The Story of Navaratri

The legend in North India goes that Mahishasura, the mighty demon, worshipped Lord Shiva and obtained the power of eternity. Soon, he started killing and harassing innocent people and set out to conquer all. Some of the gods appealed to Lord Shiva, to find a way to get rid of the demon. To protect the world from what Mahishasura was doing, the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva united their powers and created a divine female warrior, known as Goddess Durga. Mahishasura, when he saw the divine beauty of Goddess Durga, got mesmerized.

The goddess Durga

So fascinated was Mahishasura by Goddess Durga's beauty that he wanted to marry her. The goddess agreed to marry him, but made a special condition - Mahishasura would have to win over her in a battle. Mahishasura, proud as he was, agreed immediately! The battle continued for 9 nights and at the end of the ninth night, Goddess Durga beheaded Mahishasura. The nine nights came to be known as *Navaratri*, while the tenth day was called Vijayadashmi, the tenth day that brought the triumph of *good over evil.*

Another legend of Navaratri relates to the Hindu epic Ramayana. It goes that Lord Rama worshipped Goddess Durga in nine ways, for nine days, in order to gather the strength and power to kill Ravana. He wanted to release Sita from the clutches of powerful demon king Ravana, who had abducted her. Those nine nights became to be known as Navaratri and the tenth day, on which Lord Rama killed Ravana, came to be called Vijayadashmi or Dussera, signifying Rama's (good) triumph over Ravana (evil).

Whichever story we read, the essential point is the triumph of good over evil. This is at the heart of Navaratri.