



MAHA SAMADHI MESSAGE 2021

Dussehra is celebrated by Hindus all over the world. It symbolizes 'Shakti Puja'. Mother Durga symbolizes the primordial creative energy of the universe. She represents the combined force of all the 'devatas' or all the elements of nature that combine to destroy the opposition to the creation of nature and subsequent evolution. The evil force is symbolized as 'Mahishashur'. 'Mahishashur' means the evil forces (Asura) symbolized as a buffalo. 'Markendey Purana' and 'Devi Mahaatmya' give a lot of information about it. The worship of Goddess Durga is very popular in the eastern states of India like West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Assam, and Tripura. Durga Puja takes place not only in temples but also in ashrams, caves, and other places. In its simplistic connotation, Dussehra stands for *the win of the good over the evil forces*. Such victory can be on the physical plane, the mental plane, or even on the cosmic plane. 'Mahishashur' i.e., 'Mahishi' (buffalo) 'asura' (obstructionist and cruel evil spirit) was defeated in a one-to-one battle with Devi Durga who is, therefore, known as 'Mahishasuramardini'.

Dussehra is celebrated every year during Autumn for ten days and is known as *Sharad Navaratri*. It is celebrated in the bright half of the month of *Ashwini* or the period of the waxing moon as per the Hindu calendar. This falls in the Georgian months of September - October. 'Navaratri' means the nine nights of nine days and the tenth day is known as Dussehra. This is also called *Vijayadashami*. The 'Navaratri' also coincides with seasonal events pertaining to major crops.

Dussehra, in a way, is also preparatory for 'Kali Puja', which takes place twenty days later.

For the devotees of the Saibaba of Shirdi, Dussehra has an additional and important significance. Shirdi Saibaba left his body on the 15th of October, 1918, which happened to be the day of Dussehra. This being the day of Mahasamadhi of Shirdi Baba all the devotees in temples and Saibaba-related institutions celebrate it with lots of pomp and ceremony.

Saibaba of Shirdi stood for good of all human beings without caste, creed, religion and other differentiations. He taught this theme to his devotees throughout his life. Therefore, when celebrating this day as the '*Mahaprayan*' day of the Sadguru, the devotees will do well to remember Baba's kindness, philosophy, and his examples to serve humanity.

Jai Shri Sai!
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