

Vasant Navaratri 25th March - 2nd April 2020



Navaratri is one of the most observed festivals observed by Hindus all across the material world. The word Navaratri (nava-nine and ratri-nights) literally means nine nights dedicated to the worship of the Mother in her three main forms i.e. Durga Devi, Lakshmi Devi and Saraswati Devi. Navaratri is observed four times a year and the second of the four is called Vasant Navaratri that is observed for nine days and nights. During this period, devotees of the Mother observe a fast, feed Brahmins and prays to the Mother for protection, better health and the fulfillment of one's desires.

This year Vasant Navaratri is observed between 25th March to 2nd April 2020.

Do note:- Vasant/Chaitra Navaratri is observed over 9 days in 2020.

25th - 27th March Is dedicated to Mother Durga
28th - 30th March Is dedicated to Mother Lakshmi
31th March - 2nd April Is dedicated to Mother Sarasvati

{25th March} Day 1 (Pratipada):-

Mother Shailputri is worshipped

{26th March} Day 2 (Dwitiya):-

Mother Brahmacharini is worshipped

{27th March} Day 3 (Tritiya):-

Mother Chandraghanta is worshipped

{28th March} Day 4 (Chaturthi):-

Mother Kushmanda is worshipped

{29th March} Day 5 (Panchami):-

Mother Skandamata is worshipped

{30th March} Day 6 (Shashti):-

Mother Katyayani is worshipped

{31th March} Day 7 (Saptami):-

Mother Kalaratri is worshipped

{1st April} Day 8 (Ashtami):-

Mother Mahagauri is worshipped

{2nd April} Day 9 (Navami):-

Mother Siddhidatri is worshipped

{3rd April} Day 10:- Vijay Dashami

The beginning of summer and winter are two very important junctions of climatic and solar influence. These periods are taken as sacred opportunities for the worship of Durga Devi, the “warden of the material world.” The main purpose of celebrating this Navaratri is to welcome seasonal changes as the other festivals of the year start with Vasant Navaratri. The tradition of worshipping the power of Shakti (Durga) is followed as it was started by our ancestors.

All though Vasant Navaratri is dedicated to nine forms of Shakti but Lord Raam and Shree Hanuman-ji are also worshipped during this period, as Lord Raam made His appearance on the last of day Navaratri, which is also called Shree Raam Navami. The other katha that is associated with this festival is the katha of prince Sudarsana, who won the battle against King Yudhajit after with the help of Shakti (Durga). After the victory prince Sudarsana worshipped Devi Durga along with his wife and father-in-law,

as Devi Durga was pleased, she ordered them to perform her havan and other means during the Vasant Navaratri. Since then this Navaratri is celebrated as Vasant Navaratri. Lord Raam and Lord Lakshman being the descendants of King Sudarsana also performed havan during Vasant Navaratri and as a result Devi Durga helped them in the recovery of Sita Devi.

Many misunderstand the importance of Mother Durga and Lord Shiva. So we shall explain briefly. Mother Durga is the warden of the material world. Durga means "fort, prison house". So this material world is a mega prison house where one who has committed a great sin is sent. What is this great sin I am talking about? Well at one stage we were very envious of Lord Krsna and thought that we are greater than Lord Krsna and due to this grave sin we were cast into this prison house we suffer in this material world. And guess what most of them have not learnt their lesson. Don't you find so much of envy still taking place? It seems this world is being engulfed with hate and enviousness. In this material world Mother Durga punishes us with the Trishul (the 3-pointed spear), which she holds in the hand. The 3-pointed Trishul represents the three fold miseries of life, which are as follows: - miseries caused by the higher beings, miseries caused by natural disasters and finally miseries caused by envious people. Now in the prison if the warden is favorable to one then that person's prison life can be heavenly, but if one is not in favorable terms with the warden, then life can be worse than hell. That's why we should be very humble towards Mother Durga. And remember that she is no ordinary personality. One of her names in the Durga Sahasranama is "Vaishnavi" - the female devotee of Lord Krsna. Also in Shree Krsna Lila Mother Durga appears as Lord Krsna's sister. Now when one serves his sentence he is sent to the spiritual world. But waiting for you on the outskirts of the spiritual world is Lord Shiva (Vaishnava yatha shambu -the greatest devotee of Lord Krsna) in Shiva-loka. If one has even the slightest amount of materialism, desire, or obstacle he is sent back down by Lord Shiva to rid himself of that desire, etc.

Lord Shiva's duty is to make sure that only qualified persons are allowed to enter the spiritual world. So the husband-wife team of Durga-Shiva really plays an extremely important role in Sanatana Dharma (the eternal religion). Lord Krsna would not have given these important jobs to just anyone other than the two most qualified personalities who are also great devotees of Lord Krsna.

Jai Durga Mata Jai Uma pati Mahadeva



There are many versions of Mother Durga's activities. Many ask but isn't this confusion? Which do we believe? Well all are correct. You see different pastimes are enacted in different Yugas hence there are many many pastimes. Now who said Hinduism (Sanatan Dharma) is boring.

So some of the Kathas are as follows: -Durga Devi's mother desired to see her daughter. So Lord Shiva permitted her to go and see her mother only for nine days in a year. The festival of Durga Puja marks this brief visit and ends on Vijaya Dasami, when Mother Durga leaves for her return to Mount Kailash. Another katha is that these nine days are held in commemoration of the victory of Mother Durga's over the great demon Mahishasura, the buffalo-headed demon. Another version is that Mother Durga fought with Bhandasura and his forces for nine days and nine nights. This Bhandasura had a wonderful birth and life. When Lord Shiva burnt Kama (Cupid) with the fire from his third eye, Shree Ganeshji playfully molded a figure out of the ashes, and the Lord breathed life into it. Thus the terrible demon Bhandasura was created. He engaged himself in great penance and on account of it obtained a boon from Lord Shiva. With the help of that boon, he began harassing the three worlds. Then Mother Durga could not stand this and fought with him for nine nights - the demons have extraordinary strength during the night and killed him on the evening of the tenth day, known as Vijaya Dasami. This year Vijaya Dasami falls on the **2nd April**.

(Vijaya Dasami is a very auspicious day. On this day Mother Durga bestows her divine blessings upon those who have observed a vrat/fasting for the 10 days for Her.) Also since learning of any science is begun on this day. It was on this day that Shree Arjuna worshipped Mother Durga before starting the battle against the

Kauravas on the field of Kurukshetra. Also Shree Raam worshipped Mother Durga at the time of the fight with Ravana, to invoke her aid in the battle. This was on the days preceding Vijaya Dasami. He fought and won through her grace. (But please understand that Shree Raam did not need Mother Durga's help, after all He is the Supreme Lord, but to engage His devotee He allowed it. This is the Lord's mercy upon His devotees.)

A child is more familiar with the mother than with the father, because the mother is very kind, loving, tender and affectionate, and looks after the needs of the child. In the same way we cannot go to Lord Krsna, Lord Shiva, Lord Raam, etc without the mercy of their consorts (wives), i.e. Radharani/Rukmini, Ma Durga, and Sita-devi respectively. So in the same way one can easily attain the mercy of the Lord once one receives the mercy of Their consort. So one has to receive the mercy of Mother Durga first to receive the mercy of Lord Shiva. Durga Devi's grace and mercy, compassion, knowledge, power, glory are endless. She can bestow upon the devotee material prosperity as well as spiritual freedom. Remember she is a devotee of Lord Krsna, and to go to Lord Krsna one has to receive the mercy of a devotee and who better than Mother Durga.

Approach Ma with an open heart. Lay bare your heart to her with frankness and humility. Be as simple as a child. Ask Ma to remove your egoism, pride, vanity, envy, cunningness, selfishness and meanness but also pray to Ma to bless you with wealth (material and spiritual), auspiciousness, prosperity, knowledge and so forth. Make a total, unreserved self-surrender to Ma. Sing Ma's glories and chant Ma's names with total faith. Navaratri is one of the most suitable times to perform intense spiritual practices. So do not waste this opportunity.

Navaratri is actually divided into three days. The first three days is dedicated to Mother Durga, the next three days are dedicated to Mother Lakshmi and the last three days are dedicated to Mother Sarasvati.

Naivedyam (food offerings) to the Mothers during the Navaratri Fast

During Navaratri, devotees prepare sattvik offerings for the Mothers, apart from the regular food items, which include puran (a sweet made of gram and jaggery) and varan (an item made of toor-dal) in the meal. The Naivedhyam, which includes puran and varan, radiates the activated raja component and thus energy-laden, absolute Fire element frequencies, from the Universe, get attracted to it in less time. When one consumes the Naivedhyam as prasad, one benefits from the energy frequencies which are absolute Fire element oriented and, thereby, purification of one's gross and subtle bodies takes place. The Navaratri fast is observed from the first day to the ninth day. Some devotees only observe a fast during three days i.e., a first fast during any one of the first three days and a second fast during any one of the next three and last in any one of final three days. Some devotees consume just milk and fruits during the nine days. Most devotees take a single meal during

the day. Non-vegetarian food and intoxicants are totally avoided. Do note however, it's not compulsory to offer the offerings below, it's just a guide.

In South India, nine types of Naivedyam (food offerings) are offered to Mother Durga during Navaratri. In India, the nine Devi's worship differ from place to place and state to state, so the Naivedhyam (food) also differs. We are kindly providing a list of Naivedhyams for Navaratri (as per the standard procedure):

1. First day – Shailaputri Devi is worshipped as Shree Kanaka Durga – Chalividi (fried rice), vadapappu (boiled Bengal grams), and payasam (sweet rice) naivedyam.
2. Second day – Brahmacharini Devi is worshipped as Balatripura Sundari Devi – sweet boondi and chickpeas naivedyam.
3. Third day – Chandraghanta Devi is worshipped as Gayatri Devi – Rava (wheat semolina) kesari and pulihora (sour rice/tamarind rice/lemon rice) naivedyam.
4. Fourth day - Kushmanda Devi is worshipped as Annapurna Devi – Pongali (cooked sweet rice-dal) naivedyam.
5. Fifth day – Skanda Mata Devi is worshipped as Lalitha Tripura Sundari Devi – Pulohorai/Pulihora (sour rice/tamarind rice/lemon rice) and Pesara boorelu (recipe of Green grams) naivedyam.
6. Sixth day – Katyayani Devi is worshipped as Saraswati Devi – bellam Atukulu (beaten rice with jaggery), Senaga pappu (Bengal gram), and coconut are offered as naivedyam.
7. Seventh day – Kalaratri Devi is worshipped as Mahalakshmi Devi – Ksheerannam (rice boiled in milk), bellam (jaggery), and sugar are offered as naivedyam.
8. Eighth day – Mahagauri Devi is worshipped as Sri Durga Devi – Garelu (Vedda) and lemon juice are offered.
9. Ninth day – Siddhidhatri Devi is decorated and worshipped as Mahishasura Mardhini Devi – Chakra Pongali (pudding) is offered as naivedyam.
10. Tenth day – Durga Devi is worshipped as Sri Rajarajeshwari Devi – Pulihora and garelu are offered.

Please note that The Nine Goddesses to worship during Navaratri, the nine types of colours, and nine types of Naivedhyams (food offerings) may differ as per the particular temple's Agama Shastra and their owned rituals. This can also change according to the nakshatra, tithi, and year.

So the first three days we pray to Mother Durga - we pray to Ma to destroy our impurities, our vices and our defects. We pray to Ma to guide us through the many dangers and pitfalls that we experience in our lives, and to prevent such negative occurrences in the future. Thus the first three days mark the first stage of the destruction of impurities and the determined effort to root out the evil tendencies in us.

Once you have accomplished your task on the negative side- that of breaking down all the impure propensities and old, vicious habits - the next step is to build up a sublime spiritual personality, to acquire positive qualities in place of the demoniac qualities. Now the devotee must cultivate and develop all the auspicious qualities that a devotee should possess. The devotee has to earn spiritual wealth to enable him/her to receive the rare gem of divine wisdom. If this is not achieved then the old demoniac natures will surface again and again. Hence, this stage is as important in a devotee spiritual life as the first step. The difference between the first step and the second step is that the first step is ruthless and determined annihilation of the impure egoistic self and the latter is an orderly, steady, calm and serene effort to develop purity. Now this serene side is depicted by the worship of Mother Lakshmi. Ma (being the wealth – giving aspect of Lord Narayana) bestows upon the devotee the inexhaustible divine wealth. Once the devotee succeeds in rooting out the evil propensities, and develops pure, divine qualities, he/she becomes competent to attain wisdom. He/she is now ready to receive the light of supreme wisdom and divine knowledge. At this stage comes the devout worship of Mother Saraswati, who is divine knowledge personified, the embodiment of knowledge of the eternal truths. Ma bestows on the devotee the rarest gem i.e. knowledge of the Supreme Lord. (Please note Mother Saraswati is no ordinary personality. Besides being the wife of Lord Brahma, Ma along with Shree Ganesh-ji is always worshiped first at the commencement of any studying or pujas. In the Srimad Bhagavatam 1.2.4 Shree Sukadeva Goswami chants “Devim sarasvatim” - “Before reciting this Srimad Bhagavatam I offer my respectful obeisance’s to Lord Narayana, Mother Saraswati, the goddess of learning and to Srila Vyasadeva.” So for Sukadeva Goswami to chant Sarasvati Devi name says it all. He gives Ma plenty of importance.



Then on the next day i.e. the **3rd April** on Vijaya Dasami great celebrations are held.

So briefly once again during on the first three days worship a Mother Durga murti/picture at your altar place. The murti/picture should be garlanded and looking very beautiful. Offer Ma arati (incense, lamp, flowers and finally sweets/fruits/or milk). The sweets/fruits/or milk should be consumed later. Then you should chant the mantras that we have supplied below as a guide. If you have a special mantra you can also chant that as well. Mother Durga only had Dhaar to drink in the 9 days, Mata didn't eat anything until the demons were all destroyed hence many devotees to show their commitment to Mother Durga also observe a fast/vrat for 9 days like Mother Durga did. If it's possible, try to perform a salt less fast until the evening in these nine-days or try to perform it according to your abilities. (If you suffer from diabetes, etc it will not be possible, so as I have mentioned perform this vrata according to your abilities. The idea is to try to perform the vrata with faith and not be fanatical.

On Vijaya Dasami i.e. the **3rd April** Kanya Puja is performed. Nine young girls below the age of 10 are worshipped as the embodiments of the Divine Mother. They are fed sumptuously and, amongst other things, presented with new clothes (or gifted something as a present according to your means). On this day you can perform a grand havan glorifying the three mothers.

Mantras of Mother Durga/Kali to chant during this period:-

Om hreeng dung durgaayai namah

Om hreeng shreeng kleeng durgati naashin-yai mahaa maayaa yai swaahaa (this is a wish fulfilling mantra)

Om Aing hreeng kleeng chaamun-daaayai vich-chai namah

Please note the **n** and **d** are pronounced with the tip of tongue on the roof of your mouth.

Mantras of Mother Lakshmi to chant during this period:-

Om Shreeng mahaa lakshma-yai namah

Om shreeng hreeng kaleeng hreeng shree mahaa lakshmai ya namah

Mantras of Mother Sarasvati to chant during this period:-

Om shreeng hreeng sarasvat-yai namah

Om aing hreeng shreeng vaag-dev-yai saras-wat-yai namah

On the **25th March**, after having a bath, Jau seeds (a.k.a barley seeds, jau seeds, jav seeds, yava, hordeum vulgare) are planted on a tray which has sand in it so that this grows in front of the lota for the next 10 days which the Mothers will be worshipped (all of which are explained below, in the Simple D.I.Y. Navaratri Puja). In the evening of the **24th March**, add one handful of Jau seeds in water and let it soak overnight. Every day a little water is sprinkled over the seeds. These seeds will germinate for the 10 days. "Why this is performed?" one may ask - this is done to

honour Mother Shakambhari devi (who is mentioned in the 11th chapter of the Durga Paath and is none other than an expansion of Mother Durga). Mother Shakambhari devi is the mother of nourishments. For more information on Mother Shakambhari devi kindly Ctrl-Click ([HERE](#)).

Simple D.I.Y. Navaratri Puja

On the morning of **25th March**, after having a bath, you should wear fresh clothes. Then at your prayer place, sprinkle water to purify the place. Then sprinkle ata (flour) on a clean board/tile (or see what you can use – use your discretion). This is called a mandala/bedi (a place where the prayer is going to be performed). Fill a clay/brass/copper pot with white or basmati rice, place five fresh washed mango leaves in the pot and place a coconut (the coconut should be already cleaned and ready for worship) in the pot. Thereafter drape a red cloth or a sari (preferably a red colour sari) on the coconut. Then place this pot at the center of the mandala. Fresh grains are used in the worship as they convey the idea of growth and prosperity. (YOU KEEP THIS POT AND COCONUT FOR 10 DAYS - worshipping the mothers daily)

Lighting of Akhand deep:- Akhand means continuous and deep is an oil lamp; thus Akhand deep is a continuously burning lamp. An oil lamp symbolizes absolute Fire principle. During Navaratri, the atmosphere is charged with a glow that is laden with absolute Fire principle. The frequencies emanating from this glow are attracted towards the flame of the Akhand deep resulting in their constant movement into and around the house. Hence it is important to light an Akhand deep during Navaratri. Of course common sense should prevail - meaning that if no one is at home for some parts of the day, the lamp should not be burning. Rather light it daily when the puja is being performed.

On the mandala place a Lord Ganesh murti and place the picture (please print this picture before hand) given at the beginning of this article of the Three Mothers in front of the pot. Now offer an agarbatti, lamp or flower (or all three) to Shree Ganeshji (turn seven times clockwise around the murti), and pray to Shree Ganeshji and praying to him to remove all obstacles in the path of your prayer. Now you can invoke all the Three Mothers into the pot (khumbha/lota). Pray to the Three Mothers asking the Mothers to please enter in the pot (khumbha/lota) and accept your prayers.

Now chant the following:-

1) Om swagatam su swagatam - Om Durga-yai namah, Om Lakshmee-yai namah, Om Sarasvati-yai namah (Swagatam means O Mothers I welcome you.)

Now garland the coconut.

Then offer flower or flower petals. (Pushpam = flowers)

2) Om idam pushpam – Om Durga-yai namah, Om Lakshmee-yai namah, Om Sarasvati-yai namah

Then offer incense (Dhoopam = incense)

3) Om tato dhoopam aghraa-payaami – Om Durga-yai namah, Om Lakshmee-yai namah, Om Sarasvati-yai namah

Then offer lamp (Deepam = lamp)

4) Om prat-yaksha deepam darshayaami – Om Durga-yai namah, Om Lakshmee-yai namah, Om Sarasvati-yai namah

You offer the above items by turning the items seven times around the coconut.

5) Om naivedyam samar-payaami – Om Durga-yai namah, Om Lakshmee-yai namah, Om Sarasvati-yai namah

(Offer cut fruit) (Naivedyam = food)

You can also place a small lota of milk or Dhaar next to the coconut.

6) Offer prayers for forgiveness

Om yaani kaani cha paapaani janmaantara kritaanee cha, taani sarvaani vinashyanti pradakshinaa pade pade //

Then offer your personal prayers to The three Mothers. Request The three Mothers for whatever you desire and the Mothers being so merciful will grant what you desire. But be careful what you desire for...You can chant (or play on a CD/cassette player) the three mothers Chalisa or any mantras of the Three Mothers. Some mantras are given above.

After the worship of the coconut/pot for 10 days various auspicious articles (like rice, sari, and so forth) are given in charity to some deserving lady or if you like you can keep the sari for yourself.

Famous question is what to do with the coconut after the Puja. During the Mothers Puja, the Three Mothers was invited into the coconut but now once the Puja is completed the Three Mothers return back to their abodes to be with Their Husbands and thus the coconut becomes Prashad, which should be broken and eaten as Mata Prashad (Mercy food from the Three Mothers). Do not dispose of the coconut into the river.

How to perform your own Navaratri Havan

The Navaratri Havan is performed in your home. You should have a bath and put on clean clothes before proceeding to the puja place. Have all the requirements for the Puja and the havan arranged on a tray beforehand. Sit facing East or North.

Wash your hands and then place some water in your right hand and sip water from the palm of the right hand, chant Om Vishnu, wash your hands again and do this two more times.

Say in English “O Lord Krsna on this day (which ever day you are performing the havan), in this month of Chaitra, your name, I am performing my Navaratri Havan.

Take a betel leaf, betel nut, rice and flowers and pray to Shree Ganeshji “Om ganapataye aavaahayaamee sthapayamee” and keep on the bedi. Offer Lord Ganesha incense, lamp, flowers and some sweet rice and then betel leaf and

then finally lamp. Then offer Lord Ganesha his favourite food viz. kheer (sweet rice), sugar candy and laddus.

Take another betel leaf, betel nut, rice and flowers and pray to The Three Mothers “Om Durga-devi, Lakshmi-devi Sarasvati-devi aavaahayaamee sthapayamee” and keep on the bedi. Then offer The Three Mothers incense, lamp, flowers and some sweet rice and then betel leaf and nut and then finally lamp.

Then light the fire with a pieces of camphor and place in the havan kund. Place some wood in the kund now. You can add more camphor in the kund.

Chant the mantra Om Agni Devtaa bhyo Namah

Offer a Tulsi Twig into the fire. (this is optional).

The Samaghrree mixture consists of (Til, white rice, jaw {jau}, nav-daan, and lobhan).

Now we start the havan... every time “swaahaa” is chanted, offer samaghrree into the fire.

Om Ganapata-ye swaahaa

Om Sarasvati-yai swaahaa

Om sooryaaye swaahaa

Om somaaye swaahaa

Om angaarkaaye swaahaa

Om budhaaye swaahaa

Om brihaspataye swaahaa

Om shukraaye swaahaa

Om shanaish-charaaye swaahaa

Om raahave swaahaa

Om ketave swaahaa

Om Prajaapataye swaahaa

Om Indraaya swaahaa

Om Agnaye swaahaa

Om Bhoo swaahaa

Om Bhuvah Swaahaa

Om Swah Swaahaa

Om Hanumate swaahaa

Om aim hreem kleem chaamun daayai vich chai swaahaa x 9 or 21 or 108

“Om trayam bakkam yajaa-mahe sugan-dhim pushti-varadhanam urvaa-rooka-miva bandha-naam mrityor mooksheeya maamritaata” Om swaahaa x 11

om shareng hareeng kaleeng hareeng shri maha lakshmiyai swaahaa X 9

Om Namoh Naaraaya-naaye swaahaa

Om Namoh Bhagavate Vaasudevaayaa swaahaa

Om Shree Vishnave swaahaa

Om shreeng hreeng sarasvat-yai swaahaa X 9

Om Brahmeye Swaahaa

Om Sarva Devee Devebhyo swaahaa.

Offer samaghree 9 times with the Maha Mantra “Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare” to atone for any mistakes committed during the havan.

Offer water three times around the havan kund.

Finally place two purees on top of each other, place the balance of the samaghree on top of these, on top of this place a betel leaf, a betel nut, some white rice, a few drops of ghee and place whole into the fire while chanting “Om sarvam vai poornam swaahaa”, and place this in the middle of the fire. Offer the rest of the ghee into the fire. Thereafter you should bow down before the fire and then stand up and you can offer Artee to the fire and to your family Deities with a lamp. Your final prayer is to chant the Maha-mantra three times which is as follows (“Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare”) to nullify any mistakes you made while performing this prayer to the Three Mothers.

Jaya Durga Ma
Jaya Lakshmi Ma
Jaya Sarasvati Ma

DISCLAIMER:- Do note that Dipika is not affiliated to any Hindu group or organization. We at Dipika choose to remain an independent repository of spiritual advice. We appreciate that there are variances between organisations and humbly request that if our views differ from yours that you respect our decision not to conform to the precepts of your particular organisation. We remain committed to spiritual advice which is based on scripture.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this article. We pray that this article will assist you in some way and we also pray that it helps you to appreciate the beauty and remarkable foresight of our ancient Hindu culture. We wish to educate all readers and demystify the path of Hinduism (Sanatan Dharma). Please feel free to share these articles with friends and family who do not have direct access to our website or articles. If you use the articles in any form including blogs and/or as part of other articles kindly credit our website as a source. We hope that the articles serve as a reference to you and your family when you need clarification of certain topics. JAI MATA DI



Please do visit our Website to receive more
free information about our beautiful culture

www.dipika.org.za

Compiled for the upliftment of Sanatan Dharma
Narottam das & Arjun Nandlal

E-mail info@dipika.org.za