



BALAVIN KURAL

A Balambika Divya Sangam Publication



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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Dear BDS Members,

Hope the steady flow of 'Bala this week', 'Know Thy Self', Bala Slokas and songs, are giving you all the much needed pause during the day, to reflect on our beloved Bala, and receive Her grace through the virtual temple darshans.

As always, our newsletter for this month is packed with diverse content to suit everyone's palate.

We launch this edition with the Q&A section on *Manam* or mind, where our BDS President emphasizes the importance of taming our mind, for our own spiritual elevation. An excerpt from the Bhagavad Gita is explained, where Lord Krishna imparts invaluable knowledge to Arjuna on mind-control.

Continuing with the Bala Sahasranamam commentary, the context behind the word "Sushumna" is beautifully explained by our President.

While growing up, I am sure all of us would remember the advice given by our parents to not talk unnecessarily, and only speak when asked. The "Know your Mythology" section extols the omniscience and impartial nature of Sahadeva, one of the 5 Pandavas, and the advice Lord Krishna gives him to only respond when asked, and not reveal his immense knowledge.

Most of us would have observed our parents and grandparents fasting during special days of the month, such as Ekadashi and Shraavanam, but apart from the usual religious reasons, never really understood the benefits. The science snippets section elaborates on the concept of Autophagy or controlled and periodic fasting, and how it benefits and cleanses our body of unwanted chemicals and residues.

The festival of Navratri is just a month away, and we thought it would be the perfect time to refresh our knowledge on why this festival is celebrated, in the Editorial section. We would also be following this up with snippets on the significance of each of the days and the form of Ambal worshipped on that particular day, in the BDS WhatsApp group.

The "Devotee Shares" section includes contributions from two of our BDS members. One of them, "Six degrees of Gratitude", speaks about the importance of gratitude towards God, and how she understood the true meaning behind it. "Looking beyond the COVID crisis" provides a unique perspective to the challenging situation we are all in, and how Mother Nature has applied the much needed brakes on the trail of destruction mankind has been leaving over the past several decades.

If you would like to share your thoughts and experiences on Bala or contribute to our outreach activities, please email us at editorial.bds@gmail.com or message us in the BDS WhatsApp group.

Please share your feedback and suggestions on improving our content.

Sarvejana Sukhinobhavanthu.



Raja Bala as Mangala Gowri roopam
during Navratri 2019

இதன் பொருள் சூக்ஷ்ம ரூபிணியாக இருக்கும் அம்பாள் நம் உயிர்நாடியாகவும் இருக்கிறாள். ஆதிசக்தி அமேயாத்மா என்பதற்கு ஏற்ப நம் எல்லாமாகவும் இருக்கும் அம்பாள் ஆன்மாவாகவும் இருக்கின்றாள்.

மனிதனுக்குள் 5 கோஷ்டங்கள் உள்ளது. அன்னமயகோஷம், பிராணமயகோஷம், மனோமயகோஷம், விக்னமயகோஷம் மற்றும் ஆனந்தமயகோஷம் என்பவகையாகும். ஆனந்தமயகோஷம், என்பது ஆன்மாவின் வெளித்திரை. நாம் அம்பாளைப் பற்றி நிறைய அறிந்து, தெரிந்து கொள்ளும்போது ஆனந்தமயகோஷம் விரிவுபடுகிறது. அது விரிவடையும்போது உண்மை புரிகிறது. உண்மை புரியும்போது ஞானம் விளைகிறது. ஞானம் விளையும்போது அம்பாளை நம்மால் புரிந்துகொள்ள முடிகிறது. ஆனந்தமயகோஷத்தின் உள்ளே அம்பாள் நமக்களித்துள்ள ஜீவசக்தி உறைகிறது. முண்டகோபநிஷத் கூறுவதுபோல எப்படி ஒரு சிலந்தியிலிருந்து நூல் வருமோ, எப்படி மண்ணிலிருந்து ஒரு விதை முளைவிடுமோ, எப்படி முடிக்காம்பிலிருந்து முடி வளருகிறதோ அப்படி எல்லா ஜீவராசிகளும் அம்பாளிலிருந்து வருபவர்கள்.

இந்த நாமாவளிகொண்ட அம்பாள் நமக்கு நினைவுபடுத்துவது என்னவென்றால் இந்த உலகம் அவளுடைய மாயை, இந்த உடல், சுகத்தின் கைதி, இந்த மூச்சு அவளது இயக்கம், இந்த ஜீவன் அவளது உரிமை. இப்படியிருக்க நான், எனது என்பது ஏது? ஆகவே காமத்தின் மோகத்திலிருந்து விடுபட்டு, கர்மத்தின் விலங்கை அறுத்து, ஞானத்தின் வழியே நடக்க வாரீர்.

Q & A WITH SMT. ASHA MANOHARAN



Raja Shyamala—The Minister, Ganapathy - The remover of Obstacle & Varahi - The Army chief guarding the temple.

MANAM:

Today, we are going to talk about *Manam*, and how controlling it is of utmost importance for our spiritual journey.

In our previous sessions, we have talked about *Pancha Bhootas* or elements of nature, and *Antahkaranas*, our internal organs. The Antahkaranas can be classified into 4 parts:

- *Manam* (mind)
- *Buddhi* (intellect)
- *Citta* (memory)
- *Ahamkara* (ego)

The Manam refers to our general thinking faculty, and controls our body, senses and thoughts. The Buddhi controls our decision making, the citta constitutes the temporary and permanent memory based on our experiences, and Ahankaram identifies with the Self (Atman), and is responsible for the feeling of “I”.

Apart from basic consciousness, the mind controls our sense organs and associated senses, and all the emotions we house. Depending on the state of mind, we might interpret things in a subjective manner, and our desires might be pure or wanton. This directly affects our judgment to make the correct decision, and follow the righteous path.

The Mind is also responsible for all the emotions we feel, good and bad. Depending on what emotion we embrace, it becomes our nature. The fickle mind always has a tendency to toggle between the past and the future, and struggles to stay in the present moment. If the mind is inclined towards *Shubha Vasanas* or pure thoughts and desires, we think about the good things that happened to us, and reflect on good memories. On the flip side, a mind tuned to *Ashubha Vasana*, always focuses on the pain and bad experiences we had in the past. Depending on these inclinations, we will either have a virtuous personality, or will start adopting negative emotions like anger, jealousy, and hatred.

If the Mind produces the right thoughts, leading to the right actions, we will follow the path of Dharma and attain Moksha. Otherwise, our Manam will take us on a path of attachment and desire, causing us to take birth again and again. Many Sages and enlightened people have stressed the importance of treating the Manam and Panam (money) as our servants and NOT our owners. Therefore, controlling the mind is critical for our overall well-being and mental health.

The importance of controlling the mind is beautifully explained in the Bhagavad Gita as follows:

For him who has conquered the mind, the mind is the best of friends; but for one who has failed to do so, his mind will remain the greatest enemy.

வாசகரின் கேள்வியும் திருமதி ஆஷா மனோகரன் பதிலும்

மனம்:

அந்தஹ்ரகரணத்தின் பகுதி மனம். அந்தஹ்ர என்றால் உள்ளே, கரணம் என்றால் கருவி, நம் உள்ளே இருக்கும் கருவி. பஞ்ச பூதங்களை உள்ளே கொண்டது ஸ்தூல சரீரம். நம் புலன்கள், பிராணன் ஆகியவை ஸூக்ஷ்ம சரீரம். மனம், புத்தி, சித்தம் மற்றும் அஹங்காரம் ஆகியவற்றைக் கொண்டது அந்தக் கரணம். அவைகளைப் பற்றி பார்ப்போம்.

மனம் உணர்வை சார்ந்த எண்ணங்களைக் கொண்டது. அன்பு, கோபம், பொறுமை போன்றவை.

புத்தி, முடிவு எடுக்கக் கூடிய அதிகாரம் கொண்டது.

சித்தம், தற்காலிக மற்றும் நிலைத்த அனுபவங்களின் பதிவு. இதனை வாசனை என்றும் சொல்லலாம்.

அஹங்காரம் என்பது நான், எனது என்று நினைக்கும் எண்ணங்களாகும்.

சூக்ஷ்ம மற்றும் ஸ்தூல சரீரம் இரண்டும் எதை நோக்கி செல்கிறது என்று பார்த்தால் பந்தம், மோகூஷம் ஆகிய இரண்டு பாதையில் செல்கிறது. இந்த பாதையில் பெரும் பங்கு வகிப்பது மனம்தான்.

மனதை பற்றி அறிவோம்

ஒன்று, இருவித அறிவுகளுக்கு மனமே உறைவிடம். இந்திரியங்களையும், புலன்களையும் இயக்குவது மனம். புலன்கள்

அறிவுக்கு சரியான கருவியாக இயங்கவேண்டும். மனம் சீராக இயங்கினால் பார்க்கும் விஷயங்களை நல்லவனவாக நினைக்கும். சரி, தவறுக்கும் மனமே காரணம்.

இரண்டாவது, மனம் உணர்வுகளின் உறைவிடம். அன்பு வெறுப்பு, தியாகம் சுயநலம் இரண்டும் இருப்பது மனதில்தான். எதை எடுத்து வெளிப்படுத்துகிறோமோ அதுவே நம் குணம். நற்பண்புகள் தெய்வீக குணங்கள், தீய குணங்கள் அசுர குணங்கள்.

மூன்றாவது, மனம்தான் வாசனைகளின் உறைவிடம். அது நிகழ்காலத்தில் இருப்பதில்லை. சென்ற விஷயங்களையும், நாம் பட்ட கஷ்டங்களையும் அவமானங்களையும் நினைத்துக்கொண்டே கடந்த காலத்தில் வாசம் செய்கிறோம். இது அசுப வாசனை. இது கோபம், பொறாமை ஆகியவற்றை தூண்டி துன்பங்களுக்கு வழி வகுக்கும். சுப வாசனைகள் நல்ல விஷயங்களை தூண்டி நம்மை நல்லவர்களாக மாற்றும். நம் அனுபவங்களும், அதனை நாம் எதிர்கொள்ளும் முறையுமே நம் வாழ்க்கையை நிர்ணயிக்கும். கடந்த கால அனுபவங்கள் நிகழ்கால குணங்களாகிறது. வாழ்க்கை என்ற நேற்றைய அனுபவங்களை உள்ளே வைத்திருப்பது மனம்.

மனம்தான் கர்த்தா, அதாவது ஒரு செயல் செய்யக்கூடியது. மனம் தான் நம் பேச்சு, வாக்கு, செயல். நம் மனதிற்கு பிடித்தால் தான் ஒன்றை பேசி, செய்து, சொல்லி செயலாக்குவோம். ஸ்தூல, சூக்ஷ்ம உடல் நான்தான் என்கிறது மனம். மனம் செயல்பட்டு, 'நான்' செயல் வடிவமாக மாறுகிறது. மனம் நல்லது செய்தால் நற்பண்புகள் வளர்ந்து மோகூஷத்தை நோக்கி செல்லும். அதுவே மனம் தீய குணங்களுக்கு இடம் கொடுத்தால் அது நம்மை அதர்ம பாதையில் அழைத்துச் செல்லும். மனமும், பணமும் நமக்கு வேலைக்காரர்கள், அதுவே எஜமானானால் துன்பமே.

பந்துராத்மாத்மனஸ்தஸ்ய யேனாத்மைவாத்மனா ஜிதஹ் அனாத்மனஸ்து ஷத்ருத்வே வர்தேதாத்மைவ ஷத்ருவத் என்கிறது பகவத்கீதை. மனதை நம் வசத்தில் வைத்து, அதைப்பற்றி அறிந்து, உணர்ந்து, வாழ்வதே அமைதியான வாழ்வு என்பதே இதன் பொருள்.

KNOW YOUR MYTHOLOGY:

SAHADEVA - THE ENLIGHTENED ONE



Lord Krishna meets with the Pandavas

“It occurred to Sahadev, suddenly everything around him was vivid. He burst into uproarious laughter, all his senses were at the peak. He realized that he attained what many have struggled for, over the course of many lives, keeping it as the only target for many many lives, even after fulfilling every requirement in order to attain it, but were in vain. It was bound to be so; because, it cannot be an attainment, but was a gift or nature. He could see through everything around him.”

That was said to be a narration of an experience that happens to those who attain enlightenment. Sahadev got it and he was only a boy then. He wanted to share his experience with his beloved brothers, and decided to rush to them. However, suddenly, he was chased by an elderly sage, so he broke into a sprint and ran as fast as he could. But the elderly sage was surprisingly fit and kept to his heels. Sahadev gradually slowed down and stopped.

The elderly sage caught up with him and asked, "Why would you run?" Sahadev responded with a question, "I am being chased by you. What more of a blessing can a human get?" The sage asked with a mischievous smile, "What's so special about it?"

Sahadev responded, "The one whose lotus feet is being searched by countless saints and all those who do severe penance just to get one glance of the Supreme Lord. Here, those very feet are chasing me in the form of an old sage." Uttering that, Sahadev touched the old man's feet and addressed thus, "O sinless one, Vasudev Krishna!! Bless me." Krishna blessed him and raised Sahadev by his shoulder and made him sit next to Him.

Krishna said, "Sahadev, you are an enlightened being!! A Trikal Gyani. It is important that you must never disclose all that you know. Nor should you do things that change the course of the chakra of time." Sahadev responded, "If someone asks me, I can't lie, right?" Krishna smiled and said, "Respond to them for what they have asked for, nothing more. Also, do not tell anyone that you know anything or everything. It avoids the very possibility itself." Krishna looked into Sahadev's eyes. Sahadev nodded and said, "I have a request for you, you need to protect us five brothers always," to which Krishna agreed.

SAHADEVA - THE ENLIGHTENED ONE:

Continued...

The promise that he made to Vasudeva Krishna, kept Sahadev from speaking everything that he knew to his brothers, even if his brothers were closer to him than his own shadow. During the entire time, Sahadev knew everything about the numerous plots to get rid of Pandavas' lives, and the political moves of Shakuni and Suyodhana, the unfair game of dice, Draupadi's suffering, how each one would die in the war, Ashwathama's actions and the curse, Krishna and the curse from Gandhari. He knew it all. He never told anyone about his knowledge, even to his brothers who loved him, to his mother, or even to Draupadi. The only person he will talk to with no filter was Vasudev Krishna.

After the promise, he mostly remained in silence and uttered only a few words rarely, when the situation was unavoidable. Sahadev was polymath and in the Mahabharata by Veda Vyasa (translated by Kisari Mohan Ganguli), Draupadi described him as below:

"And that hero skilled in weapons and possessing intelligence and wisdom, and intent on doing what is agreeable to the son of Dharma, that favourite and youngest born of the Pandavas, is my husband Sahadeva! Heroic, intelligent, wise and ever wrathful, there is not another man equal to him in intelligence or in eloquence, amid assemblies of the wise. Dearer to Kunti than her own soul, he is always mindful of the duties of Kshatriyas, and would rather rush into fire or sacrifice his own life, than say anything that is opposed to religion and morals."

Another situation that trumpets Sahadev's knowledge and impartial nature is, when the war became inevitable, Duryodhana consulted Shakuni and all others, about seeking an astrologer to decide the muhurtham for the kala-bali (sacrifice in the war-field). Shakuni responded and recommended, "You should ask none other than Sahadev, the youngest of the Pandavas." Duryodhana asked, "But the war is against the Pandavas." Shakuni's response was, "There is no one better than him. He will not be wrong or lie or suggest something that would be only for his benefit, even if the asker happens to be his enemy." Duryodhana thought about it and realized it to have been so true. So he consulted Sahadev.

As expected, Sahadev calculated the correct day that would give Kauravas the victory and suggested Amavasya. Learning about this, the Pandava faction got deeply worried. Because, Sahadev won't make mistakes in judgement and it would just work in favour of the Kauravas. Now, their only hope was for Vasudev Krishna to find a way to foil it. Krishna also did it in His own usual and playful way.

EDITORIAL : SIGNIFICANCE OF NAVARATRI

The grand festival of Navaratri or “nine nights”, is just around the corner, so I would like to take this opportunity to describe the context behind this celebration.

In theory, Navaratri falls four times a year, however, the Sharada Navaratri during post-monsoon autumn (September-October) is the most widely celebrated, followed by Vasanta Navaratri in Spring (March-April).

The legend associated with Navaratri glorifies the great battle between the powerful demon Mahishasura and Goddess Durga. Mahishasura received the boon of immortality from Lord Brahma that he can only be overpowered by a woman. Equipped with this boon, he attacked the three worlds - Heaven, Earth and Hell. The Gods stood no chance against Mahishasura, as the boon protected him against defeat by any man. Helpless, the Gods prayed to Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva for assistance against this powerful enemy. Since he has immunity against any man, the Gods combined their powers and weapons, and created Goddess Durga, a reincarnation of *Shakti* or the personification of the supreme universal energy.

Armed with the combined strengths and prowess of the Gods, and seated on a lion, Goddess Durga fought with Mahishasura for several days, and finally slayed him on Vijayadasami day, with Her trident. Subsequently, She was named *Mahishasuramardini*, or The Killer of Mahishasura.

The legend of Goddess Durga’s triumph over Mahishasura is depicted in the Devi Mahatmya, a part of Markandeya Purana, which is a major text in the Shaktism tradition, where the divine Mother or Shakti, is considered as the supreme Godhead.

Each of these nine days of Navaratri is dedicated to one of the avatars of Goddess Durga, and culminates in Vijayadashami. Vijayadashami is also synonymous with Dussehra, when Lord Rama was able to defeat Ravana. In either cases, it reinforces the fact that good (Dharma) will always win over evil (Adharma).

Navaratri is celebrated in a variety of flavors all across India.

In North Eastern India, predominantly, in West Bengal, Navaratri is celebrated as Durga Puja. Numerous *pandals* or makeshift stages adorn the community squares, roadside shrines and Durga temples.

In North India, various *Ramlila* events are organized on temporary stages and temples, where local artists come together to enact various episodes from the Ramayana, and the victory of Lord Rama over Ravana.

In Gujarat, Navaratri is considered as one of the main state festivals. A highlight of the celebration is the Garba dance, accompanied by live music, traditional and devotional songs. The Garba is a folk dance, where people from all backgrounds and skills dance and move in concentric circles, sometimes, with the coordinated striking of *dandiyas* (sticks).

EDITORIAL : SIGNIFICANCE OF NAVARATRI

Navaratri is celebrated with a special fervor and tradition in Tamil Nadu. Bharatnatyam dance performances and classical music concerts, called *kachcheris* in Tamil, are organized in temples and community centers. A notable inclusion in the celebrations is the *Golu* dolls setup at homes and temples. This is also followed in Andhra Pradesh as *Bommala Koluvu*, and in Karnataka as *Gombe Habba* or *Gombe totti*. Golu provides an opportunity for people to unleash their creative side. Starting with Gods and Goddesses from the upper layers of the Golu, it moves on to generic themes, such as scenes from urban and rural life, farmers working in the fields, etc.

At our Malur Balambika Temple, Navaratri has always been celebrated with pomp and splendor, with special alankarams and homams performed each day for precise benefits, and attributed to a specific form of Ambal. Even the kolam, neivedyam, devotional songs and music, are customized for the particular form of Ambal that is worshipped on that day. We will be sharing the significance of each day, and the various activities that are performed at our Malur Balambika temple, in subsequent posts on the BDS WhatsApp group.

In essence, the main concept we need to take away from Navaratri, is that knowingly or unknowingly, all of us have internal demons and vices to overcome. Metaphorically, these are the Mahishasuras dwelling inside us, which need to be destroyed, to follow the path of Dharma. So, let us pray to Mahishasura Mardini Goddess Durga to vanquish these negative qualities within us, and help us move forward on the righteous path.

Kutti Bala in Her chariot during Mandala Poojai Celebrations 2019



SCIENCE SNIPPETS : *BENEFITS OF AUTOPHAGY OR FASTING*



Raja Bala Alankaram during Bala's Birthday celebrations in 2018

Most of our households sport a matriarchal elderly member, who performs 'upavasam' on auspicious days, which most commonly are Ekadashi, sravanam, pournami, Shashti, Saturdays, Mondays...., well the list goes on, and we folks from the younger generation have developed a slightly condescending attitude towards this seemingly futile attempt to please the Gods. Other than the usual health benefits that we have heard of, such as control of sugar and salt levels, well, here is some scientific, Nobel Prize winning reason for this apparently meaningless custom. A few years ago, the Nobel laureate was a Japanese scientist Dr. Yoshinori Ohsumi, who was awarded for his research on autophagy. Autophagy literally means to 'self-eat', and is a natural physiological process taking place in our cells. It controls the degradation and recycling of damaged proteins and eliminates unwanted byproducts of cellular functions. Removal of dead cells and unnecessary cellular matter prevents cancer, counters the negative effects of ageing, and also rids the body of cells infected by bacteria and viruses. Autophagy also kicks in during starvation by quickly providing energy for cellular functions by using up the damaged proteins and thus preventing the accumulation of these degenerated cells which could otherwise lead to disease. By starving during our fasts, our body is inducing autophagy, where we are actually helping the body consume and get rid of waste matter in the cells. Now, let's come to dear old Paddhu Pati's Ekadasi fasting. Every fortnight, she is actually self-inducing autophagy, and making her cells eat up all the waste proteins and degraded matter, helping her stay alive and healthy and of course young, while at the same time, she is spending her time in prayer. This holistic approach to keeping both our mind and body healthy, through spiritual healing and biological rejuvenation, has been a lifetime routine in our Hindu culture that was professed by our elderly. One can only appreciate the deep intellect in our ancient minds, as they fuse together science with religion, and make them go hand-in-hand.

DEVOTEE SHARES



The six degrees of gratitude by Gargi...

As a child growing up in a home that valued religious tenets, I was taught to revere God. Of course, I also had my regular intake of the relatable stories of Krishna playing pranks, or Ganesha's tricky adventures alongside the ones which displayed God as the all-powerful and supreme being. These childhood stories and chants certainly introduced me to God, but none of these made me think about being thankful towards God.

As I expanded my perception of God outside the boundaries of my home, I discovered a new term called 'spirituality'. It sounded cool. It felt like a great way to identify yourself as someone who is not dogmatic. It was not your mom and dad's vision of God; it was a new age! It embraced science, and gave a meaning to sounds in the various chants. On exploring the different terms and flavors of 'spirituality', a recurring theme of 'being thankful' kept popping up. According to me, this was an obvious thing. I was after all raised to be polite and courteous, and have always said my quota of 'thanks' as and when needed. I just brushed this aside as a mandatory term in spiritual parlance, and did not think much about it.

The troughs of life were a great test bed for the new spirituality I had embraced. I utilized every solution offered except being thankful during trying times.

Time and again, this simple yet deep act of being thankful and grateful, was ignored by me. And repeatedly, I found myself in situations where I had to confront this term, until I paused and thought about it.

How can a word as underwhelming as "Thanks" be used to communicate with God? It is a word that is on autopilot in a civilized society. There was something amiss here, saying "thanks" to God did not feel special as everyone said it would be. Did all the books and lectures have it wrong?

Some digging around revealed a new word "gratitude". This sounded more intense. It sounded more amenable and less mundane. Now, armed with an appropriate word, I tried to express gratitude to God. But again, the luster faded in a few weeks. It sounded rehearsed and quickly became mundane.

In a quest to experience the joy of being grateful is when I came back a full circle to the stories and chants of my childhood. I re-read the poems and listened to the devotional songs again, and realized that gratitude and thanks is not a word, it's an emotion that is yearning to escape the soul and reach God. It takes myriad forms of stories, poetry, songs, art to express something that can truly not be expressed by the one word "thanks", coined by man.

Gratitude was introduced to me from the get-go in the form of the stories and songs, but I needed to go through the various degrees of Rejection, Blind acknowledgement, Discovery, Acceptance, and Realization, to land upon the true meaning of something so simple, and yet so profound.

Looking beyond the COVID crisis by Anthil

This crisis is a necessary pause...

The current COVID crisis is an unparalleled disaster in the history of mankind. As of today, more than 24 million people have been affected worldwide. But the total weight of the virus affecting these people is not more than 12 grams. There have been several trying situations in the past - devastating cyclones, relentless floods, reckless diseases like plague, meaningless battles and chemical warfare by rogue nations, etc. So, what exactly makes this current crisis any different? These other events were simply man facing the wrath of nature's fury or a manifestation of human fallacy. But this current COVID crisis seems to be nature's way to slow down the pace of destruction we have been unleashing on this planet and correct certain elements in our lifestyle. In the present times, our daily rituals have changed considerably, and none of it seems harmful at first sight. But these seemingly innocuous changes in our day to day life have been leaching into the fabric of the Earth, and forcing it into a path of irreversible damage. Let us examine how:

Basic cleanliness:

The concept of cleanliness has over the years, moved from the point of being a holistic attribute that fused physical and mental purity, to a stage where it has been more about looking good and smelling nice. The perception of others has started dictating your cleanliness rather than your own essence of it. Here, I am not merely referring to the act of washing hands or using a sanitizer. It is deeper in terms of cleansing yourself and all material artifacts that are brought from an outside environment to our homes. A shiny iPhone packaged in a glossy box might indicate a certain amount of pristineness visually; that fact might go for a toss if you put it under a microscope. In the current situation, hasn't our attitude changed? We trust nothing and are thorough in ensuring cleanliness, both of things that are brought in and ourselves...

Social distancing:

Social interaction in the past was driven by respect, warmth and a genuine match in wavelength between people. Over the years, it has probably meandered towards excessive public display of affection and often, mandating physical contact like shaking hands or embracing each other. The wise sages from the past, have always advocated minimal physical contact, as it also needlessly adds to your flesh memory. Flesh memory has always been considered as a form of debt that follows in your karmic journey. This is precisely why physical contact in the past was always limited to only the dear and near ones. In the current scenario of COVID, the whole world wants to now embrace 'namaste' or 'namaskar' as the form of greeting with non-family members.

Respect time:

We are now at a point in time, where everything and everyone is in a flux of time. Many of us were too busy to spend time with our family. We were busy travelling around the world, but could not find time for some quality experience at home. With COVID, irrespective of whether you are a CEO of a company, or a homemaker tending to your family - everyone is at home. This has also had the unintended but a desperately needed consequence of slowing down all our activities. The nature and world around us, now has a pause, which is helping it recover and slow down the train of destruction that was heading towards a point of no return!

So, this crisis is a necessary pause...

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