

**Durgamata**



# Durgamata

- In the spiritual world, there are three potencies –
  - Samvit: helps the residents of the spiritual world to recognize their relationship with Krishna
  - Sandhini: ensures variegatedness in the spiritual world
  - Hladini: functions as the internal potency of the Lord and provides ultimate pleasure to Krishna. Srimati Radharani is the hladini potency, she is the source of all the pleasures. Durgā is also expansion of this the spiritual potency.
- The name Durgā therefore refers also to that personality who and who is thus on the platform of śuddha-sattva, pure transcendental existence. This internal potency is also understood to be Kṛṣṇa's sister, known also as Ekānāśā or Subhadrā. This is the Durgā who was worshiped by the gopīs in Vṛndāvana.
- Several ācāryas have pointed out that ordinary people are sometimes bewildered thinking that the names Mahā-māyā and Durgā refer exclusively to the external potency of the Lord. The entire creation has two divisions — transcendental, or spiritual, and material. Yogamāyā manages the spiritual world, and by her partial expansion as mahāmāyā she manages the material world. Thus:
  - Yogamaya is the personal potency of Lord Krishna's energy and
  - Mahamaya originates (expands) from Yogamaya (SB 4.16.2) .

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- **Role of Yogamaya**
  - **Yogamāyā is the name of the internal potency that makes the Lord forget Himself**
  - **to become an object of love for His pure devotee in different transcendental mellows.**
  - **yogamāyā potency creates a spiritual sentiment in the minds of the damsels of Vraja by which they think of Lord Kṛṣṇa as their paramour.**
  - **Any pastime conducted by the Supreme Personality of Godhead is an arrangement by yogamāyā, not mahāmāyā.**
  - **Permanent (not temporary) exhibition of Kṛṣṇa's māyā**
  - **She bestows on Lord Krishna's Devotees, pure devotion towards Lord Krishna ,**
  - **She is the Vaisnavî Shakti of the Vaishnavas.**
  - **She gives final liberation to those that want such and gives happiness to those that want happiness.**
  - **The hladini potency transforms into the personality of Goddess Durga in this material world. Here she has the responsibility of reforming those souls who have rebelled against the laws of the spiritual land and have come to this mortal material world.**

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- **Role of mahāmāyā**
  - the māyā which drags a person from the Supreme Personality of Godhead is called mahāmāyā, and the māyā which acts on the transcendental platform is called yogamāyā.
  - mahāmāyā means the external potency of the Lord which puts a conditioned soul into illusion that he will be happy by material adjustment
  - this is Kṛṣṇa's exhibition of māyā, but it is temporary. Here is a perverted reflection
  - it is not possible for mahāmāyā to control liberated souls or the Supreme Personality of Godhead
- **This world which we call wonderful and delight to live in is compared to a prison. Here life is uncertain, misery is inevitable, relationship is temporary and death a certainty. As prisoners are given a uniform, similarly we have been given a uniform – uniform of a human body, animal body, plant body etc. And as long as we have this ephemeral body made of flesh, bones, mucus, blood etc. and we are in this material world we are under the jurisdiction of Durga devi. She on behalf of the Supreme Lord takes complete charge of this material world, she acts under the direction of the Supreme Lord just as shadow follows the substance.**

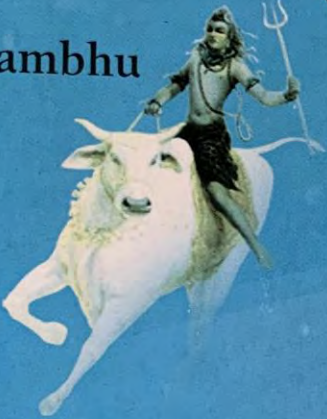
# Brahmajyotir

Sadāśivaloka

Mahākāla dhāma

a Ocean)

Śambhu



Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu



Māyā



Ramādevī



āsudeva

ankarṣana

iruddha

HARE HARE RA

HARE R

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- Siva's female consort is known under various names as Uma, Sati, Parvati, Durga, Kali, and Sakti. The divine couple, together with their sons - the six-headed Skanda and the elephant-headed Ganesa - are inhabiting the Mount Kailasa in the Himalayas as well as the Mahesa-dhama on the border of the material world (Devi-dhama) and the spiritual world (Vaikuntha or Hari-dhama).
- Siva is the original material male and Durga the original material female. Durga is expansion of Yogamaya and ultimately of Radharani.
- Durga is an eternal associates of the Lord in spiritual world. In this world the goddess Durga, the wife of Lord Siva, is famous as the external, illusory potency of the Supreme Lord.
- This is the Durga worshiped by the people of this mundane world. But the spiritual Durga is the eternal maidservant of Krsna and is, therefore, the transcendental reality whose shadow, the Durga of this world, functions in this mundane world as her maidservant.
- Ganesa, Durga, Visvaksena, and other devas worship and serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His abode of Vaikuntha. The Ganesa, Durga and other devas mentioned here are different from the Ganesa, Durga and other devas present in the material world.

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- **The form of Durgā**
  - Durgā is the presiding deity of this entire material universe.
  - She is ten-armed, representing the tenfold fruitive activities.
  - She rides on the lion (or sometimes) a tiger, representing her heroic prowess.
  - She tramples down Mahiṣasura, representing the subduer of vices.
  - She is the mother of two sons, Karttikeya and Gaṇesa, representing beauty and success.
  - She is placed between Lakshmi and Sarasvati, representing mundane opulence and mundane knowledge.
  - She is armed with the twenty weapons, representing the various pious activities enjoined by the Vedas for suppression of vices.
  - She holds the snake, representing the beauty of destructive time.
- **Worshipped for wealth**
- **People in general worship goddess Durga, the wife of Lord Shiva, for material prosperity. However, the boons received from Durga in the shape of wealth, property, good health, wife and sons, should be understood as the deluding kindness of Durga. Durga's service is to keep conditioned souls within the material world as she is the prison gatehouse keeper.**



## Śrī Brahma-Saṁhitā 5.44

sṛṣṭi-sthiti-pralaya-sādhana-śaktir ekā  
chāyeva yasya bhuvanāni bibharti durgā  
icchānurūpam api yasya ca ceṣṭate sā  
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

Translation

The external potency **Māyā** who is of the nature of the shadow of the cit potency, is worshiped by all people as **Durgā**, the creating, preserving and destroying agency of this mundane world. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda in accordance with whose will **Durgā** conducts herself.

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- However, when the soul again remembers Govinda by coming in contact with self-realized souls, Durga herself then becomes the agency of their deliverance by the will of Govinda.
- The word Durg (दुर्ग) which means "fortress, something difficult to defeat or pass". Durga is derived from the roots dur (difficult) and gam (pass, go through). Other meanings may include: "the one who cannot be accessed easily" and "the undefeatable goddess". One famous shloka states the definition and origin of the term 'Durga': "Durge durgati nashini", meaning Durga is the one who destroys all distress or one who eliminates suffering.
- There are many names for Durga in Shaktism and the Navadurga are known as: Shailaputri, Brahmacharini, Chandraghanta, Kushmanda, Skandamata, Katyayini, Kaalratri, Mahagauri and Siddhidatri. A list of 108 names of the goddess is recited in order to worship her and is popularly known as the "Ashtottarshat Namavali of Goddess Durga".
- Durga is associated with protection, strength, motherhood, destruction and wars. According to Srimad Devi Bhagavatam she is a warrior, powerful and much worshipped form of Goddess Parvati or simply Adi Shakti. Her legend centres around combating evils and demonic forces that threaten peace, prosperity, and Dharma the power of good over evil.

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- Durga unleashes her divine wrath against the wicked for the liberation of the oppressed, and entails destruction to empower creation.
- Durga is seen as a motherly figure and depicted as a beautiful woman.
- All illusion is created by Mahamaya she is the stage developer behind the false enjoyment of a living being and his miseries due to his sense gratification but this aspect is not seen in Yogamaya.
- When a devotee while practicing devotion to Lord Krishna initially is disturbed by Mahamaya until all his desires (of sense gratification) are not burnt away, Krishna himself instructs Yogamaya to seek Mahamaya to remove her illusionary energy from the devotees so that there are no further obstacles in his/her path.
- In the spiritual world Yogamaya covers the pure liberated souls with her power in the Lila with her power of illusion such that they are unaware of Krishna's real nature and thus relate to him not as God but rather as his friend, lover, or child and so on
- If Yogamaya will not extend her illusion in this way, the souls would realise Krishna's real nature and be incapable of interacting with him in Lila in intimate ways. Yogamaya's illusionary energy is a highly desirable and positive one obtained by highest yogis and perfect devotees.

# Durgamata

- **Slaying of the demon Mahishasura**
- **One of the most popular pastime associated with the goddess is of her killing of Mahishasura. Mahishasura was a half-buffalo demon who did severe penance in order to please Brahma, the creator. After several years, Brahma, pleased with his devotion, appeared before him. The demon opened his eyes and asked the god for immortality. Brahma refused, stating that all must die one day. Mahishasura then thought for a while and asked a boon that only a woman could be able to kill him. Brahma granted the boon and disappeared. Mahishasura started to torture innocent people. He captured heaven and was not in any kind of fear, as he thought women to be powerless and weak.**
- **The devas were worried and they went to Trimurti. They all together combined their power and created a warrior woman with many arms. The devas gave her a copy of their weapons. Himavan, the lord of Himalayas, gifted a lion as her mount.**
- **Durga on her lion, reached before Mahishasura's palace. Mahishasura took on different forms and attacked the goddess. Each time, Durga would destroy his forms. At last, Durga slayed Mahishasura when he was transforming as a buffalo.**

# Durgamata

- Influences
- Durga the inspiration of Durga Puja – a large annual festival particularly in the eastern and northeastern states of Bharat.
- One of the devotees of her form as Kali was Sri Ramakrishna who was the guru of Swami Vivekananda. He is the founder of the Ramakrishna Mission.
- Durga as the mother goddess is the inspiration behind the song Vande Mataram, written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, during Indian independence movement, later the official national song of India. Durga is present in Indian nationalism where Bharat Mata (i.e. Mother India) is viewed as a form of Durga. This is completely in line with the ancient ideology of Durga as Mother and protector to Bharatiya.
- She is present in pop culture and blockbuster Bollywood movies like Jai Santoshi Maa.
- The Indian Army uses phrases like "Durga Mata ki Jai!" and "Kaali Mata ki Jai!".
- Any woman who takes up a cause to fight for goodness and justice is said to have the spirit of Durga in her.

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- **Festivals**
- **The most awaited time of the year in West Bengal is none other than the month of durgotsav. Durga puja festival is also the largest festival of Bengalis as well as of West Bengal. West Bengal is the birthplace of Durga puja festival. Later this festival spread across eastern Indian states like Assam, Odisha, Bihar from West Bengal. The festival is performed as followed:**
  - **As per the Markandeya Purana, Durga Puja can be performed either for 9 days or 4 days (last four in sequence). The four-day-long Durga Puja is a major annual festival in Bengal, Odisha, Assam, Jharkhand and Bihar. It is scheduled per the lunar-solar calendar in the month of Ashvina, and typically falls in September or October. Since it is celebrated during Sharad, it is called as Sharadiya Durga Puja or Akal-Bodhan to differentiate it from the one celebrated originally in spring.**
  - **The festival is celebrated by communities by making special colourful images of Durga out of clay, recitations of Devi Mahatmya text, prayers for nine days, after which it is taken out in procession with singing and dancing, then immersed in water. The Durga puja is an occasion of major private and public festivities in the eastern and northeastern states of Bharat.**
  - **The day of Durga's victory is celebrated as Vijayadashami (Bijoya in Bengali), or Dussehra (in Hindi) – these words literally mean "the victory on the Tenth (day)".**

# Durgamata

- **How to please Goddess Durga during Durga Puja**
  - Candidasa was a devoted worshipper of Goddess Durga while his brother was a pure Vaisnava who would worship Shaligram. Candidasa was rich but his brother was poor. Candidasa had a very big and beautiful garden, he used to offer the flowers from the garden to Durga Devi. His brother too desired to offer these beautiful flowers to his Shaligram. And once he mentally offered a beautiful and colourful flower of the garden to his Shaligram. And it so happened that on that day Candidasa offered the same flower to Goddess Durga. As soon as the flower was offered Durga Devi appeared in front of Candidasa. “I am extremely pleased with you Candidasa. What benediction you want?” Candidas was surprised, “I worship you daily but why are you so pleased with me today.” “It is because you have offered me the flower which has been offered to Shaligram i.e. Lord’s maha prasadam. By seeing that prasadam flower I became pleased, so I appeared before you.”
  - Candidasa immediately inquired, “Is it that you get pleased when one worships the Supreme Lord Krishna.” Goddess Durga in a compassionate voice said, “Yes, the Supreme Lord is the cause of all causes and He is the original source of all creation. I get extremely pleased when anyone worships the Supreme Lord Krishna. So if you want to please me worship the Supreme Lord, Krishna.” Candidasa understood the ultimate truth and he became a great devotee of Krishna and this pleased Goddess Durga, the consort of Lord Shiva. Candidasa later composed many songs in which he described the transcendental feelings of separation of Srimati Radharani and Krishna. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu would love to hear the composition of Candidasa.

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- **Durga tests our dedication to the Supreme Lord. She checks if our heart has been thoroughly purified of all material diseases such as lust, greed, pride, anger, envy, illusion and false ego. and when she finds that our heart has developed deep love for Krishna then she immediately releases us from this prison house. Thus as soon as one starts practicing loving devotional service to Krishna, Goddess Durga is delighted, she immediately withdraws her trident and showers her love. She doesn't want to imprison us in this world forever. And those who are imprisoned she wants to release them as soon as possible.**
- **It is explained that in this age of Kali Yuga, the Supreme Lord incarnates with all His powers and all His opulence in the sound vibration of the Holy Name, "Kali kale Naam rupe Krishna Avatar." So the best way to practice devotional life is by chanting the holy names of Krishna like the Hare Krishna Mahamantra. We should chant this mantra with love, with devotion and with determination. Goddess Durga, the guardian of this world, will assess our dedication and our intention regularly. She even tested Haridasa Thakura's devotion to Krishna. And Haridasa Thakura passed the test with flying colours because he used to be completely absorbed in chanting the Hare Krishna mahamantra, in fact he had taken a vow to chant the mantra 3 lakh times a day. If we too want to please mother Durga then we have to become serious in our devotion to Krishna.**



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- **Durga Puja is not about playing movie songs and dancing on those songs. It is not about eating delicious foods and having fun. The best way to celebrate Durga Puja is to understand who goddess Durga is and how she could be pleased. And the best way to please her is to follow the footsteps of Candidasa.**