

## Maa Kushmanda – The Fourth Aspect of Navdurgas

Maa Kushmanda is the fourth aspect of Navadurga Goddesses. Devi Maa is worshipped on fourth day during Durga Pooja in Navratri. Mother Goddess created the whole universe in shape of an egg called "Anda" with her little and light divine smile, so that Maa Durga is named Kushmanda.

The word Kushmanda is made of three other words that are "Ku + Ushma + Anda = Kushmanda". Here "Ku" is "Little", "Ushma" is "Warmth or Energy" and "Anda" is "Egg", means the one who creates the universe as "Little Cosmic Egg" with the energy of Her divine smile is called "Kushmanda". Goddess Durga is very happy in this incarnation and it is believed that when there was no existence of any creation or universe and there was the eternal darkness, which ended when Maa Kushmanda smiled. So Maa Kushmanda is known as the creator of the whole universe. Maa Kushmanda is also named as "Adi Shakti". The core of Suryamandala (Sun) is the residence of Devi Maa. She is the only one who has the power and strength to live in the core of Suryaloka (Sun). Her body shines like the glowing Sun. All directions get light from Her Divine smile including the Sun God itself. Maa Kushmanda also known as "Ashtabhuj" as she is often depicted as having eight arms. In her seven hands she holds Kamandalu, Bow, Arrow, Lotus, a Jar of Nectar, Discus, and Mace. In her eighth hand she holds a rosary capable of giving eight Siddhis and nine Niddhis. She rides a lion who represents "Dharma". On worshipping Her ailments and sorrows are eliminated and life span, name, strength and health improved.

The Pooja of Devi Kushmanda on the fourth day of Navratri in Durga Pooja is having very importance. On this day, Yogis and Sadhaks or other dedicated devotees keep their mind in Anahata Chakra. Kushmanda represents Anahata Chakra in spiritual practice. Kushmanda Pooja during Navratri increases one's health and strength.

On the fourth day Mata Durga is worshipped in her Ma Kushmanda Swarup. She is depicted as seated on a lion, and possesses eight arms. She resides in solar systems and represents all knowledge. Seven types of weapons are shown in seven hands and prayer beads in her right hand. She likes the offerings of "Kumhde." Therefore her name "Kushmanda" has become famous. She is also known as 'Krishnamanda' and is believed to have created the universe, so she is called as Adi Swarup. She is also called 'Astbhuj'. Worship of Ma Kushmanda brings light into darkness and ignorance, gives true knowledge, destroys ego, disease, sorrow, depression, ignorance. "Kumbh Bhand" means to see cosmic vivacity in Pindi shape or knowledge of cosmic intricacies in human race. The abode of Mata Kushmanda is in Bhimaparvat

### Om Dukha Hantraya Namah

Kushmanda Devi manifests eight arms, holding weapons and a rosary (Mala), she is seated on a tiger and her aura is like the sun. Special benediction: This aspect of Devi destroys sorrows of the mind and ego by harmonising the macro-universe with the inner micro-universe of the individual. This makes available all realms of the external universe to the individual internally through meditation. She is the birthing mother presiding over birth and rebirth. The abode of Kushmanda is in Bhimaparvat. We see streams of dark orange and golden light and golden drops that end in little drops of golden light entering the spinal column. These act like a spiritual surgical knife, destroying negatives and false ego positions.



## NAVRATRI SPECIAL RECIPE

### Rajgira Fruit Tart



- Ingredients**
- 2 cup amaranth
  - 8 slices orange
  - 12 black grapes
  - 1/2 teaspoon orange zest
  - 4 pieces strawberry
  - 8 slices kiwi
  - 1/2 medium muskmelon
  - 2 cup hung curd
  - 1 1/2 cup jaggery syrup
  - 4 teaspoon white butter

#### Method

To prepare this enticing fusion dish, heat a pan on medium flame. Only when the pan is heated, add in the amaranth. Make sure the pan is well heated before adding the seeds otherwise the amaranth seeds will burn. Once you add amaranth seeds in the pan, they will start popping like popcorn. Stir cook the seeds to avoid them from burning.

Cook for 5 minutes then remove from heat and keep aside for further use.

Now, transfer the roasted amaranth seeds in a bowl and add in jaggery syrup. Mix well.

Now grease a pie tin with melted butter. Add the amaranth-jaggery mix in the tin. Then mix hung curd and orange zest in a bowl. Spread a spoonful of the hung curd mixture over the pie tin.

Next, arrange kiwi slices, orange slices and melon slices, top with strawberry pieces and black grapes. Keep the prepared tarts in the fridge to chill for at least 1-2 hours. Once done, remove from fridge and serve the chilled dessert.

## Navratri: A Journey to the source

The festival of Navratri is celebrated with prayers and gaiety in the beginning of the Ashwin (autumn) and the beginning of Chaitra (spring). This period is a time for self-referral and getting back to the source. During this time of transformation, Nature sheds the old and gets rejuvenated; animals hibernate and life emerges back afresh in the spring.

'Ratri' means night and night brings rejuvenation. According to Vedic science, matter reverts back to its original form to recreate itself again and again. The creation is cyclical, not linear; everything is recycled by nature - a continuous process of rejuvenation. The human mind, however, lags behind in this routine cycle of creation.

Navratri is a festival for one to take the mind back to its source. The seeker gets back to the true source through fasting, prayer, silence and meditation. It gives relief at the three levels of our existence -- physical, subtle and causal. While fasting detoxifies the body, silence purifies the speech and brings rest to the chattering mind, and meditation takes one deep into one's own being.

The inward journey nullifies our negative karmas. Navratri is a celebration of the spirit or prana which alone can destroy the demons - mahsihasura (inertia), shumbha-nishumbha (pride and shame) and madhu-kaitabh (extreme forms of craving and aversion). They are completely opposites, yet complementary. Inertia, deeply ingrained negativities and obsessions (raktabejasura), unreasonable logics (chanda-munda) and blurred vision (dhoomralochan) can be overcome only by raising the level of prana shakti; the life-force energy.

The nine days of Navratri are also an opportunity to rejoice in the three primordial qualities that make up the universe. Though our life is governed by the three gunas, we seldom recognize and reflect on them. The first three days of Navratri are attributed to tamo guna (it leads to depression, fear and emotional instability) the second three to rajo guna (this leads to anxiety and feverishness) and the last three days to sattva guna (when Sattva dominates then we are clear, focused, peaceful and dynamic). Our consciousness sails through



the tamo and rajo gunas and blossoms in the sattva guna of the last three days. The three primordial gunas are considered as the feminine force of our magnificent universe. By worshipping the Mother Divine during Navratri, we harmonise the three gunas and elevate sattva in the atmosphere. Whenever sattva dominates in life, victory follows. The essence of this knowledge is honoured by celebrating the tenth day as Vijaydashmi.

Though Navratri is celebrated as the victory of good over evil, the actual fight is not between good and evil. From the Vedantic point of view, the victory is of the absolute reality over the apparent duality. In the words of the great sage- Ashtavakra, it is the poor wave which tries to keep its identity separate from the ocean, but to no avail.

The Mother Divine is recognised not just as the brilliance of intellect (buddhi), but also the confusion (bhranti); she is not just abundance (lakshmi), she is also hunger (shudha) and thirst (trishna). Realising this aspect of the Mother Divine in the entire creation leads one to a deep state of Samadhi. This gives an answer to the age-old theological struggle of the Occident. Through wisdom, devotion and nishkama karma, one can attain advaita siddhi or perfection in the non-dual consciousness. Kali is the most horrific manifestation of Nature. Nature symbolizes beauty, yet it has a horrific form. Acknowledging the duality brings a total acceptance in the mind and puts the mind at ease.

Though the microcosm is very well within the macrocosm, its perceived separateness is the cause of conflict. For a gyani (wise), the entire creation becomes alive and he recognizes life in everything in the same way children see life in everything. The Mother Divine or the pure consciousness itself pervades all the forms and has all the names. Recognizing the one divinity in every form and every name is the celebration of Navratri. Hence, special pujas honouring all aspects of life and nature are performed during the last three days of Navratri.

## 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 radicleola

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

Your intelligence is sharper than ever today, which is why you'll be drawn to intricate ideas and images. There couldn't possibly be too many details for you right now because you're eager to sort through things and get to the truth behind it all. This is an exceptional day for researching, studying, or making huge headway on a complicated project. Don't worry that you will get overwhelmed or run down.

LIBRA



SEP 24 - OCT 22

Your reputation is shining bright right now, so don't be too surprised if others in your life start looking to you for answers to the tough questions. What's important here isn't giving them the correct answer; it's almost certain that you won't be able to in all situations. The most important thing for you to do is to empower these people to find their own answers.

TAURUS



APR 21 - MAY 20

Details like that could throw you off track today. Make sure you're good with your correspondence because someone has been waiting for your answer and they might be losing patience. A quick note or call (full of your usual charm, of course) should calm any stormy waters and lay the groundwork for future commitments that could lead to an infusion of cash to your bank account.

SCORPIO



OCT 23 - NOV 22

Listen to your more conservative investor voice today and don't get involved with anything you're not totally sure of. Avoid making any major transactions that concern either your money or your heart. Things that look bright and cheerful right now could be hiding some dark secrets. In fact, the more something or someone appears to be a sure thing, the more likely it won't pan out.

GEMINI



MAY 21 - JUN 20

There's a switch today in terms of communication. The people who usually get you right off the bat—family, friends, favored co-workers—aren't going to know what to make of your suggestions and ideas now. And the people who always seemed to be coming from the other side of the spectrum from you will know exactly what you're talking about!

SAGITTARIUS



NOV 23 - DEC 22

Put more effort into your career today and do the work you've been putting aside. Remember that your boss is human even if you find their style difficult to deal with from time to time. A simple, casual conversation can lay the foundation for your future and smooth over any tension you're feeling. But before you initiate any talks, use today to formulate your plan and organize a list of your recent accomplishments.

CANCER



JUN 22 - JUL 23

Someone is going to try to get what they want from you by appealing to your analytical side, but you may find yourself emotionally buying into their argument as well. You are much more willing to come up with arguments and let people slide on the silly stuff. You are mellowing out, and the people around you are feeling more comfortable presenting new ideas and getting you involved in adventurous stuff.

CAPRICORN



DEC 23 - JUL 20

Research and planning are always a good idea, but you may be getting too caught up in the details of it all. Be honest with yourself. The time has come for you to get active. And if everything isn't crystal clear, use your imagination to come up with guesstimates that will fill in the blanks and keep you going! If you need to make revisions, you can always work them out as you go along.

LEO



JUL 24 - AUG 23

The more thrifty your past, the more extravagant your future can be. You need to stay cautious a little bit longer if you want to be prepared for what's coming on the scene in the future. A big chunk of change will get you much closer to where you want to be. For the time being, you still should watch what you buy and skip any extravagances. You will be very grateful you tightened your belt.

AQUARIUS



JAN 21 - FEB 23

You've been much more grounded lately than you have been in a long while, and today you should try to figure out why. What has changed in the past few weeks in your life? Has someone exciting entered it, has someone unpleasant left it? Take some time to think things through, because unless you consciously try to understand what forces could be working in your life, you'll never know how to maintain them.

VIRGO



AUG 24 - SEP 23

Today, it might feel like you're stuck in one of those now-or-never moments where it's just picked it up and shaken it. Everything in your life is knocked off its normal moorings and floating around with little if any direction. But it's easy to make lemonade out of this lemon-like experience. Dictate your dreams and go.

PISCES



FEB 20 - MAR 20

Avoid setting too many unrealistic goals for yourself right now. If you aim higher than it's possible to reach, you'll only get frustrated. You need attainable milestones that can boost your confidence and keep you positive about the bigger mountains that you'll need to climb further down the road. Today, all you have to do is assess your surroundings and act fast. Don't think too long about the pros and cons.

