



**TriYoga® Center of Philadelphia
at Mind-Body Services**

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DEVI: THE MOTHER IN YOGA
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~ HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY ~

Oh, Divine Mother, my words are inadequate to express Your greatness.

*I am the branch, You are the tree.
I am the river, You are the ocean.
I am the ray, You are the sun.
I am the thunder, You are the lightning.
I am the servant, You are the master.
I am the soul, You are the Source.*

*Unto Thee I surrender...
Ah, we are One.*

- Kaliji, 1998

Kaliji often reminds us that our mothers are our first gurus (teachers). The mother gives birth to the child, physically cares for the baby, infant, and child, helps the child grow and develop, guides the child's spiritual life, and showers us in love, radiance, and support. On this Mother's Day, we honor all physical mothers, spiritual mothers, and Devi.

Devi, representing the Universal Mother (Mata) and Cosmic Energy, is one way of naming the ineffable Supreme Spirit, the Universal Flow, and the Spiritual Self (self

with a capital S). Devi is also called the Divine Mother, the Divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and Durga. Devi is a name for the spiritual energy within all of us.

Various spiritual and religious paths speak of the Mother, yet as any description of the Ultimate, words and images never quite fully depict her/it. Because the mind often requires a form, the Indian tradition emphasizes darshan (sight/vision) of deities. In the Indian tradition, there is an abundance of forms depicting the Universal, while it is also acknowledged that the form is only a channel for visualizing and one way of being present to the Cosmic Energy. Guru Devi is often portrayed as Durga, the Divine Mother, the mother of creation, the Divine Cosmic Power. Durga is a name for the Universal Trinity. She contains and is represented by the three spiritual energies (shaktis) of Saraswati (Sarasvati), Laksmi (Lakshmi), and Kali. These three deities are yet other ways of visualizing, describing, and feeling the energy of the Universal in feminine form. Lakshmi is the goddess/energy of inner happiness, prosperity and wealth. Saraswati is the goddess/energy of higher knowledge, creativity, mantra, and music. Kali is the goddess/energy of purification, transformation, and of the destruction of negativity.

The Indian tradition also encourages presence to the Universal through either the visualization of the guru (teacher) or through sitting in the presence of the guru (satsanga). Thus, we can receive the blessings of darshan from saintly people and great teachers. In TriYoga, we have many teachers in feminine form, since many TriYoga teachers are women. We are also blessed to have a modern embodiment of the Flows in the form of our contemporary master yogini and guru, Kaliji. We can be in her presence, learn from her teachings and example, and view numerous pictures and videos of her. One other feminine form in the TriYoga lineage is Sri Mata Jaya Laksmi (a.k.a. Sri Mata or Mataji). We have one picture and some stories about her. This master yogini was the birth mother of Sri Ganapati Satchidananda Swamiji (a.k.a. Swamiji). She is considered to have been an incarnation of the Divine Mother. Sri Mata Jaya Laksmi is regarded as the mother of both the Datta Yoga (Swamiji's) and the Devi Yoga (TriYoga) lineages, and is considered to be Kaliji and Swamiji's spiritual mother. Moreover, the great Sanskrit scholar, Dr. Sarasvati Mohan is the Sanskrit teacher for TriYoga. She has the distinct honor of being the first woman to receive a Ph.D. in Sanskrit in India, a field of study that was restricted to men until recently. We thus benefit from the wisdom, experience, and teachings of Kaliji, Dr. Mohan, and all of our mothers and gurus.

Traditionally, in India, yoga was a path restricted to men. Until recently, yoga practitioners were also required to leave their families and communities. This life as a renunciant often prohibited women from participating due to the prominence of house-holding tasks, childcare, and elder-care in many women's lives. Yoga was brought to the west from India by a number of male teachers, yet now yoga is replete with female practitioners and teachers. In TriYoga, we are blessed to have had yoga practices and wisdom manifest through Kaliji (as opposed to having it taught). Due to

this manifestation of the Universal Energy through Devi-inspired Flow (prasara) and through the physical form of a woman, we have received the gift of Devi Yoga. In a sense, one can think of TriYoga as a much more graceful, feminine, flowing form than the more traditionally masculine hatha yoga practices involving asanas (sustained postures) and vinyasa (linked sustained postures). TriYoga is and feels different from vinyasa, as it is prasara (flow) rather than linked asana. And it is more than this, since TriYoga was not created, but rather inspired and guided by Kaliji's direct experience of kriyavati siddhi (the spontaneous flow of asana, pranayama and mudra) and since kriyavati (the manifestation of prana, the universal life energy, through hatha yoga) continues to guide the evolution of TriYoga.

TriYoga is also known as Devi Yoga (a.k.a. Mother Yoga). It is called Devi Yoga because it develops the idea of the triple principle (a.k.a. Trinity) as the basis of all creation and because it includes all major yoga paths (raja yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga, nada yoga). TriYoga or Devi Yoga honors the Universal manifesting in numerous triple forms and energies. Again, one of many ways to describe the triple principle is as the trinity of Saraswati, Laksmi, and Kali. Thus, the Mother, Devi, in all of her manifestations, pervades TriYoga, guiding and inspiring us.

**In gratitude, we pranam (bow) to the Holy Mother,
in all of Her many forms, and beyond all form.**

Closing with the mantra for Devi:

**Om Aim Hreem Shreem
Om Aim Hrim Srim**

Om: Universal Energy; Aim: Saraswati; Hreem: Kali; Shreem: Laksmi

~ Jaya Guru Devi ~



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