



Breath of life by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

The world would be free from trouble if there is no love! All the problem in the world is caused by love! So also all the joy, pleasure and the very purpose in life. Do you see what I'm saying? Suppose there is no love, you can't be jealous; jealousy is because of love. Greed is because you love objects too much. Anger is because you love perfection, that is why you are angry at imperfections. You love yourself too much and that's why pride and arrogance comes to you. Isn't it?

So, every distortion of love causes problems not only for ourselves, but for everybody. Even though this is the case, without love what is there in life? Just imagine there's nobody who loves you on this planet, and you don't love anybody. Does life have any meaning, any purpose? It appears absolutely depressing, boring, uninteresting, isn't it so? But, how do we get to that point of love where that love is free from the distortions and we are able to be at ease with ourself?

This is where a little knowledge about ourself, about our mind, our consciousness, and the root of distortion will help. It is when you are tired and exhausted that you are not in touch with your virtues. Every individual is bestowed with all the virtues in the world. They simply get covered by lack of understanding. All that is needed is to just to uncover the virtues that are already there.

Never should we think, "Oh, deep inside me there is sorrow". I say it's only skin deep, go a little deeper there is no sorrow. You cannot have hurt deep inside you, that only means you have not gone deep enough. That's why we are unable to forgive somebody because we think that person has caused us hurt. Right? But if you look at the person from a different perspective, that person himself is also a victim of ignorance, small mindedness, lack of awareness. So, inside every culprit there is a victim crying for help. If we can recognise that we don't need to forgive them, we will feel compassion for them.

When we are happy, something in us is expanding, have you noticed it? And when we are upset, something in us is being crushed, a sense of contraction is felt. Just knowing this brings freedom to us. Then our mind or our consciousness no more becomes a puppet of anybody's words, opinions or their sayings. It becomes free. We are unconditionally happy.

Each of us should reach out to everyone and say, "Hey, come on, just be friendly!". Do you know that a child smiles 400 times a day, an adolescent only 17 times, and an adult doesn't smile at all. And that too, if he becomes a little successful, he becomes much more stiff. I can't understand this! To me, someone who has no fear, who feels at home with everybody and has a smile which no one can take away is a successful person.

From today, make one resolution — that you are going to be a guiding lamp for the world, for the people around you. Wherever you go, you are going to uplift the atmosphere. If someone comes to you with complaints they should go back with a lighter heart, feeling more enthusiastic. Can you all do this?

So, learning something about our breath is very important. Our breath has a great lesson to teach us, which we have forgotten, for every rhythm in the mind, there is a corresponding rhythm in the breath, for every rhythm in the breath there is a corresponding emotion. So, when you cannot handle your mind directly, through breath you can handle the mind.

Neither at school nor at home does anybody teach you what to do when you are upset or angry or depressed. Isn't that so? The first thing we did when we came to this planet is that we took a deep breath in and then we started to cry. The last thing we'll be doing, we'll breathe out and make others cry! In between, the whole life, we are breathing in and out, but, we have learnt very little about our breath! No breath, no life... know breath, know life! The rhythm in breath can help us get in touch with the depth of ourself, our soul, our consciousness, our being and we feel connected with everybody, with everything in the world.

I am sure that deep within you, everyone of you feel that you have not grown, meaning you have not changed, not grown old. This indicates the soul in you, the depth in you, the spirit in you doesn't change, doesn't grow old, it's not aging. The body is aging but something in you is not aging. Getting in touch with that something that doesn't age, brings beauty in life. That is meditation.

We need to learn a little bit about our breath. We need to know a little bit about all the layers of our existence, viz body, breath, mind, intellect, memory, ego and the self. This is what I call Art of Living, learning a little bit about ourself, the seven layers of our life. And that makes you be in the present moment and it helps us to maintain the innocence that we are all born with, and feel at home with everybody, anywhere.

What I would suggest is take one week off every year for yourself, like you take your car for servicing. During that time, align yourself with nature, wake up with the sunrise, do some exercise, eat proper food, just as much food as necessary, some exercises, yoga, and some breathing exercises, a few minutes of singing, and keeping silence, enjoying the creation. Aligning ourself with nature, our whole system gets recharged, makes the whole year, we feel so vibrant, enthusiastic.