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Worship the goddess within

By Ananda Shankar Jayant | Published: 16th September 2017 10:00 PM |
Last Updated: 16th September 2017 06:52 PM | A+ A A- |



Artists performing SRI: The Goddess Within

In a few days, almost every part of the country will pay obeisance to the divine feminine. Nine days of Navara marked by devotional fervour, pujas, pandals, rituals, music, dance, and cultural rededication, reiterating our belief in the myriad forms of the Mother Goddess.

The worship and adoration of the Mother Goddess, reveals the secret of rising from darkness, untruth and mortality unto the grand realm of light, truth and life. She is celebrated and worshipped in celestial manifestations for every instance of human thought and action.



In Navaratri celebrations, each day is dedicated to one Goddess, epitomising any one aspect of creativity, sustenance and destruction—the three cardinal lodestars of life. Goddesses Shailaputri, Brahmacharini, Chandraghanta, Kushmanda, Skandamata, Katyayani, Kalaratri, Mahagauri and Siddhidatri, are the reigning Goddesses of Navaratri.

Growing up in Hyderabad, a Tamilian by birth and a Telugu by soul, Navaratri or Dasara has been the Tamil Navaratri Puja and Golu at home, and the Telugu Bathukamma festivities with friends.

While Amma performed pujas to the Goddess of the day, we had it explained in simpler terms. The Goddesses were Lakshmi, Saraswati and Durga. I remember Amma explaining as only she could. Beautiful and bedecked, seated on a pink lotus, Lakshmi is the preserver of life,

showing her abundance, as we seek her dazzling presence of well being in our lives. Seated on a white lotus, gracefully and elegantly, the manifestation of wisdom, intelligence and insight is goddess Saraswati, showing us the path of learning and knowledge. Fierce and fearless, she is the warrior riding into the battlefield to destroy every malevolence. Riding a lion, as Simhavahini, vanquisher of darkness, arrogance and ignorance, she is Durga. She is Mahishasuramardini. She is the embodiment of the primordial Omkaara, she is Lalita, seated in the esoteric Sri Chakra. She is Shakti.

A few years ago, that early learning coalesced into my choreography and dance production SRI: The Goddess Within, that brought the goddess trinity to stage; through the architectonic beauty and grammar of Bharatanatyam, the lilt and cadence of Kuchipudi, timeless verse, music, rhythm, iconographic imagery; all merging in devotion and adulation to the omnipresent Devi, the eternal Sri.

I realised then, that in Hindu thought it is the Goddesses whom we turn to for well being, wisdom and victory. What a pinnacle of esoteric thought!

Navaratri is the time to channelise the primordial energies of our goddess into our mundane human selves, and rise into the dreams she has for us mere mortals. Over the years, the Goddess has stayed with me through the highs and lows, and has been my reservoir of strength during my life's greatest challenge—a tryst with cancer. The Mother Goddess, in her various forms, has been a dear friend, a beloved sister, an adored mother, and a venerated guru. She has truly been SRI: The Goddess Within.

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