

Maa Brahmcharini — The second manifestation of Maa Durga

Maa Brahmcharini is the second manifestation of Maa Durga who is worshipped on the second day of Navratra. Here word "Brahm" refers to "Tapa". So Brahmcharini means Tapa Charini - The one who performs Tapa or penance. It is said that the "Vedas", "Tatva" and "Tapa" are synonyms of word "Brahm". The form of Brahmcharini is tremendously effulgent and extremely majestic.

Brahmcharini

She holds a rosary in her right hand and Kamandalu in her left. She personifies love and loyalty. Mata Brahmcharini is store-house of knowledge and wisdom. Rudraksha is her most adorned ornament. When she was incarnated as the daughter of Himalaya, then influenced by the instructions of Devrishi Narada, she practiced very hard penances in order to obtain Lord Shiva as her divine consort. Due to her unearthly penances she was termed as Brahmcharini. She spent one thousand years, only on fruits and beet-roots. One hundred years she spent only by eating leafy vegetables.

For a sufficient period of time observing complete fast she suffered tormenting of nature like torrential rains and scorching sun and biting cold, under the open sky. After such a difficult routine she lived only on dry Bilva Pattaras (leaves) fallen on the ground for three thousand years. She kept herself engrossed for twenty-four hours in worshipping Lord Shiva. After that she gave up eating even these dry leaves. For several thousand years she went on without any food and water. Because she gave up eating dry Bilva leaves so she was known to be Aparna as one of her epithets.

After the hardship of penance for several thousand years her body became extremely lean and thin. She was reduced to skeleton only. Her penance, sharpened as it was, caused great disturbance in all the three worlds. The whole universe was shaken. The Gods, the Rishis, the Siddhas, the Munis all eulogised her penance as an unprecedented virtuous action.

Ultimately Lord Brahma through an oracle addressed her and said to her in a very pleasant manner-O Goddess, so far nobody has ever practiced such an austere penance. Only you could have done it. This wonderful deed is being praised in all the four quarters. Your desire would be fulfilled. You will decidedly get Lord Shiva as your divine consort. Now stop your penance and go home. Your father would be shortly coming to take you back.

Legend states that in a previous birth she was Parvati Hemavati the daughter of Himvan. Once when she was busy in games with her friends, Naradaji came to see her and on reading her hand/palm-lines Narad Muni stated that, "You will get married with a naked-terrible 'Bhole Baba' who was with you in the form of Sati, the daughter of Daksh in previous birth. But now you have to perform penance for him."

There upon Parvati told her mother Menaka that she would marry none except Shambhu, otherwise she would remain unmarried. Saying this she went to observe penance. That is why her name is famous as Tapacharini - Brahmcharini. From that time her name Uma also became familiar. She is the one who practices devout austerity. Filled with bliss and happiness, she is the way to emancipation - Moksha. 'Brahma' here refers to the meditative aspect of Brahmcharini and is always depicted as pious women or Sannyasin.

She is also worshipped as Goddess Tara and is associated with the pious form of Goddess Shakti. She is believed to be that aspect of Mother Goddess, which was present in Sati and Goddess Parvati, when they both did intense austerities to get Lord Shiva as husband.

During the penance Mata Parvati did in order to gain Lord Shivji as her consort for thousands of yrs. without eating even leaves she was called 'Aparna'. Seeing her body her mother uttered U-ma and so she is also called 'Uma'.

Her worship increases sacrifice, good deeds and restraint in humans. Rudraksha is her most adorned ornament. In some regions, Goddess Chamunda Swarup of Durga is worshipped on the second day of Navratra.

In this form she is believed to have killed the demons Chanda and Munda. There is a famous Chamunda Mata Temple at Jodhpur.



NAVRATRA SPECIAL RECIPE

Singhade Ke Aate Ki Kadhi



Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon water chestnut flour
- 1/2 teaspoon red chilli powder
- 1 dash sugar
- 1 tablespoon coriander leaves
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 7 leaves curry leaves
- 1/2 cup yoghurt (curd)
- sendha namak as required
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon ghee
- 2 dry red chili

Method:

To make this dish, take a medium bowl and whisk together yoghurt, water chestnut flour (singhare ka atta), sendha namak, red chilli powder and sugar. Whisk it really well until the yoghurt is smooth.

Now, add water to the bowl of Kadhi batter and whisk again to mix.

Now, put a saucepan or a cooker on medium flame and pour the batter into it. Keep stirring very frequently until it comes to a simmer to avoid curdling. Then, let the Kadhi simmer for 5-8 minutes or until it thickens.

At the end of the simmering process, heat ghee in a small pan on medium heat. Once hot, add cumin seeds and let them sizzle a bit.

Then, add dried red chillies and curry leaves in the tempering and fry for 30-40 seconds.

Immediately, add this tempering to the simmering kadhi and mix well. Lastly, garnish with chopped cilantro and serve with Rajgira/Kuttu ki Poori.

Navratra Akhand Jyoti Niyam



The tradition of lighting oil lamps in temples and households in India is centuries old. Generally, people light an oil lamp twice a day- once in the morning after a bath and once in the evening (roughly during dusk).

Interestingly, a Diya or Jyoti symbolises knowledge, purity, good luck, prosperity and represents the absence of darkness/ignorance. And the lamp that remains ignited for several days is referred to as Akhand Jyoti. So, devotees light the Akhand Jyoti (eternal lamp) during Navratra to

honour Mother Goddess Durga.

The Akhand Jyoti remains ignited for nine days, and that's what makes it a unique ritual. Read on to know how to light the Akhand Jyoti, the niyam (rules) and upay (solutions).

Navratra Akhand Jyoti niyam and upay

Use brass, silver or earthen lamp. If you opt for an earthen lamp, make sure you keep it soaked in water overnight to prevent it from absorbing all the oil while igniting.

Make an Ashtadal (a pattern of an eight-petalled lotus) with gulal or raw rice on the chowki/platform.

One must always install the oil lamp (Diya) on a chowki or a raised platform. You may place the Akhand Jyoti in the centre of the Ashtadal. This must be kept to the right of the Mother Goddess on the chowki or the altar.

Use a long and thick Baati (cotton wick) or the one made of Mauli to help it remain ignited until the end of the ninth day of the festival.

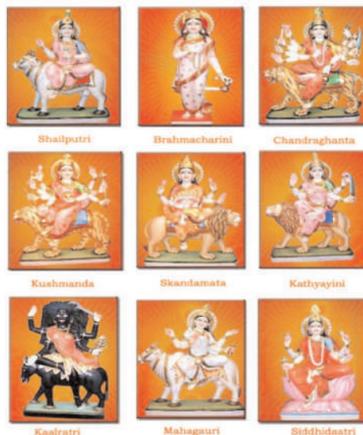
Use pure sesame oil, mustard oil or ghee for fuelling the Akhand Jyoti. Keep the Akhand Jyoti away from the direction of the breeze/window/door etc. Ensure that it doesn't get extinguished because of a sudden flow of breeze. You may also use a glass box open at the top or a glass cylinder with an open top to shield it from the air.

Keep a check on the quantity of oil in the lamp. Then, gently add oil to the Akhand Jyoti so that the inflamed end of the wick doesn't get immersed.

Due to constant kindling, the wick may start gathering burnt remains. Therefore, add a new wick to the Akhand Jyoti, light it, and gently remove the overburnt portion of the lighted end of the old wick with a slender stick.

Last but not least, a need may arise to follow this procedure at regular intervals to prevent the Akhand Jyoti from turning off before the vrat ends.

Mantras dedicated to each of the nine forms of Durga



Ashadha and Magha Gupta. This year Sharadiya Navratra begins on Oct 15th and culminates on Oct 24th.

Each of the nine days is dedicated to one of the nine forms of Durga. Each avatar of the Goddess has a specific significance, form and appearance. You can worship each of the nine Goddesses by chanting these simple Mantras this festive season. Check out specific mantras for each of the nine days:

- Day 1 – Maa Shailputri**
Om Devi Shailaputryai Namah
- Day 2 – Maa Brahmcharini**
Om Devi Brahmcharinyai Namah
- Day 3 – Maa Chandraghanta**
Om Devi Chandraghantayai Namah
- Day 4 – Maa Kushmanda**
Om Devi Kushmandayai Namah
- Day 5 – Maa Skandamata**
Om Devi Skandamatayai Namah
- Day 6 – Maa Katyayani**
Om Devi Katyayanyai Namah
- Day 7 – Maa Kairati**
Om Devi Kairatryai Namah
- Day 8 – Maa Mahagauri**
Om Devi Mahagauryai Namah
- Day 9 – Maa Siddhidatri**
Om Devi Siddhidatryai Namah

Navratra, a festival dedicated to Goddess Durga is spread over nine days. The festival is celebrated four times a year but the Sharadiya (autumn – sometime in the months of September and October) and the Chaitra (spring – sometime in the months of March and April) are other most famous. The other two are

General Knowledge Question

1. Which one of the following waves are used by the common TV remote control?

- A. Radio waves
- B. Lasers
- C. Infrared waves
- D. Ultrasonic waves

2. Given below are the psychological manifestations of noise pollution.

- (i) Constriction of blood vessels
- (ii) Increase in the rate of heart beat
- (iii) Digestive spasms
- (iv) Dilatation of pupil of the eye

Select the correct options

- A. (i) and (ii) are correct
- B. (i) and (iii) are correct
- C. (ii) and (iv) are correct
- D. (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) are correct

3. Which gas is safe and an effective extinguisher for all confined fires?

- A. Nitrogen dioxide
- B. Carbon dioxide
- C. Sulphur dioxide
- D. Nitrous Oxide

4. Which one of the following statements is incorrect about laser?

- A. It is a technique for producing intense beams of light, ultraviolet or infrared radiation of different wavelength.
- B. Even in diamond laser beam can drill a hole.

C. A variety of lasers have been made from solids like the ruby crystal and semi conducting materials, liquids and gases.

D. All waves in laser, travel in phase.

5. Which one of the following elements the drum of a Photostat machine is made up of:

- A. Aluminium
- B. Selenium
- C. Barium
- D. Caesium

6. If we say the child has an IQ of 100, what does this mean?

- A. The performance of the child is below average.
- B. The performance of the child is above average.
- C. The mental age of the child is equal to his actual age.
- D. The performance of the child cannot be better.

7. Which bacteria is responsible for the formation of curd?

- A. Lactic acid bacteria
- B. Lactobacillus Acidophilus
- C. Lactobacillus aureus
- D. Bacillus radiceicola

8. Which one of the following bacteria present in the soil produces a peculiar smell if it rains on perched soil?

- A. Streptomyces
- B. Staphylococcus
- C. Diplomyces
- D. Micrococcus

9. In poorly ventilated buildings which one of the following inert gases can be accumulated?

- A. Helium
- B. Neon
- C. Argon
- D. Radon

10. Honey is sweeter than cane sugar or corn syrup. Which one of the following carbon sugars is responsible for this?

- A. Dextrose
- B. Levulose
- C. Sucrose
- D. Fructose

11. Which Polymer is used in making non-stick kitchen ware?

- A. Nylon
- B. Teflon
- C. Polystyrene
- D. Bakelite

12. Name the polymer used in making bullet proof glass?

- A. Melamine
- B. Bakelite
- C. Lexan
- D. Vinyl rubber

13. For pipe insulation which polymer is used?

- A. PVC
- B. Polythene
- C. Teflon
- D. None of the above

ASTRO SPEAK

ARIES



MAR 21 - APR 20

Get ready for a rocky day filled with ups and downs, dear Aries, as the Libra solar eclipse brings an intense and unpredictable energy to the table. You may feel the universe is testing your relationships and sense of personal harmony. So, it'll be important that you approach plot twists and problems from a place of calm. Moving hastily could lead to regrets and bigger problems down the line.

LIBRA



SEP 24 - OCT 23

Go slow and give yourself plenty of space today, sweet Libra, as the solar eclipse manifests in your sign. This cosmic climate could seem intense at times, bringing up themes from the past that may leave you feeling vulnerable or exposed. On the plus side, you'll be in a unique position to put painful memories to rest once and for all, giving yourself permission to hit the reset button on your emotions.

TAURUS



APR 21 - MAY 20

If you've been demanding too much of your body by burning the candle at both ends, pushing through fatigue, or carrying stress, it could begin to catch up with you. It'll be more important than ever that you acknowledge the subtle signals your body sends, implementing new behaviors that promote energy, relaxation, and balance. Touch base with your spirituality later tonight when Pluto activates.

SCORPIO



OCT 23 - NOV 22

The temptation to stay in bed will be pronounced this morning, dear Scorpio, as the Libra solar eclipse brings a charge to the air. You'll be asked to go within during this astrological event, honoring your darkness, innocence, and everything in between. Opportunities for closure could also come into play, and you may find yourself suddenly parting with certain people or situations.

GEMINI



MAY 21 - JUN 20

The energy will be charged as the Libra solar eclipse graces our skies, dear Gemini, putting you in the mood for fun. You may feel more daring than usual under this cosmic climate, looking for ways to add vibrance and excitement to your life. Though the vibes are right for seeking fun, try to be responsible when blowing off steam, avoiding risky activities that might lead to trouble or injury.

SAGITTARIUS



NOV 23 - DEC 22

Expect to encounter more than a few social shakeups as the Libra solar eclipse activates your solar eleventh house. This astrological event is sure to bring forth interesting developments amongst friends, though you should take care to avoid drama, as things could get explosive. Themes around community also come into play, causing you to feel more emotionally invested in the news cycle than usual.

CANCER



JUN 22 - JUL 23

Tension at home or within your private life could reach a breaking point today, dear Cancer, as the Libra solar eclipse graces our skies. The energy will be stressful, moody, and unpredictable, causing the people you love to lash out in unexpected ways. Though you'll trigger more easily than usual right now, try your best to stay calm and centered, especially when dealing with highly emotional people.

CAPRICORN



DEC 23 - JAN 20

Boundaries will be tested as lines blur during the Libra solar eclipse, shaking up the sector of your chart that governs success, responsibilities, and public life. While other members of the zodiac may lose control of their emotions, you'll exist in a more stoic and composed state. Though there may be times you feel especially tested, maintaining your grace can help you survive this astrological event unscathed.

LEO



JUL 24 - AUG 23

Brace yourself for an adventure of the mind, as the Libra solar eclipse graces our skies. The energy at play could feel high-pressure which may cause you to overthink certain situations. Don't feel pressured to make any important decisions right now, especially when it comes to matters of the heart. Lean into uncomplicated activities that can help clear the mind, seizing control of your thought process whenever possible.

AQUARIUS



JAN 21 - FEB 23

The Libra solar eclipse graces our skies this morning, dear Aquarius, bringing an intense and unpredictable energy to the table. While cosmic may fall off balance under this cosmic climate, you'll feel surprisingly energized and at peace as your solar ninth house is activated. Lean into your spirituality in honor of these supportive vibes, choosing to see magic while taking a step back from stressful situations.

VIRGO



AUG 24 - SEP 23

Be smart with your finances as the Libra solar eclipse graces our skies, bringing an unpredictable and intense energy to the table. Impulse purchases may be difficult to resist under these strange vibes, though overspending could lead to major issues down the line. Rather than gravitating toward retail therapy or "get rich quick" schemes.

PISCES



FEB 20 - MAR 20

The vibe could feel slightly explosive as the Libra solar eclipse graces our skies, conjuring themes around death, rebirth. Consider how your commitments have shaped your life and whether you're content or ready for a change. Avoid impulsive decisions right now, acknowledging red flags or disappointments as they arise, taking time to reflect on them before making choices.

11. Teflon
12. Lexan
13. PVC

1. Infrared waves
2. (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) are correct
3. Carbon dioxide
4. It is a technique for producing intense beams of light, ultraviolet or infrared radiation of different wavelength.
5. Streptomyces
6. The mental age of the child is equal to his actual age.
7. Lactobacillus Acidophilus
8. Staphylococcus
9. Selenium
10. Levulose

Answers: