



Divinity Resides Within

If someone asks me what the teaching of this Ashram is, I can sum it all up in one sentence: “The Divine dwells within you and in everyone and everything around you.” God is not something or someone out there. God dwells within us in the form of our virtues. Just as the presence of light and warmth is the presence of the sun, the presence of unconditional love, kindness, forgiveness and acceptance is the presence of God.

When we are aware of our virtues, we are in touch with the Divine within, and when we are practicing these virtues in our daily life, it is the Divine that is manifesting through us into the world. These are the moments of union with God. When we are in such moments, we are in the presence of the Divine. Living a life like this is acknowledging the Divine within.

While God, the Great Unknown, the Divine, is called by many different names in different cultures, It is beyond any name, form, gender and color. It permeates every single atom of the space between the earth and sky. Yet when we try to come closer to It, It is beyond our comprehension.

That is why in order to focus our attention, we give the formless a form. We give it a name we can relate to. If I have to give a name to the Great Unknown, I call it Mother.

Mother is our first friend when we come onto this Earth. Even before we are on this Earth, she carries us in her womb, nurtures us with her body, and then gives birth to us and nurtures us with her milk. Her attention is constantly focused on the needs of her baby. She is constantly thinking about what could be her baby’s next need. Mother is our first friend, our first teacher, our first Guru. So if I have to give a name to that Great Unknown, I call It Mother – the Divine Mother.

In India, a school of thought has emerged out of relating to the Great Unknown as Divine Mother. This school of thought acknowledges Shakti (energy, power, capability) as the primal force which manifests in Its various forms as creation. Through these manifestations She enables us to live our lives in wholeness. Although the Shakti is one, Her diverse qualities have been given various names, just as you may respond to one name at home, another at work, and yet another on the playground. The most familiar names for Shakti, the Divine Mother, are Kali, Lakshmi and Saraswati.

Kali or Maha Kali is the remover of darkness and death. She is fierce toward the enemies of Her devotees and bestows fearlessness to Her devotees.

Lakshmi or Maha Lakshmi bestows wealth – both material and spiritual. She is worshipped for prosperity.

Saraswati or Maha Saraswati bestows knowledge. She is worshipped to obtain the supreme knowledge.

The teachings of the Ashram are aligned with this school of thought. Although the Divine is beyond any name, form and gender, for the purpose of expressing devotion, we address Her as Divine Mother.