



SELF SUSTENANCE

SPECIAL ISSUE

eBook of Youth Experiences during
Global Pandemic, Covid-19



Youth wing (R.E & R.F)
Brahma Kumaris

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Blessings

Om shanti,

My heartfelt blessings to all the youth and the contributors of the eBook. I am very much confident that these experiences will motivate youth across the globe. They will get an insight on how to face the pandemic, how to be resilient and it will bring smile on their faces. The best practices shared in the experiences will make readers' life easy and hopeful. I wish you have a helping hand for the world therefore become a blessing to come out of this pandemic

Om shanti.



Dadi Ratan Mohini
Chief Administrative Head
of the Brahma Kumaris.
Chairperson, Youth Wing, RERF.

”

The best practices shared
in the experiences will
make readers' life easy
and hopeful

“



Inspirations

Dear Readers,

In reference to the present situation, it is a challenging time when one should know their own capacity to face the situation.

Mankind has a big asset and that is, to think, to churn out, to feel, to experience, to realize and finally to become.

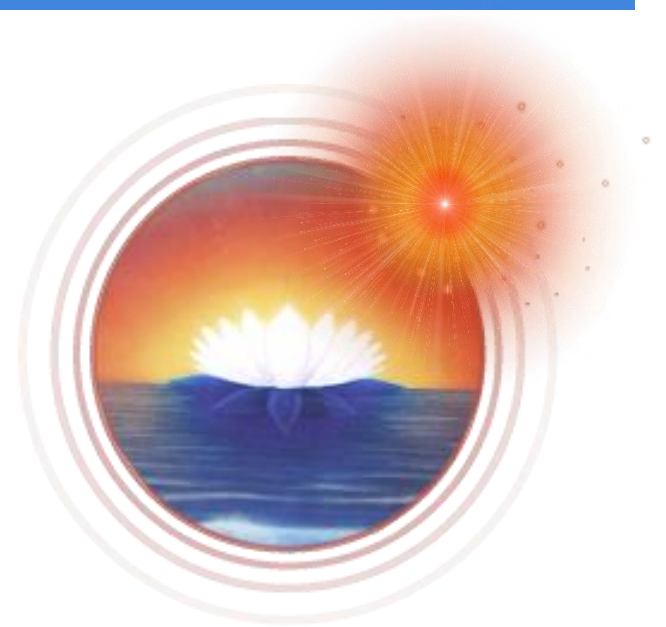
Being the greatest creation of nature we are also master creators. We should think, that I am a unique personality, a great human being and I am a master of my own self. Whatever I want to do, I can do and whatever I want to make, I can make. We need to remain fearless.

So now, the attitude we need to adopt is to be always positive and powerful. Never let your thoughts lower you down. Always think elevated... I know my originality that I am a soul, master of my body. I am the son of the Supreme God Father. God's qualities are my inheritance, my birthright.

God Father is the Almighty Authority, the source of love, happiness, bliss, etc. and so I am master of all of it. I am fearless, peaceful, blissful and powerful. I am a very good soul. All people around me, they are all very good. Whatever is happening around me is also very good and whatever is going to happen will be also very good. My world is beautiful. I am a very happy go lucky person. My luck is the greatest. My life is to serve the Universe by giving, spreading vibration of peace, happiness, and love.

This special eBook is being forwarded to you to share some of the good things practiced by youth during pandemic. The issue has highlighted the lives of these youths on how they dealt with this condition. I hope this will give you a new dimension to face the present time.

Om shanti.



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Being the greatest creation of nature, we are also master creators.

“



BK Chandrika ben.

Editor, Youth wing Newsletter,
Vice chairperson, Youth Wing, RERF.

“ I am fearless, peaceful, blissful and powerful. I am a very good soul. ”

Preface

COVID is the talk of the town these days. We are getting lots of information through various mediums and we are going through them not knowing whether they are authentic or otherwise.

The Youth group is one of the most affected in this pandemic. It has disrupted their daily routine, education, job, mental health etc. In the midst of this situation, we felt to share in this book the best practices, positive thoughts and behaviours of the youths who are practicing Rajyoga Meditation.

We approached some of them and we asked them to write their experiences through Covid Situation because we felt that when a youth narrates, it is more understandable, heart touching and acceptable for other youths. In this eBook, we have compiled thoughts of your peers and we are sharing with you as “friends sharing”. You will love these varied thoughts these youths have experienced.

I am happy that the original idea of collecting COVID stories and experiences have come to fruition through this eBook. I thank all the contributors who have written their experiences. I also thank the team which coordinated such a collection, design, proofread & prepared the eBook. I am sure whatever is shared will help you to overcome what you are currently going through.



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Life and Livelihood



Self-survival or supporting the society, ensuring two important aspects of life in COVID-19

Life is essential and livelihood ensures the existence and sustenance of it. During COVID-19 pandemic, there is a trade-off between the two. In the last pandemic, all of us witnessed national reverse migration of labour for safety and survival. The youth faced a dichotomy, to safeguard their lives or to earn for their family.

Survival of the fittest:

The slogan “survival of the fittest” seems to be applicable to the present context. In this world, survival of the fittest means to survive or to beat the challenges by any means. But as per God’s wisdom, this means : one can sail and survive through honesty, ethics, kindness, and truth. During the world war, survival of the fittest meant to survive through the most cruel acts. The approach could be anything ethical or unethical and people even resorted to sedition, treachery, violence in all possible ways to ensure safety of the self and the community.



BK Shibprasad,
Pune (Maharashtra)

God’s wisdom on survival:

Beating all personal challenges by hook and crook is a myopic view towards survival. God teaches us to survive with spiritual powers and energy. Your spiritual power will ensure your safety, prosperity, and progress. In the time of survival, people prioritize safety over progress. Living by God’s definition, one can ensure success and safety amidst all challenges. Meditation helps one to empower one’s self and to transmit those powers to others. Many youths must be getting disappointed within such exigencies and uncertainties. But determination, meditation and intense effort will enable them to cross the hurdles.

Strategy to support through self-survival:

Things are fragile, frustrating, and failing consistently. Keeping one’s own rhythm, hard work, motivation, and happiness means sailing against the force of the wind. Exercising self-control in difficult situations and maintaining tranquillity is possible. Those who have not started intense meditation, introspection and self-audit for transformation should start now if he /she wants to survive and to support others. Being youth, one has to earn but more than that life is valuable. Sacrificing life is not the solution. Self-immolation does not mean to put your life at risk. But it means to dedicate your energy and intelligence for a greater cause with safety and survival of the self.

When Spirituality is Foundation

Bhilwara among the first to impose lockdown: As soon as I heard about COVID Virus and its effect, I was thinking of ways and means to help people. First case was detected at my place - Bhilwara, Rajasthan and the lockdown was imposed on 19.03.2020. Being a spiritual practitioner, I started meditating for people. I kept myself busy with self-progress activity. I have been searching something to do for people.

Where there is a will there's a way: I got a call from a friend informing me that the local COVID Testing lab is in need of a Senior Lab Technician, being a postgraduate in Biotechnology with 2 years experience, I attended the interview and got selected. I convinced my parents saying - look around, people at various stages are doing something, let me too have my space and allow me to do something.

Challenges at Work: There were more than 2000 samples in a day to complete. Initially, I was not used to PPE Kit, double mask etc which at later stages was like part of me. Once we entered the lab, we were not taking any water, food as most of the time we continued to work for 6-12 hours. Night shift was again a challenge. There was a demand for results of emergency cases. My parents were also sleepless sometimes as I was going at 4 PM and returning at 4 AM. However, they were also surprised seeing me working at this length. It was a place where even doctors panicked to enter the lab. I make friends with the buzzer of the testing lab equipment reminding myself good things wherever the buzzer rings. Self-motivating talk was one thing I used to practice at my work.

Spirituality was Foundation: I learnt tirelessness. I practiced self-affirmations for myself, the people, and my work. It was not the salary that dragged me to the lab but inner gist to work for people. I felt that I should rely on one Almighty only rather than people. I practiced to remain firm in various situations. I learnt to be an observer simultaneously taking action needed at a particular time. I practiced positive wishes, feelings of compassion for people and for my work at the workplace.

Spiritual knowledge helped to be ever-ready for any challenges. Morning 4 o'clock meditation, daily spiritual classes helped me to remain positive and kept myself safe from being flooded by news and other social media.

When my father reported us that he is not able to sleep for the last 15 days properly then we helped him to get disconnected from worldly news about pandemic. The result was that he could have a better sleep.



Image courtesy Brahma kumaris UK

When there was a death of a relative due to covid, the spiritual knowledge helped me to remain stable. Thus I could take care of everyone in the family while being on the stage of an Observer.

My last learning was to remain fearless. Diseases may not harm people as much as fear does. One should remain physically and mentally fit. Practice positive affirmation in your daily life. I have been testing COVID Samples for 8 months and found a new person in me.



“Spiritual knowledge helped to be ever-ready for any challenges.”

Rashmi Pareekh,
Senior Lab Technician (SLT)
at RVRS Government Medical College,
Bhilwara (Rajasthan)

The power of [Thinking]



Image courtesy Cottonbro from Pexels

The pandemic brought about a range of experience for me. The most important being, I started to value time and understand the power of collective thinking and influence we all have on each other.

When lockdown began, I realized how the atmosphere created at work and home influenced my productivity. I learnt to be more disciplined in my routine and realized the importance of having a designated physical space for my work/meditation/spiritual studies. Also having a timetable for all the activities to create a balance in all aspects of life was critical because with everything being online and so readily accessible it's like I didn't know where to give my attention to.

I really appreciated the silence in the atmosphere initially, while there was a lot and still is some uncertainty, the cooperation of communities in staying at home keeping social distancing was very touching to see. Respect for the elderly and just general courtesy it seems was more apparent. I personally enjoy being at home, so being able to stay in and step away from friends and other social activities and focus on deepening my spiritual practices was a huge benefit. I was able to give more of my time to help serve with the Brahma Kumaris by doing weekly classes in various topics.

“I started to value time and understand the power of collective thinking and influence we all have on each other”



Jaymini Patel
Senior Manager at William Benato
And Libby, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Because of all this internal focus I was able to visibly remain calmer, uninfluenced by the anxiety and fear from COVID. I was able to share at work how meditation is extremely essential for mental well-being.

Covid has put a lot of things in perspective, like what are my priorities and has triggered me to make a more conscious effort in reaching those goals.

It's also made me look into how much fear I hold on to, how media and negative talk can eat away at me.

It's been a great time for introspection and opportunity to serve by sharing a more positive outlook and encouraging others to remain strong.

“I” the soul

Peaceful and Blissful



Image courtesy @Awakening TV, Brahma kumaris

By taking the time to meditate more, I was able to come to the realization about how I was getting caught in the whirlwind of things to do, keeping myself unnecessarily busy and pushing so hard without reason.

The extra time spent in meditation helped me tremendously to silence the inner chatter of my mind. I gradually became more present and was making better choices about how I spent my time, and this worked like a reset button, allowing me to refocus.

My first priority was now to listen and respect the needs of “I” the soul. I realized I needed to be more stable internally and be less reactive to the world. Working on this helped me feel safe and secure. I felt a sense of assurance that nothing will happen as long as I stay focused on my spiritual practices.

I was also more mindful of my diet, my interactions with anyone I came into contact with. In observing how everyone was doing their part to follow the guidelines enforced by the government authorities I was touched deeply by the feeling of cooperation.

There were a lot of collective powerful meditations through online facilities which I participated in, this together with inspirational positive talks helped tremendously to feed my soul. I could literally feel the power and vibrations spreading not only in every cell of the body but even to the world. It was like a boost to my immune system, it was becoming more natural to remain uninfluenced by the fearful, insecure, negative energy of the world. I was also able to inspire many others too to see the brighter side of this pandemic, which created a feeling of inner joy and happiness.

When the impact of the pandemic began to rise and countries were shutting down, the first feeling I had was that the universe is signaling to humanity on a grand scale to stop. We were all caught up in a mad rush, it was time to break out of this hectic cycle.

During lockdown, the measures government put in place to control the spread verified for me the teachings of Raja Yoga, for example, I was aware that there would be times when we wouldn't be able to meet one another or reach a center and now I was seeing this in practice. This deepened my faith and made me more firm about my daily meditation practices.

“I am grateful for the pandemic. I will continue to work on empowering myself as well as those around me.”

Being under lockdown also inspired me to create meditation commentaries and a 21-day Soul Sustenance Program, which touched the lives of many.

I realized how the practice of meditation over time helped to develop my inner potential to serve humanity. In this way I am grateful for the pandemic. I feel like I am back on track and will continue to work on empowering myself as well as those around me.



Janita Hargoven
Meditation Instructor and
Holistic therapist,
Harare, Zimbabwe



Image courtesy Congerdesign--509903, Pixabay

Build Healthy Eating Habits

The right diet increases immunity, helps to keep fit and energetic and aids in recovery. The following points are to be noted and acted upon.

“Home Diet Plan” to remain Healthy & Fit.”

1. Keep well hydrated. Drink plenty of water. Also drink liquids like coconut water, lemon water, buttermilk, green tea, soup, citrus fruits, juices. This helps to detox the body and keeps your skin and cells healthy.
2. Consume proteins significantly, which will help you to recover quickly. It also aids in weight loss. Sources of proteins are soya products, dry fruits, milk and milk products, pulses, lentils (dal). It is necessary to include these in diet.
3. Your diet should have omega fatty acids such as chia seeds, flax seeds, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, watermelon seeds, walnuts. It can be taken in roasted or raw form. Excellent when included in salads or shakes.
4. Last and most important part of a diet are vitamins and minerals. These nutrients improve the metabolism, give energy and are healthy for all organs. Vitamins like A, D, E, C, B6, B12 and minerals especially magnesium, zinc are to be included either as food or as nutrient supplements. Depending on the health condition of an individual, the required quantity is to be taken. Age, weight, medical history are important factors in deciding the necessary nutrients and their quantity

Remember to sit in a silent place, in the remembrance of the Supreme whilst eating or drinking.

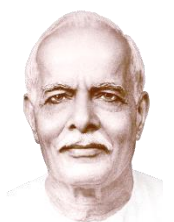
In addition to this, it's almost more than a year we have not yet been able to get rid of Covid 19.

It has affected our lifestyle including wearing Mask, Hygiene, Social Distancing but it's also important to Eat Right during the pandemic situation

Most of us have put on weight. Those who were healthy have become obese and those who were obese, are now getting signs of pre-diabetes. An increase in the number of children coming in with diseases related to obesity this year & in the hormonal imbalance in most of women in the country.

Looking into the situation it's important to keep awareness & take care of yourself your loved ones & by taking a “Home Diet Plan” to remain Healthy & Fit. You can consult your nearest professional dietician or nutritionist for guidance.

Dr. Neha Patel
Dietician and Nutritionist,
Ahmedabad (Gujarat)



When we're cooking, our minds are working. When we're stirring and rolling and baking, we're thinking. Thinking creates vibrations because that's what thoughts do. The vibrations affect both the food and the people who eat the food.

- Brahma Baba

My journey during 14 days in isolation

It started when I took the regular test prior to travel back by flight abroad. The first test showed negative. But a second lab test confirmed that I was covid positive. So, all of a sudden with no symptoms of covid, I had to go into isolation in the room. It meant that now everything was in the hands of God and the Drama and my role as a patient began. Whoever were helping me to go through in this next 14 days quarantine were like God's angels to me.

Imagine, I was now having unlimited time at hand inside this room and so, I chose to keep the mind strong, the heart clean and the soul powerful.



Kanan Patel
National Coordinator,
Brahma Kumaris , Botswana

In order to achieve this, it was most important to set a few key guides which I promised to follow, and they were:

1. Morning Yoga and Spiritual study are highly important to pay a deep attention in setting the intellect in God's connection and communication.
2. Keeping everything hygienic with Dettol and tidy, especially the floor. Making the room fresh and lighted daily.
3. Always eat every meal hot as it came with love and appreciation at that given time. Also to take the medicines for treatment daily.
4. Answer the phone in soul consciousness, peacefully, softly, gently and trust. Always say yes and support them.
5. Take full advantage of 12 hours sunlight in the room. To stay very aware and alert during the day by doing relaxation exercises to keep blood circulation and taking moments of rest.
6. I did not fix any meeting or any program online as I was given this time for reflection and cleaning the soul in yoga.

I still faced few Challenges:

1. The first 5 days went well as I was finding myself resetting a new pattern. Then came a wave of lethargy which meant I had to start singing and do self-talk workouts of appreciation.
2. On the 12th day, it was getting heavy again as I started to give online class to share the experience. I think it was too soon to do so as too much excitement is overwhelming and I could not come out of the room to share the happiness.

It is important to note that many different challenges could be faced but know that God and the Drama are our parents and those outside the room are our family members who will never wish us any harm. Keep courage and faith at every moment and spiritual stamina becomes an asset for all time.

“I chose to keep the mind strong, the heart clean and the soul powerful.”

“What is going on?”, said Rahul, a young graduate whose placement is not certain due to COVID menace, to Smita.

Smita: I think God is angry with humans or maybe nature is angry on humans. I don't know. But it is not a good feeling!

Does this resonate with your surroundings? The pulse of youth is wary, anxious, unhappy.

We had been living in a world which was certain. We could plan our future, our next day. But due to corona its seems bleak. Is there a way out? History is testimony that after every pandemic, mass hysteria, malicious outbreak peace has prevailed. After a turbulent storm, the sun rises back, and life creates itself again. This too shall pass. But are we to live in fear all the time, in jeopardy... What if it happens to me!

The answer is a big 'NO'. All we need to do is to go back to the right ways of thinking, doing and being. Things like 'Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise'. If we began following this simple age-old wisdom we can be sorted.

Then comes Diet...Only if the population could eat nutritious fruits, nuts, seeds, vegetables, grains, and pulses soon we will have a healthy population. Then Exercise...a little daily muscular activity can keep physical ailments at bay. Begin the workday with activities that draw your interest, attention and keep building on it one day at a time. Finally, by evening retire to family needs and symbiotic conversations to grow together as a family.

Shobhit Agarwal,
Career Advisor, Life Coach,
Corporate Trainer, Spiritualist
Lucknow (U. P)

I label this wisdom as a positive lifestyle change. Some people call it spiritual lifestyle but is it bad in COVID times? Life and nature are automatically teaching us to mend our ways. If we, do it, we can take care of ourselves...mentally, emotionally, physically, socially, spiritually, and professionally. “Rome was not built in a day” and so the benefit of this life is deep rooted, everlasting but it takes a while to show results. Patience, determination, and clarity is the key to conquer this lifestyle change.



What is going on?



Image courtesy Pixabay

“Using this COVID time purposefully, creatively and as an experiment to bring magnanimous benefits to self and others”

Pulsating our energy at a high vibration, uplifts spirits. As a career counsellor...I see the coming times to be of technology laden, enabled ways of doing business. Learning some skills would become ceteris paribus. Like e-commerce, digital marketing, basic photography, videography, designing, planning, organizing. From food to travel everything will be managed online.

Using this COVID time purposefully, creatively and as an experiment to bring magnanimous benefits to self and others is the need of the hour rather sulking, complaining, cursing, blaming and the likes. Let's gather ourselves together and work courageously to create a blissful life for ourselves by staying at home. Help will follow, people will follow, and the rest will become history.

Self-isolation

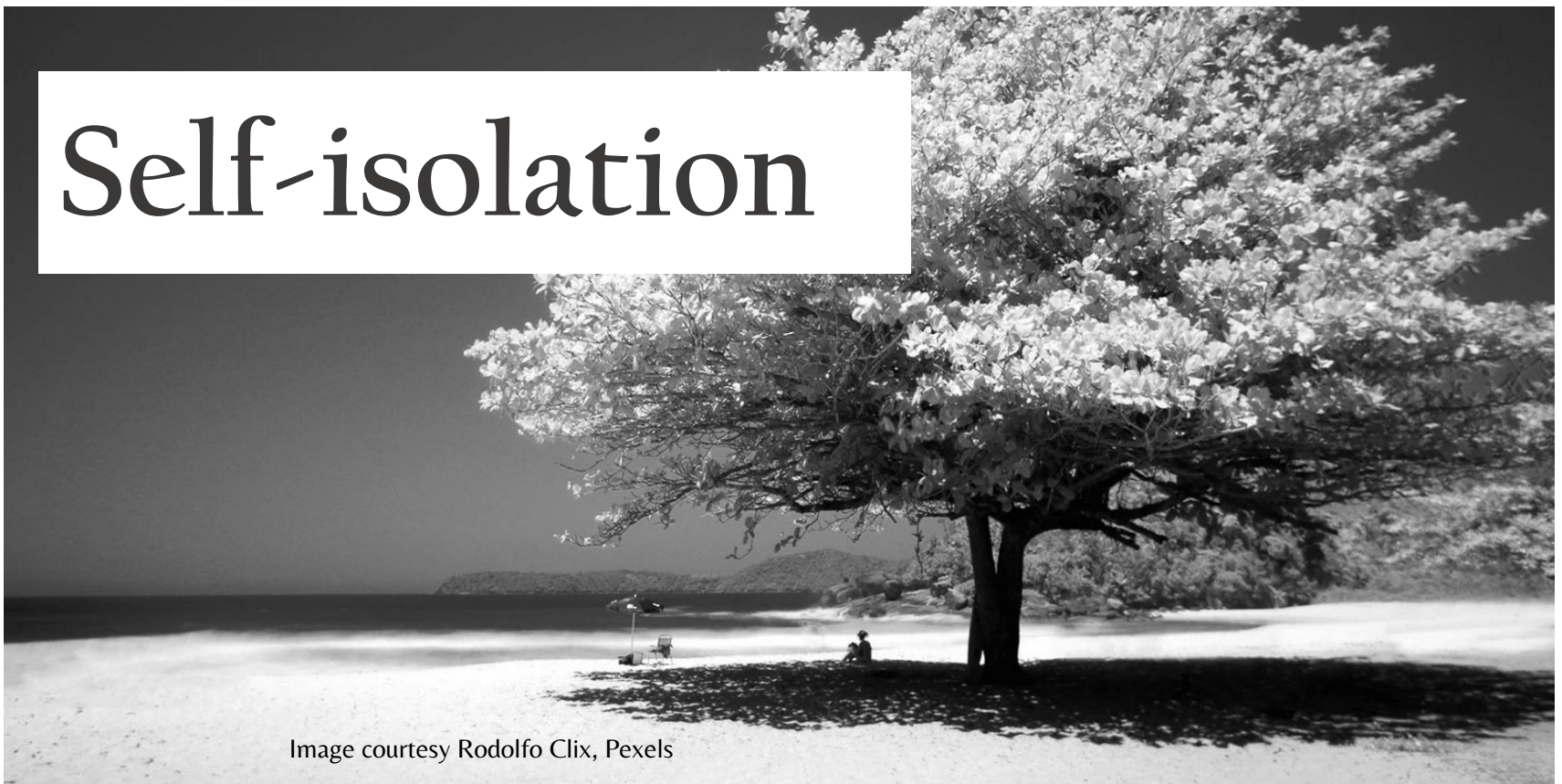


Image courtesy Rodolfo Clix, Pexels

Walking on the lonely streets with my hands
swinging in counterpoint to my feet,
Dancing with the ghosts of all past summers
Came rushing to haunt me the reminisce of the
beloved memories
The time when the body clocks were ticking
with wild liveliness,
Earlier I could hardly imagine this silence
between the twilight and sidewalks,
But here I am now, with half of my face
covered.

We call these fancy things mask,
A mask of every colour, every shade and hue,
Built for one purpose to protect oneself from
the novel disease, cold or flu.
Another fancy thing we use are sanitizers,
Sanitizers of every colour, fragrance and bottles
new.
They say do not go out, stay inside the four
walls of your shelter it is curfew
The ones who follow the orders will be the few,
To survive the monster lurking outside the view.

Another day, another life passes by just like
mine it's not complicated,
It's hard time to be human. We know too much
and too vagued,
Does the sky need us? The fish? The bird? The
sapling planted?
If the one thing we have managed to do right
while locked,
We again heard the blissful chirping of birds
once subsided,
The sky smiled with new spirit which was once
polluted,
The penguins jumped, laughed and played who
were once endangered.

Indeed, it is challenging the sustainability of
the human race

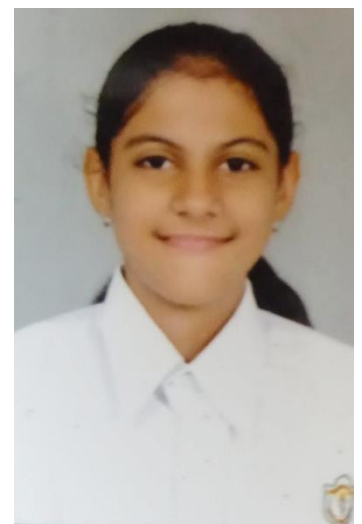
Indeed, the obstacles are hard to face.

Life is like a short poem with weird rhyme
scheme,

It rhymes but not the way we expect, so treat
everything with grace.

Fight this threat tooth and nail.

Stay home, stay safe.



Tanisha Parhi
Std 10, Bhubaneswar





Image courtesy Brahma kumaris UK

Staying at peace in all situations

“ This situation has taught me a lot of lessons, especially the fact that all the weapons I need to face the world are already in me. ”

Razafimanantsoa Nivolalandy
Project manager in the field of IT development, Antananarivo - Madagascar



The period of the covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown has begun in March 2020 in Madagascar. It's been exactly one year that my life took a big step. Like everyone, I did not expect that this microscopic thing would turn everything upside down but fortunately; I was able to transform the situation in my favor so I can bring benefits to others as well.

For me, the lockdown has been easier than I feel it has been for a lot of people. I was very blessed that I didn't have to worry about my personal needs during this time. It was then that I realized that having a roof over my head and food to eat is a real privilege. And because I live alone and work from home, the situation has not changed anything in my daily life.

At first, I was also surprised but it was mainly because I felt all the fear around me. The atmosphere was getting very heavy, so I knew deep down that something has to be made and it had to start by me from within. So, I've decided once and for all to be more focused on my spiritual efforts and, also, to use social media to spread positivity and to bring light through my spirituality by giving tips on how to face the odds and staying at peace in all situations.

I was already very active online to share topics around personal development and, on top of that, I am part of a community of positive influencers in my country. But at the same time, I felt that it was still possible to do better. That is why this period is a game-changer for me.

Since then, I often get feedback from people who tell me how much my story have helped them overcome hardships, but above all, I am grateful that now I am contributing concretely to build a better world.

This situation has taught me a lot of lessons, especially the fact that all the weapons I need to face the world are already in me. I just had to take a step of courage to make them emerge, that is why I make sure to inspire others to do the same.

Even if the situation is not yet resolved, my experience shows that we can manage to take advantage of it. A great opportunity to start a more authentic and meaningful life.

Strength & Courage



Image courtesy Jeremy Bishop on Unsplash

When I saw in the news about the coronavirus, for me it was normal because we have seen along the years many viruses coming and going from different countries. I had my final year exam too, so I was serious about studying and reading. So, I didn't think much about the curfew, hoping that next day all will be back to normal, but it was not the case. Instead, the next day, we got the news from our prime minister declaring a one-month lockdown. Of course, it was good for the country and for the people. But I was tired to be far from my home and my family, seating in one room with 6 other roommates. It's hard to describe our situation.

Nevertheless, after few days we became used to this situation and we found out a way to make ourselves happy. In my case, it was an opportunity to use my time every day in meditation and reading good inspirational and spiritual knowledge. I was also working online, and I got more clients.

As I am a student of the Brahma Kumaris Institution, I was also aware of the teachings saying: "Sweet children, become ready for the bad times to come". I was wondering how lucky I was to have this wisdom which was giving me the strength and the courage in my day-to-day life. I could be more peaceful, happy, and calm. I felt very lucky to feel the presence of the Almighty with me in my each and every situation that I don't have words to describe my feelings.

"It was an opportunity to use my time every day in meditation and reading good inspirational and spiritual knowledge."

And one thing I noticed is that nowadays people are becoming more and more spiritual and health conscious. They have realised that material things do not give happiness. It is when we go beyond matter that we find real peace and happiness... And the last but not the least, I want to express my thankfulness to the Supreme Father, to our Didis and brothers, the angels who are always there for us in each and every situation to give us the right solution and guidance.

Om shanti

Madhvi Trivedi
Yoga Trainer,
Bhavnagar (Gujarat)



A Little Courage And Some Letting Go

It takes honesty as well as courage to give ourselves a good shake and see things for what they are, not what we imagine them to be.

True Helper



Om Shanti, my name is Pallav Sharma. I am 25 years old. Born and brought up in Punjab, India. Currently living and studying in Montreal, Canada.

I won't say this year was an easy year as people have lost many precious things. But it has been a very special year of my life.

As the year starts, everyone take new resolutions and I did the same. Mine was a little different. Being a student of the Brahma Kumaris, I took this determined thought that no matter whatever happens this year, I will stay more connected with myself (I, the soul) and I will have the most beautiful relationship with Godfather (the Supreme Soul) by following all codes of conduct of Raja Yoga. And I can say this determined thought made this year a very special one.

A complete lockdown was imposed in Montreal from March 13th as Corona cases were rising at a sharp edge. People were so afraid that they bought more than their needs from the stores. And for few weeks, even normal cooking stuff were hard to find at any store. My studies became online gradually. Nowhere to go but just sit in front of the laptop all day long listening to College classes, French classes, and Spiritual classes. I even left my part time job as it was too risky to work outside.

I am sharing room with a Punjabi boy. I am very introverted whereas he is just the opposite.

Being locked in the room, initially it was hard for me to live with him but eventually with everyday meditation and practice using the knowledge helped me to make things look normal.

However, my roommate was really pumped up and wanted to take the full benefit of the confinement, so he started doing a lot of exercises and eat as much as he could to get a masculine body. The whole day, he was taking care of himself physically. And I used to go for a walk in the evenings. One day, he said to me "don't you think if you just sit in front of PC all day your physical health will eventually degrade, and you can get sick?"

I asked him a simple question what do you think will help us if tomorrow we will get sick? A "strong body" or a "strong mind" and he replied a "strong body". Days passed by and by month end of May, my roommate somehow got the coronavirus. It came like a complete surprise for both of us.

At first, I shifted all my necessary things out of the room so that he can quarantine himself for 14 days as per the Government instructions. It was so hard for him to bear this harsh truth and he was feeling a huge amount of pain due to virus. It was my first experience to take care of someone sick and that too with covid 19. Many times I was fearful about catching the virus but at the same time I felt how could I leave my roommate like that alone.

Then, I remembered the spiritual knowledge I learned in the Brahma Kumaris "problems will come take strength and help from the Supreme Power to overcome them by connecting to him". Those were the days that I got the chance to check my actual faith on God. I didn't tell anyone neither in India nor in Canada. I just told "Baba" (God Father) that you must help me in this situation. By staying positive, lesson learned at the Brahma Kumaris in my every day class and connecting myself with God, gradually my mind calmed down then eventually my roommate's health improved within 10 days and I too didn't caught the disease from him. This experience made me come closer to the Supreme Soul (God).

"problems will come take strength and help from the Supreme Power to overcome them by connecting to him".

This made me understand that problems are part of life and they will come until our last breath but now I have realized who is our true helper.

Om Shanti.



Pallav Sharma
Student of Network & Internet Security, Montreal - Canada



RESILIENCE

Image courtesy Ann H from Pexels

How to be resilient ?

Initially I was taken aback when the lockdown was extended. Everybody was going through their times of feeling bored, thinking where and what we're heading towards! 21 days into lockdown and with no sign of it being lifted, I thought let me attempt to find some positivity in this time of the COVID Pandemic.

Before the pandemic, once I get up, I'd rush into the shower, would leave home by 9.30 am and reach the office by 10 am. This was my morning routine. Two hours of rushing, commuting, busy streets and mindless newsfeed scrolling.

It's well known that physical health and mental health go hand in hand. During lockdown I was free from my commute, traffic, rushing and hustling. I took time to wake up very early and practice meditation, self-affirmations, breathing techniques and write in a diary. I also wrote down my worries and stresses as they came into mind during the day. I found these practices helpful in shaping a more positive mindset.



Ankita Shah
Senior Accountant,
SEWA Federation,
Ahmedabad (Gujarat)

I decided to keep myself occupied and disciplined; I converted a small space at home into an office, promising myself to do a little bit of work and skimming through the phone on breaks. As I was working from home, there was a time when I lost balance between work and my time on social media because there were no restrictions as in the office.

“I took time to wake up very early and practice meditation, self-affirmations, breathing techniques and write in a diary.”

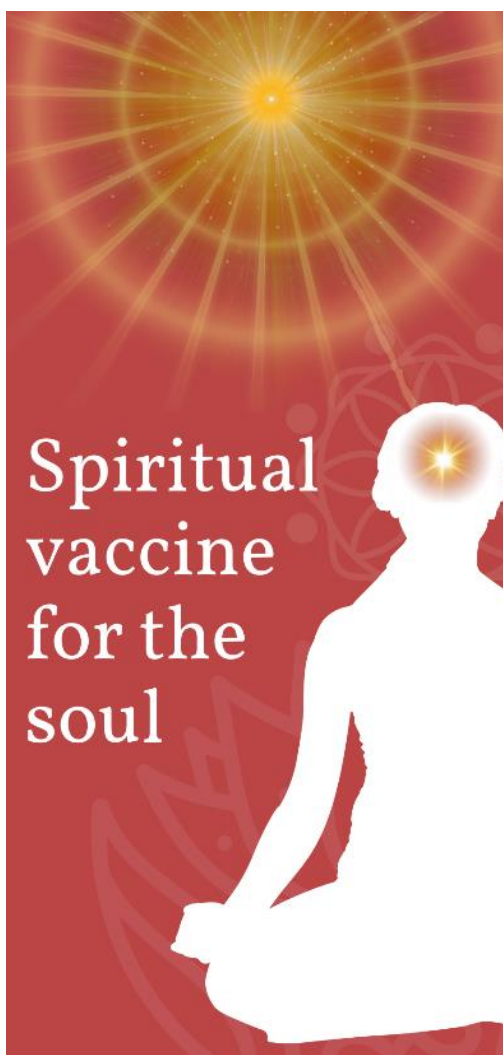
So I decided to keep my phone out of the bedroom and self-imposed screen-free time, this helped me to balance the negativity with the benefits social media brings.

If anyone would have asked me before lockdown that if I could stay home without any travelling or outings in the town, I would have said just one word 'Impossible'. The lockdown has proved me how resilient I can be and how I can adapt to almost any situation.

Another good thing was that I was making proper lunch for myself, and I was doing all the house admin bits I was always too busy to tick off. And I liked it.



Resilience is your personal power, your inner strength that allows you to rise above difficult circumstances and bounce back stronger than before the challenge! With such vitality, nothing can bring you down, or de-stabilise you.



“It gave me more clarity, depth of understanding spirituality and most importantly removed all the unnecessary distractions from my life.”



Madhuri Muralidhar
Project Coordinator at
Vestas - Sweden

It was sometime in december of 2019 I first came across the word Coronavirus. Little did I know the huge impact this tiny virus could have on our lives. It is probably the only pandemic which has caused such wide scale disruption, illness, and death. Irrespective of country, region, sector, gender it brought the world to its knees. Lockdown in many places meant spending entire days in the confines of our homes, shortage of essential supplies and a general vibe of fear and stress surrounding us. Despite schools, universities and companies trying to do the best they can to keep the motivation high, not everyone was in their best spirits. In the first wave of COVID-19, Governments also acted as quickly and effectively as they could to ensure citizens safety. It did bring some relief for a while, but it was only short lived and now we are again in an even more aggravated situation. Despite all the measures and reassurances, there is a foreboding sense that the new normal might be something very different and difficult to face.

When such wide scale negativity pervades, it is natural to feel stress and anxiety for the safety and wellbeing of ourselves and our loved ones. However, amidst chaos, if one dares to look into oneself, we find that we are inherently powerful beings and our natural state is to be at peace. If we take some time out for self-introspection then we will realize that this is something worth fighting for and brings strength and light to others in need.

But how do we fight? What are the weapons we have? How can we become more resilient and mentally immune to negativity? These were some of the questions I was pondering over initially when the pandemic set in. I realized that the first step in this fight is to calmly accept the situation and silence my mind. I did not have all the answers to the whys, hows and whats, but deep down I knew that it will all come to settle once I have silenced my mind and lifted my consciousness above chaos and confusion. This is the knowledge I had received as a part of Rajayoga meditation, and the lockdown situation was the time to really put it into test to understand my strength. Once my mind accepted the situation then it became easy to figure out how I should handle myself and with others in similar situations. One of the best things this lockdown did to me was to regularize my daily routine, right from my morning meditation followed by spiritual study and then dispensing family responsibilities and office work and evening meditation to ending the day with a reflection of my thoughts and actions of the day. This was not something I used to follow on a regular basis but now I see the benefits of a solid routine. It gave me more clarity, depth of understanding spirituality and most importantly removed all the unnecessary distractions from my life. It helped me immensely to focus and progress in my spiritual path which had a positive impact on my family and work life as well. The relationship that I nurtured with my Supreme Father gave me strength and courage to face whatever that is in store for me and the world. I believe that without this support and love from the Divine, I would also succumb to the fears and pressures that the world at large is facing today. I now not only feel good and secure about myself, but I also extend it to others especially when I see them getting depressed or insecure. With my connection with the supreme, I feel like I am becoming a repository of good wishes and benevolence which is so nurturing for the self and to others around me. As we are now facing the second wave of coronavirus, it is just the appropriate time to rebuild, reconnect, return to the source to get the spiritual vaccine which gives us protection from negativity not only in the current moment but also for many many births to come.

Lockdown Memoirs

stay positive, stay grateful

I am associated with the Brahma Kumaris organization since childhood and am a regular practitioner of the Rajyoga meditation technique and listen to the elevated Godly versions every day. I am also working with a reputed Pharmaceutical company located on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, Gujarat. My basic qualification is B.Tech Chemical Engineering (gold medalist) and work in the R&D Division. My job profile includes the Process development, scale-up and Technology Transfer of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients and its various intermediates. It is more than a year since the COVID-19 pandemic struck the world. I clearly remember that it was in mid-March last year when we were working and received a notification from the company management stating that the entire field staff working at the R&D division shall be divided in to shifts and colour coded zones to ensure social distancing norms as laid down by the government while the employees associated with only computer work shall work from home. As the time passed by, the rules and norms were changing everyday as there was total confusion all round the world with respect to the COVID-19, its nature of spreading and its treatment.

Soon a complete nationwide lockdown was announced and only essential services were allowed to function. I being associated with the Pharmaceutical industry (considered as essential services) were to report to work each and every day with alternate shift every week – one in the morning and the other in the evening. Taking unnecessary leaves resulted in doubt creation if the employee had contracted the Corona virus and this monotonous routine led to fatigueness amongst the employees not only physically but also mentally. It is at this time that the everyday meditation, positive thinking and affirmations helped to manage this emotionally energy sapping period and kept me as fresh as a flower every day. At the start of lockdown, I thought surely this would be only for a month, maybe two at the most. How wrong I was. It has been almost a year and although complete lockdown has eased but curfews and other COVID-19 rules need to be ensured to the hilt.

The complete lockdown had its own implications on the people's mindsets and there was a sense of fear, confusion, despair, unhappiness, paranoia, and depression amongst the people at large and also at work. Psychologically people were distressed with also wearing masks and a sense of fear had build up.

Complete negativity had surrounded the atmosphere with everyone seeming to revel in the day-to-day updates on the coronavirus infections, or worse, the death rates being recorded country-by-country and city-by-city. Then came the avalanche of video clips from doctors, nurses, patients, and a host of other 'experts', sharing their knowledge, expertise and experiences about this pandemic-causing virus, resulting in information overload and more confusion.

“Life is a Marathon, not a Sprint, so please pace yourself.”

The alternate shifts every week (still continuing with more than a year passed by) had its own implications with most of the people suffering from sleep problems due to change in the biological clock every week. Rajyoga meditation not only helped me to adjust to this every week but also helped many of my colleagues with whom I shared some positive affirmations and techniques. The infections at workplace resulted in more anxiety and tension building up. Post COVID-19 recovery, people suffered from severe bouts of depression and loss of self-confidence. With time, self-doubt increased amongst the people at large. I particularly remember one of my colleagues whose nature had changed completely post covid-19. He used to be isolated and not talk to anyone and would not get sleep for days. We discussed his problem at length and suggested some guided meditation commentaries to help him overcome his problem and today he is slowly getting back to his original self.

Conti. on next page



3 POWERS

to cooperate, to adjust
and to tolerate

During COVID I used the opportunity to build my physical and mental well-being.

Physically I ensured I was following the rules by practicing extra hygiene protocols. Like eating food that helps boost the immune systems and I was making the effort to exercise and build physical strength.

Spiritually I ensured that my family and myself meditated together an extra 30 mins to build inner resilience. This enabled us to prevent from the vibration of fear, worry and uncertainty to affect us. We also meditated daily to send peace to the world and help others get through the pandemic. I also joined various meditation groups as I believe collective meditation can change the atmosphere and bring well-being to all. The other element I focused on with my family was to increase my inner powers to create healthy relationship as we were 24hrs together. These powers were to cooperate, to adjust and tolerate. This brought peace in our home.

During the isolation periods I also reflected on going inside myself and understanding the importance of being introverted.

“These powers brought peace in our home.”



Amita Heeralall
A marketing expert in the skincare industry, Interior design, Aromatherapy, Colour therapy and Adult education, London (U. K)

Lockdown Memoirs

stay positive, stay grateful

From prev. page

As we slowly begin the process of returning to some modicum of life as we knew it, I have learned a lot about myself and others; about situations and things; about what truly matters (good physical and mental health, strong self-confidence, being positive at all times etc). Lockdown has taught me patience in many ways and has created a new perspective with making God as my companion at all times and surely there will be a way through the storm. It has taught me to be kinder and more accepting of others and myself and instilled the importance of empathy towards life. It is important for one to spend time in solitude/silent reflection everyday reminding oneself of the positive strengths on oneself. However, it is very important to distinguish between solitude, isolation, and loneliness. The first of the three happens when you come face-to-face with yourself. This is not a bad thing per se; it’s a time and place where we converse with ourselves and realize your true self. You can be alone, but in good company; whereas isolation appears when I am neither with myself nor with others but concerned with the affairs of the world; whereas loneliness causes people to feel empty, alone, and unwanted. My advice to everyone is that “Life is a Marathon, not a Sprint, so please pace yourself. Let us stay positive, stay grateful and focus on what is important and make God our companion in whatever little act we do and see his miracles occur.”



B.K. Nikhil Shah
Occupation: Research Associate (Process development, Technology Transfer and Scale-up), Ahmedabad (Gujarat)



Image courtesy Pezibear, pixabay

Give heed to precautions as per need of time

Last year when covid pandemic started, I took proper precautions. However, as time passed, I became less alert. When things got normal, I became busy with my routine work.

And during the 2nd wave, I became a victim of Corona. Then, I started taking regular medicine, precautions, proper food etc. My daily routine was to do early meditation, spiritual class, physical exercise which has helped me and I am continuing to follow the same.

Give heed to precautions: I felt that we should follow the instructions given by the Government, the indication of people around us and the requirements as per time. I felt if proper precautions were taken since the beginning then this kind of situation, circumstances would not have aroused. Personally, I was using only a simple cloth as mask which led to infection. Doctors reiterated that while going out and in gathering use compulsorily N95 mask along with another medical or cloth mask, in short wear 2 masks.

Helping Each other: During my covid treatment, my mother had heart problems, my neighbor got covid, my wife was found covid positive while doing service of family members. But friends, relatives, institutions are helping one another to overcome. I experienced that when we have helped people in their time of need, we also get their help in time.

Writing letters: I wrote letters to God about all the good and bad emotions, all kinds of small and big tension, including my fears. This practice helped me to remain calm and mentally fit. I found this to be one of the good practices everyone should do.

Friendship with Corona: I was asking myself why has this corona come to me. I realised it has as a teacher to teach me certain things. I made friendship with Corona and interacted with him. It is said everything happens for a reason and nothing is by chance. So Corona was making me see my weakness in certain areas, it said I am here to provide you time and seclusion so that you can find root level causes of your problems. I started to clean myself within and in my surroundings, eating proper diet, reading, gardening, spiritual practice etc. which all came as a learning. Secondly, Corona said keep on practicing these forever and make a permanent change otherwise I have to come again.

You are your own Creator: I practiced self-affirmation of “I am the Creator”, what all things are happening around me are my creation. Creator is always more powerful than creation. Corona is also our creation, but creator is more powerful than creation. You can create more powerful creation. This spiritual understanding has helped me to keep my mind powerful and did not allow any fear to seep in.

Being Grateful: I am thankful to God who along with His team has helped in all dimensions in this Corona experience. He trained me through Rajyog to see everything in such a positive and logical way that no question arose and facing the situation was made easy. This made me thankful to Corona also who taught me few difficult lessons very easily.



Vibhor Kumar Singh
Manager, Bachpan Play School,
Agra (U. P)

Change is Constant



Change is constant. Everything in this universe is going through a constant change. This year, when mankind was caught up in the clutches of the deadly covid-19 and the way everyone's life changed, it was a message on how it is necessary to adapt, to accept and to be open to change and sustain ourselves in uncertainties.

In this scenario, many sectors offered work from home and in some sectors, employees had to come to work with precautionary measures as per government guidelines, because they were part of providing essential goods and services for survival. I am employed in one of them.

In an atmosphere of panic, in which I could sense fear in each one, I was feeling calm, fearless, and having faith in God. I was thinking that whatever has happened is for a good reason. As a practitioner of Rajyoga meditation, I could stay positive.

I myself got infected with Covid 19 one day. Initially, I got a little scared. I told myself that this is karmic account which I have to settle. Once it is over, I will be free from it. And also, I am not alone, God is always with me.

During the quarantine period I remained optimistic, taking proper medication as prescribed by my doctor, maintaining my daily routine of meditation, listening to spiritual classes and various lectures which helped me to keep my mind on a higher consciousness. I was reading good books. I was eating proper nutritious food. I was exercising and taking proper sleep. There was an added advantage because there were online classes and collective meditation conducted by the Brahma Kumaris Institution.

By the end of the quarantine period, I had recovered and became fit enough to resume a normal life. I felt grateful to God, and my mother for their love and care.

This experience made me want to help those affected adversely either due to the virus infection, the unemployment or any other problems which were the outcome of the lockdown. But how to reach out to so many people in the entire world? At the Brahma Kumaris, we are taught how through meditation, we can spread and give good vibrations and healing energies to all the souls, even the ones who have left their bodies, to mother nature, to all the planets, and the entire universe.

This is a subtle form of help we can do. And it is powerful and effective.

I really feel that being connected constantly to the Almighty through thoughts, feelings and in every way is a very empowering experience. His company has helped me sail through all the tough situations. I feel if each one realizes that He is there for us, He is always willing to take our burdens, then even bigger challenges will become a cake walk.

“Daily routine of meditation, listening to spiritual classes and various lectures which helped me to keep my mind on a higher consciousness”



Saloni Shah
Deputy Manager,
Ahmedabad District Cooperative
Bank, Ahmedabad (Gujarat)

Image courtesy engin akyurt, Unsplash



Why is Covid not leaving us?

I am sure that each one of us whether in India or the world would like to get rid of Covid 19 so that we can all go back to normal life but that's not happening. It is frustrating for all of us as we are unable to go to normal lives. But why is Covid not leaving us despite putting in so many efforts? Let's think a little about what the missing link is. Is it hidden in the word COVID itself?

V for Virtues

While we have been pushed indoors, we have a good chance to work on virtues like patience, love, peace, happiness, purity, bliss and power. Virtues can be developed only through spiritual practices like learning Rajyoga Meditation. When we develop virtues within us we radiate positivity automatically which keeps the negative energies at bay.

Co-operation - Opportunity - Virtues - Illuminate - Discipline

C for Co-operation

It is a value which if followed well, can save many of us. The government wants us to co-operate with them by wearing masks, sanitize our hands and maintain social distancing but as the lockdown was brought down many of us stopped wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing which has brought the covid back to many locations once again.

O for Opportunity

Covid has given us the opportunity for so many things like to learn a new skill, to make ourselves fit both physically and mentally, spend more time with family, save traveling time and use it for something better or to do something we like. Rather than using this opportunity well, we prefer to go outside and try to socialize and then have the fear of getting covid. Fear is negative energy that attracts all the negative towards us.

Rohit Gehani
HR at Tata Capital,
Mumbai (Maharashtra)

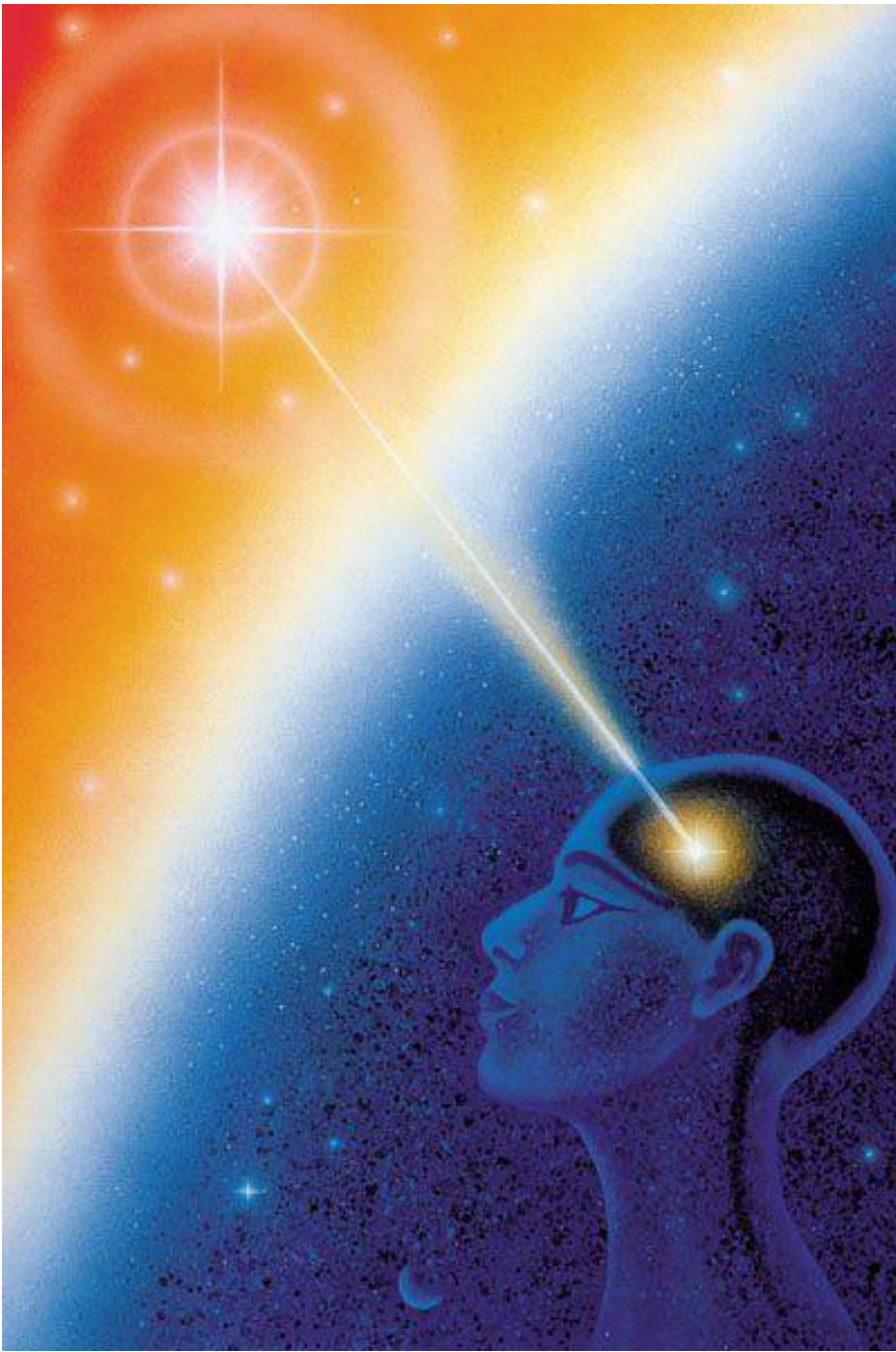


I for Illuminate

Illuminate your mind with the true knowledge that you are a spiritual being and not the physical body. The body is just the costume we have got from the 5 elements to express ourselves. If we can do all our actions in this illuminated state of soul consciousness, then there won't be any negative or waste thoughts for the self or others. We will think good for the efforts put by the government, doctors and everyone who is working hard towards keeping us safe.

D for Discipline

Discipline is a good value as it keeps us sane and our karmas righteous which is very important to live a peaceful life. We should follow all the right practices to safeguard ourselves and our family members, friends and everyone around us by following the right measures of safety so that we can drive the virus away once and for all. So, let us all collectively vibrate positive energies into the world and hope for the well-being of everyone so that our positive vibrations can drive away COVID and we can all go back to normal lives.



“Connection and experience togetherness with God through meditation”

Before this pandemic, I never thought of doing work online but as a psychologist, I was connecting with patients through this virtual platform. I became even more busy through this kind of activity that I did not have the time to think about anything else rather than helping my patients. Yet, I programmed my day to walk around my society with all the precautions required, like wearing a mask, and maintaining social distance. I lost 7 kgs weight through diet control and exercises. I planned to have personal time for me to feel the company of God.

This period has taught me that there is nothing without which we can't live, and it has made me realise the hidden strength I have, which I was unaware of. This situation had given me the opportunity to join a full-time course along with my job, as everything was online, I was able to manage both the things simultaneously. This period has taught me new ways to live, new ways to connect to people, new ways of shopping, new ways of doing job/work, and new easy ways to cook different foods and try new recipes.

I got the opportunity to remain positive and spread positivity through meditation and also through my work. I experienced a new version of myself.



Archana R. Thawani,
Clinical Psychologist,
Ahmedabad (Gujarat)

This pandemic situation has taught us about the uncertainty of life. Feelings of fear are everywhere. People have faced financial issues, the loss of loved ones, there is the feelings of loneliness, of insecurities, etc.

“I planned to have personal time for me to feel the company of God.”

But I want to share my experience of this lockdown. In fact, this period gave me the opportunity to connect and experience togetherness with God through meditation. I was able to feel as if God is protecting me from all the fears and insecurities. Meditation helped me a lot in remaining positive and convert this crisis into opportunity.



Though the mind often asks for what is visible or material, its needs are deeper and cannot be met by anything superficial or short term. Meditation leads to a meeting point with all that is true and eternal.

- Supreme Soul Shiva

Meditation Commentary for healing our thoughts From B.K Shivani

Image courtesy @Awakening TV, Brahma kumaris

Relax your body... Bring your focus on the center of the forehead.. Visualise a tiny point of light... Looking at this point of light, just think... I am a soul... a point of light... an energy... the owner of the body, ...

I am detached from the body... Whatever I think, whatever I feel will influence the body... I will influence and affect my health... All my thoughts are positive...

I am a powerful soul... ... I am calm...peaceful... I am stable... the vibrations of peace, calmness is relaxing the body, the body becomes very comfortable.

I am completely confident on my destiny and God...

I am safe..., fearless..., I have faith ...

Now visualise a powerful point of light above you...

It is God, the incorporeal, God the Almighty Authority and He is your Father and you are His child... You can call Him Baba, Father... Whatever bothers you, scares you, give all your tensions to Him and make yourself light...

Now think...

My baba is always with me...He is my Father... He is giving me powers... I am taking all the rays of powers into me from Him... I am empowering myself with all the powers of the Divine....

Baba is taking care of me... He is protecting me... He is all the time with me...

All these powers are enveloping my mind, my body and I am getting clean...healthy... strong... immune... I have confidence... I am pure...

These vibrations of powers are reaching each cells of my body... making them strong... healthy....

The vibrations of purity coming from Baba are making my mind pure... I am a pure soul... these pure vibrations are making each cell of the body pure... and the virus is becoming lifeless... it is dying... In front of the power of purity, the virus cannot stand, it is dying... the virus is destroyed completely...

My body is now completely healthy.... My throat, my lungs, my body all are now healthy... I can breathe normally...

Thank you Baba for your love, your powers, your purity, which have been a protection...

Visualise an aura of protection made of these qualities... Om Shanti.



About Brahma Kumaris

Brahma Kumaris (Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya) is a worldwide spiritual movement dedicated to personal transformation and world renewal. Founded in India in 1937, it has spread over 137 countries across all continents with more than 5000 branches and has an extensive impact in many sectors as an international NGO. It is affiliated to the United Nations as an NGO having consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). Its International Head Quarters is at Mount Abu, Rajasthan, India.

It acknowledges the intrinsic goodness of all people. It teaches a practical method of meditation that helps individuals in understanding their inner strengths and values. As a worldwide family of individuals from all walks of life, we are committed to spiritual growth and personal transformation, believing them to be essential in creating a peaceful & happy World.



HQ: Pandav Bhawan, Mt. Abu
www.brahmakumaris.com
www.brahmakumaris.org

About Youth Wing (R.E & R.F)

To promote the spirit of service and sacrifice of the Youth by engaging them in community welfare services. The wing works to achieve its aim with the help of thousands of young brothers and sisters. These young people, in addition to performing all their regular duties, observe celibacy, lead a life free from unhealthy habits and spend their spare time and energy in rendering voluntary services for the upliftment of the society. They participate in retreats and meditation camps to develop viceless attitude, strong moral values, divine manners and a well-rounded personality.

The Vision:

I shall change myself, set an example and the world will change. I step forward with the courage to take-up the responsibility. No more excuse, now I shall work for the results and shall join hands in creating Swarnim Bharat.

The Mission:

To inspire, to empower, to realise to rededicate, to meet, to share, to break all bondages like addictions, bad habits and blind faith, to spread the message of brotherhood by developing spiritual consciousness.



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