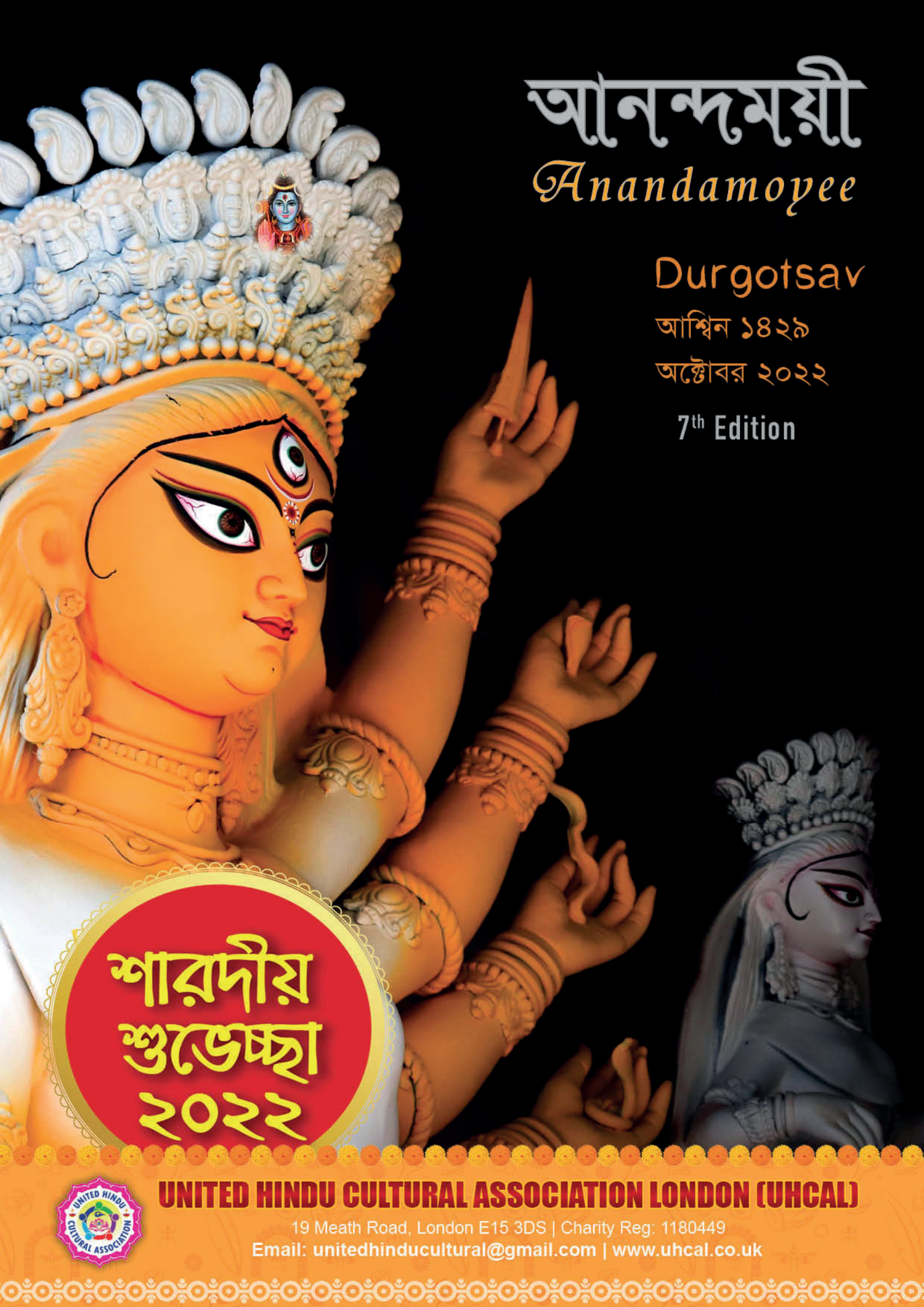


আনন্দময়ী

Anandamoyee

Durgotsav

আশ্বিন ১৪২৯

অক্টোবর ২০২২

7th Edition

শারদীয় শুভেচ্ছা ২০২২

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1926 - 2022

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Upcoming Events from UCHAL

- Kali Puja:- Monday 24th October 2022
- Saraswati Puja:- Wednesday, 25th January 2023
- Maha Shivaratri: Saturday,18th February 2023
- Lokenath Baba Triodhan:- 2nd June 2023
- Krishna Janmashtami: 6th September 2023
- Durga Puja- 20th October - 24th October 2023

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Editorial Message

Lots of events have taken place over the past few weeks. The longest-reigning British monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, died on Sept. 8, 2022, at 96 years old. Liz Truss became the new Prime Minister for the UK. We extend our condolences to King Charles III, the Royal family, and the Commonwealth on the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Let her memory be a blessing.

However, under this circumstance we are going to celebrate Durga Puja again this year. Our goal is to deliver Hindu heritage to the next generation. Hinduism has roots and customs dating back over 4,000 years, making it one of the world's oldest religions. Currently, Hinduism has about 900 million followers, making it the third-largest religion on earth. 'Atman', or the belief in the heart, is one of the key concepts of Hinduism. Living creatures have souls, and they are all part of a supreme soul, according to this philosophy. It is the goal of conservation or salvation to end the cycle of rebirths and become part of the absolute soul. There are several forms of Hinduism that are henotheistic, meaning that they worship one god, known as 'Brahman,' while including other deities and goddesses. There are multiple paths to reach their god, according to followers.

Durga has always been a sacred object of meditation, devotion, prayers, and guidance for centuries. This Forty-hymn treatise vividly praises Her presence, conquest of enemies, Vedic wisdom and mercy on conditioned souls on Earth. The Hindu festival of Durga Puja, traditionally held in Bengal, Assam, and other eastern Indian states, is a major Hindu festival that takes place for 10 days in Ashvina (Bengali Month and September-October in English), the seventh month of the Hindu calendar. Today it is celebrated everywhere in the world where Hindus live. UNESCO has inscribed 'Durga Puja' in Kolkata on its 'Intangible Heritage List'. "Kolkata's Durga Puja has just been inscribed on the #IntangibleHeritage list," UNESCO tweeted.

According to the Shiva Purana, this divine female energy (Durga) originates from the goddess Parvati. Before the cosmic creations, Shiva invoked Her from His left and created Shivloka with her help. It further states the demonic son of Rambha named Mahishasur once created havoc on Bhuloka (earth) and defeated all the gods of heaven, endangering their existence. After hearing such events, Lord Vishnu discharged a huge mass of light from His mouth that merged into the similar rays emitted from the mouths of those gods. A powerful female deity called Durga emerged from this powerful light and challenged Mahishasur.

Mahishasur's entire army packed with evil-minded soldiers such as Chikshur, Chamar, Asiloma, Vidalaksha, Durdhara, Mahanhanu and others assaulted at once. Armed with the celestial weapons, Goddess Durga took on all of them with her matchless brutality and beheaded Mahishasura who tried to kill her in various animal forms. Durga is honored with devotion during the festival of Durga Puja in her ten divine forms Kushmanda, Chandraghanta, Brahmacharini, Shailaputri, Skandamata, Katyayani, Kalaratri, Mahagauri, Mahakali and Durga.

Additionally, we gather every year not only to celebrate our puja, but also to pass down our values, beliefs, honesty, and devotion. By working together, we are able to make the Puja a success, and it is through honesty and hard work that we will be able to build a better community, reunite families and create a wonderful society.

Those who support us financially, physically, and mentally every year to bring Durga Puja to life are always greatly appreciated. The guests who never refused the financial contribution through the advertisements in Anandamoyee magazine have been valued by us. Without their dedication, we could not achieve our goals. Our sincere thanks go out to Sujan Saha and Dabasish Roy for their tirelessly passionate and creative work on this publication. I would also like to thank poets and writers for their valuable contributions. Lastly, we would like to say that we have worked hard to produce a vibrant magazine that you are sure to enjoy reading.

I hope you will continue to send us your articles so that we can keep informing, educating, & sharing your experiences and knowledge to make the world a better place. Jai Maa Durga.

Wishing you a happy and prosperous Navratri!!



Editor-In-Chief:
Dr Dababrata Chowdhury



Editor:
Mr Uday Shankar Durjay

High Commission for the People's Republic of Bangladesh
London, United Kingdom

High Commissioner



Message

On the auspicious occasion of the Sharodiya Durgotsab and Holy Durga Puja Festival 2022, I convey my warmest felicitations and Sharodiya Shuveccha to all members of the Hindu faith residing in the United Kingdom and Ireland. I am happy to learn that United Hindu Cultural Association London (UCHA), UK is bringing out a publication on the Occasion of Durga Puja Festival.

The Bangladesh Constitution, as enacted by our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, guarantees equal rights of all irrespective of race, colour, creed, ethnicity gender or religious beliefs. Today's Bangladesh, under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has emerged as a leading global example of inter-faith harmony and secular values upholding the spirit of our glorious Liberation War of 1971.

Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has unequivocally said "Religion is for the individual, but festivals are for all," Durga Puja being the largest festival of the Hindu community, therefore, is not only a major Hindu religious festival but also a celebration for all communities in Bangladesh. The Durga Puja Festival enlightens us with the message of victory and triumph of the good over the evil and of the righteous over the vile and vicious forces.

I hope that the Sharodiya Durgotsab 2022 will further consolidate the bonds of friendship and fraternity among all diaspora communities in the United Kingdom. I thank United Hindu Cultural Association London, United Kingdom for organizing the Holy Durga Puja Festival 2022.

Warm salam and deep regards,

(Saida Muna Tasneem)

28 Queen's Gate, London SW7 5JA, Tel: +44(0) 20 7581 7422 PABX: +44(0) 20 7584 0081 Fax: +44(0) 20 7581 74771 (0) 20 7225 3831, Website:www.bhclondon.org.uk E-mail:hc@bhclondon.org.uk

MAYOR OF LONDON



Message from the Mayor of London

I would like to send my best wishes to all of those in London and members of United Hindu Cultural Association London who are celebrating Durga Puja this year.

As the Mayor of London, I am proud to represent such a forward-looking and dynamic global city where we do not just accept our differences but respect and celebrate them. Your community continues to make a huge impact on every aspect of life in the capital and I would like to thank you for the contribution you make to our great city.

Wishing you all a peaceful and joyous Durga Puja.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London



President Message

Dear Devotee,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the United Hindu Cultural Association London (UHCAL) Sharodiya Durgotsav and Kali Puja 2022.

I feel very privileged and honoured to serve all devotees during our different celebrations with all of your continued support. I want to take this opportunity to commend last year's working committee for doing an outstanding job of making UHCAL an inclusive society. We have provided a platform for Bengalis & Indians to come together & promote this Hindu traditional culture to the next generation.

We met numerous Bengalis who have lived in London for several years but have yet to become a member. We want to reach out not only to them but also to those who have recently relocated. Please do spread the word, bring them to the events and urge them to join the UHCAL community. The success of an organization depends in large part on the strength of its balance sheet and this is one of the areas where we need to work hard to improve. We appeal to all of you for your support. We welcome your knowledge and support to improve our charity organization activities. UHCAL is nothing without you.

I would like to convey my sincere thanks to all of our UHCA members, friends, families, contributors, sponsors, advertisers, article writers and other community people who have in one way or another contributed and participated in the various activities and their selfless efforts and total dedication towards service to the community as well as nation building.

I wish to extend my best wishes to everyone, may Maa Durga bestow us with a lot of joy, happiness, success, unity and hope for a better tomorrow.

Joy Maa Durga and very best wishes to Shubho Bijoya.

Mr Noni Gopal Paul.
UHCAL – President.



Secretary Message

Dear Devotee,

We have once again come together to celebrate Sharodiya Durga Puja and Kali Puja for the 7th year running with your continuous help and support. The festival of Durga Puja marks the victory of good over evil. It is the celebration of Shakti and Bhakti, which strengthen the bond of fellowship, love and harmony in the society.

Having the privilege and honour to serve as the General Secretary of UHCAL, I would like to take the opportunity to convey my sincere gratitude to all of our advertisers and patrons who have generously contributed financially. Our appreciation also goes to the respected members of UHCAL, friends and families for their tireless and unselfish effort in the endeavour to create a caring and compassionate multicultural community and to promote our culture, customs and traditions to the new generation. We acknowledge the generosity of those devotees who have already set up monthly direct debit towards the payment of membership fee and encourage others to come forward to set up monthly direct debit in order to support our noble cause.

We are all working together to make this year's Durga Puja and Kali Puja a success again and hope that by getting together through our faith and celebrations we will not only strengthen our community and bring the families together but also allow the society to maintain a positive attitude towards the objective of creating a better future.

May Maa Durga guide us in the path of righteousness and shower her blessings on us for peace, happiness and prosperity. **Joy Maa Durga.**

Mr Shuvra Bhowmik
UHCAL- General Secretary

ইউনিভার্সেল
কার্ডিয়াক হাসপাতাল
সাবেক- আয়েশা মেমোরিয়াল কার্ডিয়াক হাসপাতাল



"হার্টের যত্নে
যেকোন মুহূর্তে
আমরা আছি
আপনার পাশে

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Durga Puja *By Jasamit Saha (year 4)*

Durga puja is a very important festival as Maa Durga defeated the monstrous demon Mahishasura. Mahishasura had received a special boon from Lord Brahma, making him invincible. He chased all the God's out of Heaven, making them powerless. All the Gods and Goddesses went to Brahma to save their life from Mahishasur. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva combined their powers to form the ten armed Maa Durga. Each god and goddess gave her a weapon in her hand, including a conch shell with a lotus flower and a trident. With their blessings, Maa Durga mounted the Lion and set out to destroy Mahishasur. They fought for 10 days and 10 nights. On the last day she defeated the half buffalo, half demon. Maa Durga destroyed the darkness and everyone was happy once again. During Durga puja, we wear special, traditional clothes called "panjabi" and "shari . We also eat blessed food called "prashad", which tastes very delicious. I love Durga Puja a lot because we can have fun and celebrate with our friends and family.

Happy Durga Puja to everyone!



Durga Puja *By Prithika Saha (year 8)*

Hinduism is the oldest religion in the world and Durga Puja is the most famous and biggest festival.Durga Puja is a time of year to celebrate and worship the almighty Goddess Maa Durga for destroying the fierce Mahishasur, a half buffalo, half demon who had vicious red eyes. After a long period of suffering, the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva came together to combine their powers to summon Maa Durga. Each god and goddess armed her with a weapon to use in battle with the demon. The battle lasted for a period of 9 days. On the last day Maa Durga successfully slayed the horrible creature, returning peace and prosperity back to earth. The humans were overjoyed and the gods and goddess returned back to heaven once again. Durga Puja is a time for joy and happiness. The festival is also marked by scripture recitation, performing arts,giving gifts, family visits,feasting and public processions. I love Durga Puja because it is a very good opportunity together with friends and family, alongside having delicious prashad every day.

Wishing everybody a lovely Durga Puja!



Durga Puja *By Pearl Saha (year 11)*

Durga Puja, a significant festival of Hinduism, traditionally held for 10 days in the month of Ashin (September–October), is celebrated on the seventh month of the Hindu calendar.It is particularly observed in West Bengal, India, Bangladesh, and other surrounding regions. A nine-night festival is dedicated to Goddess Durga to celebrate her victory over the vicious demon king Mahishasura.The celebration of Her divine victory has been recently acknowledged by the United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), inscribing it on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The festival has also come to signify 'home-coming' and seasonal return to one's roots. Durga Puja has been recognised to be one of the world's grandest displays of public performance of religion and art, and as a thriving ground for collaborative artists as well as devotees.The festival is characterised through large-scale installations and pavilions in urban areas, in addition to conventional Bengali drumming and veneration of the goddess Maa Durga. During the event, the divides of class, faith and ethnicities fall apart as crowds of spectators gather round to worship and express their affection towards Goddess Durga.

Wishing everybody a lovely Durga Puja!

Durga Puja, Dussehra & Diwali Celebrations 2022







"Tamasomaa Jyotirgamaya"
Lead me from darkness to light

"This life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive." - ***Swami Vivekananda***

We wish you happiness & success in everything you do. Let the spirit of festivals bring you hope and courage in life. May the divine Blessings of the Divine Mother be with you now and always.
Ram Chandra Saha & the team

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Durga Puja

By Tonaya Das, 11 years old. *Bolo Durga Mai Ki Joi*

Durga Puja is the worship of Goddess Durga – Shakti and Power. This festival is celebrated with full enthusiasm all over India. People fast for ten days, thereby showing their devotion towards the Goddess Durga. The celebration differs from place to place based on tradition and belief. At some places, the festival is celebrated for 5 days, some places for 7 days and at other places it is celebrated for a complete ten days. The last five days of Durga puja: Sashthi, Saptami, Ashtami, Navami and Dashami are celebrated with full joy and exuberance in India.

In nine days of celebration, Goddess Durga is worshipped in nine different avatars. Day one as Shailputri, day two as Brahmacharini, day three as Chandraghanta, day four as Kushmanda, day five as Skandamata, day six as Katyayani, day seven as Kaalratri, day eight as Mahagauri and day nine as Siddhidatri.



Durga Puja

By Tanmoy Das, 14 years old

The auspicious festival of Durga Puja is an annual five day celebration originating in the Bengali subcontinent which pays homage to the Goddess Maa Durga. It celebrates the victory of good over evil as Goddess Durga killed the demon king Mahishasur. According to Hindu mythology, it is believed that the Goddess visits her earthly abode during this time to bless her devotees. According to Hindu mythology, the demon Mahishasur had received a boon of invincibility from Lord Brahma, which meant that no man or God could kill him. Mahishasur attacked the Gods and chased them out of heaven after receiving the blessing. To fight off the demon king, all the Gods came together to worship Adi Shakti. The divine light that came out of all the Gods during the puja created Maa Durga. Goddess Durga slayed the demon king on the tenth day, and hence the day is celebrated as Vijaya Dashami, symbolising the victory of good over evil.





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Ganesh Festival and Experience in UK

Abir Chowdhury (Year 7)

Ganeshotsav is a Hindu festival commemorating the birth of the Hindu god Ganesh. Ganesh Festival, also known as GaneshChaturthi, is an auspicious Hindu festival which is celebrated for 10 days every year. The festival is celebrated in the Bhadra month as per the Hindu calendar which generally falls in mid-August to September. It marks the birthday of the beloved elephant-headed Lord Ganesh. Ganesh is known as the God of wealth, science, knowledge, wisdom and prosperity. Therefore, most Hindus remember him and seek his blessings before starting any work. Lord Ganesh is known by innumerable names like Gajanana, Vinayaka, Vighnaharta as well as many others.



This festival is celebrated with great devotion and joy by Hindus globally. This year, on the 31st August, I celebrated this festival with my family, which I enjoyed. We celebrated this in the Chelmsford Hindu Temple. There were many deities represented in the temple. All of these Gods represent different roles. This festival was very engaging and is also important for our culture. To mark the end of this festival and after 10 days of completing the everyday puja, the Chelmsford Hindus gathered to submerge the Lord's statue in the River Can to complete the Visarjan. There is a story behind the Ganesh visarjan. It is believed that Lord Ganesh returns to the Kailash Mountain join his family on the last day of this sacred festival. I wish that Lord Ganesh will bless us all health and wisdom.



Durga Puja

John Drudge

In the days
Of Ashvina
When spirits rise
In unison
When Durga strikes
At the heart
Of the demon king
We rejoice in wonder
At the cycles
Of the moon
The Shakti
That beats in us all
Behind
Lakshmi and Sarasvati
On a path
Of blue lotuses
Drumming in procession
And following
Scared footsteps
To the river
Home



মানুষ

শিব শংকর সাহা

মানষ তুমি ন্যুইকো মানষ
নামটাই শুধু তোমার আছে,
ঘণার জাল বিছান্যে তোমার চারপাশে
রঙিন ফানস ওড়াও তুমি স্বপ্নের বিলাশে
মুখে তোমার ধর্মের কথা
তমি নাইকো ধুর্মের ধারেকাছে।
ধর্মের নামে ব্যবসা করো
ধর্ম বেচো হাট বাজারে,
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মানষ তমি ন্যুইকো মানষ
শুধু নামটাই তোমার আছে।।
মানষ যদি না থাকে এই দনিয়াতে
ধর্ম থাকবে কোথা থেকে??
হিরোসিমা নাগাসাকিতে কোন ধর্ম আছে??
একই চন্দ্র একই সূর্য একই আকাশতলে,
ভাগ করছো তুমি মানুষ আল্লাহ্ ভগবানে,
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THE DURGA PUJA FESTIVAL: INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

(Dr. Gaikar Vilas B - Vice-Principal & Associate Professor in Economics, Smt. CHM. College, Member, Board of Studies in Economics, University of Mumbai, India. & Dr. Leena Vilas Gaikar: Head, Dept of Chemistry, Sidharth college, Badlapur, University of Mumbai, India)







India is well-known for a plethora of things, including its cuisine, culture and so on. Being multicultural country, Hindus in India celebrates Diwali, Lord Ganesh Puja, Mahashivratri, Holi, Krishna Janmashtami, Ram Navami etc. but Durga Puja is special one of them. The Hindu festival Durga Puja, which commemorates Goddess Durga's victory over the demon king Mahishasura, is grandly celebrated with great pride and devotion across India. A time to unite as a nation and celebrate the various hues of rich and vibrant history, traditions, and culture that have bound us all together for generations is Navratri, also known as Durga Puja. India celebrates Navratri for nine days, during which time people worship the nine incarnations of Goddess Durga (which translates to nine nights). This festival is very deer to the Indian youth. Following are various regions in India where Durga Puja is enthusiastically celebrated:

West Bengal state:

The state of west Bengal (Kolkata) is at the top of the list because it is well renowned for its fervent celebration of Durga Puja. You will be able to see some of the state's finest pandals during the Durga Puja celebrations, including stalls offering mouth-watering Bengali delicacies and more. Similarly, the city's joyful appearance during the Puja celebrations takes on an incredible value. Every year the different kinds of pandals are created with the message to masses of population. The entire state is in a holistic mood in this period.

Maharashtra State:

The metropolitan cities in the state like Mumbai, Pune etc are witnessing the huge celebrations of the Durga puja. The special attraction is the dance 'Garba'. However, the Bengali minority in this area is credited with initiating the trend. They set up many pandals and started celebrating Durga Puja in the city, much like they did in Kolkata.

Delhi:

When it comes to celebrating a festival in style, the capital city of India, i.e. Delhi isn't far behind either. And CR Park is the most well-known location in the city for capturing the essence of Kolkata. People in the city visit various pandals over these auspicious days to taste a range of traditional Bengali delicacies. The iconic Ramlila Maidan has a spectacular celebration on Dussehra, the day when Ravana's effigies are set on fire.

Gujarat and Rajasthan States:

Gujarat is the state, however, to host a nine-night dance festival that is reputed to be the longest in the entire world. People congregate in open areas every night throughout the state, in both towns and villages, to worship Shakti, the feminine divinity.

The dancing style known as 'Ras garba', which is occasionally joined by the dandiya, which worships Lord Krishna rather than a goddess, is a product of the 'Gop culture of Saurashtra and Kutch'. The 'Ras garba', song frequently incorporates tales about the emotions and relationships between Krishna and the Gopis.

Along with the above states, the entire nation is celebrating this festival.

This year the prestigious Hindu festival 'Durga Puja' to be celebrated from 26th September, 2022 to 4th November 2022 and on 5th September 2022, the 'Vijayasahsami or Dussehra' to be celebrated on grand manner.

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Durga the almighty Goddess

Louise Whyburd

It is that time of year where an integral part of Hindu culture brings communities alive to celebrate the Durga Puja festival across the world. The Durga Puja is one of the most important festivals in India, it refers to all the six days observed as Mahalaya, Shasthi, Maha Saptami, Maha Ashtami, Maha Navami and Vijaya-dashami. To most it is more than just a festival Durga Puja is a celebration of life, culture, popular customs, and traditions. It is a time of reunion and rejuvenation to love, to share and to care. The Durga Puja is a pinnacle part Hinduism as is celebrated all over the world with different rituals and festivities especially in the eastern region of India. Although the festival is traditionally celebrated over a 10-day period, the celebrations intensify on the 6th day which is believed to be the day the goddess came to earth so this year it the celebrations will start on the 1st October until the 5th October. This festival involves the worship of Shakti the Goddess Durga. According to legend Shakti is the back story of Mahisasur, who is a powerful daemon also known as the Buffalo Daemon. He was born after many years of intense praying from his father Lord Brahma and it was said that his powers made him invincible, however his intentions were not good and he started marauding across the world, killing people in his path and eventually he decided he wanted to uproot the gods too. The Gods who were in disillusion upon hearing of his evil intentions so decided to combine their powers to create an alluring warrior, they each placed their most potent weapon in one of her ten hands. Durga was so powerful she killed Mahisasur and won heaven back for the Gods. The festival is a very social and public event, where it dominates religious and socio-cultural life, with temporary pandals, bold and elaborate roadside shrines, and stunning temples. The festival is also observed by some Shakta Hindus as a private home-based festival too. This is typically also the day on which the eyes of the deities on the representative clay sculpture-idols are painted, bringing them to a lifelike appearance. Many rituals and Puja ceremonies are also performed during this festival which also include ritual-based dance celebrations such as Dhunuchi. The Durga Puja really is a spectacular festival from the stunning Pandals, the delicious array of foods, intricate shrines and the beautiful outfits it is no wonder why Hindus across the globe truly adore this festival. It brings families together and communities unite to celebrate to show the respects for the almighty Goddess Durga.



Durga Maa

Orpa Saha (Year 11)



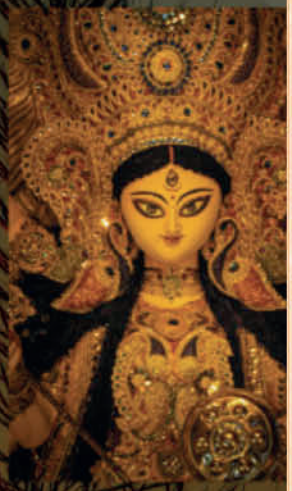
Our eternal goddess
Always omnibenevolent
The sun will reflect
Her luminescent heart.
She will rise above
And take stead against evil
Until we hear the humanity.
Joyously celebrate
Maa Durga our shining debi
Forever gunnersing in our hearts
Dancing to the chants
Of Hare Krishna
Until the sky turns dark.
Maa Durga, our straight
Who wishes the best for all
She will paint our sunsets
With love, joy and harmony
A rainbow of endless unity.



May the nine avatars of Maa Durga bless you with nine qualities-power, happiness, humanity, peace, knowledge, devotion, name, fame and health. Jai Mata

Happy Durga Puja

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With Open Eyes For Durga Puja

Sarah Leavesley

English-skinned and English-languaged, I cannot
wear these Hindu words as my own,
only welcome learning of their significance:

the wonder of post-monsoon celebrations,
for a female deity, harvest and growth,
for life, its journeys and the blessings of water,

for victory in scripture and ongoing
everyday triumphs of goodness. I live within
my limited experience's limited knowledge,

but that doesn't stop my recognition of beauty
beyond this: a cupped offering of 108 lotuses,
the brilliance of lighting 108 lamps,

or what it might mean to gift an eye in place
of one lost flower – for all of us to offer our sight
to the ways and needs of those around us.



Dialectics

David Lee Morgan

it's the dance of love
it's the dance of life
it's the dance of revolution
it's the dancing of dance
up close, it's an explosion
step away and it's an eternal solid that never moves
another step away & it's a fragment in a larger explosion
now go in deep, deeper, deeper still
there is no inside that isn't an outside
there is no outside that isn't the inside of a larger outside
we are the infinite onion
there is no outer skin
no inner core
only more



Durga Puja

Fin Hall

"Dugga, Dugga" the women cry
Resplendent in colourful attire,
Bindis and bangles,
Buckles and bells,
Celebrating Durga bidding Mahishasura farewell
For ten days we dance.
Dugra, created by the Devas
As told in the Debi Bhagvatam
From Mahalaya to Vijaydashami,
And beyond, riding on the lion.
Even after you were laughed at Scorned for be-
ing a mere woman,
Your hidden strength came to the fore
And then for evermore,
We rejoiced. Despite Asura changing form.
Changing shape, changing to deflect the Devi,
Cunning, but not cunning enough
The buffalo is vanquished.
And so, we rejoice
With drums and dunuchi, and heavy jewels,
Ullu and Maa Duga, begone evil fools.
Dugga, Dugga, the women cry,
In penance the men still walk behind.

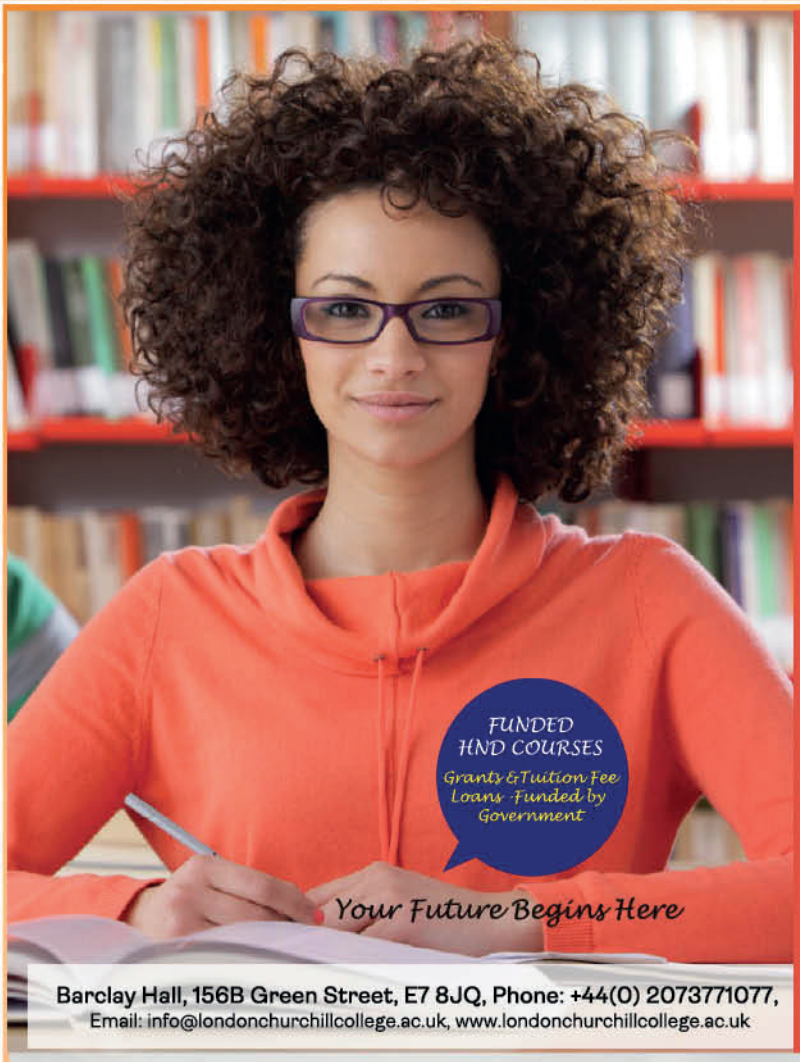


The Sailors

Shyamashri Ray Karmakar

When Vertigo stepped on our staircase
and transformed it into a deep blue sea,
I saw my father.
He was sailing a lone ship.
His glances became such softening breeze,
a silent odyssey of moments
took me beyond the date and time,
a chiaroscuro of tinged memories,
careful strokes of tears and ecstasy, a Caravaggio.
Showing a range of wrecked vessels
my young father held my five year old palms,
kissed them and said,
"Remember my child! Jealousy is a hungry shark
and
I've always taught you how to sail... "





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Returning Home
(For Durga Puja)

Daniela Andonovska-Trajkovska

Your fingers are playing with the light
weaving it in this old lump of clay
my lungs are inhaling the life
that flows in the streets
Inhale... Exale...
Inhale... Exale...
Inhale... Exale...
The crowd moves slowly in a rhythm and
carries me up in the sky

"Open my eyes with the gentle feather of time"
– I whisper in your heart,
"Let me be a strength that leads you in the darkness
Look at yourself with my eye that looks inward
You are a woman! A wife! A mother! A Goddess!
A stone! A temple of life!
Draw me a smile and stand against your pain
Leave your fear behind
Embrace the voice of your truth
Be yourself,
an energy that ennobles,
a life that never dies,
peace on Earth,
salvation of the humanity!
Be Me and the universe will flow into your veins
I am You and the sky cries solemnly

Lift me high above your head
and face me with your multiplied faces
that lurk from every corner of my street
praying for life

"The Goddess must go home!" – you hear on
the street behind you
My body flows in the water
A gentle smile grows in your eyes
In you I am
In Me You are
Your doubts
Your fear
Your pain flow in the river
My strength, my breath, my heart
Returns home with you



Rejoice people!
Durga Puja!

Mariia Starosta

The goddess will defeat all evil!
She came with kindness to every home and
country- Celebrate and enjoy bright days.
There are ten days in the month of Ashvina
tambourines and songs do not stop.
Goddess Durga of the demon Mahishasura
overcame forever to the joy of everyone!



ব্যাঙাবতার

(ঋগ্বেদের ৭ম মণ্ডলের ১০৩ নং সূক্ত অনুসরণে)

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শারদ কথন

দয়াল দত্ত

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শরতের আলো

অনিন্দিতা মিত্র

মেঘের কপালে জলের টিপ পরিয়ে বৃষ্টি নামে মাটির গর্ভে, আলোছায়ার ঝিলিমিলি উপত্যকায় সানাইয়ের সুর, ট্রেন ছোটে, ছোটে কাশবন, দুরন্ত হাওয়ায় মিলিয়ে যায় এলোমেলো সব কথার বাহার। ঘুম জড়িয়ে আসে চোখে, চিকন পাতার তিরতির করে কাঁপা বুকে রঙ আর তুলির মায়াবী টান, পুকুরের কালো জলে ডুব দেয় জলফড়িং, শাপলার সরল মধু চুষে খায় ভোমরার দল। শরতে প্রতিটা মেয়ের মায়াজন্ম হয় আগমনি হয়ে।

Photo Gallery

















Photo Gallery


















Photo Gallery





















Dhanvin Gunowa
13 Years

Hinduism is the world's oldest of all living religions dated back over 5,000 years, although elements of the faith are much older. Hinduism is a diverse approach of thoughts marked by a range of philosophies, beliefs, rituals and prayers. Hindus will usually wish to pray twice a day. Hinduism represents a complete way of life and is practised by over a billion of followers. Hindus believe in one God and worship that one God under many manifestations, deities or images. Hindus believe that all prayers addressed to any form or manifestation will eventually reach the Supreme God. Hindus often visit temples and even worship God in their own homes. Most Hindus have a special place in their house where there is a family shrine. They burn incense and use holy scriptures such as Bhagwat Gita, Ramayana, and prayer beads. Fasting is a regular feature of the Hindu religion and is commonly practised during festivals such as Shivaratri, Krishna Janmashtami and Durga Puja. Jai Shri Krishna.



Ishika Dhar
17 Years

My name is Ishika Dhar, I am 17 years old and currently studying at Northgate Sixth Form - 4 A Levels including Biology, Chemistry, Economics and Maths with an aim to study further next year at University.

Hinduism is a significant part of my life. It has helped me with many difficult decisions by clearing my mind and allowing me to think carefully. I feel power and devotion in my beliefs, which has gives me confidence at times where I doubt myself.

Ma Durga is especially a symbol of strength and destruction. I find this to be inspiring especially as a student because it motivates me to try my best and never give up.

I find the festivities and celebrations in Hinduism beautiful and this particular aspect of our religion is seen at Durga Puja. The lights, the colours and the liveliness are all so captivating. I enjoy seeing our community come together at such an auspicious time. I wish to learn more about Hinduism to strengthen my devotion and help me to navigate through life. Hoping you all enjoy this special occasion and the celebration of Ma Durga.

Durga Puja

Festival, Tradition and Facts

Sereen Jlassi





The Durga Puja event is one of the main yearly Hindu festivals observed on the Indian subcontinent. It's also observed in the Indian states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Assam, Meghalaya as well as in the nation of Bangladesh .. in honour of the goddess Durga and it commemorates Durga's triumph over Mahishasur.

Durga is a major Hindu goddess, worshipped as a principal aspect of the mother goddess Mahadevi. She is associated with protection, strength, motherhood, destruction, and wars.

Durga Puja celebrates the victory of the goddess Durga over the demon king Mahishasur. Durga is believed to unleash her divine wrath against the wicked for the liberation of the oppressed and entails destruction to empower creation.

Puja is a worship ritual performed by Hindus, Buddhists and Jains to honour the presence of special guests, or their memories after they die. Puja, the loving offering of light, flowers, and water or food to the divine, is the essential ritual of Hinduism. For the worshipper, the divine is visible in the image, and the divinity sees the worshipper.

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ইভা অরণ্যা

সৌহার্দ্য সম্প্রীতির মিলন মেলাই হোল উৎসব। উৎসবপ্রেমী এই বাঙালি হয়ে ওঠে অবিরাম আনন্দ ধারার মাঝে চির উজ্জীবিত। ধর্মীয় সব ভেদাভেদ ভুলে এক অভিন্ন সত্তায় বাঙালি হয়ে ওঠে একে অপরের আন্তরিক বন্ধু। ধর্মীয় উৎসবের মধ্যে সার্বজনীন দুর্গাপূজা হচ্ছে বাঙালী হিন্দুদের সবচেয়ে বড় উৎসব। প্রতিবছর সনাতন ধর্মাবলম্বীদের প্রাণের উৎসধারায় বেজে ওঠে শরতের দিনগুলো। শিউলি শিশির মেখে নিতে নিতে যেমন চঞ্চল হয়ে ঠিক তেমনি পুজোর-দিনগুলোতে ভোরগুলো এমনি করে বাদ্য ছাড়া বেজে ওঠে প্রতি গৃহে।

দেবীপক্ষের সূচনা অমাবস্যাটি হল 'মহালয়া' আর এই মহালয়া থেকে পুজোর এক অদৃশ্য আগমনী সুর এসে কানের কাছে বাজতে থাকে সারাক্ষণ। শেষের দিনটি কোজাগরী পূর্ণিমার মাধ্যমে শেষ হয়ে গেলেও বাঙালি হিন্দুদের বাড়িতে পুজোর সুবাস রয়েই যায়। বাংলাদেশ-ভারত পেরিয়ে পৃথিবীর বিভিন্ন জায়গায় এই উৎসব এখন সার্বজনীন হয়ে উঠেছে। তৃতীয় বাঙলা বলে খ্যাত এই বিলেতে, প্রতি বছর কয়েকশ মন্দিরে দুর্গাপূজা সহ আরও অন্যান্য পূজা অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। অনেক মন্দিরে পর্যাপ্ত জায়গা না থাকায় বিভিন্ন স্থানে হল ভাড়া করে ধর্মীয় অ্যাসোসিয়েশানগুলো শারদীয় দুর্গোৎবের আয়োজন করে থাকে। যুক্তরাজ্যে কিছু শারদীয় পূজা উদযাপনকারীদের মধ্যে ইউনাইটেড হিন্দু কালচার অ্যাসোসিয়েশন, সনাতন অ্যাসোসিয়েশন ইউকে, ইন্ডিয়ান কালচারাল সোসাইটি ক্যামব্রিজ, ওয়েল্‌স পূজা কমিটি, মিডল্যান্ড্‌স ইন্ডিয়ান অ্যাসোসিয়েশন, বেঙ্গলি ফেস্টিভ্যাল উইম্বলি অন্যতম। এরকম অসংখ্য অ্যাসোসিয়েশন যারা আগামী প্রজন্মকে সভ্যতা, ধর্মীয়, সাংস্কৃতিক, কৃষ্টি, আচার আচরণ সম্পর্কে অভিহিত করে থাকে পাশাপাশি বিভিন্ন পূজা পার্বণ অনুষ্ঠানাদির মাধ্যমে সার্বজনীনতা, সহমর্মিতা ও একে ওপরের প্রতি অহিংসাবোধ জাগিয়ে তোলে। প্রার্থনা করা হয় যাতে দেবী মা দুর্গা যেন সব দুর্গতি নাশ করে সবার মনে আনন্দ আলো জ্বেলে দেন। হিংসা বিদ্বেষ ভুলে যেন সবাই এক আকাশের নিচে পা মলিয়ে চলতে পারে। এই খুন হানাহানি ধ্বংস বিবাদ রেখে মানুষ যেন নতুন আলোয় আলোকিত হতে পারে। সব লোভ আর লালসার আড্ডাখানা থেকে বেরিয়ে মানুষ যেন উন্মোচন করতে পারে এক অহিংস পৃথিবীর মায়ার চৌকাঠ।

বিগত কয়েক দশক ধরে বাঙালিরাও শিক্ষা দীক্ষায় এগিয়ে যাওয়ার পাশাপাশি বাংলা সাংস্কৃতি ও উৎসবে অংশগ্রহণ করে আসছে; চোখে পড়ার মতো না হলে একেবারে নগণ্য নয়। বর্তমান প্রজন্মের ছেলেমেয়েদের মধ্যেও শারদীয় উৎসব নিয়ে কৌতূহলের কমতি নেই, তারাও উৎসবে জেগে ওঠে; আনন্দে উৎসবে মেতে ওঠে সহপাঠী ও আত্মীয় পরিজন নিয়ে। মূর্তিগুলো সাধারণত পশ্চিমবাংলা থেকে আসে আর পূজা আর্চনার জন্য অনেক প্রয়োজনীয় জিনিস আসে বাংলাদেশ থেকে। কর্মব্যাস্ত প্রবাস জীবন তারপরও উৎসবে কারর কোনো ক্লান্তি নেই। কর্মক্ষেত্র থেকে ছুটি নিয়ে পরিবার সাথে করে সবাই বেরিয়ে পড়েন মায়ের মুখ দর্শনে। উৎসবের শেষের দিনগুলোতে মানুষের পদচারনা একটু বেশি দেখা যায়। শুধু যে ঠাকুর দর্শন তা নয় বরং দেখা হয়ে যায় অনেক দিন অদেখা বন্ধু এবং আত্মীয় স্বজনদের সাথে। আর এই সার্বজনীন উৎসবে যে শুধু হিন্দু ধর্মাবলম্বীরাই আসে মোটেই তা নয়। যারা উৎসবকে উৎসব হিসেবে দেখেন বা ভিন্ন কৃষ্টি কালচার উপভোগ করেন তারাও এক আনন্দ ধারার মাঝে উপস্থিত হন। পূজার সবকটা দিন জুড়ে থাকে মঞ্চ নাটক, সঙ্গীতানুষ্ঠানসহ নৃত্য এবং আরতি। মহিলারা মেতে ওঠেন সিঁদুর খেলায়, কেউ নেচে গেয়ে উপভোগ করেন আনন্দময়ী উৎসব। উৎসবের প্রায় প্রতিদিনই গান বাজনার আয়োজন থাকে পাশাপাশি প্রসাদের ব্যাবস্থা থাকে। প্রতিটি পূজা মণ্ডপ যেন এক খণ্ড বাঙলার মিলনমেলা হয়ে ওঠে। অনেকে পাঞ্জাবি-পায়জামা, কেউ ধূতি-পাঞ্জাবি আর মা বোনেরা রঙিন শাড়ি, শাঁখা-সিঁদুরে একেবারে বাঙলা উৎসবের পূর্ণাঙ্গ উঠোন করে তোলেন; যেন ভাবাই যায় না যে বিলেতের পাড়ায় ঢাকের আওয়াজ, খোল, করতাল আর ধুপের মায়াবী সৌরভের মাঝে মহামায়া আবির্ভূত হয়েছেন। বাঙালি তাঁদের যেকোনো উৎসবেই বাঙালি সাজে বেরিয়ে পড়ে। ঈদ-পূজা-বৈশাখী মেলা প্রতিটি উৎসবে বাঙালিদের উপস্থিতি চোখে পড়ার মতো। বিদেশি শিক্ষা-সমাজ ব্যবস্থার মধ্যে বেড়ে উঠলেও বাঙ্গালিত্বটা টিকিয়ে রাখাটা অনেক জরুরি। আগামী প্রজন্মকে বাঙালি সংস্কৃতিতে বেশি পরিমাণ সংযোগ ঘটানোর কাজটা কিন্তু দায়িত্ববান লোকেদেরই করতে হবে। শুধু ধর্ম চর্চাই না বাঙলা ভাষাকে এবং বাঙালির চির উজ্জ্বল সংস্কৃতিকে টিকিয়ে রাখতে জ্ঞানী মানুষের ভূমিকা রাখতে হবে সবচেয়ে বেশি।



A Thousand Splendid Blues

Uday Shankar Durjay

Your beauty and magic are made of pink glasses drawing a candlelit mountain. An unsettled landscape lets you escape the shadow however, you are still looking for another shadow. A thousand splendid blue oceans bring the stars down. Waiting to enjoy the colourful rain pouring on the snow ground. Rain and snow never make a difference. Let me fly over the Stella. A holly rainbow ended up in the backyard; your camera didn't miss to capture all the thriving best. An Instagram hunter waiting to go over the obsession with paint and brush.

Spectral rainbows need some oxygen; your magical touch would be the pain killer for the faded Mediterranean sea. Pristine water would be burnt touches with your footsteps. You love the flame in the water and dust of burning diamonds. Let's find the sandstone theory and figure out the beauty of La Marsa; I wanna be your spectacular summer capital, with ancient relics and art, with Celtic and Viking form. Let's walk in the white-washed town just before the day loses its light. In your archaeological eyes are pictured cliff-diving canvas. Have you ever met your hidden adventure? Let's meet the midnight stars fall and get drowned in the ashes.

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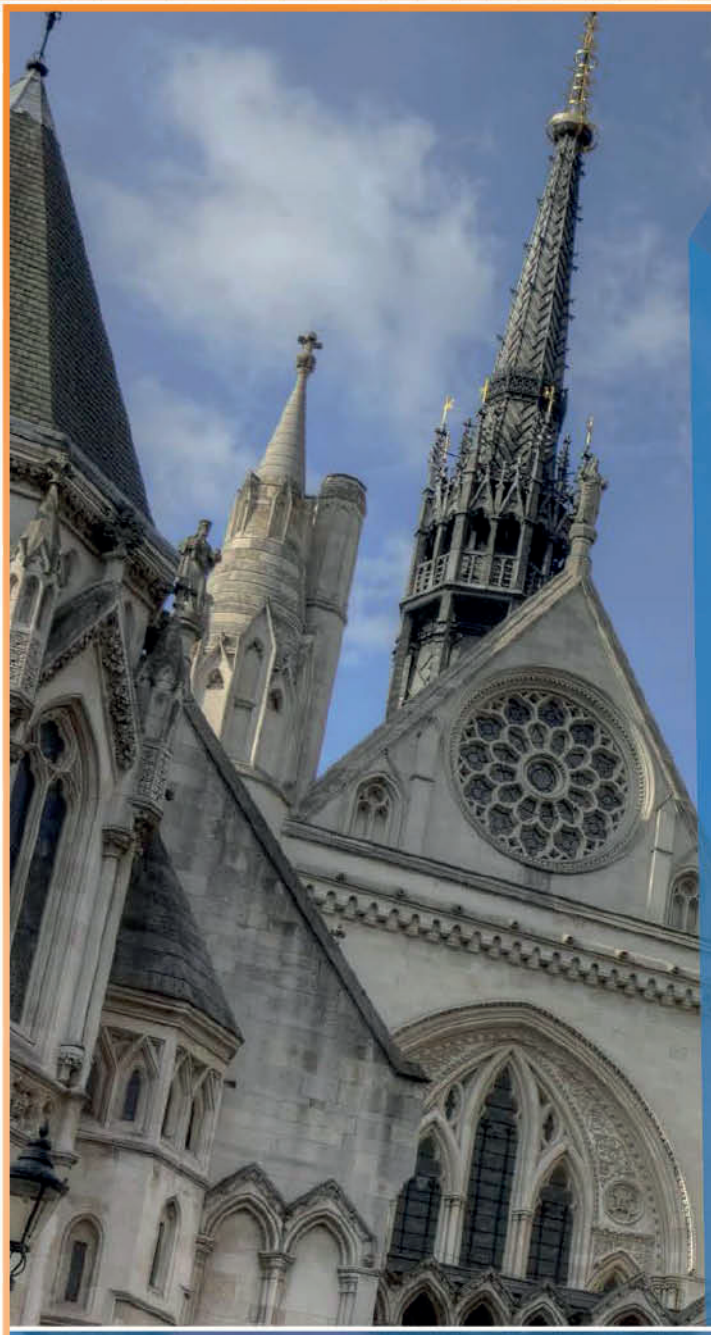
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শুভ্র ভৌমিক

আবহমান কাল ধরে শারদীয়া দুর্গাপূজার সার্বজনীন মাহাত্ম্য এবং একে ঘিরে বাঁধভাঙ্গা উচ্ছাস আর আনন্দের প্রতিফলন ঘটেছে বাঙালীর শিল্প ও সাহিত্যে। দেবী দুর্গার বহুমাত্রিক রূপ কখনো মাতৃরূপে, কখনো শক্তিরূপে আবার কখনোবা আনুষ্ঠানিকতার রঙে উজ্জ্বল বিভা ছড়িয়েছে বাংলার সাহিত্যিক আর শিল্পীদের বিভিন্ন সৃষ্টিকর্মে। শরতের অপরূপ রূপ, ধানের ক্ষেতে রৌদ্রছায়ার খেলা, ঝকঝকে নীল আকাশে সাদা মেঘের ভেলা, কাশবনের আন্দোলন যেমন বাঙালীর মনে আনন্দের অনুরণন সৃষ্টি করে তেমনি দুর্গাপূজাকে ঘিরে রচিত গান, নাটক, উপন্যাস, কবিতা, ছোটগল্প, নৃত্য, প্রতিমাশিল্প, পটশিল্প সবকিছুই এক অনির্বচনীয় পুলকের ছোঁয়া দিয়ে যায়। বাঙালীর শিল্পসাহিত্যকর্ম আর শারদীয় দুর্গোৎসব তাই একে অপরের চির পরিপূরক।

আধুনিক বাংলা সাহিত্যে দেবী দুর্গার আবির্ভাব ঘটে মাইকেল মধুসূদন দত্ত আর বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের হাত ধরে। মাইকেলের "আর্শ্বিন মাস" ও 'বিজয়াদশমী' সনেট দুর্গোৎসবের স্মৃতি নিয়ে রচিত। 'মেঘনাদবধ' মহাকাব্যে তিনি দেবী দুর্গার কল্পনা করেছেন শশাঙ্কধারিনীরূপে। দেবী বিসর্জনের অসাধারণ বর্ণনা উপস্থাপনের মধ্য দিয়ে মেঘনাদবধ কাব্য সমাপ্ত করেছেন তিনি- *"বিসর্জ প্রতিমা যেন দশমী দিবসে/সপ্ত দিবানিশি লঙ্কা কাঁদিল বিষাদে।"* বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রে পাওয়া যায় দুর্গার আধ্যাত্মিক ও তাত্ত্বিক ব্যাখ্যা। আনন্দমঠের বন্দেমাতরম গানে দুর্গার বঙ্গমাতা রূপ, আবার কমলাকান্তে দুর্গা, "দিগ্ভুজা, নানা প্রহরণ প্রহারিণী, শত্রু মর্দিনী, বীরেন্দ্র পৃষ্ঠ বিহারিণী- দক্ষিণে লক্ষী ভাগ্যরূপিনী, বামে বিদ্যাবিজ্ঞানমূর্ত্তিময়ী, সঙ্গে বলরূপী কার্ত্তিকেয়, কার্যসিদ্ধিরূপী গণেশ, সুবর্ণময়ী বঙ্গপ্রতিমা।"

রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান, কবিতা, উপন্যাস, গল্প, নাটক আর চিঠিপত্রে দেবী দুর্গার বহুমাত্রিক রূপের উজ্জ্বল প্রতিফলন ঘটেছে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ দেবী দুর্গাকে আনন্দময়ী হিসেবে অভিহিত করে বাঙালীর প্রাত্যহিক জীবনের সাথে একাত্ম করেছেন মুক্তি ও ভক্তির সাথে। তাঁর 'কাঙালিনী' কবিতায় উঠে এসেছে এক দু:খিনী মেয়ের সুখ দু:খ আর আনন্দ বেদনার গল্প। *"আনন্দময়ীর আগমনে/আনন্দে গিয়েছে দেশ ছেয়ে/হেরো ওই ধনীর দুয়ারে/দাঁড়ায়ে কাঙালিনী মেয়ে।"* "দেনা পাওনা" গল্পের নিরুপমা আর 'খাতা' গল্পের উমা চরিত্রের মাধ্যমে শারদীয় দুর্গোৎসবের মানবিক আবেদনটি ফুটিয়ে তুলেছেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ। 'স্বর্ণমৃগ' গল্পে শারদোৎসবের অনবদ্য চিত্র এঁকেছেন তিনি। "যেতে নাহি দিব" কবিতায় পূজোর ছুটিকে ঘিরে মানুষের মনের চাপা দু:খ আর আশা নিরাশার দোলাচলের প্রতিফলন ঘটেছে- *"গিয়েছে আশ্বিন/পূজার ছুটির শেষে ফিরে যেতে হবে/ আজি বহুদূরদেশে, সেই কর্মস্থানে।"* 'রবিবার', "রাসমণির ছেলে" সহ আরও নানা গল্পে ধনী দরিদ্রের ব্যবধান ঘুচিয়ে দুর্গাপূজার উৎসব আনন্দ পালনের বার্তা দিয়েছেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর গানে শরতের অপরূপ রূপের মায়ার প্রকাশ ঘটিয়েছেন। ১৯০৫ সালে বঙ্গভঙ্গ হলে দেবী দুর্গাকে দেশমাতা রূপে বন্দনা করে রচনা করলেন এই অবিস্মরণীয় গান, *"আজ বাংলাদেশের হৃদয় হতে কখন আপনি/তুমি এই অপরূপ রূপে বাহির হলে জননী।"*

নজরুল তাঁর সাহিত্যকর্মে দেবী দুর্গাকে অসুন্দর আর অন্যায়ের বিরূদ্ধে তেজোদীপ্তরূপে চিত্রিত করেছেন। "রক্তাম্বরধারিনী মা" কবিতায় কবি মা কে শ্বেত শুভ্র রূপ পরিত্যাগ করে বিধ্বংসী রক্তমাখা রূপ পরিগ্রহণ করতে আহ্বান জানিয়েছেন- *"শ্বেত শতদল বাসিনী নয় আজ/রক্তাম্বরধারিনী মা/ধ্বংসের বুকে হাসুক মা তোর/সৃষ্টির নবপূর্ণিমা"*। নজরুলের আগমনী কবিতায়ও মা দুর্গাকে অন্যায়ের বিরুদ্ধে প্রত্যক্ষ সংগ্রামে তেজোদীপ্তরূপে চিত্রিত হতে দেখা যায়- *"আজ রণরঙ্গিনী জগৎমাতার দেখ্ মহারণ দশদিকে তার দশ হাতে বাজে দশ প্রহরণ!/ পদতলে লুটে মহিষাসুর/মহামাতা ঐ সিংহ-বাহিনী জানায় আজিকে বিশ্ববাসীকে/শাশ্বত নহে দানব শক্তি, পায়ে পিষে যায় শির পশুর"*। "আনন্দময়ীর আগমনে" কবিতায় নজরুল মা দুর্গাকে ঔপনেবেশিক শাসনে জর্জরিত ভারতবর্ষেও নিপীড়িত মানুষের প্রতিবাদী কণ্ঠস্বর হিসেবে উপস্থাপন করেছেন- *"আর কতকাল থাকবি বেটি, মাটির ঢেলার মূর্তি আড়াল/স্বর্গ যে আজ জয় করেছে অত্যাচারী শক্তি চাড়াল/দেবশিশুদের মারছে চাবুক, বীর যুবাদের দিচ্ছে ফাঁসি/ভু-ভারত আজ কসাইখানা, আসবি কখন সর্বনাশী"*।

শারদীয় উৎসবের আনন্দ উচ্ছাস আর সার্বজনীন রূপটিকে বাঙালীর ঘরে ঘরে পৌঁছে দিতে পূজাবার্ষিকীগুলোর এক বিশাল ভূমিকা রয়েছে তা বুঝিয়ে বলার দরকার পড়ে না। অসামান্য সব কথাসাহিত্যিকদের সৃষ্টিকর্মে ঋদ্ধ পূজাবার্ষিকীগুলো এখনও বাঙালীর জীবনে আনন্দেও বিশাল উপকরণ হিসাবে অবস্থান করছে; জ্বলজ্বল করছে শুকতারার মতো।

দুর্গাপূজা যুগ যুগ ধরে বাঙালী সংস্কৃতির সঙ্গে অবিচ্ছেদ্যভাবে মিশে আছে। অন্ধকার কূপমন্ডুকতা, সংকীর্ণতা, আসুরিক অপশক্তি, অর্থনৈতিক বৈষম্য আর সাম্প্রদায়িকতার বিষবাস্পের বিরূদ্ধে লড়াইয়ে মা দুর্গা আমাদের সাহস আর শক্তি যোগান। আর তাই দেবী দুর্গার সার্বজনীন ও বিজয়িনী রূপটি ফুটে উঠেছে শাশ্বত বাঙালীর শিল্প ও সাহিত্যকর্মে।



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The Holistic Strength – Maa Durga

Dr. Anukrati Sharma
Head and Associate Professor
Dept. of Commerce and Management
University of Kota, India



India's festival season is distinguished by devotion to and adoration of Goddess Durga. Typically, it takes place between September and October. The whole country becomes more colourful as it rejoices in the triumph of good over evil. Goddess Durga is said to embody "Shakti," or "Universal Energy," in bodily form. The Hindu Gods fashioned her in order to destroy the infamous monster "Mahisasura." To greet Goddess Durga and the most intriguing 10 days, Indians wait a whole year. People of all ages get together at this time of year to commemorate Maa Durga's triumph. This celebration's importance is so great that it has been proposed for the UNESCO World Heritage List for the year 2020. In order for the entire world to understand the significance of Durga Puja, it is thought that it is an intangible heritage that must be placed on the map. Every nook and cranny of the cities and suburbs glows thanks to colourful pandals and sparkling lighting designs. Beginning on the day that all the gods created Maa Durga, at the beginning of Mahalaya. To enable her to resist Mahisasur's oppression, every god gave of his strength and bestowed lethal weapons. She has ten hands, each of which is holding a different object.There are various reincarnations of Maa Durga. She was the prodigal daughter of Menka, the foremost "apsara" of Indralok or Heaven, and the great Himalaya. Later on, she married Lord Shiva. She thereafter returned as "Maa Durga" to avenge the infamous monster. To commemorate his triumph over Ravana in the Satya Yuga, Lord Rama initiated the Durga Puja celebration. He wanted Maa Durga to bestow abilities on him since he had satisfied her. The primary celebration of the year is Durga Puja, which is celebrated by the various groups of West Bengal. This puja is regarded as the social glue in many large historical families when everyone congregates at their ancestral homes. Since there are so many rituals and offerings involved in the puja, doing it alone would be quite challenging. According to ancient customs, the rituals last from "Shashti" or the sixth day after Mahalaya until "Vijaya Dashami" for a total of five days. Many people think that the rituals are made and designed in such a way that each family member must participate in order for harmony to be maintained.

It honours her victory over Mahishasur, the devil, in order to keep the world safe from his evil deeds. The first day of Navratri marks the beginning of the Durga Puja celebration. Dussehra, which commemorates the victory of good over evil, falls on the same day as Durga Puja. On that day, people also worship the gods Ganesh and Kartikeya, the goddesses Saraswati and Lakshmi, and the goddess Durga. Many Durga Puja boards of trustees organise free feasts for everyone where people from different backgrounds gather and enjoy the treats as a gift from Goddess Durga.

On this planet, there is a heavenly location where many holy rivers run and great festivities are praised. People, especially in Eastern India, celebrate Navaratri or Durga puja, which signifies a celebration of Nine Nights. It spreads a joyful, joyful spirit over the whole country. People organise and dedicate themselves fully when they travel to the temples or worship the goddess Durga at home. Worshipers of the goddess Durga pray to her for success and happiness in life.



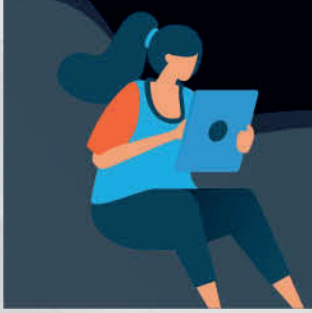
The celebration of Navaratri, also known as Durga Puja, honours the victory of good over Mahishasura, the demonic devil. Goddess Durga was commissioned by Gods Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu to slay the evil demon and rid the world of all evil spirits. On the ninth day, which is known as Dussehra, she eventually managed to extinguish that bad spirit after several protracted battles. The nine days and nights of a battle between the goddess and the demon are what give Navaratri its true meaning. Durga Puja attracts a sizable throng of believers including those from beyond the area. The four days of Dashami, Saptami, Ashtami, and Navami are dedicated to the celebration of Durga Puja.

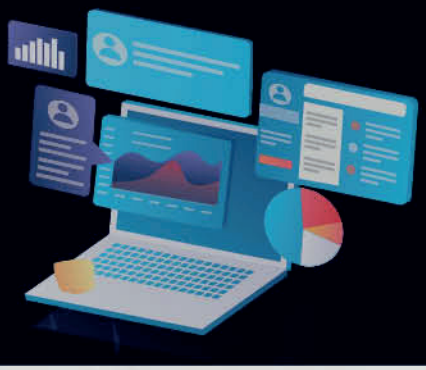
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Happy Durga Puja





Importance of Ekadashi

By - Liton Baidya

Introduction:

Ekadasi is a wonderful opportunity for all spiritual practitioners to intensify their devotional service and come closer to Krishna. While the Ekadasi day can be seen as an austerity – not eating grains or not using your favourite spices; it is like the poison which turns out to be nectar. The tongue is the most voracious and difficult to control of all the senses but Krishna sends His Prasad just to help us conquer this fickle friend. Ekadasi is another form of Krishna Prasad and just as a child may in later life develop taste for items previously abhorred, we can perhaps keep an open mind that 'maybe Ekadasi is for me after all.' This humble offering hopes to inspire you: in your attraction to Sri Ekadasi and perhaps increased understanding of this wonderful day.

What is Ekadasi?

There are two Ekadasi days each month and they are astronomically calculated according to the Moon. The word Ekadasi literally means the eleventh day, eka (one) + das (ten) = eleven. So an Ekadasi generally falls eleven days after a full Moon and eleven days after a new Moon. Although there are sometimes exceptions to the rule. There are multilayers to Ekadasi. Twice a month Krishna bestows His mercy in the form of this special day of benediction. During an Ekadasi, Bhakti or Devotional Service should be emphasized. Specifically ekanga Bhakti should be practiced, namely chanting the holy names – Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare. Srila Prabhupada introduced Ekadasi as an obligatory practice for all Vaishnava devotees. The Ekadasi vrata or vow is an extremely important aspect of devotional life. It may be followed differently according to time, place and circumstance; but such a munificent opportunity should not be polly-foxed or bypassed.

"To observe Ekadasi-vrata and Dvadasi-vrata means to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Those interested in advancing in Krishna consciousness must observe Ekadasi-vrata regularly." (SB 9.4.29 pp)

Foods That Can be Taken All Days of the Year,

Including Ekadasi and Caturmasya:

All Fruits (Fresh and Dried), All Nuts and Oils Made from Nuts, Potatoes, Pumpkin, Cucumber, Radish, Squash (But No Loki), Green Papaya, Lemon, Jackfruit, Avocado, Olives, Coconut, Buckwheat, All Sugars and All Milk Products – though be careful of starches used in sweet preparation

Spices That May Be Used: Turmeric, Black Pepper, Ginger, Salt (taken from new or clean package)

Foods Restricted During Ekadasi:

Tomatoes, Eggplants, Cauliflower, Broccoli, Bellpepper, Peas, Chickpeas, All Types of Beans – including products made from beans, (Papadams, Tofu, Tempeh, Grain Beverages, etc.)

Indian Vegetables:

Karela (Bitter Lemon), Loki, Parmal, Toroi, Kunli, Drumsticks, Okra (Lady Fingers), Banana Flower.

All Leafy Vegetables:

Spinach, Salads, Cabbages, Leafy Herbs, Like Parsley, Curry Leaves, Neem Leaves, etc.

Grains: Millet, Barley, Farina, Dalia, Pasta, Rice, Corn, All Types of Dahl

All Types of Flour Made from Grains and Beans – Like Rice Flour, Chickpea Flour, Urad Dahl Flour, etc.

Starches from Corn: Grains and Products Made from and Mixed with these Starches – Like Baking Soda, Baking Powder, Certain Soft Drinks, Custard, Certain Yogurts, Puddings, Cream Cheese, Sweets, Candies and Tapioca.

Oils made from Grains: Corn Oil Mustard Oil Sesame Oil etc.

And Products Fried in These Oils: – Like Nuts, Potato Chips, and Certain Snack Foods.

Spices NOT Used on Ekadasi:

Sesame Seeds, Cumin Seeds, Hing, Fenugreek, Mustard Seeds, Tamarind, Fennel, Celery, Poppy Seeds, Kalonji Seeds, Ajwain Seeds, Cardamom, Nutmeg, Cloves,

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