Navaratri: Making Place For The Feminine

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Navaratri is about approaching life through the feminine nature of the Divine, and revering all aspects of life and creation. The nine-day festival reflects three basic qualities of existence - tamas, rajas and satva. The first three days are tamas or inertia, where the goddess is fierce - Durga or Kali. The next three days are about activity, with Lakshmi-related goddesses - gentle and material-oriented. The last three days are dedicated to Saraswati, who represents knowledge and transcendence.

Everyone needs to draw upon all these three dimensions of existence. Once you go beyond these, it is about liberation. So, after Navaratri, the 10th and final day of Dussehra is Vijayadashami - the day of victory. That means you did not give in to any of these qualities; you participated in each of them, but you did not invest in them - you won over them. The message is that being in reverence and gratitude towards everything leads to success and victory.

Today most people believe that conquest is the only way to success. Our whole attitude towards life has becomelopsided - we choose to conquer life rather than embrace it. Trying to conquer the planet has led to the disasters we see today. The masculine line is always about conquest. The feminine is about flowering, relaxing and living. For a long time, survival was the dominant factor for humanity; hence masculine was the dominant force. The feminine needs to find its place in any society. If this does not happen, we will exhaust the planet soon. The feminine can come to its proper place only when societies have handled their survival and reached a stable level of culture and civilisation.

Masculine and feminine are two qualities. This is not about being physically male or female; the feminine can be as alive in a man as it is in a woman. Only when these qualities happen in balance, can a human being live a life of fulfillment.

In the past, societies were aware of the significance of the feminine. Goddess worship is the most ancient form of worship. It flourished in India, Europe, Arabia and large parts of Africa before going into decline.

The only culture where worship of the feminine endures is in India. I have been to many Devi temples, famous and the not-so-famous - and am amazed to find that temples consecrated hundreds of years ago are still alive. These are not dolls that you worship. They are live feminine forces of different calibres, intensities and qualities - from gentle to fierce. Whether you worship or not, there are many ways to make use of them to do various kinds of activities.

Most of these temples were created for a specific purpose, for the requirements of that area. As they are found in so many places, apparently the technology to make them was widespread and well-known.

It was humbling to see that in a tiny village, someone had consecrated something with a great amount of sophistication. These were nameless yogis. They didn't think it necessary to leave their name on the temple. The energy they left is all there is. It is not in the nature of the feminine to leave a footprint but to imprint life within through a strong experience.

This Navaratri, make use of these spaces and their energy and celebrate the feminine. Only then you can know the beauty of life.

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