



Learner's Hub



*The Epics of
Navaratri
&
Dussehra*

Victorious Triumph against Evil

2021-22



English Enrichment Centre

Educate | Engage | Empower

Mumbai, India

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**Note: These chapters have been written by students from the age group of 8 to 14 years.*

Founder's Message



Nisha Sanghvi

Dear Readers,

It gives me immense pleasure and privilege to launch another book by Learner's Hub – Creative Writing students. The first being, Journey of Authors – Launched in June 2019.

Learner's Hub Educators believe in 'Innovative and Engaging' teaching methodology across all grades. This ignites the learning and curiosity spark in students. All our Learner's Hub Students from Jr Kg to Grade 9 have been adapting themselves to the online learning mode from the last one and half years. They have proved themselves to be confident self-learners.

Every year Learner's Hub Educators team up and create a Mega Event for Creative Writing Students, be it online or physical sessions.

This year when our Sr. Creative Writing Facilitator – Sunita Bansdawala conceptualized the Mega Writing Event on Navaratri – students, parents as well as all the teachers at Learner's Hub were enthusiastic to plunge into it.

This mega event has been a journey of immense learning and gaining knowledge; not only for our students but in the process, all the educators have understood the Essence of the Navaratri Festival.

From the past six months, students learnt the art of descriptive and narrative genres in their creative writing online sessions. These skills were put into action, effectively by them, in the Mega Writing Event.

During this event, all the Creative Writing Students were allocated their teams as per their grades and batches. A team spirit was initiated within a group with a student moderator. I was amazed to observe the students, as they began pouring in their ideas and imagination, creating sentences and paragraphs, based on the video, displayed to them, online. Eventually 10 chapters were written based on the 10 videos created for this e-book called, “The Epics of Navaratri and Dusshera.”

I wish to thank Sunita Bansdawala, Riddhi Jani, Jasmine Mehta and Charmi Dave for efficiently planning and executing the event. In addition, the creative writing team of teachers did an amazing job of proof-reading, editing, and formatting of this e-book. A special thanks to Sumi Ajmera for compiling this e-book for Learner’s Hub.

Thank you,

Nisha Sanghvi

Sr. Creative Writing Facilitator's Message



Sunita Bansdawala

A research study was conducted with the Learner's Hub students, ranging from the ages of nine to fourteen years studying in grades four to nine. This research was based upon their knowledge of, **“Why does India celebrate Navaratri and Dusshera?”**

A unanimous answer from the students surprised me, “A goddess fought against some demon and won! So, we enthusiastically dance with ‘Garba and Dandiya’. Also, we savour heavenly food and sweets too!”

To some extent, the students' answers were correct. However, I had peculiar thoughts about their understanding. So, I researched upon the various goddesses who had several challenges, but conquered them with strength, focus, eventually defeating the evil demons. More so, several goddesses had taken the form of mighty Maa Durga, but their names were hardly recognized by students.

Therefore, I conveyed my opinions to our Founder of Learner's Hub, Nisha Sanghvi. I explained that, our students writing abilities, particularly with their creative writing topics are brilliant now. We can guide them to write mythological stories of Navaratri and Dusshera.

These mythological stories, could have similies, metaphors, personification, idioms and proverbs.

Within two days, I brainstormed a certain plan and had a meeting with Ms. Sanghvi and my fellow teachers, Riddhi Jani and Jasmine Mehta to have a **Mega-Story-Writing Event** – with the **scriptures of Navaratri and Dusshera**. With a green signal from the Founder, my co-teachers and I scheduled the flag-off event on our online learning platform from 2nd to 8th October 2021.



Riddhi Jani



Jasmine Mehta

Now, with Riddhi and Jasmine, we still believed more precise learning needed to be taught. Hence, to teach our students, we had to connect with them in the simplest form of experiential learning:

Educate - Engage - Empower

- **Educate:** Learner's Hub Team of Educators created 10 customized videos: Navaratri & Dusshera.
- **Engage:** Segregate 170 students into teams over a 6-Day Period in the Mega-Story-Writing Event.
- **Empower:** Turn the story-book into an E-Book and Publish it on Amazon India & Worldwide – making our students into published writers!

Without a moment of delay, parents and students were informed and the event began!

To make this event and e-book a success, I pay my heartfelt tribute to the following teachers, Riddhi Jani, Jasmine Mehta, Charmi Dave, and Supreeta Shetty. They have earnestly stood by me, and dedicated their time and effort to create this E-Book for Learner's Hub. Also, the entire constellation of students, teachers and parents, thank our Founder, Nisha Sanghvi, for believing in us to create a mammoth event like this, and publish our first in E-Book on Amazon!

The Learner's Hub Team is sincerely grateful to all our Indian and Global students, as well as parents for their support and belief in us. Today, we are proud to have young-writers listed in this amazing E-Book:

The Epics of Navaratri & Dusshera
Victorious Triumph against Evil

Thank you,

Sunita Bansdawala 

Introducing The Auspicious Festivals of Navaratri & Dusshera

Creative Writing Educators: Sunita Bansdawala, Riddhi Jani, and Jasmine Mehta

The drums beat, the musicians sing, and the glorious dancers are in a colossal circle. These dancers are bouncing off the ground with their traditional attire to the tunes of Garba and Dandiya! It feels as if we are in the presence of the mighty Goddess, on a starry lit navy-blue sky!

Whereas, in some parts of India, several tribes comfortably place themselves around a blazing fire, ready to hear the stories Navaratri and Dusshera!

Today, our students are the “tribe” of Learner’s Hub. They are bringing to you the auspicious stories of nine Goddesses in Navaratri and Dusshera. These mythological stories are told from our children’s perspective, to the best of their knowledge, from the scriptures written thousands of years ago.

Chapter 1

Maa Shailaputri



Grey

This colour is dedicated to Goddess Shailaputri, and grey symbolises the strength, calm, peace and power.

Writers: (in alphabetical order)

Aashi Kapadia	Aditya Pitale	Azaan Kotwal	Dheer Desai	Haem Dalal
Jahaan Shah	Khushi Bhatt	Kiyaara Shah	Kavish Parekh	Mahi Kanakia
Praash Shah	Priyanshi Shah	Reanna Moradia	Raisha Karia	Ridhima Mehta
Riyanshi Gogri	Shivalika Saigal	Saeed Desai	Sanjana Singh	Sanya Vora
Viditi Vora	Vriti Jhaveri	Vihaan Doshi	Vivaan Ambedkar	

On the first auspicious day of Navaratri, people worship Maa Shailaputri, the daughter of the Himalayan God, Hemavan. He was believed to be compassionate and nurturing. More so, he was known to be strong and powerful which expressed, 'Shakti' in all forms. Thereafter, sages wrote stories, several years ago, of a powerful Goddess, who took form into nine Goddesses. Today people believe, follow and celebrate the presence of these Goddesses, during the nine nights of Navaratri.

The story starts with a great King, Daksha Prajapati. Like every father, he loved his daughter Sati dearly. The King learnt about Sati's love for Lord Shiva. Hence, King Daksha Prajapati became as ferocious as a raging bull. Therefore, he disagreed for a marriage union between Sati and Lord Shiva. The reason was, King Daksha Prajapati didn't believe Lord Shiva to be the best match for his gorgeous daughter. King Daksha Prajapati's words were bullets to Sati's ears. Nevertheless, she ignored her father's words and disobeyed him. The King was extremely furious and disowned his daughter.

Since, Sati's love for Lord Shiva was like a crimson red rose attached to nectar, she married her beloved, against King Daksha Prajapati's will. The King was disappointed, hence he did not forgive his daughter, Sati.

One fine day, Sati's father organized a powerful Yagna ceremony with the Gods and Goddesses'. Even though Lord Shiva and Sati were not invited for the commemoration, yet, she proceeded to be present at the ceremony. During the Yagna, Lord Shiva was insulted by King Daksha Prajapati, which Sati could not tolerate. She was fuming with rage within her heart and in searing exasperation, she glared at the Yagna's blazing, tangerine orange fire burning.

Since, Sati had a burning love for Lord Shiva, she couldn't bear the humiliation that her father said about her husband. Though Sati was as patient as the Ganges River, this time she was in turmoil, and slowly

went step by step towards the blistering fire. As Sati entered the scorching fire, her clothes were lit with flames. The moment Lord Shiva heard this news, he was devastated and fell into a dismal state.

Although, Lord Shiva was hot tempered, his affection for Sati was undying. Therefore, without any delay punished King Daksha Prajapati at the Yagna Ceremony. Thereafter, he carried Sati and lifted her on his arms, with tears of sorrow in his blood-red eyes.

While carrying Sati, Lord Shiva was not aware that her body parts had fallen across India. After a few years, Sati was reborn as Maa Shailaputri, the absolute form of mother nature who is also known to be the daughter of the Himalayan God. After becoming a matured and an understanding woman, Maa Shailaputri discovered her love for Lord Shiva.

Now, we recognize Maa Shailaputri, who rides a powerful bull. She also holds a pointed trident and an orchid-pink lotus, bestowing blessings upon her devotees. We celebrate the first day of Navaratri worshipping this great Goddess. Maa Shailaputri is the manifestation of the Hindu deity, Maa Durga.

People believe that chanting the following divine prayer can create wonders in a person's life:

||: Hreem Shivayai Namah :||

Chapter 2

Maa Brahmacharini



Orange

**Orange represents vibrancy, brightness and happy energy.
This colour is dedicated to Goddess Brahmacharini.**

Writers: (in alphabetical order)

Dhruvin Rao	Harit Khetia	Jiya Shah	Neev Jain	Saanvi Bhatt
Aanya Gosrani	Darsh Modi	Jiyan Modi	Mitansh Chitroda	Namra Gindra
Nilay Shah	Nirvi Sarvaiya	Nirvaan Jalui	Saanvi Raval	Shimoni Pathak
Nysha Masalia	Renisha Sheth	Shreya Kapadia	Tithi Karelia	Vanshika Shah
Vedant Vaidya				

The scorching amber Yagna fire ended the life of Sati. Thereafter, she was reborn as Maa Shailaputri, but also known as Maa Parvati, the daughter of the Himalayan God. As Maa Parvati was growing up in the Himalayas, she met a divine sage, Narad Muni. He advised her to follow a road of penance, if she wanted to re-marry Lord Shiva.

Maa Parvati smiled, but questioned Narad Muni, “What does penance mean?” Narad Muni replied, “To marry Lord Shiva you will have to go through a journey of penance. Penance means to yield several valuable deeds to compensate for your terrible deeds.”

Maa Parvati walked for miles and miles in the sub-zero climate to search for food on the Himalayan Mountains. Furthermore, to search for heavenly scented flowers and juicy fruits, the goddess would have to roam in and out of the snowy mighty mountain ranges.

Therefore, on the road of penance, Maa Parvati began with devouring only juicy fruits and flowers for more than a thousand years. Various fruits were found, such as a bunch of emerald green grapes, saffron oranges, ruby apples and black berries and many more. Also, she nibbled heavenly scented flowers like rose, lily and lotus found in several places in the snow-covered Himalayas. After another hundred years, she just consumed various green leafy vegetables. Thereafter, three thousand years, she crunched on dried leaves which was an extremely difficult situation for Maa Parvati. Finally, after sacrificing food completely, she continued her penance by facing the challenging situation.

Although, the penance was a tough time for Maa Parvati, she certainly didn't lose hope and continued her journey. After this long sacrifice, from a vegan diet she turned as thin as a tooth pick; but the goddess was not ill because she was completely focused on her

penance. During this time, Maa Parvati made a rosary. She held the rosary in faith, praying to the Gods, for strength during the penance, and allowing her to reunite with Lord Shiva. The reason being, Maa Parvati was well aware that when her struggling years of penance would end, she would be blessed to re-marry Lord Shiva.

Even though Maa Parvati was suffering massively in her life, yet Lord Brahma cautiously observed her from heaven. During his careful watch over the Goddess, on a particular day, he appeared in front of Maa Parvati. This was the day, when the penance was over.

Undoubtedly, Lord Brahma was delighted with Maa Parvati's faith, trust, commitment and earnest dedication. Therefore, she was also called as Maa Brahmacharini – 'Brahma' for penance and 'Charini' for female devotee. This name depicts that the Goddess was focused on her road to penance, hence she achieved her aspiration.

Therefore, the proverb, "Diligence is the mother of good fortune," which means *hard work* and ceaseless efforts pave the way to *achievements*. Just as, this Goddess's *hard work* refers to her road of penance and ultimate prayers. Also, her *achievements* were to be blessed by Lord Brahma to re-marry the great Lord Shiva. Now, people understand that Maa Brahmacharini is the symbol of sacrifice, solitude, purity and penance.

People believe that chanting the following divine prayer can create wonders in a person's life:

||: Hreem Shri Ambikayai Namah :||

Chapter 3

Maa Chandraghanta



White

This colour is known for purity and worship. It is dedicated to Goddess Chandraghanta.

Writers: (in alphabetical order)

Aahana Bharadia	Dhanvi Devani	Deeyan Shah	Drishti Shah
Dakshesh Upadhyay	Gatee Parekh	Hiyaan Shah	Jahaan Jhaveri
Kavya Munjasara	Meher Deliwala	Moksha Shah	Manasvi Rode
Nabhya Mistry	Prasham Ghiya	Shlok Vaidya	Siya Joshi
Swayam Mehta	Shaurya Chandrani	Samweg Maloo	Shlok Lakhani
Suhani Mehta	Urja Mathia	Vrishti Patel	Ziya Upadhyay

The abated fury of thunderous clouds glowered over the Himalayas on a tragic day. As soon as, Sati stepped into the fire, it encircled her and she died. The Goddess was reborn as Maa Parvati, she was the daughter of the Himalayan God. Maa Parvati had a desire to marry Lord Shiva in this era again. However, she had to go through severe penance, thus she was known as Maa Brahmacharini. Upon completing her penance, Lord Brahma blessed her to marry Lord Shiva. However, the Goddess was upset with Lord Shiva, when she gazed at him walking towards her to be married.

When Lord Shiva arrived at the wedding, he was looking horribly peculiar that everyone's eyes became large marbles in fear. In spite of being a charming prince, he was not dressed like a groom. Upon seeing him, Maa Parvati was a raging dragon. At the same moment, she was despondent on accepting the fact that Lord Shiva was unprepared, because of his despicable appearance. He had matted hair, slithering snakes all over his body and covered in arsenic ash. More so, in his procession, petrifying aghoris, ascetics, deadly ghosts as well as horrifying ghouls were marching along the road. Maa Parvati was in oblivion, heart-broken and tremendously upset. In exasperation, she changed her appearance into a form of a ferocious Goddess.

After the speck of blinding light, all the deities had a glimpse of the Goddesses' tempestuous form – Maa Chandraghanta, the furious Goddess. Her name defines, 'Chandra' means moon and 'Ghanta' means bell. Deadly lightning danced across the sky and the winds howled like an outraged storm, as she appeared in this form. In addition, she enlarged herself while sitting on an ochre yellow lion with ten arms protruding from her torso. In each hand, she held various weapons: a powerful trident, a sharp bow and arrow, a pointed and deadly goad, a gigantic mace. Also, she clasped a splendid lotus, a shiny golden bell, a brass water vessel and the tenth hand, had blessings for her devotees. Frightened by the ferocious avatar, the Gods paid their respects towards her. Then, the inauspicious thoughts of her devotees were eliminated.

Maa Chandraghanta had a heart as pure as gold. So, she prayed to Lord Shiva from within her soul, to change himself back into his divine form. She wanted to revere his exquisite face and have a constellation of heavenly blessings showered upon themselves. Lord Shiva smiled at the Goddess and heard her prayers. He accepted her gesture and then turned into a dashing groom. Thereafter, Maa Chandraghanta and Lord Shiva were married blissfully in front of all Gods and Goddesses. Their marriage had a magnificent ceremony and a heavenly bond.

So, when people pray to Maa Chandraghanta, all our dangerous sins, negative mindsets, depressions and anxieties would vanquish. If we have, a contented mind like Maa Chandraghanta, it is a perpetual feast which satisfies our mind, so we pray to her for turning us to be free of negative mindsets.

Chant this mantra for a powerful mindset:

||: Ai Shri Shaktai Namah :||

Chapter 4
Maa Kushmanda



Red

This colour is dedicated to Goddess Kushmanda and the significant colour of this day is red that represents love, energy and vigour.

Writers: (in alphabetical order)

Aatmi Vora	Adeetya Patel	Arnav Shanghavi	Bhoomi Shah	Fioni Desai
Haasil Shah	Keya Shah	Maanya Shah	Manan Shah	Nishka Shah
Palak Mehta	Pankti Pandya	Parthi Jhaveri	Praisha Dadia	Pratham Kulkarni
Rivaan Mehta	Tanish Deore			

As a mother blesses her child, so does Maa Kushmanda bestow the universe. Before, the universe was created, it was filled with darkness. Like every cloud has a silver lining, Maa Kushmanda gave birth to a positive pearl of glimmering light. She created a small cosmic egg – the source to all forms of life creation. In other words, Maa Kushmanda is the Mother of the Universe; her love is as vast as the cosmos.

This omnipotent Goddess has a meaning in her name which is split into three parts. Firstly, ‘Ku’ means little, secondly, ‘Ushma’ means comforting and smiling, and thirdly, ‘Anda’ means a small cosmic egg. Maa Kushmanda is also known as the “Smiling Goddess,” with ultimate power. Do you know, which incarnation is Maa Kushmanda known to be?

Maa Kushmanda is the fourth incarnation of the mighty Goddess Durga. She resides in the core of the star nearest to the Earth – the Sun. She directs the sun’s significant movement. The radiance of Maa Kushmanda is as scintillating as the Sun. She does not need any form of force as she herself is the élan of the universe. This deity is a true symbol of divine spark. Her appealing form, while sitting on a lion, denotes her supremacy.

Maa Kushmanda, thus, decided to create Goddesses and Gods. Therefore, she began to create three life forms with her three powerful eyes. She used the middle eye on her forehead to create the Goddess of Wealth, Mahalakshmi. Following next, a terrorizing Goddess was made from her left eye and was named, Mahakaali. Finally, a benevolent and gracious Goddess form, Mahasaraswati, was conceived with her right eye. Thereafter, she formulated the three Gods known as the Trimurti allotting them their roles – Lord Brahma, the creator, Lord Vishnu, the Preserver and Lord Shiva, the destroyer.

When people worship Maa Kushmanda, she eliminates all the hurdles from the lives of her devotees. She proves that she is undoubtedly, the

mighty and invincible “Goddess of the Universe.” This powerful Goddess is the one who watches all of us and is the protector of the Universe. The potent Goddess, with eight hands, destroys the ailments of her worshippers, bestowing harmony, salvation and prosperity upon them. Yet, if they indulge into wrong deeds, she may curse them with a reverse karma.

People believe that chanting the following divine prayer can create wonders in a person’s life:

:: Ai Hree Devai Namah ::

Chapter 5

Maa Skandamata



Royal Blue

This colour is dedicated to Goddess Skandamata and to represent the divinity and her power.

Writers: (in alphabetical order)

Aastha Mehta	Darsh Patel	Dhruti Kotadia	Dhruv Vora
Dia Shah	Heet Malde	Jainit Chhajer	Krishna Khokhani
Krushmi Vira	Siddhant Fouzdar	Vrinda Gohil	Yugam Bhanshali

Have you heard the mythological story of the auspicious birth of the six-faced Kartikeya? Several moons ago, two indestructible demons named Surahpadman and Tarakasura wanted to demolish the world. These two demons had agonizing fire of enemies between them, just like a war. However, there was a solution found to destroy these demons, especially as they caused havoc. Thereby, it could only be done by the mighty power of Lord Shiva and Maa Parvati's child.

When Lord Shiva and Maa Parvati married, their combined powers, created a powerful and radiant seed. This seed was as beaming as the Sun. Thus, it was initially cared for by Lord Agni, the Fire God. Later, it was guarded and protected by Maa Ganga. Eventually, Maa Parvati decided that she will be the best to take care of the radiant seed. So, she nurtured the seed in her flowing clear water, as she took this form. Soon the seed grew and Kartikeya, also known as Skanda, was born. Skanda refers to the son's name, Kartikeya, and Mata represents Mother. Therefore, Maa Parvati is also known as Skandamata.

As Kartikeya was growing up, he became an intellectual and obedient child, but inquisitive. Kartikeya, had an innocent question – “What does Om mean?”

Kartikeya asked this question to Lord Brahma. Lord Brahma explained the meaning of Om in *twelve thousand verses*. Yet, Kartikeya was dissatisfied with the answer. Hence, he went to his father, Lord Shiva to ask the same question. Lord Shiva explained the meaning of Om in another *twelve lakh verses*. As a result, the young intelligent child was well contented and understood Lord Shiva's explanation. Thereafter, Kartikeya compiled his knowledge and explained the meaning of Om to the entire world in, *twelve crore verses!*

The door of success depends on our actions. So, Kartikeya grew up with his power and knowledge and vanquished the two demons – Surahpadman and Tarakasura.

Now, when we pray with love and devotion to Skandamata, a powerful mother of a powerful God, we in turn, seek blessings from Lord Kartikeya too. The conceivable power and the never-ending knowledge of Kartikeya is yet to be brought to light in people's heart, worldwide.

People chant a powerful mantra in devotion to Skandamata:

||: Hreem Kleem Swaminyai Namah :||

Chapter 6
Maa Katyayani



Yellow

This colour reflects the symbol of joy, warmth, power and brightness into our lives. Yellow is a happy colour and it instantly puts joy in our minds when we look at it. This day is dedicated to Goddess Katyayani.

Writers: (in alphabetical order)

Darsh Shah	Devansh Oza	Hia Kothari	Kavya Vaid	Khushi Doshi
Kiara Goradia	Meet Maniar	Neev Mehta	Preesha Mehta	Rhia Jobanputra
Shaurya Shah	Shlok Rathod	Tanvi Vaya	Tashvi Malkan	Tvaritaa Shah
Tvisha Khambaswadkar	Viaan Dagli	Vihaan Badani	Zenisha Goradia	

A wild menacing demon named Mahishasura was causing havoc on the emerald green and sapphire blue earth. Terrified by seeing the destruction, the three most powerful God's namely Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva created an immortal Goddess called Maa Katyayani. She is one of the most popular forms of Goddess Durga. Maa Katyayani was so puissant that she could kill any demon, whether it was invincible or not.

Therefore, all Gods blessed Maa Katyayani to defeat the terrible Mahishasura. Now, she had the holy blessings, but needed weapons to slaughter the cacodemon. Maa Katyayani was offered powerful weapons. A trident – a dangerous three-pronged spear of Lord Shiva being the major weapon. The next, was a Sudarshan Chakra – a potent, divine weapon presented by Lord Vishnu beneficial to fight for human virtues. The final blessings were not weapons, but a water vessel and a holy rosary – gifted by Lord Brahma. Once the Goddess accepted these, yet other Gods also bestowed Maa Katyayani with their own weapons for the battle.

The inevitable fierce battle broke; likewise, a fight for justice began. So, with the weapons which included a conch presented by Lord Varun, was used to initiate the war. Thereafter, a dart given by Agnidev flew, shooting the demons and the quiver given by Suryadev added to the power. More so, Lord Vayu's bow and arrows given to Maa Katyayani had mantras to defeat the evil demons including, Mahishasura. Towards some powerful demons, the mace offered by Kuber, though heavy, was purposefully used to kill the evils. Another weapon, the thunderbolt given by Lord Indra was extremely powerful in burning these demonic fiends.

As Maa Katyayani had descended on earth to fight these demons, who were in troops, was in a rageful state. Although, her battle was focused on Mahishasura, it lasted for several long days. Mahishasura was immortal, hence he was going to win the battle. However, Maa

Katyayani was confident with her power, blessings and weapons that she would not be defeated!

As the battle proceeded, Maa Katyayani was furiously in war with an influential weapon – heavy iron battle-axe offered by Lord Vishwakarma, to behead Mahishasura. Finally, Lord Kaal's sword and shield protected Maa Katyayani from the demon's wrath.

Maa Katyayani's strength, power and chivalry defeated the dismal devil, Mahishasura. After a grueling and strenuous war, Maa Katyayani finally killed Mahishasura by decapitating his head with her powerful sword. She stood proudly on her ferocious lion after a victorious triumph!

Know the enemy, know yourself, your victory will never be endangered.

Chant this mantra for Maa Katyayani's blessings for bravery:

||: Kleem Shri Trinaitrayai Namah :||

Chapter 7

Maa Kaalratri



Green

This colour marks the new beginnings as devotees honour Goddess Kalaratri, the mother earth for nature and growth.

Writers: (in alphabetical order)

Ahaan Adhikari	Parshwa Doshi	Parth Doshi
Rishabh Shah	Viyam Shroff	

The moon seemed to be anchored by the jet-black sky, and the mighty thunder, as well as the howling winds. The peace of Devlok, the home of Gods and Goddesses was at stake. It seemed as if the heavenly Devlok, was forced behind bars of the dungeons and was tied to metallic chains, anxious to escape.

Two demons, Shumbha and Nishumbha had abruptly started to destroy Indralok and destruct Devlok. The entire Devlok was in ruins. The Gods were helpless and their only ray of hope was Maa Parvati. Thus, Lord Indra visited this valiant Goddess for support. Lord Indra kept the entire situation in the form of fearsome words in front Maa Parvati. The potent Goddess was taken aback on hearing the dreadful situation.

Maa Parvati transforms into her fiercest form, the almighty, Maa Kaalratri, also known as ‘Chandi’ to save Devlok. As she appeared, she could exhale ferocious blazing fire from her mouth. More so, this Goddess has four hands. A sword manifests in the first hand, and a thunderbolt gripped in the other. Her third hand depicted the Abhay Mudra – symbolizing fearlessness of Maa Kaalratri. Finally, the fourth one displayed Varada Mudra, demonstrating the benevolence of Maa Kaalratri’s kindness. This Goddess is like a pitch-dark moonless night and has three illuminating eyes. Her third eye represents the fiercest form of her fuming rage.

The fearless Maa Kaalratri, descended to Devlok to regain the throne by slaughtering Shumbha and Nishumbha. In return, Shumbha and Nishumbha sent their two demons, Chanda and Munda to cause further destruction at Devlok. As soon as Maa Kaalratri spotted the demons in Devlok, she charged at these cacodemons. Within moments, a fierce battle was fought between the Goddess and the demons. In the end, Maa Kaalratri was victorious against these two blood-thirsty demons.

However, Shumbha and Nishumbha created and sent their undefeatable fiend, Rakthabeej. He was such a demon who could form a new clone of

himself with every drop of blood falling on the ground. So, Maa Kaalratri was extremely furious and she struck Rakthabeej with her weapon. She leaned downwards and swallowed every drop of blood from Rakthabeej's wounds; not allowing a single droplet to touch the ground!

Finally, Rakthabeej, the ferocious monster was eliminated from existence. Soon, after his death, Maa Kaalratri proceeded to assassinate Shumbha and Nishumbha who still continued their havoc in Devlok. She charged ahead in battle to attack them. The moment her lethal sword slaughtered the indestructible demons' throats, this battle was finally led to an end of this bloodshed.

With the victory of Maa Kaalratri, the glory and shine of Devlok returned. With this triumph, Devlok was once again peaceful. It mirrored the conquest of courage and bravery over bad deeds and evil. Thus, on the seventh day of Navaratri, devotees worship Maa Kaalratri, to remove sorrows and sufferings from their lives.

People chant the following powerful mantra to remove their sorrows:

||: Kleem Ai Shri Kaalikayai Namah :||

Chapter 8
Maa Mahagauri



Purple

This colour is dedicated to Goddess Mahagauri and to represent that, purple is the colour that symbolises ambition and peace.

Writers: (in alphabetical order)

Diya Ganger	Eishika Bajaj	Hetvi Joshi	Jia Mehta
Krish Shah	Shriya Shah	Swanandi Budhkar	Vedanti Shah

Centuries ago, Maa Parvati transformed into a fearsome Goddess with a dark complexion, which was as ebony black as the midnight sky. Her complexion changed due to her rage and fury to fight Mahishasura, a demon who had become an exasperation for mankind. After the vigorous battle, she emerged victorious against the terrorizing devil. Although she won the battle with her strength and determination, she could not rid herself of her dusky skin.

Maa Parvati's complexion soon became a situation for humiliation. Even, Lord Shiva was repeatedly taunting her because of her black dark complexion. This provoked Maa Parvati immensely and her blood boiled unimaginably.

Therefore, the irate Goddess went to Lord Brahma and said, "I don't like this dark skin complexion. I want my fair skin once again."

So, Lord Brahma instructed Maa Parvati to immerse herself in the holy waters of the Mansarovar Lake situated in the magnificent Himalayas. As she lowered her body into the sacred, divine lake, her dark skin separated and she regained her previous radiant complexion. However, the process led to the formation of another Goddess with an alabaster fair complexion. This Goddess is known as Maa Kaushiki or is commonly remembered as Maa Mahagauri, due to her radiant skin and radiant personality.

Maa Mahagauri's name is depicted as, 'Maha' means great and 'Gauri' refers to fairness and beauty. She wears pristine white clothes riding a milky-white bull. She holds a mighty trident and a rhythmic damru. The divine Goddess is considered as a symbol of kindness and morality.

This legend about Maa Parvati spreads a message that, 'True beauty is not having a fair complexion but a just and fair heart.'

Maa Mahagauri resides in the heart of her devotees and blesses them with courage and virtues. This tale tells us, that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and dark is divine.

Devotees chant the mantra below for being blessed with happiness and prosperity:

||: Shri Kleem Hrim Vardaayai Namah :||

Chapter 9

Maa Siddhidatri



Peacock Green

This colour is dedicated to Goddess Siddhidatri. Devotees pray to the Goddess to fulfill their desires.

Writers: (in alphabetical order)

Darsith Raghani	Jai Sharma	Keya Patne	Kyra Telang
Meenakshi Patnaik	Mishti Daru	Rudra Maheshwari	Yana Kaswala

Maa Kushmanda, the ‘Smiling Goddess’, appeared when the pitch-black core, with no universe, was in total darkness. She channeled her energy to create a miniature, glistening celestial egg – the universe where we reside. This era was the time when she created the three Gods, known as the Trimurthi, namely, Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva. The Trimurthi were allotted roles in which Lord Brahma was the Creator, Lord Vishnu, the Preserver and Lord Shiva, the Destroyer.

The Destroyer, Shiva devoted his prayers to Maa Kushmanda and requested her to bestow him with blessings and excellence. The Smiling Goddess willingly agreed to Lord Shiva’s request and created another Goddess, Maa Siddhidatri. This powerful and perfectionist Goddess blessed Lord Shiva with the eighteen Ashta Siddhis, also known as ‘*perfections.*’ In a swerve, Lord Shiva and Maa Siddhidatri, conjured up a holy combination called ‘*Ardhanareshwar*’. Maa Siddhidatri also blessed Lords Brahma and Vishnu with the Ashta Siddhis. The extraordinary virtues bestowed upon the Gods are exquisite and have powerful meanings to follow:

- ❖ Anima means ‘*being humble*’
- ❖ Mahima is ‘*to think big*’
- ❖ Laghima means ‘*to forgive and forget*’
- ❖ Garima means ‘*to stay committed*’
- ❖ Prapti is ‘*aiming for fulfillment*’
- ❖ Prakamyā means ‘*never say never!*’
- ❖ Vastva is about ‘*self-discipline*’ and finally,
- ❖ Istva means ‘*to be motivated and lead thy self*’.

Ever since, Maa Siddhidatri is not only worshipped by people, but also by Gods and Gandharvas. In addition, demons, mythical creatures, as well as sages, worship her. In Navaratri, Maa Siddhidatri is praised on the ninth day, an auspicious day, known as Ram Navami.

Chant the mantra below to be blessed by Maa Siddhidatri for the Ashta Siddhis:

||: Hreem Kleem Ai Siddhaye Namah :||

Chapter 10

Dussehra



Writers: (in alphabetical order)

Harshal Jobanputra	Maanan Sureja	Neil Mahajan
Palash Doshi	Prisha Parekh	Tanay Shah

After the nine days of the Navaratri festival ended, yet there is another story which explains the power of Maa Durga. This story also occurred several years ago with Lords Rama, Laxmana and Mata Sita, and the evil King Raavan...

It was a new dawn in the thirteen years of the exiled king, queen, and king's brother of Ayodhya. The sun shone on the heart of the jungle, where these deities are still worshipped today. Becoming accustomed to the elegance of the dense forest, Lord Rama, Mata Sita and Lord Laxmana were living in peace. As the family spent years together, they weaved their feelings to match the saffron orange sun with their attire, as if they were threads of divine ruminations. Sita Mata often made herself comfortable outside her dainty cottage. She grinned at the melodious pure white doves and citrine green parrots chirping. More so, she calmly observed swirling waters of a nearby clear-river.

Suddenly, Sita Mata spotted an attractive golden deer that caught her eye. This marvellous golden deer was like a painted piece of majestic art work. This deer pranced around enchanting Sita Mata in every way possible. So, she urged Lords Rama and Laxmana to hunt for that golden deer for her desire. The Lords reluctantly agreed; they walked a few metres away to seek for the deer. However, they were unaware about the unethical evil plan that king Raavan was plotting.

Unexpectedly, Raavan came to Sita Mata disguised as a sage. He seemed to appear as a poor and famished monk. Sita Mata offered him alms and water, as it was her culture. However, King Raavan had cruel intentions and successfully tricked Sita Mata to step out of the Laxman-Rekha, an invisible boundary marked by Lord Laxmana, for her protection. At the cottage, Sita Mata's beauty allured Raavan, like a bee to a flower. Thereafter, the disguised-sage abducted Sita Mata and revealed his authentic form, as he fled to Lanka. However, nobody knew where Sita Mata was being taken to.

As soon as Lords Rama and Laxmana heard Sita Mata shrieking, they returned immediately, but Sita Mata was already kidnapped. Yet, they were in bewilderment to find their devoted vulture, Jatayu, in a horrific condition. The bird was bleeding profusely and in a dying state, uttering his last quivering words. This loyal vulture felt extreme disappointment and heavy weight of shame on his shoulders.

Jatayu said, “Raavan has taken Sita Mata, and they were headed towards the south direction. I am so sorry, I couldn’t save her.” The heroic vulture sighed his last breath and died in Lord Rama’s arms.

Anguished by Jatayu’s death and enraged by the capture of his wife, Lord Rama vowed revenge against King Raavan. King Sugreev of Kishkindha, heard the news. So he asked the King of Monkeys, Hanuman, along with Jambavan, the King of Bears, to help Lord Rama. So, Hanuman agreed, searched for Sita Mata and told Lord Rama that she was in the clutches of the evil king in Lanka.

Thereafter, a dedicated machination of monkeys and a maul of bears created a powerful army. This army was enthusiastic about helping Lords Rama and Laxmana unconditionally. The collaboration of monkeys and bears built a bridge of rocks - ‘The Ram-Setu Bridge’. It connects India to Lanka, and was built with utmost faith, so that they could rescue Sita Mata.

Upon reaching Lanka, the army waged war on the island of Lanka. During the war, the country was shattered in bloodshed. In the midst of this battle, Lord Rama was informed of a secret by Vibhishana, Raavan’s brother. Raavan was an invincible King under the blessing of a special protection bestowed by Maa Durga. So, Lord Rama had to discover what was the secret.

Hence, Lord Rama prayed to Maa Durga and asked, “I seek your blessings in winning the war against Raavan who has kidnapped my Sita.”

To this Maa Durga replied, “You have to complete a difficult, if not impossible ritual. You must acquire, one hundred and eight exceptionally rare blue lotuses.”

Lord Rama immediately agreed and called for Hanuman to fetch the lotuses from the Debidaha Lake.

Without wasting a moment, Hanuman flew to the lake, collected one hundred and eight lotuses, and returned without batting an eyelid. During the prayer ritual, when Lord Rama counted the flowers, he was disheartened to find only *one hundred and seven* blue lotuses. Therefore, to complete the ritual, with one hundred and eight lotuses, Lord Rama decided to make a sacrifice.

Lord Rama would do anything to gain his beloved Sita back. Even if it meant that he had to remove his own eye, as it resembled a lotus, he won't hesitate. As he proceeded to harm himself, mysteriously, Maa Durga appeared in her divine form. The Goddess prevented him from detaching his eye from his charming face. Maa Durga decided to give Lord Rama her pure blessings and eliminate the divine protection from evil Raavan.

Upon the mighty Maa Durga's promise, Lord Rama had a ferocious battle against Raavan. As the secret disclosed by Vibhishana, Rama shot a crimson red firing arrow into Raavan's navel. Thereafter, the nectar in his navel was vanquished, making it a fatal kill. Hence, Raavan's life source dried with the power of fire. Raavan succumbed to his fate of death, and Sita Mata was finally rescued.

In Dusshera, we learn that victorious light prevails over awful dark intentions.



English Enrichment Centre

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Foreword from the Founder



Nisha Sanghvi

Nisha Sanghvi, founder of Learner's Hub - English Enrichment Centre, and her team of teachers have been teaching children from Junior Kg to Grade 9. Enriched with an experience of more than 17 years, she has designed her own teaching modules and innovative curriculum along with her team.

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