



# Sai Dharmam

Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Cooksville

## NAVARATRI

What is Navaratri? Why do people celebrate this festival? Navaratri is a Hindu festival that happens every autumn for nine nights and ten days. It begins on the first new moon of autumn until the tenth lunar day. This year, Navaratri is from Tuesday, October 9 to Thursday, October 18. Navaratri is celebrated to worship the goddesses Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. The ten days of this festival is divided into four. The first three nights focuses on goddess Durga, the next three nights is about goddess Lakshmi and the final three nights is for goddess Saraswati. The tenth day is Vijaya Dashami.

Mother Durga is known as a powerful woman who destroyed the demon Mahishasura after nine nights of battling. She strengthens our courage, overcome our fear and our ignorance as she guides us on a path to fulfill our dreams. Mahalakshmi brings spiritual wealth. Her generosity reminds everyone about the value of the world we live in. She provides the needs for her children. Goddess Saraswati is celebrated for her wisdom, creativity, knowledge, noble thoughts and truth. She is an example for individuals who are students, artists, musicians and writers. Lastly, Vijaya Dashami is the festival of victory, symbolizing the beginning of truth within everyone.

The ten days of celebration has a message. In order to live a full and complete life, ask goddess Durga for help with the obstacles, pray to mother Lakshmi for peace and seek goddess Saraswati for knowledge. The three goddesses will assist in bringing out the Shakti within each individual.

During Navaratri, people will fast, go on a vegetarian diet, chant mantras to the dedicated gods, pray, meditate and read literature about Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. Some individuals go garba dancing as part of their evening worship around an oil lamp that signifies the goddesses. They dance with small decorated sticks tapping each other.

Therefore, Navaratri is an auspicious day to Hindus as it is dedicated to worship Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. Each deity has different facets but are not different entities as they bring the Shakti out of all of us.

## SWAMI'S PERSPECTIVE

Navaratri or Dasara, is an important festival observed over an auspicious nine-day period. During this festival, many focus on the worship of the Devis but is this the correct way to celebrate?

Bhagavan says that we should first worship nature (Prakruti) and then receive the blessings of the Lord (Paramatma). Prakruti is made up of the three qualities: Satwa (Lakshmi), Rajas (Saraswathi) and Tamas (Parvathi). Therefore, to get control over Nature and to receive grace from Nature, we must worship Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi.

The forms of these 3 qualities (gunas) are the heart, words and actions. Purity of thought, word and deed would enable one to receive the grace of God. Lakshmi, who is the embodiment of all prosperity, is represented by the heart. The spoken word represents Saraswathi. Kriyaa Shakthi (action) is represented by Durga. True Devi Puja is the observance of Trikarana Shuddhi - unity and Purity of thought, word and deed.



So, the most important thing in Devi Navaratri is to worship nature. All that man requires is available with Mother Earth. Navaratri signifies, worshipping nature and protecting all that is given to us. We should not waste or misuse things available in nature. Within us, the three Mothers are manifest as Iccha Shakti, Vak Shakti and Kriya Shakti (thought, word and deed) and endeavoring to purify these, pleases the Lord more than all the ritualistic worships we can offer.

## DEVOTEE SPEAKS

When I think of feminism and its role in my life, I always try to relate it to the goddess Durga. A few years back I visited a Durga temple in south India and after my visit there I learned about how Durga always conquered evil and was never scared to face her fears. When I returned home I went back to school and was facing some challenges in regards to school. A few people thought I wasn't capable of winning a competition and kept putting me down for it. I prayed with all my might Durga will give me the strength. As I went into the competition the next day I had a sense of peace even though I was scared. I successfully made it to the top and placed in the top ranking which gave me a sense of pride, but I wouldn't have been able to do that without the strength that she had given me. In this day and age many people like to put you down by saying "You can't do it because you are a girl". But if you keep your head held high and have a firm faith that you can you will be more than successful. The Life ahead can only be glorious if you learn to live in a world with total harmony with the Lord.





## NAVARATRI: THE FESTIVAL OF NINE NIGHTS

Navaratri is the celebration of nine nights in September dedicated to worshipping the nine manifestations of the divine Mother Goddess, originating from the three main forms: Goddess Saraswathi, Lakshmi and Durga. Each of the nine days are celebrated for one form of the Mother Goddess of Hinduism. Navaratri falls in the very significant and sacred times of the year, autumn and spring, where there is large climatic and solar influence.

Day 1 celebrates Shailaputri, signifying the Himalayan mountains of whom Goddess Parvathi is the daughter of. In physical form, the Goddess rides a bull while holding a trident and lotus.

Day 2 celebrates Brahmacharini, signifying when Goddess Parvathi became the great Sati as an unmarried woman who personifies love, loyalty, and wisdom. Her form walks bare foot holding a japamala and kaman-dalu.

Day 3 is devoted to Chandraghanta which signifies when the half moon appeared on her forehead after her marriage with Lord Shiva. Her form has ten hands holding various weapons or in the midst of giving a boon or stopping a harm, has three eyes and is riding a tiger. She personifies peace and knowledge.

Day 4 worships Kushmanda, the creator of the universe residing in the Sun. Her form has eight hands possessing weapons and a garland while riding a lion.

Day 5 celebrates Skandamata on Panchami (5<sup>th</sup> day) who personifies knowledge. Her form rides a lion with her son in one of her four hands, and three eyes.

Day 6 celebrates Katyayini on Shasthi, signifying the warrior Goddess born to Rishi Katya. She rides a lion, has four hands and three eyes.

Day 7 is for worshipping Kalaratri, who blends in and kill demons. Her form rides a donkey and has four hands. She personifies the destruction of darkness.

Day 8, the day of Durgashtami, worships Goddess Durga, who personifies peace and compassion. Her form rides a bull, has four hands and is often wearing a green and white sari.

Day 9, known as MahaNavami celebrates Goddess Devi who sits on a lotus and possesses 26 wishes to grant her bhakthis.

Day 10, the last day, celebrates Vijayadashami. This signifies the celebration of Goddess Shakthi's victory over Mahishasura, Lord Rama's victory over Ravana and Goddess Durga's victory over the demons. This summarizes the day of victory of good over evil.

While the nine nights and ten days are devoted to worshipping the divine Mother Goddess, the significance of the celebration is to show that in any given situation, good always has victory over evil.

### BHAJAN

Mata Maheshwari, Tribhuvana Janani  
 Prema Mayi, Sathya Sai Janani  
 Tribhuvana Mohini, Papa Vinashini  
 Veda Kalavati, Kalyana Dayini  
 Jagat Oddharini, Parthi Narayani  
 Prema Mayi, Sathya Sai Janani

### MEANING

O Mother of three worlds, mother Sathya Sai! Thou form is Love. Thou art destroyer of sins and thou enchants the three worlds. O Resident of Parthi, Mother Sai Narayani! Thou art giver of Vedas, Thou confereth auspiciousness and hast come to remove miseries of the entire world.



## **100 Years of Maha Samadhi witnessing Journey of Love & Devotion with Shradha & Saburi**

Lakshmi Bai Shinde and Bayyaji were the only ones remaining. She was near Baba's feet. Baba put his right hand in his shirt pocket twice, took out Rs.5 and Rs.4 and gave them as charity to Lakshmi Bai. Baba explained the significance of these nine rupees as the nine qualities a devotee should have (1) Absence of egoism (2) Absence of jealousy (3) Untiring service (4) Absence of worldly desires (5) Complete faith in Guru (6) Peaceful nature (7) Desire to know the truth (8) Absence of envy, and (9) Absence of self-boasting and finding faults in others. Unless a devotee improved these nine qualities, he could not have true devotion to reach God. Thus Baba taught to Lakshmi Bai even in his last moments. The day was Tuesday, the 15th of October, 1918. Last day of baba's physical body .It was Vijayadashami (Dushera) . Baba became bodily very weak, Baba got up as usual and sat in his place. Devotees came for his darshan as usual. Baba put his Abhaya Hastha on their heads, blessed them and gave them udi prasad. Baba gave them necessary advice as per their need. They took them as usual advice which Baba used to give, but failed to think that they were Babas last ones to them while in physical body. The time was 11 in the morning. Preparations were being made for noon Aarti. It appeared as if some divine light entered Baba. Aarti was started. Throughout the Aarti Face of Baba was changing every moment. Those who looked at him had peace of mind and felt like looking at him continuously. During that period Baba appeared in different forms to the devotees present there. He appeared in the forms of Maruthi, Vittal, Dattatreya, Rama and to Muslim devotees as Mecca and Medina. For one Christian devotee, he appeared as Jesus. For Butty he appeared as Sri Krishna playing the flute in the Wada built by him. In this manner Baba, during aarti time, had shown his divine form to the devotees as per their thoughts. Aarti was over. The time was one hour past noon. Baba ordered all the devotees to go away quickly. All of them went away to their houses. Tatyia the devotee of baba who was also fighting with death, recovered and his pulse came to normal. Some new strength entered his body. He stood up and could walk also. He cried out of joy. He could not understand from where he got this new power all of a sudden. The spectators were also surprised. Before he recovered from his surprise, he remembered Baba. Thinking that Baba had given him another lease of life, he went running to the mosque. By that time Baba leaned on Baija Appaji Patil. Beforehand Baba had asked his devotees to be without fear and sent them for their meals. But a few devotees refused to leave Baba. When Tatyia saluted Baba, he asked Shama to take Tatyia and leave him in his house. Shama returned after leaving Tatyia in his house. Dashami ended and Ekadashi came. The time was 2.30 in the afternoon. Sai Baba told Bayyaji that he was leaving this body and after his body was to be kept in Butty Wada. he would be protecting his devotees at all times. He breathed his last giving charity and teaching Jnana to his children. This is the way the king of yogis - Yogiraja - attained Samadhi. The divine light which came out of the body of Baba, joined Gurudhan, Dwarakamai and Venkusa, who were already in the form of divine lights (jyotis) and all the four jyotis combined into one as Sai divine power. It again divided into four parts. One part went to Gurusthan. The second part when to Chavadi and settled there. The third part merged in Dwarakamai, and the fourth part went into Butty Wada. These four powers represent the four Vedas. These are the proofs of Sai Power which can command and control the whole world. The Shivashakti from Kailash came and stayed in Shirdi. In this way Shirdi became a holy place. The body of Sai who exhibited supernatural powers and saved several devotees, was lying in Dwarakamai. The physical body of Sai Baba, lying in Dwarakamai, cannot be seen again. So let us imagine ourselves to be in Dwarakamai and touch the holy feet of Sai Baba and make our life meaningful.