

The power of the Goddess Durga

The Gods all lived in heaven and were ruling there. The demons, however, who lived on the earth, were very unhappy. 'We used to rule in heaven,' they complained, 'until the Gods came and took over.' The demons were furious and wanted heaven back again.

They decided to go to the wicked and powerful demon called Mahish. He was so cruel and mischievous that everyone was terrified of him. Years before he had been granted special powers so that no man could ever kill him. Only a woman would ever be able to kill Mahish. He was very pleased to be approached by all the demons, and before long he had gathered together a huge and terrifying army to attack the Gods in heaven.

The battle commenced. The Gods fought bravely and endured violence and suffering for a hundred years, but in the end they were forced out of heaven. The wicked Mahish had won and became the new king of heaven.

The Gods were devastated. What could they do to win back heaven and rid the world of the wicked Mahish? They concentrated their thoughts and all their powers together to seek help. Gradually a light began to shine and it became brighter and brighter, like the sun, and out of the light appeared a terrifying sight. A powerful Goddess emerged riding on a savage lion. She was the wonderful Goddess Durga.

The Gods gave Durga all their most dangerous weapons, and off she rode to challenge the wicked Mahish. Mahish was so powerful and he had such a strong army that he had no fear of Durga. The demon army charged her from all sides. However, they could not harm her. The ferocious lion on which she rode killed them all with his powerful jaws.

Now there was only Mahish left. He was quick thinking and instantly changed himself into a gigantic buffalo which thundered around uprooting mountains and making the ground quake. Durga tried to capture him with a rope, but he changed to a lion and freed himself. In his efforts to avoid Durga's attacks he changed into a man, then an elephant and then a buffalo again. This time Durga stamped on him with her foot so that he was unable to move, and as quick as a flash, she swung her sword into the air and cut off his head just at the point when he turned himself back into his demon form. A woman had killed Mahish.

The Gods were overjoyed that the earth and heaven were now rid of the most wicked demon. The world was restored to peace once more.