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Dear Sai brothers and sisters,

Our sacred journey this month is to the holy shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi.

Mata Vaishno Devi



Vaishno Devi Mandir is one of the holiest Hindu temples dedicated to Shakti, located in the hill of Vaishno Devi, Jammu and Kashmir, India. In Hinduism, Vaishno Devi, also known as Mata Rani and Vaishnavi, is a manifestation of the Mother Goddess.

The temple is near the town of Katra, in Jammu district in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It is one of the most revered places of worship in Northern India. The shrine is at an altitude of 5200 feet and a distance of approximately 12 kilometres (7.45 miles) from Katra. The cave shrine of Mata Vasihnodevi ji or Trikuta Bhagwati (alt: 5,200 ft.) has been a

beacon of faith and fulfillment to millions of devotees from all over the world. The pilgrimage to the Shrine holds great significance for the pilgrims.

The Legend of Mata Vaishnodevi Ji

The pilgrimage to the holy temple of Mata Vaishnodevi is as fascinating as the legend associated with it. It goes that thousands of years ago, a comely maiden called "Vaishnavi" have been created by the three lords attained human form and was a devotee of Lord Vishnu. Having taken a vow of celibacy, she spent almost all her life in meditation and prayers. In time she attained enormous spiritual powers and is believed to have extracted an assurance from Lord Rama that he will marry her in KaliYug if she persisted in her spiritual quest.

This is why she is also known as Adh Kanwari or the "eternal virgin". Mata Vaishno Devi established an ashram in the foothills of the Trikuta Mountain and began to meditate. As predicted by Lord Rama, her glory started spreading and people began to flock to her ashram to seek her blessings. As time passed, a Tantrik called Gorakh Nath (Demo God), who had a vision of the episode between Lord Rama and Mata Vaishno Devi, became curious and wanted to know more about her. Accordingly, he sent his most able disciple `Bhairon Nath' to find out. Bhairon Nath started observing her secretly and realized that despite being a `Sadhvi', she always carried a bow and arrows and was always surrounded by langoor (apes) and a ferocious looking lion. Bhairon, the demon God took a fancy to her. But the Mata spurned his advances and fled to the Himalayas to continue her spiritual quest.

On the way the goddess felt thirsty at Banganga and shot an arrow into the earth from where water gushed out. Charan Paduka, which is marked by the imprints of her feet, is the place where she rested. The Goddess then meditated in the cave at Adh Kanwari. It took Bhairon nine months to locate her, which is why the cave is known as Garbh Joon. When the demon found her, Mata Vaishno Devi blasted an opening at the other end of the cave with her trident and fled to the Holy cave at Darbar (temple).

However, Bhairon was persistent and followed her there to harass her. Then goddess became very angry and assuming the form of Mata Kali, beheaded Bhairon outside the cave with the aid of the flying disc gifted to her by Lord Krishna.



Banganga - the place where Mata Vaishnodevijji felt thirsty and shot an arrow into the earth from where water has been gushing out.

The severed head of Bhairon fell at a distant hilltop. In his dying moments, Bhairon begged and received divine forgiveness from the goddess. Today, it is believed that the Yatra is not complete unless the pilgrim has been to Bhairon ka Mandir (2.6 km from the main sanctum) as well, after the darshan of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi.

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The goddess herself took up permanent abode in a cave in the Trikuta Mountains by metamorphosing herself in to three pindis (Rock). This holy temple of Mata Vaishno Devi is unique as it contains the holiest of holy Pindis manifesting the Mata in her three forms - Maha Kali, Maha Lakshmi and Maha Saraswati - each form representing a particular attribute.



A view of the holiest of holy Pindis manifesting Mata Vaishnodeviji in her three forms - Maha Kali, Maha Lakshmi and Maha Saraswati.

Maha Kali represents Tamas Guna, Tamas meaning darkness. In her manifestation of Kali the omnipotent, absolute and all pervasive, she is said to be beyond fear and finite existence and is therefore able to protect her devotees against fear and to give them limitless peace. Maha Lakshmi represents Rajas Guna, Rajas meaning prosperity. In this manifestation, the goddess blesses her devotees with wealth and prosperity for living a better life. Maha Saraswati represents Satva Guna, Satva meaning wisdom and knowledge. This manifestation enables her devotees to distinguish between good and bad and helps them to adopt the right path in life. The combination of these three attributes in a single Shakti is a unique combination, which is what makes it, revered all over the world.



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