

Message on Navaratri, 1998

SWAMI BODHANANDA



The other day we celebrated Navaratra – the memory of the epic fight that the DIVINE MOTHER fought against Mahishasura, the buffalo demon, and the final victory of the good over evil.

On the tenth day – dasami – the Divine Mother having accomplished the mission of HER advent, disappeared into the surging waters of the ocean.

Her entire creation heaved a sigh of relief as the world was finally free from the scourge of Mahishasura, the epitome of ignorance and arrogance.

Sakti is the power of the Lord by which HE deludes creatures as well as delivers them. In fact delusion and deliverance are two aspects of the same process. Both are His play. Only the deluded will know the value of deliverance. It is only when you lose the diamond that you know the value of the diamond.

As the Mahisha of ignorance overpowers our faculties, the intellect gets deluded, emotions are muddled, senses run riot, perception becomes warped, the spring of love in the heart dries up, words become bitter and acerbic, thoughts turn split, deeds become violently destructive, and the quality of life is totally and irreparably degraded.

Mahisha also stands for death and disintegration. Mahisha wallows in filthy water. It is a beast of burden, oblivious of the hideous weight over its back. It is a symbol of voiceless suffering.

Mahisha represents the unacceptable levels of suffering, suppression and disruption caused by kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, matsarya, damba, ahamkara, asuya and irsyā – all due to a fall from spiritual values and holistic vision.

The ordinary human being is so steeped into this mire of psychological filth that all his attempts to pull himself out have come to naught. Like the Tusker-King Gajendra of Bhagavatam, he is carried deeper and deeper into the whirlpool of Samsara by the crocodile of his insatiable greed.

It is at such dreadful moments of pitch darkness in midday, as all our struggles are frustrated by an enemy from within, that good people start fervently fasting and praying for the DIVINE intervention, for a fresh transfusion of life giving energy.

When the Mahisha, that huge hulk of all devouring darkness straddle the length and breadth of the individual and social life, swaying menacingly its powerfully crooked horns, stamping its hooved feet irreverently on anything holy, beautiful and vulnerable, its puffed nostrils shooting shafts of fury, its eyes bulging into venomous rage, it is then good people helplessly look heavenward with upraised open arms and cry their heart out for DIVINE intervention.

It is then Lord Vishnu, Brahma, Siva, Indra, Varuna, the sun and the Moon, and all the other Gods, along with the Rishis and Munis pool together any pray to the most compassionate DIVINE MOTHER of the universe to intervene and take action. They all, in unison, beseech Her to put on Her terrible form, to jump on to the back of her snarling mount, the roaring lion, put out her eighteen hands and pull out the armory of eighteen missiles, to join battle with the Mahishasura, and vanquish him once for ever.

Granting their collective prayer, the Universal Mother came down on the Mahishasura like bouts of thunderbolts, slicing and incinerating the dark monster into extinction. Darkness ended and there was sunshine again.

Navaratra is a message of hope, of faith, in the ultimate victory of good over evil. Faith is an inbuilt mechanism of good asserting decisively when the balance of forces shifts in favour of evil. Navaratra heralds the regenerative, creative powers in the midst of entropy and death.

Navaratra is the celebration of hope, and the reaffirmation of Faith.

satyameva jayate na anrtam
satyena pandha vitatah devayanah

Truth alone triumphs, never untruth;
The paths to Gods are made of Truth.

OM TAT SAT
JAI MATA DI

JAI MATA DI

Swami Bodhananda

Source: Message written for the occasion of the celebration of Navaratra by His students and devotees of Sambodh Foundation Bangalore Chapter, India, in 1998

Swami Bodhananda is Chairman, Sambodh Foundation, India; The Sambodh Society Inc. USA; and Bodhananda Research Foundation for Management & Leadership Studies. He is the Inspiration and Guiding Force for all Sambodh institutions.