

A home is not just a structure, it's a living organism that grows with the family inside it. It breathes when the windows open, it hums when laughter fills the air, and it rests when the last light is switched off at night. As architects, we often find ourselves listening more to people than to walls, because a well-designed home is not a collection of rooms—it is a choreography of human moments. Navratri, with its nine forms of the goddess, offers a beautiful parallel. Each day embodies a unique energy, courage, wisdom, beauty, devotion, and together they weave a complete celebration of life. What if our homes too could embody nine such facets, each reflecting the way we live, love, and dream?

The entrance, for example, is rarely “just a door.” It is the threshold of belonging. Think of it as a handshake, a warm smile, or even the smell of freshly lit incense before you step in. A well-designed entrance doesn't scream grandeur, it whispers comfort. Add greenery, natural light, and maybe a shaded sit-out, and suddenly the boundary between the outside world and your inner sanctuary feels softer, more humane.

Step further in, and you'll find the living room, the collective heart of the house. It's a space where birthdays are celebrated, arguments are resolved, and countless cups of chai are shared. It is the modern version of the garba circle—where everyone gathers, sometimes in sync, sometimes offbeat, but always together. And honestly, isn't that the true meaning of family? Here, sustainability also plays its part. Why should comfort mean air-conditioners blasting all day? Cross ventilation, thoughtful layouts, and materials that age gracefully remind us that responsibility can be designed into beauty.

The kitchen, on the other hand, has always been underestimated in architecture. We call it a utility, but really, it's an altar of nourishment. Food is where affection takes shape—dal simmering slowly, spices crackling in hot oil, a hurried breakfast before school. Designing a kitchen is not about how many cabinets fit on a wall, it is about designing for rhythms of care. And when we integrate natural ventilation, energy-efficient appliances, and non-toxic materials, the act of cooking becomes not only love for the family but also respect for the planet.

From the kitchen flows the dining space, the table of togetherness. This is where people eat, yes, but more importantly, where they speak, listen, and sometimes even argue. In many homes, it is the only time in a day when everyone sits face-to-face without a phone in hand. Designing this space is about creating intimacy and focus. A quirky thought here: shouldn't dining spaces be designed more like campfires than conference tables? After all, both are about stories and warmth.

And then come the bedrooms, the retreats of rest. They are less about decoration and more about emotion. Bedrooms are where people shed the public self and find their most authentic selves. A good bedroom design is not about grandeur but about silence, how much daylight it welcomes, how naturally it cools, how safely it cocoons. Sustainability here means healthier materials, fewer toxins, more comfort. After all, what's the point of a luxurious bed if the air you breathe isn't kind to your body?

Every home, I believe, should also have a corner for reflection. A nook that asks nothing of you except that you pause. It could be a meditation space, a window seat, or even a tiny balcony where morning tea feels sacred. We live in an age of noise; homes must gift us silence. And silence, if you think about it, is also a sustainable resource, we have to design for it, protect it, and cherish it. But life is not all calm and prayer. Families need spaces for play and expression too. A music room, a hobby corner, or even just an adaptable area where children can scatter their toys without reprimand—these are the spaces where joy takes physical form. Designing for joy is tricky; it requires flexibility, imagination, and yes, a bit of humor. After all, walls should not just hold paintings—they should be able to echo with the sound of a badly strummed guitar or a child's impromptu dance performance.

Even the most ordinary parts of a home—corridors, staircases, transitions—carry meaning. They are not dead spaces; they are the veins that allow a home to breathe. A staircase, for instance, is not just a way to move up or down; it is a place for quick conversations, for children to sit and tie their shoelaces, for plants to bask in sunlight. Designing these transitions with light and air in mind makes them sustainable and soulful.

And finally, the outdoors. Courtyards, balconies, terraces, gardens—these are not extras, they are essentials. They remind us that we are not separate from nature but part of it. A home that doesn't allow its residents to feel the sun, touch the soil, or listen to rain misses its true purpose. These outdoor spaces also anchor sustainable practices—rainwater harvesting, passive cooling, growing your own herbs. They remind families that being responsible citizens begins right at home. When we bring these nine facets together, a home becomes more than a shelter. It becomes a celebration of integration—between family members, between humans and nature, between tradition and modernity. Much like Navratri, where each day has its distinct energy yet contributes to one complete festival, each part of a home has its own role but comes alive only in harmony with the others. As architects, we hold a responsibility that goes beyond drawings and details. We are shaping the backdrop of human lives. And if our designs can foster stronger families and more sustainable lifestyles, then we are not just building homes, we are building futures.