

Science and Vedanta: The Quest for Perfection

—SIDDHARTHA SEN

In his book '*Walden*', Henry David Thoreau explains the idea of the quest for perfection very well, by a fable from India. The relevant passage is summarized here:

“There was an artist in the city of Kouroo who was disposed to strive after perfection. One day it came into his mind to make a staff. Having considered that in an imperfect work time is an ingredient, but into a perfect work time does not enter, he said to himself, I shall be perfect in all respects, though I should do nothing else in my life. He proceeded instantly to the forest for wood, being resolved that it should not be made of unsuitable material, and as he searched for and rejected stick after stick, his friends gradually deserted him, for they grew old in their works and died, but he grew not older for his singleness of purpose and resolution and his elevated piety endowed him, without his knowledge, with perennial youth. As he made no compromise with Time, Time kept out of his way and only sighed at a distance because he could not overcome him. By the time he had found his staff and had smoothed and polished it Kalpa was no longer the pole-star and Brahma had awoke and slumbered many times. But why do I mention these things? When the finishing stoke was put to his work, it suddenly expanded before the eyes of the astonished artist into the fairest of all creations of Brahma. He had made a new system in making the staff, a world with full and fair proportions... and now he saw by the heap of shavings still fresh at his feet, that, for him and his work, the former lapse of time had been an illusion, and that

no more time had elapsed than is required for a single scintillation from the brain of Brahma....”

The Quest for Perfection in Science

The quest for perfection seems to be inbuilt in us. What is Perfection? It is the search for a hidden timeless essence that we instinctively know is present in all that we experience: seeking perfection is never ending. This quest can be rephrased as seeking the hidden reality underpinning what we observe and experience. What we see is an illusion. Science has established that this is the case at a mundane level. Our body, objects that we see, are illusions created by the brain, since we now know that atoms and molecules and forces between them are the hidden constituents responsible for their observed forms.

This quest engages all creative human beings whether they are focused in artistic, scientific, or spiritual endeavours. The quest in science is to lift the veil of appearance that hides an inner deep Reality that is present in the world. In physics, this unstated quest has led to the conclusion that the world of appearance is an illusion. The starting quest was to understand the natural world observed. As progress was made it became clear, step-by-step, that what we see hides more fundamental entities that conspire to create the illusions observed. It has become clear that the way to make progress to understand the world requires the creative use of symbols to capture structural relationships between the abstract concepts of force, mass, energy, space, and time that were discovered by

the giants of science. It slowly became apparent that the material world could be described as a dance in space and time of energy distributed in localized lumps, called matter such as electrons and protons, or in space as fields, governed by universal laws of nature. It could be shown that the material universe, our body, our memories, could all be understood in terms of the dance of clumps of energy. The great conceptual contribution of Einstein was to show how space and time were not simply a backdrop for the dance of matter and fields but were themselves active participants of the dance. Energy changed with locations, objects moved, the material world was constantly changing, yet behind these changes there remained the unchanging laws of science that were outside the confines of time and space. Like the staff of the artist in Kouroo these laws could not be touched by time: they give us a glimpse of reality and perfection. Behind the ever-changing world there was thus an unchanging reality present, the facets of which could be perceived. As physics progressed, the quest became to show that there was one underlying set of laws that governed the working of the observed world that could be used to make testable predictions about it. The quest to find the set of Grand Unified Laws that govern the material universe is an ongoing endeavour.

The Quest for Perfection in Vedanta

I place Vedanta (as described by Adi Shankaracharya) as the quest for seeking to find the Eternal Laws of Existence. Viewed in this light one can say the Grand unified vision of Vedanta is on a scale that is far more encompassing than all the endeavours of science. I will sketch why,

and comment on implications of such a point of view. The text of Vedanta I am initially using is the *Mandukya Upanishad*. In eleven stanza's it offers a vision of a hidden Reality that underpins all of existence. The first step identifies Reality as something that has abstract attributes and is outside the realm of space-time and causality. Once identified, the next step is to represent this Reality by the name Brahman and the symbol 'Aum', which captures the essence of anything that can be stated by human beings and thus represents the limit of all possible communications.

After these preliminary steps the final step is to show that reality, so defined, exists. This step is based on observation of the different states of consciousness of human beings. Three observational steps are described and interpreted followed by a grand synthesis. The first step is to accept what we observe when awake, as Reality; the next step is to question this conclusion based on the fact that when we sleep we dream and that dreams seem to have the same qualities as our waking experiences. But dreams, we know, are not real thus perhaps what is observed when we are awake is also not real as no operational logical method of distinguishing a vivid dream from an experience of the waking state can be made. The common characteristic of both the waking and dreaming states is that there are changes and that different objects are present that behave as separate entities and act and respond to environmental or other effects. Thus these experiences do not satisfy the definition of Reality as something that is unchanging and timeless.

The sages of Vedanta then move on to analyse the nature of the state of deep sleep that all human beings experience. In

this state there are no differences and there are no changes. But this dreamless state has a beginning and an end, and is therefore also constrained by time. It is not timeless and thus not real. Each of these extraordinary steps described in the Upanishads are relentlessly driven by observation and a search for the unchanging timeless objects or experiences present in a world of time-driven change.

The final step of Vedanta is based on the experience of special individuals: it says that there is a fourth stage of consciousness that they have experienced which is timeless and is the reality we seek. It is further asserted that experiencing this reality is open to all as this reality is simply the eternal law of existence and we are this reality. The observed world is an illusion created by the underlying reality. We do not perceive this truth due to layers of ignorance that need to be removed before we can realize our true nature. No distinction is made between the living and non-living or between a worm and a human being. The leap is from the mundane to a vision, which for its boldness and rich implications, has no parallel. It solves the problem of the existence of reality in one stroke: we and the universe are all this reality: we are not parts of this reality, as the Ultimate Reality has no parts. It is a stunning vision and a grand unification of all that is or will be, which, at the same time, offers us a way to conduct ourselves in this world of illusion. Since we are all this reality it makes sense to treat all human beings, all living and non-living creatures, such as our environment with respect, it suggests the possibility that all sincere seekers of perfection might realize their true nature and that seekers of

scientific knowledge can be encouraged to pursue their dream of discovering appropriate universal timeless unchanging laws of nature in their chosen field of endeavour. Those who join such a quest simply do so for the joy it gives them.

In the *Chandogya Upanishad* the importance of joyfully undertaking any task is made explicit. It is stated that:

Where there is Creation, there is progress. Where there is no Creation, there is no progress. Know the nature of Creation.

Where there is Joy there is Creation. Where there is no Joy there is no Creation. Know the nature of Joy.

Where there is the infinite there is Joy. There is no Joy in the Finite.

The Indian civilization of the Upanishads could thus be characterized by three attributes: a supreme belief in the unity of all existence; a great regard for Truth; and a great regard for the infinite as a vibrant symbol of potentialities.

I have left out the careful analysis of the nature of the timeless Reality discussed in Vedanta, where it is explained how the limitations of our senses make it impossible to describe or comprehend its nature, but it can be experienced as Self-Realization.

Synthesis

The conclusion is that the vision of the Upanishads includes the endeavours of all the sciences, and indeed all creative activities. The vision can be life-changing but it is never prescriptive: no one is asked to follow this vision. It simply puts before us what the sages discovered based on their profound analysis of everyday events and their personal authentic experiences. Their insights tells us that all life paths

followed by all creatures conform to the Maya of existence, that there are multiple ways to self-realization and that no road followed by a dedicated person in this quest for realizing reality is superior or inferior. All paths are equally valid ways in the journey of self-realization. The religious beliefs, caste, eating habits or dress of a person make no difference: all are Brahman. The “all” includes all existence experienced and differences perceived, and these are simply due to Maya. There is no room for bigotry.

A further observation regarding the way the idea of unity of all existence proclaimed in the Upanishads maybe made. The Upanishads compress the insight of sages into a single symbol, Aum, which is then clarified. But this is done without falling into logical traps. For instance the description of this Reality stated maybe summarized as the two equations:

Reality = Brahman = Self and
Brahman = Truth + Existence + Bliss

But the terms introduced reflect eternal abstract entities, not objects belonging to a logical system. The attributes defining Brahman form a whole. In contrast it has been shown that attempts to compress all of mathematics to a small set of axioms within a conventional logical framework are bound to fail. Thus even the modest attempt to capture all the possibilities in the simplest part of mathematics, namely arithmetic, must fail, as was proved by Godel, who showed that any finite set of axioms cannot capture all possibilities present in arithmetic, in the sense that there would be true results of arithmetic that do not follow from them. Godel needed to use the logical rule of induction to establish this profound result.

But if this rule is relaxed in a suitable way, Godel’s incompleteness result is no longer valid. The limitations of a finite logical system also show up in the quest to understand the working of the human brain as was noted by the mathematician and logician von Neumann in his book ‘*The Computer and the Brain*’ von Neumann observes that the human brain does not seem to work on the basis of conventional logic and suggests that perhaps it follows a different form of logic whose nature is unknown. Thus the idea of Unity, as expressed in the Upanishads, or even the working of the human brain do not face the logical problem of incompleteness implied by Godel’s theorem, simply because the structural entities introduced in the Upanishads are not finite conventional logical objects and the logical rules of the brain perhaps do not use the logical rule of induction in its working.

The sages of India were well aware of the pitfalls of logical classifications as illustrated in one of the stories in Somadeva’s “*Kathasaritsagara*” — as summarized here: A king and his son were on a hunting trip and came across two sets of charming footprints which they identified as those of a mother and daughter. The royal pair surmised that the larger footprints were those of the mother and the smaller ones were those of the daughter and that the two ladies were fleeing from some terror. The king and prince decided that it was their duty to rescue them and marry them, if they were indeed in distress and were willing. It was decided that the king would marry the lady with the large footprint, the mother, and the prince would marry the daughter. The two royal personages successfully tracked down the ladies and sure enough they were

in distress. The mother and daughter were the wife and daughter of a king who had unexpectedly died creating a dangerous situation for them from which they were fleeing. As agreed the king, with the consent of the ladies, married the lady with the large footprint and the son married the lady with the small footprint. But there was a twist in the tale: the lady with the large footprint was the daughter and the one with the small footprint was the mother. In course of time two male children were born to the two ladies. The question is what is the relationship of the two children? The children were born and existed but placing them in precise logical categories of relationships was impossible.

A further remarkable refinement in this chain of reasoning of the Upanishads, was stressed by Gaudapada, the guru of Govindapada, who was the guru of Adi

Shankaracharya. Since the totality of all our experiences is part of Maya, in truth no one is seeking realization. Seekers are simply playing their part in Maya, even those who see through Maya, and understand its true nature, and joyfully play their part in its unfolding, but now with an understanding of the true nature of Maya.

There are statements in the Vedanta that reflect the science of that time and are not correct. These occasional scientific remarks, such as a comment on the nature of rain given in the *Brihadaranayaka Upanishad*, have no scientific merit. But the vision of unity proclaimed by Vedanta, based on observation and experience, stands before us as a stunning picture of an underlying eternal law of unity present in all of existence, that we are, and there is the possibility that we can experience and realize this Eternal Truth. ❀



He whom the sages have been seeking in all these places is in our own hearts; the voice that you heard was right, says the Vedanta, but the direction you gave to the voice was wrong. The ideal of freedom that you perceived was correct, but you projected it outside yourself, and that was your mistake. Bring it nearer and nearer, until you find that it was all the time within you, it was the Self of your own self. That freedom was your own nature and this Maya never bound you. Nature never has power over you.

—Swami Vivekananda

Navadurga, the Nine Manifestations of the Goddess Durga

—INDU RAMCHANDANI

The nine manifestations of Goddess Durga, constitute, according to Vedic scriptures, the Goddess in Her nine different aspects. These aspects are especially worshipped during the festival of Navaratri, “the nine nights of the Goddess”, where each of the nine manifested forms is venerated, one on each night.

Traditionally, there are two ‘Navaratri’ festivals — one in April, which celebrates Rama Navami, the birth of Lord Rama and the second in October-November, ‘the Autumn’ festival, which undoubtedly, is the more popular and famous. Not only is this festival of “nine nights” a narrative of the Navadurga, telling us of Her prowess in overpowering demons and of Her most caring and protective forms as she blesses her devotees... it links Sri Rama’s great battle against the Asura king Ravana. As legend goes, Sri Rama and his brother Lakshmana, along with the *vanara sena* (monkey army), which is ably managed by Hanuman and the Vanara king Sugriva, are now getting ready for the final battle with Ravana. This demon king had kidnapped Sita, Sri Rama’s beloved wife, from their cottage in the forest, and was holding her captive in Ashoka Vatika, in his Kingdom in Lanka. Ravana is a tough adversary, and Sri Rama worships the goddess venerating her before he crosses the ocean to Lanka. Pleased with his worship, the goddess appears and blesses him with victory. Rama defeats Ravana on Vijayadashami (the tenth night), but this event is also linked with the Devi destroying

Mahishasura, the vicious demon who has ousted the devas, the gods, from their heavens. Along with the festive celebrations of the Navadurga, therefore, is the enactment of the Ramlila, the play of *Ramavatara* conquering evil.

Many of us are perhaps not aware of the link of the worship of the Goddess with the Pandavas and with the Mahabharata. In the Virata Parva, it is now the thirteenth year of the Pandavas’ exile, and it is imperative for them to remain *incognito*. They seek asylum in the kingdom of Virata, each taking on a seemingly non-descript persona. But before they enter the kingdom they must hide all their weapons. They find a large *Sami* tree. As per legend, this is one tree said to be the abode of the devas. After they hide all their weapons, they hang a corpse on the tree to deter inquisitive passers-by. At this point, Yudhishtira worships the Goddess. She appears before him and blesses him with victory in their impending war against the Kauravas. Later, just before the war, in the Bhishma Parva, Arjuna praises the goddess as the giver of victory and invokes Her blessings to win the war. These methods of worship as given in both the epics and in the Puranas link us to the Goddess as a source of self-bondage (through *avidya*) and self-liberation (through *vidya*). She is also identified with Mother Earth, the cosmos, and the Primordial Energy (*Prakriti*). Her worship symbolizes the unification of power and energy in pursuit of Dharma and Self-Realization.

The Navadurga

We now see the nine forms of the Goddess, as She is worshipped during the nine nights. The Goddess always has a vehicle, or *vahana*, on which She rides. While Durga and most of her forms are frequently seen seated on a lion, some of them are also seen with a tiger as well. Like, among the Nava-Durgas, Kushmanda Devi is Vyaghra-Vahini, the one who rides a tiger. Similar is the case with Chandraghanta. But Katyayani, who slays Mahishasura is always said to be accompanied by a lion.

Goddess Shailaputri

Goddess Shailaputri is the first manifestation of Goddess Durga. Navaratri begins with a night of worship and celebration in honour of Durga's manifestation Shailaputri, whose name means "daughter of the mountains". Also known as Sati Bhavani, Parvati, or Hemavati, she is the daughter of Hemavana, the king of the Himalaya. Shailaputri is considered the absolute form of Mother Nature and the embodiment of the power of Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahadeva.

After performing self-immolation in her form as Sati, Lord Shiva's consort, the Mother Goddess Parvati is born as the daughter of the Himalaya and in Sanskrit, Shaila means the mountain, thus the name Shailaputri.

Iconographically, she is depicted riding a bull and holding a trident and a lotus blossom. The lotus represents purity and devotion, while the prongs on the trident represent the past, present, and future.

Devotees offer pure ghee (clarified butter) on the foot of Goddess Shailaputri.

It is believed that by offering pure ghee the devotees are blessed with a life free of disease and illness.

Goddess Brahmacharini

The second day of Navaratri is dedicated to Goddess Brahmacharini, whose name means, "One who practices devout austerity".

'Brahma' means "The one self-existent Spirit, the Absolute Reality, Universal Self, Personal God, the sacred knowledge." 'Charini' means "Occupation with, engaging, proceeding, behaviour, conduct, to follow, moving within, going after". She is the goddess of asceticism and penance, as her name is the female equivalent of one who practices austerities.

Brahmacharini is the Mother Goddess born unto Prajapati Daksha as his daughter Sati and is later married to Lord Shiva. This is her unmarried form. Her other names are Parvati, Aparna, Uma, Patlabati.

The goddess walks bare feet with a *rudraksha japa-mala* (prayer beads or rosary) in one hand and a *kamandala* (sacred water utensil) in the other. The meditative form of this goddess symbolises Goddess Parvati when she is engaged in deep meditation to please Lord Shiva. She enlightens us in the magnificent embodiment of Durga with great powers and divine grace. Brahmacharini, representing the special prayers recited in her honour, symbolizes marital bliss. The devotees believe she endows happiness, peace, prosperity, and grace upon all who worship her. She is the way to emancipation, or *Moksha*.

Goddess Brahmacharini is offered sugar for the longevity of the family members.

Goddess Chandraghanta

The third day of Navratri is for Goddess Chandraghanta. This third manifestation of Durga, represents peace, tranquillity, and prosperity in life. Chandraghanta is the married form of the Mother Goddess. After marrying Lord Shiva, she adorned her forehead with a half-moon shaped like a bell, which explains the origin of her name. Chandraghanta is charming, has a golden bright complexion, and rides a tiger. Like Durga, Chandraghanta has multiple limbs, usually ten, each holding a weapon, and she has three eyes. Goddess Chandraghanta carries a *trishul* (trident), a *gada* (mace), bow-arrow, a sword, a *kamandala*, a *kamala* (lotus flower),

ghanta (bell) while one hand is in *Varada mudra*, symbolizing the giver of boons and one of her hands remains in blessing posture or *Abhaya mudra*, granting fearlessness.

She is the goddess who inspires courage in a person and is always ready for war against demons. She is all-seeing and ever-vigilant, ready to battle evil from whatever direction. When provoked, She can be malevolent to those who invite her wrath, therefore, she is also seen as the fierce ten-armed goddess, out to destroy



all evil and wickedness. But she remains the embodiment of serenity to her followers.

The ferocious goddess is pleased with *Kheer* (sweetened milk desert). She is known to drive away all pains.

Goddess Kushmanda

Kushmanda is the fourth form of the mother goddess, and her name means “creator of the universe”, for she is the one who brings light to the dark cosmos.

She is the manifestation of Parvati. *Ku* means “a little”, *ushma* means “warmth” or “energy” and *anda* taken from the last three words of the Sanskrit word “Brahmanda” that means the Universe.

After taking the form of *Siddhidatri*, the Mother Goddess began to live inside the Sun, resulting in liberating the Sun’s energy to the universe. Since then, this form of the Goddess has been known as *Kushmanda*, namely for her power and capability to live inside the Sun. The glow and radiance of her body is as luminous as that of the Sun.

Like other manifestations of Durga, Kushmanda has multiple limbs (usually eight or ten). She rides on a lioness symbolizing strength and courage in the face of adversity.

She holds a *kamandala*, *dhanusha* (bow), *gada*, and a *kamala* (lotus) in her right hands. Her left hands hold the *Amrit Kalash* (pot of nectar), *japa-mala*, and *Sudarshana-chakra*, in that order. Thus she holds weapons, glitters, a rosary, and other holy objects. The glitter is particularly significant because it represents the sparkling light that she brings to the world.

Said to have created the universe in the flash of her smile and is believed to bestow *siddhis* (supernatural powers) and *niddhis* (wealth) to her devotees.

Devotees offer *Malpua* (sweetened pancakes) to Ma Kushmanda to improve their intellect and decision-making ability.

Goddess Skandamata

Skandamata is worshipped on the fifth day is also known as Panchami. Goddess Skandamata is the mother of Skanda or Lord Kartikeya, who was chosen by the gods as their commander-in-chief in the war against the demons.

Skanda is Lord Ganesha’s older brother. Emphasizing her pure and divine nature, Skandamata is seated on a lotus, and she has four arms and three eyes. She holds the infant Skanda in her right upper arm and a lotus in her right hand, which is slightly raised upward. With her left arm, she grants blessings to the faithful, and she holds a second lotus in her left hand. Goddess Skandamata mounts the ferocious lion. She is also recognized as “The Goddess of Fire”. She sits on a lotus flower as well and because of that is also known as *Goddess Padmasana*.

Devotees who worship this form of the Mother Goddess get the added benefit of blessings of Lord Skanda. Goddess Skandmata’s favourite fruit is banana.

Goddess Katyayani

The sixth day of Navaratri is dedicated to Goddess Katyayani, who is a form of Shakti. Like Kaalaratri, who is worshipped on the following night, Katyayani is a fearsome sight, with wild hair and 18 arms, each clutching a weapon. Many still see her as a four-armed warrior goddess. She carries a lotus flower and sword in her left hands respectively and the right hands are in *Varada mudra*, symbolizing the giver of boons and one remains in blessing posture or *Abhaya mudra*, fearlessness. Like Kushmanda, Katyayani rides a lion, ready at all times to confront evil.

Katyayani is considered as one of the most violent forms of Goddess Parvati. To destroy the demon Mahishasura, Devi Parvati incarnated as the daughter of sage Katyayana, and helped the devas. She is known for her anger, vengeance, and ultimate victory over the demons. She will bestow boons, if she is pleased, upon those

who worship and revere her with a pure heart. Born in a fit of divine rage and anger, she emits a radiant light from her body from which darkness and evil cannot hide. Despite her appearance, devotees believe that she can bestow a sense of calm and inner peace upon all who worship her. Devotees offer honey as prasad to Devi Katyayani.

Goddess Kaalratri

Saptami or the seventh day of Navratri is the night of Goddess Kaalratri. Kaalratri is also known as Shubhamkari; her name means, "One who does good". This is among the fiercest and the most ferocious form of the Mother Goddess, in which the Goddess Parvati manifests to destroy the demons Sumbha and Nishumbha. Kaalratri, meaning the night of death (death night). All time, light, emotions, life forms and others all blend into her. She is the death of time and is greater than Kala (Time) himself.

She is a fearsome-looking deity, with a dark complexion, dishevelled hair, four arms, and three eyes. Lightning issues from the necklace she wears and flames shoot from her mouth. Like Kali, the goddess who destroys evil, Kaalratri has a black skin and is worshipped as a protector of the faithful, one to be both honoured and feared. In her left hand, she holds a *vajra*, or spiked club, and a dagger, both of which she uses to fight the forces of evil. Her right hands, meanwhile, beckon to the faithful, offering them protection from darkness and allaying all fears. As per legend she sacrificed her skin colour and embraced a dark complexion to kill demons. She is a four-armed deity who rides a donkey, carries a sword, a trident, and a noose or perhaps a deadly hook.

Her right hands are in *Abhaya mudra* and *Varada mudra*. She has a third eye on her forehead that is believed to contain the entire universe. Devotees offer Jaggery as prasad to Devi Kaalratri for relief from pains, obstacles, and to bring happiness.

Goddess Mahagauri

Mahagauri is worshipped on the eighth day of Navaratri. Her name, which means "extremely fair", refers to her luminous beauty, which radiates from her body. Mahagauri is known as the goddess of purity and cleanliness. She is known as the forgiving goddess and forgives sinners and purifies them.

Devotees believe that by paying homage to Mahagauri, all past, present, and future sins will be washed away, imparting a deep sense of inner peace. She wears white clothes and rides on a bull. She has four arms, holding a *trishul* in one of her right hands and depicts the *Abhaya mudra* with the other right hand. She carries a tambourine or *damaru* in one left hand and depicts the *Varada mudra* or has a *kamandala* in her other left hand.

The person who pleases Her, by Her grace, all flaws, faults, and mistakes will be burnt to ashes and will be redeemed. She is a four-armed deity who rides on a bull or a white elephant.

Devotees offer coconut to Goddess Mahagauri.

Goddess Siddhidatri

Goddess Siddhidatri is the ninth form of Durga, celebrated on the final night of Navaratri.

In the beginning of the universe, Lord Rudra worshipped the unmanifest form of the Mother Goddess, Adi Parashakti, for creation. As Adi Parashakti, the Mother

Goddess had no form, She thus appeared as Siddhidhatri and from the left half of Lord Shiva.

Her name means “giver of supernatural power,” and devotees believe she bestows blessings upon all deities and devotees of the faith. Siddhidatri grants wisdom and insight to those who appeal to her, and the followers believe that she can do the same for deities who worship her as well. Like some of Durga’s other manifestations, *Goddess Siddhidatri* sits on a lotus or rides on a tiger or lion. She is depicted with four hands. She has a *gada* in the one right hand, a *Sudarshana chakra* (spinning disc) in the other right hand, a lotus flower in the left hand and a conch in the other left hand. The conch, called a *shankha*, represents longevity, while the spinning disc symbolizes the soul or

timelessness.

She bestows all types of *siddhi* (supernatural powers) to her devotees and hence is worshipped by humans, demigods, demons, and gods alike. The *siddhi* that She provides is the realization that only She exists. She is the mistress of all achievements.

This form of Goddess Durga signifies perfection. Siddhidatri is the one who removes ignorance and she provides the knowledge to realize true reality. Sesame Seeds are offered to Devi Siddhidatri for safety and security from unnatural events.

For the believers, for those to whom festivals and their rituals are significant, for whom the Divine Mother is the Prakriti who churns this cycle of life, the Navadurga are very significant. Jai Ma! ❀



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–EDITOR