

MOTHER



***Maathru Devo Bhava
Pitru Devo Bhava
Acharya Devo Bhava
Athidhi Devo Bhava***

-Taittiriya Upanishad

“Mother is like God, Father is like God, Acharya (teacher) is like God, and Athidhi (a Guest) is like God”.

Stotra:

Ya Devi Sarva Bhooteshu Matru roopena Samsthita

Namastasyai Namastasyai Namastasyai Namaha

- Devi mahathmyam

"Salutations to the divine mother, whose art manifest in every being's existence as mother, I worship thee, over and over and over again."

How do you treat God?

You love God. You obey God. You respect God.

Question: How should you treat parents?

Mother is like God because she created you. She bore you in her womb for nine months with great difficulty. Mother is most loving and kind. When you are hungry, she feeds you. She is the first teacher. Father and sometimes Mother works very hard at job to earn the money to make sure you have a nice place to live and make sure you have good clothes and good food. They are like God in that they fulfill your wishes and make sure you are safe. They love you very much. Therefore, they deserve love, respect, and you need to obey them as they always want is best for you.

Guru is your teacher. In Sanskrit Guru means the one who brings the brightness by removing the darkness. Teacher also works very hard to see that you learn a lot. They also deserve love, respect, and you need to do what they ask.

If you do not make your parents happy, you yourself cannot be happy.

How to show respect to Mother, Father, and Teacher?

- Obey them! They always want what is best for you!
- Love them! This will make them happy, then they will bless you.
- Show respect to them! How to show respect?
- Do not argue. Do not cry every time you don't get what you want. Do what they ask you to do.

- Do pada namaskar on auspicious occasions. (Demonstration of love and respect).

In great Vedic tradition, guest is also treated like God. We always serve the guest first, and take care of all their needs such as a need to wash up, be fed, have a proper place to rest, and so forth.

Story of Pundalika:

Pundalik was a devoted son to his parents Janudev and Satyavati. They lived in a forest called Dandirvan. But after his wedding, Pundalik began ill-treating his parents. Tired with their son's misbehaviour and ill treatment, the elderly couple decided to leave for Kashi. Legend holds that people who die in the city of [Kashi](#) attain salvation and emancipation from the cycle of birth and death, and so, many pious Hindus in bygone era would relocate to Kashi as their end drew near.

However, the elderly couple were not destined to escape their sufferings so easily. Upon hearing of their plans, Pundalik's wife decided to join them and make a pilgrimage. Pundalik and she then joined the same group of pilgrims on horseback. The ill treatment of the old couple continued at the hands of Pundalik. While the youthful son and his wife rode on horseback, the frail old couple walked in bad weather. Pundalik even made his old parents work towards making his own journey comfortable. Every evening when the party camped for the night, the son forced his parents to groom the horses and do other jobs.

On the way to Kashi, the group reached the ashram (hermitage) of a pious and venerable sage named Kukutswami. Being tired from the journey, they decided to spend a few days there. That night, when all were asleep, Pundalik by chance lay awake. He witnessed a remarkable vision. Just before dawn, he saw a group of beautiful, young women, dressed in dirty clothes, enter the ashram, clean the floor, fetch water and wash the venerable sage's clothes. After they finished their chores, they went to the prayer-room of the hermitage. When they reappeared after prayer, their clothes were spotlessly clean. Then, they vanished as inexplicably as they had appeared.

Pundalik did not feel moved to raise an alarm; on the other hand, he felt a deep sense of peace as he witnesses this scene. It remained on his mind the whole day, and he resolved upon remaining awake the next night, to be sure that what he had witnessed was not merely a dream. This time however, Pundalik was very curious. He approached the beautiful women and asked them on who they were.

They said, they were the [Ganga](#), [Yamuna](#) and other holy rivers of India in which were revered for their holiness and pilgrims thronged to have a dip in their holy waters to wash away their sins. The holy rivers explained that their clothes were dirty and unclean due to the sins of the bathing pilgrims. "But O Pundalik, you, with your ill-treatment of your parents, are the greatest sinner of them all!"

This incident completely shocked Pundalik and got a transformation in him. He realized his mis-deeds and became devoted to his parents. He made all efforts to make his parents comfortable. And left no stone unturned to make his parents happy, even at the cost of his own comfort.

They say, devotion in any form reaches [God](#) immediately. Seeing this utmost devotion of Pundalik to his parents, Lord [Vishnu](#) was very pleased. God was so happy with him that He wanted to bless [Pundalik](#) immediately, so he left from [Vaikuntha](#) (Lord Vishnu's abode) for bhoolok (Earth) and Pundalik's ashram.

Lord knocked Pundalik's door. At that time Pundalik was serving his parents food and was busy. Pundalik heard the door knock and realized it was God who had come to see him. But such was his devotion to his parents, he wanted to complete his duties and only then attend to the visitor, irrespective of whether it was even God at his doorstep. Pundalik threw a brick outside for God to stand on and wait for him until he finishes attending to his parents.

Seeing this devotion & commitment to his parents he was extremely impressed. And the ever-loving God waited for his devotee. When Pundalik came out and begged God's pardon, Lord Vishnu replied that far from being displeased, he was pleased with his love for his parents and granted a boon to him. Pundalik requested God to stay back on Earth and bless all his numerous devotees. Lord agreed to stay back as Vithoba, or God who stood upon a brick.

Student Activity (Paint the following image of Goddess Durga):

