

## THE SPEAKING TREE

# We Will Breathe Freely And Better Again

*Vijay Hashia*

Life and death are universal cyclic movements that pass away in endless succession. Nothing is substantial, solid and tangible in the world. Health and disease, hope and despair, happiness and sorrow are two ends of the same continuum.

The second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic sinisterly, gloomily felled lives, livelihoods, and normalcy. Terrified by this outbreak, more and more of us have become spiritually oriented. The young and old now turn to prayers in their sacred puja rooms, daily beseeching for the safety of all. Along with these prayers, most stubborn mindsets have transformed to kindness by adopting yogic practice using lungs as pneumatic tool to remove intoxicants, stimulants, and distractions and also to enhance their lung breathing capacities. With the breath inhalation, retention and exhalation, the release of toxins happens effortlessly. Playing conch also strengthens lung capacity for oxygen retention and lowers stress.

Science also states that controlling breath can change the response of the body's autonomic nervous system that controls unconscious processes such as heart rate and digestion, as well as the body's stress response. Consciously changing the way we breathe appears to send a signal to the brain to adjust the parasympathetic nervous system, which can slow the heart rate and promote feelings of calm, as well as the sympathetic system which controls the release of stress hormones.

Many maladies, such as anxiety and depression, are aggravated or triggered by stress hormones. When we take slow and steady breaths, the brain gets the message that all is well and activates the parasympathetic response. When we take shallow rapid breaths or hold our breath, the sympathetic response is activated. If we breathe correctly, the mind will calm down.

The dormant prana as life force, in the process, reactivates electric and magnetic impulses of the brain and energises the whole body. The cells simultaneously regenerate as the breathing supplies oxygen to the entire system. Deep breathing also gradually increases efficiency and helps the immune system regenerate to fight infections and other dormant ailments. This on the whole calms the mind and acts as a shock absorber.

Meditation helps in decreasing metabolic rate. Lower the metabolic rate, longer the life span, higher the metabolic rate, shorter the life span. In meditation, consciousness fluctuates to a higher plane in the state of pranayam, as each breath inhaled has a corresponding state of physiological effect on the body system.

Human mind is no more oblivious to nature's vibrations, as within each one of us lies the tremendous soul force. The collective effort to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic, desperation, and death have taught us that difficulties and adversaries at one moment or other require compassion by someone, sometime in life.

Panic can cause overestimating of the pandemic threat and underestimating our coping abilities, whereas bravery, confidence, and tranquillity act as an elixir to overcome it. Everything has a beginning and an end. The stillness of activity has to gradually limp back to normal routine and life has to move on. The

future is expected to be once again bright with the same bustling activity as it would be. Never lose hope, we will breathe freely and better again.

