

Victory Is Yours



by Swami Jyotirmayananda

Worshiping God as mother is as ancient as human existence. From the early dawn of history, people have adored the Mother aspect of Divinity in various ways. This particular psychological need in human personality has been well developed and unfolded in Hindu culture. From Vedic times, the time of Rig-Veda, Sages offered prayers to the Supreme Self as Mother. Even in the Christian religions where God is Father, Mother Mary is worshiped with great love and devotion.

The reason for this attitude to the Divine Self is simple. The profound need of a child for the mother is deeply embedded in the human heart. Everyone turns to his or her mother with a deep feeling of communion. One may hesitate to express all their feelings before their father, but not before their mother. A similar spiritual state must be developed in which the soul turns to the Divine Self with that open-heartedness and simplicity of a child. That is the meaning behind worshipping God as Mother.

In Hindu culture a special period of ten days each year is devoted to the worship of the Divine Mother. The tenth day of this worship is called Vijayadashami, the Day of Victory, because it commemorates the ancient mystic history of Goddess overpowering demoniac forces. Goddess, assuming the form of Mahalakshmi, destroyed the Demon Mahishasur on this day. Understood symbolically, demons are nothing but forces of darkness—different shades of ignorance that obscure one's vision and bring about bondage in one's consciousness. The Divine Mother, Goddess, leads the soul through the world process, enabling you to fight the battle of life, to surmount all obstacles and to become victorious.

Victory is the destiny of every soul. The Upanishads declare boldly, "*Satyameva Jayate Nanritam*" – "Truth alone triumphs and not falsehood." You may linger with falsehood for many days, many months, many years, many embodiments, but you cannot permanently abide in a realm of illusion. The spirit within you is bound to triumph over all illusions. It is a matter of time, a matter of spiritual enfoldment. Since every human being is in reality the Self, you must eventually realize your essential nature and overcome all illusions. This fact of victory, which is the birthright of every soul, is celebrated through a mystic dramatization of Goddess fighting with the demons and destroying them.

This day also commemorates the victory of Lord Rama over Ravana, the powerful, ten-headed demon. In that story of Rama there is also a profound spiritual meaning. Ravana, with ten heads, represents ego-sense in a human being with ten impurities. Every soul is tormented by that demoniac king with ten heads. His very name implies that he causes grief, and makes people cry and weep. Anger, greed, lust, conceit, falsehood, delusion, pride, hypocrisy, jealousy and violence—all these are heads of the demon. And Rama's destruction of this demon, his victory over Ravana, is symbolic from a spiritual point of view of the attainment of Self-realization.

The message of Vijayadashami, then, is the message of the latent victory of the soul. Deep within you is the victorious spirit. Therefore, you should not entertain thoughts that are negative nor allow your mind to linger in the world of illusion.

Rather, you must first recognize the illusion, and secondly, adopt the right method of Yoga to get out of that illusion. Understand that behind every illusion there is a Divine power. Instead of fighting with illusion, worship the power that is behind it. If you do so, the illusion will not overcome your mind.

Because of Divine *Maya* you cannot understand why you make certain decisions so clearly, and yet, you cannot maintain those decisions or fulfill them. *Maya* controls your mind, your intellect. Therefore, you must gain a deep insight into the Divine meaning behind all mental functions, behind the darkness of the mind, behind memory and loss of memory, behind pride and so many illusions through which the soul must seek its evolution.

If you understood that meaning, you would not be frustrated in life, but, rather, would understand that even during adverse

circumstances, it is the Goddess who is assuming different masks. A child is frightened when his mother puts on a mask of a black bear or a tiger. However, the moment the child looks behind the mask, he laughs and becomes very happy about his mother playing that role.

Much in the same way, an aspirant must develop that profound relationship with the Cosmic Self—the relationship of a child with his Mother. And when you have done so, spiritual movement becomes easy. Instead of being burdened by egoistic frustrations and reactions, you learn to recognize the face of the Divine Mother behind every condition in life—a power so loving and compassionate, although there are times when you cannot easily glimpse it.

That transcendental compassion of the Mother is usually interpreted by the ego as cruelty. However, the Mother does not care for how your ego views your life and the circumstances around you. The Divine pressure is ruthless in ignoring the ego's values. Yet if you were to gain deep insight into that process and develop faith in the Divine power, you would realize that you are constantly guided by the all-caring and deeply compassionate Mother. The moment you attain that vision, you live a relaxed life, no matter what happens. Mother is concerned, you are being guided and you will not wander far.

In the nine days of worship, Mother is adored in three aspects. In the first three days, She is worshiped as Durga, the Destroyer. As a worshipper of the Mother in this form, you develop an attitude of appreciating the Divine Hand behind apparent destruction. Loss in business, adverse circumstances, disease, quarrels, disharmony—all these are expressions of Goddess Durga.

Out of the anguish of the soul there emerges the brighter vision of life. Out of pain there emerges philosophical insight. Out of dark clouds there emerges the nectarine rain. Therefore, the mind should never lose its vision of a Divine mean-



ing behind adversity. The Goddess is there, even behind adversity. And so, though your mind may be shaken by the winds of adversity, be like a tree that has deep roots. When the wind blows, such a tree shakes, but its shaking becomes a kind of dance. Its deep roots will not be disturbed.

Gradually, this attitude removes all gross impurities from your mind. Anger, hatred, vanity, pride—all these arise out of a form of inferiority complex, a feeling of lack of perfection within oneself. The sense that “I am imperfect” urges a person to grab any concept of perfection as quickly as possible. Thus, negative qualities arise out of that inner feeling of deficiency, and are a way of compensating for the sense of inadequacy.

When you develop an attitude of worship, however, instead of allowing your mind to enter into illusions, you learn to break those illusions; instead of compensating for the sense of deficiency within yourself, you allow yourself to be fulfilled with the harvest of spiritual vision. That is the meaning of worshipping Durga.

As this worship unfolds, a higher stage develops. When you have removed the gross impurities, you then become aware of the

great treasure that lies within you—the treasure of mind with its infinite powers. The challenge before you is to focus the mind’s attention on



directing its rays, its processes, its thought waves in the right direction. If you do so, you will discover that there is endless wealth, wealth of the spirit, within yourself. You discover that you can enjoy deep contentment. You find your nervous system filled with the sentiments of compassion, universal love, kindness and humility instead of cruelty and arrogance. You find how joyous it is to have a garden of spiritual qualities blooming in your own heart, a garden of immortal values much more precious than all the riches of the world. And that is the Grace of Goddess Lakshmi, the Goddess of Prosperity.

The third phase in spiritual evolution is revelation, the manifestation of Goddess Saraswati. This occurs when you have overcome the gross impurities, discovered your inner resources, and enriched your personality with the treasures of spiritual values. Then, you attain Enlightenment. You wake up, as it were, from this world process.

In your experiences in this world you can see a similar phenomenon operating. You may have thought, for example, that you would be happy if you had a wonderful house, gardens and all comforts. If you had all that, what would you do next? Lie down and go to sleep. The moment you have everything of this world, the only thing left to do is to transcend the whole thing and enjoy inner contentment.



And therefore, in the Divine Plan, all of one’s efforts to remove obstacles and to enrich life ultimately culminate in the attainment of that revelation wherein you wake up from this entire process. That is Self-realization, intuitional realization that “I am the Absolute. I am not this limited embodiment. I am the Universal Life.” In that state of revelation you become one with the Mother. So, as your mind advances, you begin to view the entire world and all its circumstances and conditions as an expression of the Divine Mother, an expression of immense power and Divine Love.

The worship of the Goddess is very profound, and every story that has been associated with the Goddess has deep mystic meaning. When

most people see the terrible Goddess with leaping tongue and garland of skulls dancing on Lord Shiva, they consider her form quite gruesome and frightening. Yet, that was the figure that inspired Ramakrishna Paramahansa to enter into ecstasy.

You can better understand the power of that form of Kali when you gain insight into its subtle meaning. Lord Shiva is the Absolute and the Divine Mother is *Prakriti* or Nature, dancing upon Shiva. The entire world-process is a form of dance sustained by the Absolute, who always remains its support. Each skull worn by the Goddess is a cosmos, a cosmos reduced to its skeleton—because there is no reality in this world. A person in flesh and blood seems to have great value and significance, but the very same person reduced to its skull and skeleton loses any meaning and significance. No one likes to remember the fact that he carries a skeleton within himself. And if he were to see it, he would be horrified.

And so, the Goddess wearing skulls carries that message: “The world you are after is nothing but an empty skull.” To the Goddess, the whole cosmos becomes nothing but a skull, and countless world-processes combine to become the entire garland of skulls.

The great tongue of the Goddess is *Brahmakaravritti*, the mind flowing towards *Brahman*, eating up the demons of duality and multiplicity, and digesting the entire world into one experience—the experience of the Self.

Therefore, all the details about the Goddess have profound philosophical and mystic implication. If you learn to understand and adore that Divine Power in adversity and in prosperity, all illusions are easily transcended. But, if you do not have that spiritual sense of adoration, illusions multiply.

Therefore, the simple teaching of the Devi Puja (worship of the Goddess) is to learn to surrender to the Goddess, to the Divine Power behind the Universe, with the spirit of a child turning to his mother. Day by day learn to ignore your egoistic

interpretations of things, and instead of saying, “How miserable am I,” feel, “I must flow along with the Divine Will that guides me. Even in adversity, the Divine Mother leads me on.” As you develop such spiritual impressions day by day, illusions drop off, and you wake up to realize, “I am the Self.” And that is your victory.

Unless you terminate the process of birth and death with the vision of Self-realization, you linger in the world of illusion, and illusions are endless. Certain desires are fulfilled during one life, and many other desires remain submerged. Running after them you enter into another embodiment. The process is endless.

But, when you wake up by the Grace of the three aspects of the Goddess, you attain Enlightenment, and the process of birth and death terminates. That is the victory, and the victory is yours. With that understanding that you too are going to be victorious, celebrate joyously the victory of the Mother over the demoniac forces of ignorance on Vijayadashami day and every day!

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