

First day – 16 October 2012

“**Shailaputri**” (literally meaning daughter of the mountains) is the first form of the Goddess Durga and is worshipped on the first day of Navaratri. Diversely known as Sati Bhavani, Parvati or Hemavati, the daughter of Hemavana - the king of the Himalayas, she is the first among the nine manifestations of the Goddess or the “Navadurgas”. She is believed to be the embodiment of the power of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. She rides a bull and carries a trident and a lotus in her two hands.



Second Day - 17 October 2012

“**Brahmcharini**”, is the second form of the Goddess Durga and is worshipped on the second day of Navaratra. Bharmacharini means the one who practices devout austerity. She holds a rosary in her right hand and a water utensil in her left hand. She is in a state of bliss and bestows happiness, peace, prosperity and grace upon all her devotees. Filled with bliss and happiness, she is the way to liberation or Moksha.



Third Day - 18 October 2012

"**Chandraghanta**", is the third form of the Goddess Durga and is worshipped on the third day of Navaratra. The Hindus pray to her for peace, tranquility and prosperity in life. She has a 'chandra' or half moon on her forehead that is in the shape of a 'ghanta' or bell. This is why she is called 'Chandraghanta'. She has a golden bright complexion and rides a lion. She has ten hands, three eyes and holds weapons in her hands. She is the apostle of bravery and possesses great strength to fight in battles against demons.



Fourth Day - 19 October 2012

"**Kushmanda**" is the fourth form of the Goddess and is worshipped on the fourth day of the Navaratra. 'Kushmanda' means the "the little cosmic egg" ('Ku' means a little; 'ushma' means 'warmth'; and 'anda' means cosmic egg. She is considered the creator of the universe, spreading her light in all directions like rays from the sun. Often she is depicted as having eight or ten hands. She rides a lion.



Fifth Day - 20 October 2012

"**Skanda Mata**" is the fifth form of the Goddess and is worshipped on the fifth day of Navaratra. She is the mother of Skanda or Lord Kartikeya, who was chosen by the Gods as their chief in the war against the demons. She is accompanied by the Lord Skanda in his infant form. Skanda Mata has four arms and three eyes, holds the infant Skanda in her right upper arm and has a lotus in her right hand which is slightly raised upwards. The left arm is raised to bless devotees. In her left lower hand, she holds a lotus. She is seated on a lotus.



Sixth Day - 21 October 2012

'**Katyayani**', is the sixth form of the Goddess and is worshipped on the sixth day of Navaratra. The story goes that there was once a great sage named Kata who had a son named Katya. Kata underwent long austerities and penance in order to evoke the grace of the Mother Goddess. He wished to have a daughter in the form of a goddess. According to his wish and desire, the Mother Goddess granted his request and Goddess Katyayani was born to him.



Seventh Day – 22 October 2012

'**Kalratri**' is the seventh form of the Goddess and is worshipped on the seventh day of Navaratra. She has a dark complexion, disheveled hair and is in a fearless posture. She has three eyes that shine bright and terrible flames that emanate from her breath. Her vehicle is the donkey. Her raised right hand always seems to grant boons to all worshippers and her right lower hand is in the pose of allaying fears. Her left upper hand holds a thorn-like weapon, made of iron and there is a dagger in the lower left hand. She is black like the Goddess Kali and holds a sparkling sword in her right hand to fight evil. Her gesture of protection assures us of freedom from fear and troubles. Though her appearance is fearsome, she is generous with her boons. She is also as 'Shubhamkari' – the one who is auspicious.



Eighth Day - 23 October 2012

"**Maha Gauri**" is the eighth form of the Goddess and is worshipped on the eighth day of the navratra. Worshipping her washes away the sins of the past, present and future. Maha Gauri is intelligent, peaceful and calm. Her long austerities in the deep forests of the Himalayas won the love of Lord Shiva who cleansed her with the Ganga waters and made her beautiful once and white again. She has four arms and rides on a bull. Her right hand is in the pose of allaying fear and her right lower hand holds a trident. The left upper hand holds a 'damaru' (a small rattle drum) and the lower one is in the pose of granting boons to her devotees.



Ninth Day - 24 October 2012

"**Siddhidatri**" is the ninth form of the Goddess and is worshipped on the ninth day of the navratra. Siddhidatri has supernatural healing powers. She has four arms and is always in a blissful happy enchanting pose. She rides on the lion. She blesses all Gods, saints, yogis, tantrics and all devotees. In the 'Devi Bhagvata Purana', it is mentioned that Lord Shiva worshipped her and was blessed with all the Siddhis (supernatural powers). By her blessings, his half body became female and other half body male in the form of Ardhnarishvara.

