

Coping with Stress

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So the world population is increased from 1 billion way back in 1800 and today is close to 7.7 billion. So it took nearly seven centuries for the population to double from 0.25 billion in 800AD to 0.5 billion in 1500AD, but now the fastest doubling of the world population happened between 1950 and 1987 when the world population grew from 2.5 billion to 5 billion in just 37 years and the take population growth of 2.1 % in 1962. So by 2056, we will hit approximately 10 billion world population.

So this discussion is on stress and we are not talking about how to improve technology, but having improved technological still, we are experiencing great dichotomy in increased levels of stress. So the combination of these peaceful people and the prosperous strictly green planet would be the ideal recipe for harmony and balance as many of you are aware the United Nations general assembly is all to observe June 21st every year as International Day of yoga and this was done in December 2014.

So there are four reasons why the International Day of yoga was introduced at the United Nations level:-

1. United Nations saw that it is important to provide in individuals and populations choices and lifestyle patterns which foster good health.
2. United Nations was also aware of the fact that unless there is proper global health, there will not be a long-term development paradigm and therefore countries which are aware of soft powers, which can help an individual well. Then one will be able to adapt better into your lifestyle.
3. Basically United Nations recognised that yoga provides a holistic approach to health and wellbeing.

4. They wanted a platter, from which the benefits of such self-control and how the benefit, how the process, control in cruise health of the population, that was supposed to be disseminated this.

Therefore when we are speaking about modern-day scenario we find that with respect to people's anxiety level, 300 million people across the world but experiencing symptoms of stress and anxiety disorder. Stress is defined as the gap between expectation and reality, and when there is a gap between expectation and reality, then the reality is much lower than what your expectation is and you experiences anxiety. **Patanjali Rishi** in his famous yoga sutras defined yoga as **yoga chitta vritti nirodha** which means the waves of the reports of disturbance which are caused upon the waters of the mind and to reunite the mind to its state of peace and calm.

Bhagwat Geeta defines yoga as:

योगस्थः करु कर्मणि सङ्ग त्यक्त्वम धनञ्जय ।

णसङ्ख्यणसङ्ख्योः सर्ो भत्वम सरत्त्व योग उच्यत ॥

Be steadfast in the performance of your duty, O Arjun, abandoning attachment to success and failure. Such equanimity is called Yog.

Now I would like to tell you a instance about Arjuna from Mahabharat, the Epic.

So just before the battle of Kurukshetra when 614 million soldiers ran with the deadliest weapons to fight to finish war. Then Arjuna, in that state of despair and stress, turned to Krishna.

Now some may say that, Arjuna was an accomplished and experienced warrior, and fighting was the easiest thing for him to do. So why did he turned up to Krishna during the battle?

So when Arjuna saw in front of Duryodhana and Dushashna, he was fully charged up for fight. But then Krishna brought Arjuna chariot in front of Bhishma and Drona, and Arjuna saw his grandfather, Bhishma. Arjuna started thinking, 'Am I a warrior or a grandson?' When it was Drona, he started thinking that whether he's a student or a warrior? And so Krishna realised that Arjuna 'swadharma or swabhav' is a warrior, but he needs to now learn about something which is beyond his 'swadharma and swabhav'. He has to be taught about his 'Swaroop', which does not change in spite of the changing identities.

Therefore the root cause of stress is the gap between expectation and reality. This root cause of expectation, is rooted in our multiple changing identities and connected to those identities in which we imagine a whole lot of activities, to do or not to do on

basis of whether its socially acceptable or not. And therefore when a student fails in an exam, it's a gap between is expectation and reality. It's a huge change from a self-identity of being a successful student. It's also a huge change for the parents whose identity as competent parents, and who can take care of the children's education, gets jolted because of seeing those grades. So now the child and his parents are in anxiety, all this because of this identities which keep changing.

And therefore Krishna spoke the **Bhagavad-Gita** to Arjuna because of that state of Arjuna. He said

विसृज्य सशरं चमप शोकसविग्रमानसः ॥

Meaning that, I will place my Gandiwa (weapon) on the ground, so I will not fight. Arjuna, the great and powerful warrior, experienced paralysis in decision making. Because he was not able to decide for sure which identity to follow, his identity as a warrior or as a student or as a grandson. And therefore when external multiple identities experience conflicting positions, they paralyze our decision making.

That is the time when we realise that all problems in life do not have simple answers, but some monsters are only created when we rise about that particular situation. There was a paralysis in decision-making and such paralysis in decision making is ultimately what is known as depression when one loses purpose to fight. So Krishna injected hope in Arjuna by speaking from Bhagwat-Geeta:-

कर्ण्यवनाधकमरस्त र्म फलष कदमचन ।

र्म कर्फलहतभर्म ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्णि ॥

Arjuna always do your work, but do not expect the fruits, do not think you are the self in charge, do not think to run away from the field.

So therefore when we are speaking about overcoming stress, the Bhagwat Geeta speaks about various types of yoga and yoga emphasizes on increasing ones awareness. Distraction is so attractive because the brain processes distraction as something new, and acting new releases dopamine levels in the brain, the neurochemical, which is associated with pleasure.

Microsoft conducted a study in 2017 and came to the conclusion that the distraction levels have gone down from 12 seconds in 2012, to 8 seconds in 2017. Even a goldfish as an attention span of 9 seconds. So our situation has become worse than that even of a goldfish with respect to attention span, as people are spending several hours a day on their smartphone devices, on the internet, on laptops and of course today with the global pandemic, it has become the need of the hour. A study shows that the number of internet users are increased to about 4.5 Billion in 2020, from only about 400 Million in 2000. So from 400 million to 4.5 billion, it is a huge increase.

Almost about 65% population has internet connection in big cities in India, and almost 40% of World population has internet access. The addiction rate of internet is almost 6%, and about 12% of the total internet pages are pornographic, and you know this translates to approximately 2.3 billion pornographic webpages in 2018. And so, you know what is shocking in India, it's that the percentage of pornographic consumers below the age of 24, in India is 48%, and is much higher than the global average in this age group which is 31%. Around 64% of all accidents in the highways in America are caused due to distraction.

Just like internet addiction, there are various other so many addictions as well. Like in 2010, around 42% adults worldwide were addicted to alcohol, but thankfully that number was only around 15% here in India. Alcohol is responsible for around 2.8 billion premature deaths globally. Around 5.8 lakh deaths happen every year in India due to alcohol addiction.

Just like this, around 100 million people died in 20th Century due to smoking. And it's being estimated that around 1 billion people are going to die in 21st Century due to smoking, a tenfold increase in number.

So therefore a population which does not have self-control and self-restraint will be stressed and therefore in the Bhagwat-Geeta, Krishna says

ये णह सस्पर्जस भोगम दःखयोनय एव ते ।
आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तय न तष रर्त बधः ॥

meaning that the impact of the senses with the same objects is strong, it creates various kinds of pleasures and pains, but ultimately even if you experience pleasure, that pleasure caused by sense gratification is a cause of future pain for people. But it will also have an impact on the environment.

Many people say 'Papi pet ka sawal hai', as there is a big issue of food shortage in the world, but very less people know that about 33% of the food for human consumption created worldwide is wasted, which is translating in 2.3 billion tons of food waste. And so almost 2 million metric tons of municipal solid waste is produced annually across the world and this will increase to 3.4 billion metric ton by 2050.

Just like this there are various other stress in people's daily life. But one must also know how to deal with daily stress and anxiety. There are various ways to cope up with stress and anxiety. There is nothing more calming than spending quality time with another human being who makes you feel safe and understood. In fact, face-to-face interaction triggers a cascade of hormones that counteracts the body's defensive "fight-or-flight" response. The people who care about you will be flattered by your trust. It will only strengthen your bond.

Poor time management can cause a lot of stress. When you're stretched too thin and running behind, it's hard to stay calm and focused. The good news:

there are things you can do to achieve a healthier work-life balance. That's where quick stress relief comes in.

Just like this, Spirituality and Yoga also empower us to reclaim our destiny, and bring out the best of us to attain our best and, therefore we have to remain authentic to remain honest and sincere in our flesh and abandon any kind of cheating or any other dirty or other vulgar things from our mind and live peacefully.

As we only have this 'One Life' to live, so why don't we live this one life with peace and joy.