

3. I began a continuous laudatory prayer of the Goddess Durgā, the beloved of Śiva, the creator of the universe, of the nature of Vidyā and Avidyā²⁵¹ and identical with the pure supreme Brahman.

4. I salute the Goddess who is omnipresent, eternal, for whom there is no support, who is never distressed, who is the mother of the three deities, who is the grossest of the gross and yet has no form.

5. O Goddess of the devas, you are Perfect knowledge, Supreme Bliss, identical with the supreme Soul. Be pleased. Grant me the fulfilment of my task. Obeisance to you.

6. O celestial sage, on being thus lauded Caṇḍikā, the mystic slumber, appeared before me.

7. Her complexion had the glossy hue of collyrium. She had comely features. She had four divine arms. She was seated on a lion. She showed the mystic gesture of granting boons by one of her hands, and pearls adorned her dishevelled hair.

8. Her face shone like the autumnal moon, the crescent moon bedecked her forehead. She had three eyes, looked beautiful and the nails of her lotus-like feet glistened.

9. O sage, seeing her who was Śiva's Energy herself, directly in front of me, my lofty shoulders bent down with devotion and I eulogised her after due obeisance.

10. Obeisance, obeisance, to Thee, who art in the form of Pravṛtti (Action) and Nivṛtti (Abstinence); who art in the form of creation and sustenance of the universe. Thou art the eternal Energy of the movable and the immovable beings capable of enchanting everyone.

11. Thou hast manifested thyself as Śrī, a garland round Keśava's form, who in the form of Earth holdest everything within, who art of yore the great Goddess causing creation and the destruction of the three worlds and art beyond the three Guṇas.

12. Thou art present in everything even in the essential atom and who art charmingly honoured by Yogins; who

²⁵¹. The Goddess Durgā is personified as knowledge true as well as false. True knowledge leads to realization of Sadāśiva, the supreme lord, whereas false knowledge is an illusion whereby the non-existent (असत्) appears to be existent (सत्) and vice versa.