



Sanatana Mitra

SEPTEMBER 2009



RUDRASHIVANANDA.COM

Upcoming Events

Oct. 10-11 - Kriya Workshop
Union City, CA

Nov. 6 - Chakra Workshop
Singapore

Nov. 7-8 - Kriya Workshop
Singapore

Nov. 10-11 - Kriya Workshop
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Navaratri

One of the great Indian festivals is that of the nine days of Divine Mother. As the name implies, this is a celebration of the Mother of the Universe, the feminine aspect of Divinity. Unlike western ideas of the feminine as only passive and receptive, a major stream of the Sanatana Dharma of India considers that the feminine power can be active and energetic. In fact, it is by the power of Mother Shakti that things are done in the universe!

Navaratri is celebrated throughout India but the specifics vary considerably from region to region. In general, there is music, dance and lots of chanting in the nights of this festival. Also, a variety of pujas or celebratory rituals for the Mother are performed. The main deity who is associated with the nine days is Mother Durga, who is an integration of all the divine goddesses.

This year, Navaratri started on September 19th and ended on September 27th. There are various ways of dividing up the 9 days. One way is to dedicate the first 3 days to Durga-ma, the second 2 days to Lakshmi-ma and the last 3 days to Saraswati-ma, as these are the 3 main manifestations of the power

Continued on Page 3

In Memory Of Neelu

On the 12th of September, my wife and partner for over 28 years departed from our physical realm – she is now in the care of Babaji. It was unexpected and shocking – she is missed by many people in the spiritual community throughout the world.

There is much grief for her loss from our children and myself. It is natural to feel sorrow for a loved one who has left us. This is the cycle of human life that we shared when we were born and it would not be natural to deny one's feelings in such a time, even for those on the spiritual path who might wish to practice detachment or vairagya.

We can take comfort in that she is not the body or mind but the immortal spirit that neither decays nor dies.

We can take comfort that we are One in the Divine and our spirit (s) will be united in Babaji's consciousness.

We can take comfort in the memories of the beautiful life that she lived and all the happiness that we shared together.

Kamaljeet Kaur Randhawa (fondly called Neelu) was a very loving and giving person. She consistently sacrificed her own desires and well-being for the sake of her children and husband. Neelu worked tirelessly to ensure that our needs were met first before she would think of herself.

It was only after our marriage that I appreciated and learned what real love and compassion was. It is easier to practice love and compassion for humanity as a whole but it can become more theoretical than practical. The ancient sages realized the need for a companion and off-springs in order to develop and temper the virtues of love

Continued on Page 2

The Importance of Sacrifice in Yoga

Sacrifice or Yagna is a pivotal concept in the Sanatana Dharma. It is one that is not really explored much in popular treatments of yogic philosophy. However, sacrifice permeates all levels of spirituality.

In one of the creation myths, it is the sacrifice of the first being, Prajapati that gives rise to the rest of creation! In another myth, it is the sacrifice of Sati, the first wife of Lord Shiva which made possible the 51 shakti-piths or centers of the Divine Mother for the welfare of humanity – each of the piths has the essence of one part of her body.

In the ancient Vedas, sacrifice is the

primary means of attaining to the higher realms and or achieving success in this world. The priests would perform the sacrifice on behalf of the sponsor, who would usually be a king and like a correctly performed science experiment, the results desired would be fulfilled by compelling the responsible deity to discharge his duties.

In the Bhagavad-gita, we find that instead of an externally performed sacrifice by someone else, the emphasis is now on either an internal sacrifice or at the least action performed by oneself.

The definition of sacrifice now be-

Continued on Page 2

In Memory Of Neelu

(Continued from Page 1)

and compassion in the fire of actual relationships.

It could not have been easy for Neelu to live with someone like myself who is always going off to meditate or teach classes and is more focused on spiritual pursuits than on taking time off for vacation or the acquisition of possessions. She was a gem of a person who never complained about my spiritual inclinations and in fact participated wholeheartedly. Neelu had a strong desire to be with God – a true bhakta or devotee

of the Divine who had achieved her own higher states of consciousness.

Neelu was always thinking of how she could be of service to others and was gentle and loving. However, she also had a strong sense of right and wrong and would not hesitate to stand up for the right of others – she could be a warrior queen when she needed to be – to defend those who could not defend themselves.

It is only when someone is gone that we wish we could have told the loved-

one all the words we had saved up for later, but later would not be coming. However, I know that Neelu is blazing in the light and knows how much she will be missed and how much she was loved and appreciated even though such words are inadequate to the occasion.

It is at such a time that I now realize that an aching heart or broken heart is not just a metaphor – it is an actual sensory experience. I honor and remember Neelu, her love and her sacrifices. Till we meet again in the Infinite.

The Importance of Sacrifice in Yoga

(Continued from Page 1)

comes selfless action, that is, any actions performed without regard to one's own welfare but for the sake of others would be yagna. Thus the fire of yagna is fueled either by a sense of duty or compassion. Whatever one's circumstances, one has assumed certain duties whether voluntarily or by birth, and the selfless commission of one's duties is as a sacrifice. If one does not have a specific duty towards another, but still chooses to act out of compassion, it is also a yagna.

The sacrificial act is self-less and consequently without karmic impact – this is very important, since if one completes a kind action for another, one would acquire good karma, but just as bad karma should be avoided, even good karma will bind us in the cycle of birth and death. It is only non-karmic acts that don't bind us, and therefore sacrifice is the essence of Karma Yoga.

The performance of sacrifice is connected with dispassion and non-attachment because only with non-attachment to the results of one's actions can the yagna be perfect.

All spiritual practices which lead towards Self-Realization are also considered to be sacrifice. This is because

the sadhana is not done with any material benefit in mind and to be able to achieve Self-Realization, there has to be a dispassion towards the results as well.

Therefore, the process of Yoga is an internal sacrifice which results in the state of Yoga or union with one's true Self. It is the attainment of divine knowledge and wisdom which liberates one from the cycle of birth and death.

It is stated in the Bhagavad-gita:

Apaane juhvati praanam
praane'paanam tathaapare

Praanaapaana gati ruddhva praana-
aayaama paraayanaah

Those who practice yoga as a sacrifice by offering the inhaled breath into the exhaled breath and the exhaled breath into the inhaled breath, achieve the breathless super-conscious state.

It is this verse that emphasizes to all those who practice Kriya Yoga that their practice is the internal fire ceremony or sacrifice and it is the death of desires burned in the fire of breath that leads to the immortal spirit.

Overcoming Karmic Blocks

Just as Lord Shiva is the cosmic consciousness that guides us towards liberation from the cycle of birth and death through the practice of yoga, the power of Durga-ma can help to unlock the karmic hurdles that prevent us from living life in pursuit of liberation.

The stories about Durga-ma are always concerning her invocation by other gods to save them from some terrible demonic power. These stories have both a macrocosmic and microcosmic perspective.

The most famous story concerns the demon king Mahisaasur. He was so powerful that even though lacking any virtue, he was able to conquer the three worlds of humanity, demi-gods and gods. The gods rushed to the Divine Trinity for help and when the three Lords heard their sorry tale, they reacted with righteous anger and each emitted golden light which conjoined to give form to a young and lovely damsel. This was mother Durga with ten arms who was richly dressed in red and golden clothing and rode a fierce and fearless lion. She laughed and the world shook. She had the weapons

Continued on Page 3

Navaratri

(Continued from Page 1)

and energy of the Lords Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma, and represent the destruction of evil, the power of success and the creative aspects respectively.

Another way to celebrate the nine days is to dedicate each day to a specific aspect of Durga-ma:

- Shailputree-ma is the young daughter of the King of the Mountains – she inspires us to be pure and to do good to all

- Brahmacharini-ma who performed great austerities and meditations to win the hand of Lord Shiva

- Chandraghanta-ma who inspires us to crush evil especially those within our minds.

- Kushmaanda-ma inspires us to be powerful in the discharge of our duties

- Skandamaata radiates happiness, nourishment and energy as the mother of the divine child

- Kaatyayani-ma is 3-eyed and holds weapons in her ten arms to destroy all demonic forces that might harm creation

- Kaalraatri-ma inspires us to destroy ignorance

- Mahagauri-ma radiates power, compassion and beauty

- Siddhiratri-ma combines all power,

prosperity and knowledge

The celebration of Navaratri can help spiritual aspirants to tap into the Divine Mother power to help in their progress on the path. It is not necessary to wait for the next occurrence of this festival to benefit from the power of the Mother. Festivals are more for the mass of humanity who needs a special time from their own ego-driven activities to focus for a few days on the blessings of divinity. For the spiritual seeker who has an attraction to the feminine aspect of divinity, then there can be a navaratri every month starting from the day of the new moon.

Overcoming Karmic Blocks

(Continued from page 2)

bestowed by the other divine aspects – the trident from Lord Shiva, discus from Lord Vishnu, conch-shell from Varuna, flaming dart from Agni, the bow from Agni, the quiver and arrows from Surya, the iron rod from Yama, thunderbolt from Indra, the club from Kubera, the garland of snakes from Shesha and so on.

Durga-ma went on to defeat and kill Mahisaasur, of course. From a yogic perspective the demon lord personifies primordial ignorance and the might of the ego. When the spiritual student's positive characteristics as personified by the gods are separate and not unified, then she will suffer from the negative power of the ego. It is necessary to unify all of one's virtues in order to defeat ignorance and ego – this unification of all one's positive characteristics is called Durga-ma.

She is also called Chamunda for slaying Chanda and Munda who are the personifications of anger and passion. When these two demons hurled all their thousands of weapons at the Mother, she merely opened her mouth and absorbed them into her infinity without any harm.

Another strong demon called Raktabija had the power bestowed on him that every drop of his blood that touched the ground will give immediate birth to a clone of himself. He was the seed of desires and could not be killed – in fact, he multiplied himself as soon as he was cut down, just as the satisfaction of a desire gives rise to more desires. To overcome Raktabija, The Divine Mother stuck her lovely red tongue out and drank all the blood and consumed it – she is called mother Kali who can help us overcome our desires.

No matter what form she takes, she will help her devotees and punish the evil-doers. Since she is the mother of existence, she is also the giver of illusions as well as the remover of illusions. She will give the toys for her children to play if that is what they desire, or she will help them achieve to Self-Realization if that is what they aspire to.

Durge smrtaa harasi bhitima sheshajantoh

Svasthaih smrtaa matimativa shubhaam dadaasi

Daaridrya dukha bhayahaarini kaa tvadanaya

Sarvopakaara karanaaya sadaardracittaa.

O Mother Durga who relieves all difficulties, my fears are dispelled when I remember you

You increase the welfare and intelligence of the spiritual seekers who remember you

You are unique as you dispel poverty, pain and fear and extend compassion to all

We bow to you who reveal the Divine Consciousness to those who meditate.

Babaji University Update

After factoring in all the logistics involved, we are now in a position to announce the start date for classes: March 22nd, 2010.

This will mark the commencement of the Masters in Yoga Studies program.