 65 Om Narayanyai namah
- 66 Om Roudryai namah
- 67 Om Chandra-mruta-pari-srutayai namah
- 68 Om Jyeshtayai namah
- 69 Om Indirayai namah
- 70 Om Maha-mayayai namah
- 71 Om Jagat-grushtya-dhika-rinyai namah
- 72 Om Bramhanda-koti-samsdha-nayai namah
- 73 Om Kaminyai namah
- 74 Om Kamalaa-layayai namah
- 75 Om katya-yanyai namah
- 76 Om Kalaa-teetayai namah
- 77 Om Kala-samhara-karinyai namah
- 78 Om Yoga-nishtayai namah
- 79 Om Yogi-gamyayai namah
- 80 Om Yogi-dyeyayai namah
- 81 Om Tapa-svinyai namah
- 82 Om Gynana-pupayai namah
- 83 Om Niraka-rayai namah
- 84 Om Bhakta-bhishta-phala-pradayai namah
- 85 Om Bhutatme-kayai namah
- 86 Om Bhuta-matre namah
- 87 Om Bhute-shyai namah
- 88 Om Bhuta-darinyai namah
- 89 Om Svadhayai namah
- 90 Om Naree-madhya-gatayai namah
- 91 Om Shada-dharadi-var dhinyai namah
- 92 Om Mohitam-shubha-dayai namah
- 93 Om Shubhrayai namah
- 94 Om Sukshmayai namah
- 95 Om Matrayai namah
- 96 Om Nirala-sayai namah
- 97 Om Nimna-gayai namah
- 98 Om Neela-samka-shayai namah
- 99 Om Nitya-nandayai namah
- 100 Om Harayai namah
- 101 Om Paraayai namah
- 102 Om Paraayai namah
- 103 Om Sarva-gynana-pradayai namah
- 104 Om Anamtayai namah
- 105 Om Satyayai namah
- 106 Om Durlabha-rupinyai namah
- 107 Om Sarasvatyai namah
- 108 Om Sarva-gatayai namah
- 109 Om Sarva-bheeshta-prada-inyai nama

Next Issue

Next Issue will be available in August. The main highlights will be as below;

- 1- Complete Shakti Upasna and its practice
- 2- The different form of Shakti, how and why?
- 3- Purushottam maas and its significance
- 4- Dushhara and Deepawali
- 5- Events between September and December

