

# For Balance and Equality in Society, We Must Create a Balance within Us

by TARA MANIAR

Women during the early Vedic period enjoyed equal status with men in all aspects of life. Works by Sage Patanjali suggest that women were educated and could choose to marry or become sages or sants in this early Vedic period. In the Rig Veda, it is suggested that women married at a mature age and were free to select their own husbands who were deserving of them in a practice called Swayamvar. They were also allowed to have live-in relationships called Gandharva marriage. (In today's society, this is what is referred to as common-law relationships.)

India has seen women in power as prime minister, president, leader of the opposition, speaker of the Lok Sabha, governors and chief ministers. They have been leaders in science, education, health, engineering, aerospace, etc.; however, as in other parts of the world, these roles have been very few in comparison to the positions men have occupied.

Today, in almost every newscast in North America and in social media, we are hearing about sexual harassment and assault, rape and violence against women by men in power. At my most recent workshops, women have disclosed that they have lost their voice, lost their identity and lost their power. Some have said that at work they live in their inner power, but return home to feel powerless and voiceless.

In the past few centuries, we lived in a culture where violence against women was an accepted occurrence of life. This violence against women took many forms, from implying that women are weaker, unintelligent and not good enough to emotional, mental, sexual and physical abuse. The girl or woman who was violated did not speak up as she felt isolated, shame, guilt, and powerless to defend herself. Women were considered property of men – father or brother, husband or son or master; and, she felt that no one would listen to her, so she did not disclose the violence against her. To her, it was just a part of being a girl or woman. Regardless of how we went from equal status with men to property of men, it is time we discover our inner shakti or power, our voice, our identity, the strength in our femininity. The current #MeToo campaign has brought the issue

of sexual abuse to the surface. We can no longer accept that sexual harassment, abuse and rape are part of our culture.

During the Second World War, when men went off to fight, the women stepped up and went to work in factories, offices, etc. Women, when given the opportunity, discovered that they could work a job and look after the family. When the men returned, the women were expected to return home and look after the family. This led to the feminist movement where women wanted to be equal to men. In this endeavour, women gave up their femininity, dressed and behaved as a man so that they could succeed in the man's world. This led to an imbalance in the energy of females.

What we do know is that both men and women can be successful in every aspect, in all the roles they play when there is a balance of energy within; when we accept all that we are – the masculine and feminine parts of who we are. Only when we create the balance within each of us will there be balance and equality in society.

In the Ashtavakra Gita with commentary by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Ashtavakra, a great Brahma jnani (one who knows God), in conversation with Raja Janaka, said, "Where women are honoured there is prosperity, success and growth."

We all want prosperity, success and growth but fail to honour the divine Shakti in our lives. For women to honour her inner divine Shakti, she has to be



honoured as a girl in her family's home. Boys have to see their fathers and brothers honour the women and girls in their family. When women discover that divine Shakti within, they are able to live from their inner power and can honour, respect and love themselves, then others will honour and respect them.

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev said that we have to shift our priority from 'having - doing - being' to 'being - doing - having'. How do we make that shift to 'be', to discover that inner Shakti, to honour and respect ourselves when we have not learned how to 'be' and don't know that there is an inner strength within?

How would discovering that inner Shakti, that inner power and strength bring equality and allow women to regain their voice, regain their identity and regain their power?

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji gives us the formula of 'meditation - no reaction - introspection' for transformation. When each of us takes time to 'be' we will discover the interconnection between every living being from humans to animals to Mother Nature and Mother Earth. When we discover the strength and power within we are able to see the strength and power in all.

To live the teachings of the spiritual masters, I have developed a signature system of how we can live our day to regain our voice, our identity and our power and have confidence in all aspects of life. We start the day with 'being'. Take time to connect with yourself in silence each morning. This could be with exercise, meditation, breath work, dance, yoga, tai chi, walking, running, swimming, etc. We must 'be' in silence to journey inwards and connect with the spirit. In this 'silence' you may ask yourself, 'why am I here?', or 'who am I?' These questions will help you to regain your identity beyond the roles you play; help you determine your true purpose in life and connect with your inner Shakti.

In this silence, you may also set an intention of how you want to live your day. Consciously decide what type of energy you want to carry with you in your interactions with others. Additionally you may repeat affirmations such as, I am divine, I have inner power, I speak my truth, I know who I am, I know my purpose, I live my potential, etc. With

this sense of being, you can now move through your day with confidence, purpose and a quiet freedom to live from your true self.

Remind yourself of your intention or the insights you received in the morning as you interact with others. Keep your awareness on your intention or affirmation. As you pay 'attention' to your intention, you will respond instead of react to situations. In practicing 'no-reaction' we respond to situations for the benefit of self and others. As we 'be' we will 'do'. When we set our intention to live with respect and honour, we will bring that respect and honour to all our interactions during the day.

In the evening, we sit in introspection and appreciate all that manifested during the day. Review all the events that went right – the way you wanted it to go and give credit to all those that make that situation as you wished. Also, examine all the events that were challenging – that did not go the way you wanted. Appreciate those moments as well, for it is in the exploration of the challenging moments that we learn and grow. Then release it all! The questions, the successes, the challenges, the emotions, etc. Release it all and sit in silence for five minutes. Before going to bed, make a gratitude list. Write down all the you are grateful for and appreciate all that you experienced during the day. Each evening add to your gratitude list and each morning read your gratitude list.

As you live this discipline of connection, intention, attention, appreciation of all your manifestations, you will slowly regain your voice to speak your truth, your power to live in freedom with confidence, honour and respect, and your identity to be your true self. In your transformation, you will discover the truth of who you are and why you are here! You will then be able to bring a balance between your feminine and masculine energies, which will be reflected in the balance and equality in society.

If you would like to explore this topic further, please email [tara@taramaniar.com](mailto:tara@taramaniar.com) for an invitation to her discussion group session on Dec. 11.



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Tara is a certified Chakradance facilitator and spiritual life coach with programs on 'Embrace Your Spirit', 'Co-Create Your Life', 'Ahimsa in Action' and 'Awakening with Chakradance,' which are offered on a one-on-one basis or group setting. For a no-cost consultation, please email [tara@taramaniar.com](mailto:tara@taramaniar.com) or call / text 204-218-9722.

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