

*Navaratri
Message*

*By Swami
Jyotirmayananda*



Enshrine the Goddess in Your Heart

MOTHER worship is a wonderful tradition in India. It extends for nine day and nights and is usually celebrated during the month of September or October. (The precise date is calculated according to the Hindu calendar.) The worship is concluded on the tenth day by celebrating the victory of the Goddess over all demoniac forces.

The first three days are devoted to the worship of Goddess Durga for the destruction of gross impurities such as violence, pride, lust, greed and jealousy. The next three days are devoted to the worship of Goddess Lakshmi—the giver of prosperity in the form of material wealth, as well as spiritual wealth in the form of contentment, fearlessness, cheerfulness, and balance of mind. The last three days are devoted to the worship of Goddess Saraswati—the bestower of wisdom. Goddess Saraswati promotes the development of artistic talents, academic knowledge, and spiritual knowledge.

These three Goddesses are the three major aspects of the One Supreme Deity (*Maha Maya*). *Maya* and *Brahman* are in fact one and the same. It is the *Brahman* or the Absolute of the Upanishads that is worshipped as the Divine Mother—to emphasize the fact that the Divine Plan that operates through an individual is intrinsically compassionate and tender, even as the arms of the mother are for an infant.

You are enveloped by the Divine Mother within yourself as well as outside of yourself. You are constantly enfolded by Her loving arms. Therefore, if you develop this awareness of the presence of the Divine Mother in and through your life, you will become an ideal devotee of the Goddess.

When the Goddess is pleased, there is no obstacle that cannot be overcome, there is no problem that cannot be resolved, there is no objective that cannot be realized. The Divine Goddess is the Pure Consciousness that underlies the functions of the mind. She has various manifestations. In the plane of intellect, She manifests as *Jnana Shakti*—the power of knowledge that is capable of turning intellect into intuition.

In the plane of mind (*manas*), She manifests as *Ichha Shakti*—the power of will that is the controller of the movements of the mind and an effective aid for the practice of concentration, meditation and *samadhi*.

In the plane of the vital realities of one's daily life, She is *Kriya Shakti*—the power of action, promoting conditions and circumstances for one's spiritual evolution.

An aspirant must develop the art of worshipping the Goddess at all times. If you are intent upon removing the gross impurities such as anger and greed from your mind, you are worshipping Goddess Durga. You are adoring Her in an effective manner.

If you practice generosity and enhance your personality with nobler virtues, you are adoring Goddess Lakshmi. If you are kindling the light of vigilance in your mind and promoting good will for others as well as the aspiration for Self-realization, you are adoring Goddess Saraswati in the best possible manner.



Let not your worship be confined only to the ritual performance of Mother Worship. Let it permeate all your days and nights. Let it become the central theme of your existence.

It is the Goddess Who has enveloped your soul by assuming the forms of your unconscious mind (*chitta*), intellect, mind, senses, body, your talents, your negative and positive qualities, and your world. It is the Goddess Who manifests in the form of contentment, cheerfulness, will, memory, intuitive vision, spiritual aspiration, and ceaseless persistence on the mystic path.

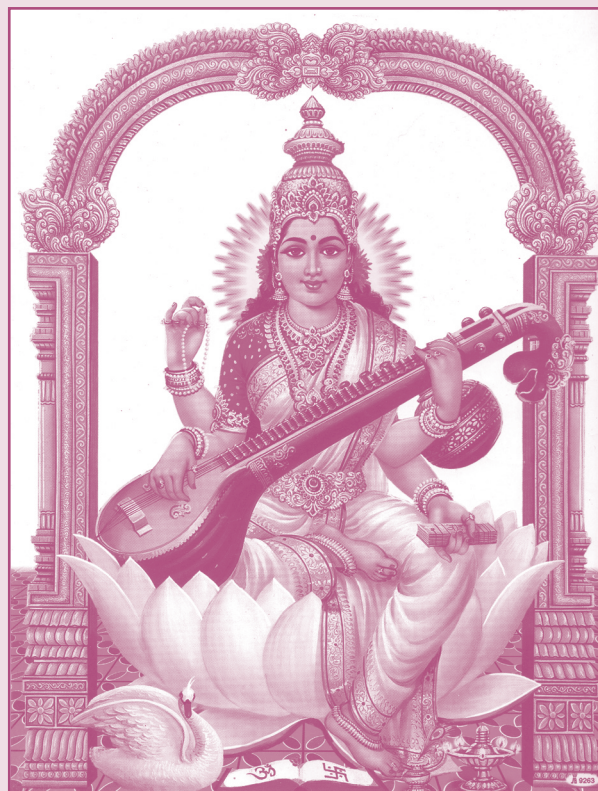
It is She Who manifests in the negative form of discontent, delusion, infatuation, loss of memory, mental obscurity and manifold evils proceeding from ignorance. The Goddess enlightens as well as infatuates. She releases one from the bondage of matter; She also entangles one in the world of material involvements. Her powers are endless.

When you learn the art of adoring the Goddess through your thoughts, words and actions, you are assisted by the positive manifestations of the Goddess. But, when you turn away from good association, scriptural injunctions, and continue to place yourself under the control of anger, hatred, jealousy, pride, and other forces of darkness, you encounter negative aspects of the Goddess operating through your personality.

Be a constant worshipper of the Goddess. If you utilize your talents, your energies, and your resources for the integrating of your personality and for the promotion of goodness around you, you will receive endless supplies of refreshing spiritual energy and insight from within yourself.

The Goddess within you will promote right intellect, steady mind, strength of will, tenacity in your efforts, and patience in your

personality. She will bless you with health, material security, and prosperity of every kind. However, if you misuse the energy that flows through you by indulging in unrighteous deeds,



*Ya Devi
Sarva Bhuteshu
Shraddha-Rupena Sansthita
Namastasyai Namastasyai
Namastasyai Namo Namah.*

**Adorations
again and again
to the Devi (Goddess)
who is seated in the
heart of all beings
in the form of *shraddha* (faith).
Adorations again and again!**

you will be gradually robbed of the clarity of your vision, the conviction of your thoughts, the power of discrimination and insight into the deeper value of life.

See the world permeated by the glory of the Goddess. She is compassionate as well as cruel. However, Her cruelty is only a terrifying mask for assisting every soul towards its final destination—Self-realization.

When a mother puts on a terrifying mask, a child, even though sustained by her arms, is terrified. But when he realizes that behind the apparent terrible features there hides the gentle face of the mother, he smiles and cries no more.

Much in the same way, you live to discover that behind your bitter experiences in life, behind your adversities, behind the apparent mask of confounding complexities of life, there smiles the gentle face of the Divine Mother. She is ever beckoning your soul to the lofty heights of spiritual realization. As this realization dawns, you will be dazzled and awed by the living kindness of the Mother, and you will grieve no more.

Be a worshipper of *Shakti*—power, strength and dynamism of the soul. Why are you weak and debilitated? Why should you be lingering in the lanes of desolation and humiliation when you could pursue the royal road leading to the Palace of Liberation?

Enshrine the Goddess in your heart! Discover Her presence in the heart of everyone. Honor Her, respect Her and adore Her. The Goddess will work out the destruction of the dark forces that have encompassed your soul and thrown you into the dream of the world-process.

Live to witness the Victory of the Goddess even in this lifetime, in the form of Self-realization. May you receive the blessings of the Divine Mother!



FROM SWAMIJI'S KITCHEN

Devi's Mashed Potatoes

Prepared with loving devotion
during Navaratri Puja by
Maleeni, Atul, Shreya and Siddhartha

Potatoes
Cheddar Cheese
Green peas
Grated carrots
Chopped onions
Grated ginger
Asafoetida (Hing)
Salt and Black Pepper
Garam Masala
Chaat Masala
Sour Cream
Heavy Cream
Cashews
Ghee
Cumin Seeds (Jeera)
Cilantro (Coriander leaves)

Boil, peel, and mash the potatoes.

Heat ghee in a pan, add asafoetida (hing) and jeera (cumin) and fry the onion until it turns golden brown.

Add green peas, grated ginger, grated carrots, cashews, garam masala, and chaat masala to the fried onions and continue frying until carrots and peas are cooked.

Add sour cream.

Stir the above mixture into the mashed potatoes and add heavy cream and grated cheese. Mix well and garnish with cilantro.