

The Worship of Lord Skanda

Today is the final day of the worship of Lord Skanda. And while it is quite understandable to be a little overwhelmed by the beauty and the power of the worship itself, still it is important that we remember its inner meaning—so that every day of the year it can have significance for us.

Like Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Gītā and the Divine Mother during Navarātri, Lord Skanda stands for that part of Divinity that rescues us from ourselves. All the Purāṇas speak about our inner situation—the battle going on within us between that part of ourselves that wants the world, wants mammon, and that part of ourselves that wants to rise higher, to answer the call of God. Inevitably the battle cannot be won at that level. First one part of ourselves is victorious and then the other. Finally, in our desperation, we appeal to the Divine to, in the case of Lord Skanda, lead us; in the case of Lord Kṛṣṇa, to tell us what to do; in the case of the Divine Mother, to simply rescue us.

But who is Lord Skanda, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Divine Mother? They are the personal aspect of the transcendental God. The scriptures tell us that the transcendental is totally above the world. Indeed, it is even suggested that the transcendental is not aware of creation at all. So we must depend upon the personal God.

Why do we call it the personal God? Because the personal God is not somewhere else, but is really a part of ourselves. Sometimes we call it our higher Self. Gurudev speaks of an understanding heart, and he describes it a little more as equal vision, balanced mind, faith, devotion and wisdom. It is that part of ourselves that is above the battle, that is the witness of the battle without calling itself a witness. It is that part of ourselves that sees clearly. It is that part of ourselves that has the courage to look at ourselves exactly as we are and then act appropriately. It is this part of ourselves that saves us from ourselves, that we must follow, that we must take refuge in.

Therefore, while we can involve ourselves deeply in the beauty and the power of these worships, we must never forget the dead seriousness of them, that they are pointing us to the saving knowledge, to the *guru* within, which is always a part of ourselves, indeed a more true part of ourselves than who we think we are and that we are normally a slave of.

We are all seeking liberation, and the first step of liberation is to surrender to the *guru* within, the Lord Skanda, Lord Kṛṣṇa, Divine Mother within. It is the most real part of ourselves, and It is ever ready and willing to come to our rescue. But it is we who must appeal and surrender.