

Maa Brahmacharini — The second manifestation of Maa Durga

Maa Brahmacharini is the second manifestation of Maa Durga who is worshipped on the second day of Navratra. Here word "Brahm" refers to "Tapa". So Brahmacharini 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 Brahmacharini is tremendously effulgent and extremely majestic.

Brahmacharini

She holds a rosary in her right hand and Kamandalu in her left. She personifies love and loyalty. Mata Bhrmacharini 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 Brahmacharini. 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 - Brahmacharini. 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 Brahmacharini 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

Palak Makhana



- Ingredients**
- 300 grams Spinach Leaves (Palak)
 - 2 Tomatoes, diced
 - 1 cup Lotus Seeds
 - 1 teaspoon Cumin seeds
 - 1 teaspoon Garam masala powder
 - 1/2 teaspoon Red chilli powder
 - 1/2 teaspoon Turmeric powder (Haldi)
 - 1 Cinnamon Stick
 - 2 tablespoon Milk
 - 1 tablespoon Ghee
 - Salt, to taste

Method:
We begin the Palak Makhana by washing the spinach thoroughly under running water.
Drain the spinach and cook it in a pressure cooker with little bit of turmeric powder, cumin seeds and green chillies for 2 whistle.
Once the whistle is done let it cool down till the pressure comes out naturally. Blend it into paste and keep it aside.
Roast the makhana with ghee on a flat bottomed non-stick pan. Remove the makhana and in the same pan add little bit of oil and temper the cumin seeds and add the tomatoes. Cook until they loose all the liquids and add all the spice powders.
Add little water and simmer it for 2 minutes. Add the blended spinach mixture along with milk and simmer it for 3 minutes again.
Finally, add the makhana and bring it to a boil.
You can serve your creamy Palak makhana with Ajwain puri or Jeera pulao to make a complete wholesome meal.

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 Jyot 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



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

Ashadha and Magha Gupta. This year Sharadiya Navratra begins on Oct 7th and culminates on Oct 15th.

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 Brahmacharini**
Om Devi Brahmacharinyai 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 Kalratri**
Om Devi Kalaratryai Namah
- Day 8 - Maa Mahagauri**
Om Devi Mahagauryai Namah
- Day 9 - Maa Siddhidatri**
Om Devi Siddhidatryai Namah

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 radiceola

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

- A. Streptomycetes
- B. Staphylococci
- C. Diplonococci
- D. Micrococci

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

A desire for control could cause you to shut down emotionally as the Cancer moon faces off with intense Pluto. While it's certainly okay to bring yourself to a place of composure in order to go about your day, try not to bury your feelings so deeply that you forget to process them later. The sun will give you a chance to manage your emotions in healthy ways.

LIBRA



SEP 24 - OCT 22

You'll feel emotionally invested and committed to your professional growth today, dear Libra, as the Cancer moon shares a sweet connection with the Virgo sun. This cosmic climate will allow you to handle your daily tasks with ease, though you may want to shoot a little higher than you normally would. Use this energy as an excuse to venture away from home, even if it's just for a quick bite to eat with your bestie downtown.

TAURUS



APR 21 - MAY 20

Your spirituality can help you find clarity today, dear Taurus, as the Cancer moon faces off with intense Pluto. Don't be afraid to face your fears and anxieties head-on, as doing so will provide you with an opportunity to let go of them for good. As the day unfolds, the vibe will lighten when Luna blows a kiss to the sun, bringing out your playful side.

SCORPIO



OCT 23 - NOV 22

Your words may carry more weight than you realize as the Cancer moon faces off with Pluto. While this cosmic climate is sure to provide you with profound new insights, you may want to pull back from sharing them right away, or you could come off as a little intense. Energy will elevate as the sun and moon connect in the sky, helping you decompress with friends and colleagues.

GEMINI



MAY 21 - JUN 20

Your vibe may be a little more intense than you realize today, dear Gemini, as the Cancer moon faces off with brooding Pluto. While this cosmic climate will certainly give you a taste of power, try not to be overly pushy with your agenda. The vibe will lighten when the sun and moon share a sweet connection up above, inspiring you to ground, honor your emotions, and find beauty in the present.

SAGITTARIUS



NOV 23 - DEC 22

You'll walk with authority as the Cancer moon forms a sweet connection with the Virgo sun. These vibes are perfect for making an impression professionally, though you'll want to make sure you're carrying yourself in a refined and composed manner. Luckily, the vibe will lighten later in the afternoon when the moon enters Leo, activating the sector of your chart that governs spirituality and adventure.

CANCER



JUN 22 - JUL 23

Issues within your love life or romantic disappointment could throw off your vibe as the Cancer moon faces off with brooding Pluto. This cosmic climate could trigger obsessive behavior, so you'll want to avoid current crushes online. Luckily, your mind will wander toward more productive topics once the sun and moon connect in the sky, and a boost to your popularity will provide you with distractions.

CAPRICORN



DEC 23 - JUL 20

You may feel as though you're in a battle with your own emotions this morning, dear Capricorn, as the Cancer moon faces off with intense Pluto. A disconnect between what your heart wants and what is good for you may come into play, but try not to put too much pressure on yourself to figure it all out at once. The sun and moon could provide guidance from beyond the veil.

LEO



JUL 24 - AUG 23

There's an astrological risk that you may be too hard on yourself as the Cancer moon faces off with brooding Pluto. Try not to get down on yourself for being shy or imperfect, understanding that every mistake you make provides an opportunity to learn. Luckily, a cosmic pick-me-up between Luna and the sun can help you reclaim your joy as long as you tap into your gratitude and acknowledge the blessings around you.

AQUARIUS



JAN 21 - FEB 23

The universe will ask you to make some changes today, dear Aquarius, as the Cancer moon connects with the Virgo sun and Pluto. While this cosmic climate could trigger brutal realizations around unhealthy behaviors or patterns, it will also provide opportunities for growth and self-improvement. Remember to value yourself as you are in the moment, without losing sight of what you hope to achieve.

VIRGO



AUG 24 - SEP 23

The vibe may feel off within your social sphere as the watery Cancer moon faces off with brooding Pluto. Watch out for emotional traps and avoid getting sucked into any malicious drama that doesn't concern you. Luckily, a sweet connection between the sun and moon can help guide you toward more positive interactions as long as you lean into kindness.

PISCES



FEB 20 - MAR 20

A few haters may come out from the shadows this morning, but try not to give them the power to weigh you down. That's right, dear Fish, an opposition between the Cancer moon and Pluto could bring out the worst in those around you, though a helping hand from the sun will allow you to hold onto joy, as long as you lean into love and pay no mind to negativity.