

## Integrative Approach Amid COVID-19 Crisis- A Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

The crisis of the Covid-19 that we are currently experiencing has been a huge turning point in the life of many of us, but will certainly bring a radical turn in our lives. In broad sense; dimensions of health/disease can be described as; biological, socioeconomic, environmental, cultural, political. While majority of the above dimensions are being studied around the world, some of the less mentioned determinants are; Planets and disease (Astrology), role of Integrative Medicine that mainly focuses on behavior modification and prevention of diseases, role of Alkaline diet to boost immune system, role of life style modification viz; Physical fitness, importance of Sleep, Positive Mind as a major part of spiritual awakening. The current article through light on some of these less talked dimensions. It shall need an integration of various approaches; pharmacological and non- pharmacological and a lot of community participation (more of a community level fight) at community level mostly related to health promotion and specific protection (life style modification and adaptation) so that patients coming to the hospital are reduced so that hospitals are not strained.

**Keywords:** Covid-19; Biology; Astrology; Epidemiology

### INTRODUCTION

#### Live The Present Moment

The crisis of the Covid-19 currently experienced by us, has been a huge turning point in the lives of many of us, but will certainly bring a radical turn in our lives. I am talking of radical changes in our lives, because a lot of things are going to change for us when we get out of this crisis. The universe imposes us to take time to reflect on ourselves, on our existence on earth so that, each living being and species evolves and learns from past mistakes, so that we can survive well through adaptation and harmony. We cannot change the big events going on right now but we can change the way we handle the impact of those events upon us.

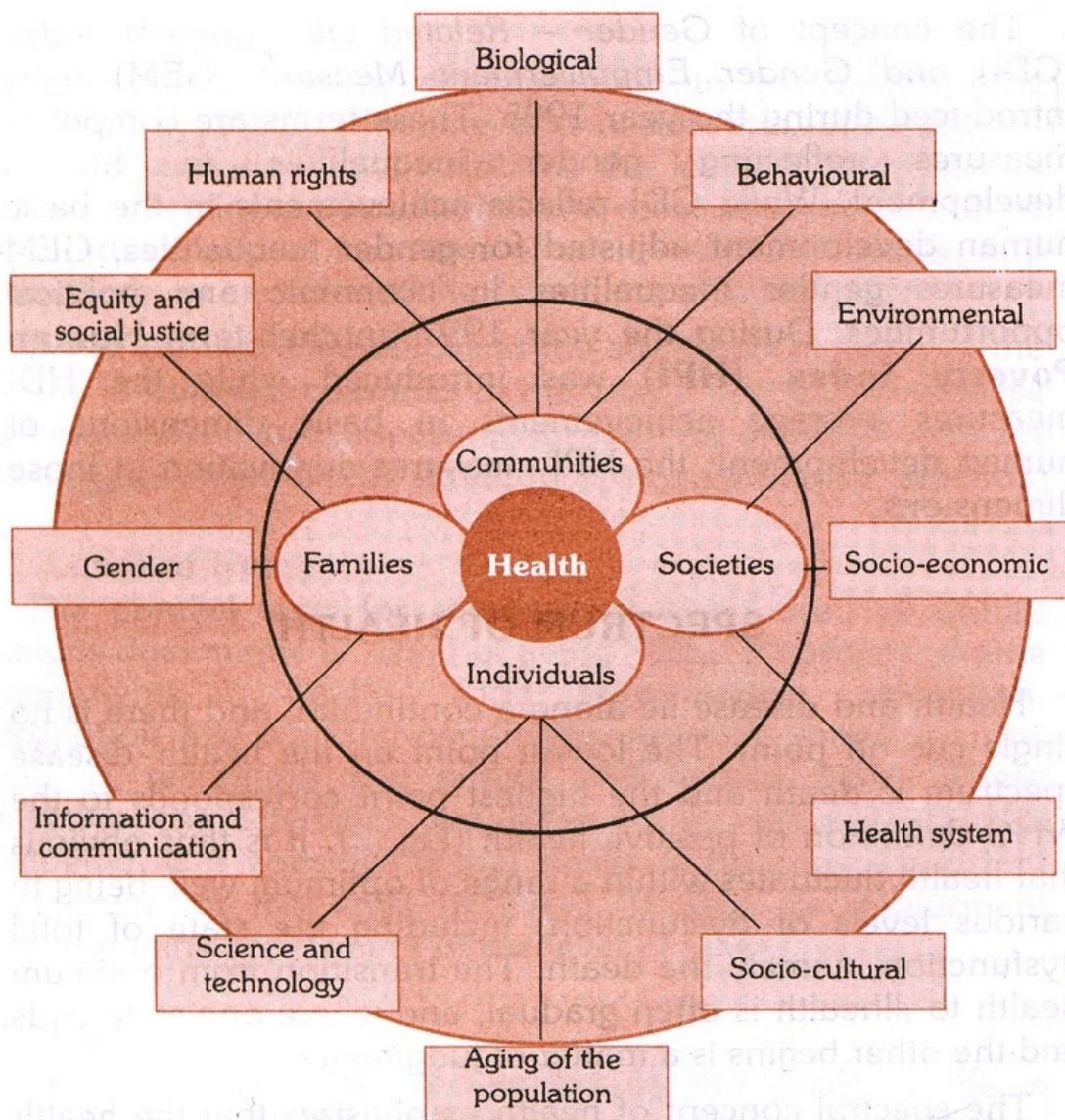
I would like to briefly review the definition of health as given by WHO; Health is generally understood as absence of disease. According to it "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." A person who is not diseased may or may not be healthy. An individual, who is not infirm, weak or feeble, may or not be healthy. In broad sense, determinants of health/disease are defined as the range of; biological, socioeconomic, environmental, behavioral, cultural, political and others and they influence the health status of individuals or populations. Important Determinants of Health<sup>1</sup> are depicted in the (Figure 1).

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Source : (30 A)

Figure 1: Determinants of Health

**DISEASE**

The Oxford English Dictionary defines disease as “a condition of the body or some part or organ of the body in which its functions are disrupted or deranged”. Covid-19 is an infectious disease caused by a new strain of Corona virus. The virus is renamed by WHO as SARS-CoV-2 and the disease caused by it as COVID-19.

In order to understand the epidemiology of Infectious disease for example COVID -19, we need to understand that, the

occurrence of this disease in a given host is dependent on the presence of disease in other members of the population and the length of time that the infected hosts are able to transmit the disease to others. The understanding of these characteristics of a disease allows us to develop rational measures to prevent and control the disease. One of the uses of epidemiology is to study the course of a disease from onset (inception) to resolution. As Covid-19 infection is new to the world and has spread as pandemic, we are trying to understand this course till its

resolution. The natural history of disease can be understood as shown in (Table 1).

**Table 1:** The Natural History of a Disease.

Stimulus To The Host		Host Reaction		Recovery
Interrelation of Agent, Host and Environmental factors	Latent (Period symptomatic)	(Pre-Symptoms, Signs (Clinical))	With or without Defects, Disability	
Prepathogenesis		Period of Pathogenesis		
Health Promotion, Specific Protection	Early Diagnosis and Prompt Treatment		Disability Limitation, Rehabilitation	
Primary Prevention	Secondary Prevention	Treatment	Tertiary Prevention	

While majority of the above dimensions are being studied around the world, some of the less mentioned determinants are; Planets and disease (Astrology), role of Integrative Medicine that mainly focuses on behavior modification and prevention of diseases, role of Alkaline Diet to boost immune system, role of Life Style modification viz; Physical fitness, importance of Sleep, Positive Mind as a major part of spiritual awakening. All these are part of non-pharmacological and integrative approaches especially amid a disease that is novel. The current article throws light on some of these less talked about dimensions.

**PLANETS AND DISEASE**

**The Nature’s cycle**

It is well known that the planets (earth, sun, moon) and their movements, their inter distances and relationships will cause seasons of the year. Planets’ influence on origin of seasonal diseases and their control is still a Pandora box. Nature goes through different cycles, some longer than others, some more important than others. For example, it takes a year for the Earth to make a complete circle around the Sun, and this cycle happens over and over again. It takes three months for the seasons to change, and we go through them over and over again. And we know that every time the season changed, we managed to adapt to it, just like the animals and nature do. But this time, it’s a little bit more complicated. Because this time the whole world is facing a challenge. There is going to be a before and an after. We are not just entering a new season; in 2020 we are entering a new era. Nature has its own power: it adapts to the movement of the Earth and the Sun, it adapts to our own actions, the animals adapt to their predators or a new environment. And usually it takes some time to adapt, decades or centuries. So always pay attention to nature around you: the weather, the animals, the landscape, the natural resources, the natural risks. It’s important to analyze all of this before we settle our plans. One wouldn’t build a golf course on a volcano!

One last thing to illustrate my point again is: picture Earth as a human body. It breathes, it evolves, some of its parts die sometimes, and others appear. And just like a human body it has to stay in good shape! So, when something goes against its own system, as it is the case with all the pollution and the

destruction, it has to fight back. Just like when you get sick because of bacteria: your body fights the bacteria. Well, nature fights as well the way it can. It’s the way things are: in order to survive, the smallest has to adapt to the biggest. So, one need to adapt to nature, as well as nature has to adapt to the planets’ movements. The season change because of the Sun, the tides happen because of the Moon, etc. Nature is impacted just like us by the planets. This is why astrology is an amazing tool.

**The History’s cycle**

In fact, if you look at the whole history, you’ll see that it’s not the first time that something like that happens. For example, in 1918, the world suffered the Spanish flu. In the centuries before there was the plague. And more recently, in 2009 we discovered the swine flu. This is no coincidence: nature is always evolving so only the strongest can thrive. The survival of the fittest holds true. And it’s not just about nature in history; it’s also about humans’ actions, like the war or economic crisis.

**The Astrology’s cycle**

As I told you, 2020 was going to be a new cycle. We just entered a new decade, and new year, and not any year: a mirror year! “20” is repeated twice! And in numerology this has a lot of meaning: balance and unbalance, strong emotions, etc. 2020 was definitely going to be a strong year! And even more when we know that it started with a strong Saturn. In fact, right at the beginning of the year, Saturn was in conjunction with Pluto. And as Pluto is the strongest planet of 2020, the effects were going to be very important. This was definitely going to mark the start of a new era since Saturn has always had a deep impact on the world. I told you about the Spanish and the swine flu. Well, in 1918 Saturn was in great conjunction with Neptune and in 2009 Saturn was in opposition with Uranus.

So, we see that astrology is all about cycles as well, and that if you always keep an eye on your sky you can predict great things. And adapt your life to the better by getting ready to face the crisis, avoiding the mistakes and seizing the opportunities! Planets always send you energy, good or more difficult, it comes and goes, you need to adapt your behavior according to it. First

of all, realize that adapting your life to a new situation does not mean you have to give up on the plans and dreams you had before! You can keep the idea in mind; you just have to find new ways to achieve it. Adapting is not giving up, it's improving, it's overcoming. Adapting is making a plan better than it was before. So, while you enter this new cycle, keep in mind that all you had in mind is going to be better! Understanding of astrology leads to 'spiritual awakening', and this cannot be taught because it starts from within. It cannot be achieved it needs to be acquired by letting go of the past and trying to embrace a new and better reality. It's about experiencing new feelings and asking new questions; why this is happening, what does the future have in store for us? Unknown fears are completely normal and it's actually a good sign. They all mean the same thing; the start of spiritual awakening.

### Prime Minister of India's efforts (Political aspects)

The WHO lauded "India's tough and timely actions" in form of six weeks lockdown against the corona spread by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to ensure that the virus does not spread to new areas and to help flatten the epidemic curve and to buy time to prepare for adequate medical facilities. Containing a large outbreak of COVID-19 in the hotspots needs aggressive activities in form of strict lockdown to bring down chances of community transmission. Other astrological measures were; seeking spiritual awakening as on 22nd March 2020, "Janata Curfew" was sought in form of clapping of hands to bring collective attitude of gratitude, by producing vibrations to combat the dissatisfaction of increasing crimes against doctors and other health care providers. In form of "Lighting Lamp/Divas" on 5th April 2020 by all at the same time; coinciding with astrological transits, can be called as a gesture of appeasing planets, related to dispersing the darkness together, overall a measure to illuminate the soul and being.

### INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TO DISEASE

#### Before moving in to understand Integrative approach we need to review some definitions.

Although alternative practitioners and a small group of conventional physicians do embrace the use of natural therapies and products the vast majority of "establishment" physicians are still dragging their heels and even denigrating and ridiculing alternative medicine. This fact, perhaps more than anything else, is what is driving the rapid and massive switch from conventional to alternative medicine.

The major source of funds for medical research is pharmaceutical companies who, not surprisingly, are very reluctant to support investigations into lifestyle modifications, vitamins, and other unpatentable products. Nevertheless, a growing number of medical researchers are focusing their attention on natural supplements and remedies and are publishing their work in mainstream journals.

### Holistic Medicine

It is defined by the Canadian Holistic Medical Association as; Holistic medicine is a system of health care which fosters a

cooperative relationship among all those involved, leading towards optimal attainment of the physical, mental emotional, social and spiritual aspects of health". It emphasizes the need to look at the whole person: including analysis of physical, nutritional, environmental, emotional, social, and spiritual and lifestyle values. It encompasses all stated modalities of diagnosis and treatment including drugs and surgery if no safe alternative exists. Holistic medicine focuses on education and responsibility for personal efforts to achieve balance and wellbeing[1-5].

### Complementary medicine

It is used together with conventional medicine. An example of a complementary therapy is using aromatherapy to help lessen a patient's discomfort following surgery.

### Alternative medicine

It is used in place of conventional medicine. An example of an alternative therapy is using a special diet to treat cancer instead of undergoing surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy that has been recommended by a conventional doctor. Alternative medicine, without exception, considers each person as a unique individual and uses a holistic approach in treatment.

### Integrative medicine

It combines mainstream medical therapies and CAM (Complementary and Alternative Medicine) therapies for which there are some high-quality scientific evidence of safety and effectiveness.

While there is little doubt that allopathic medicine works well in the case of trauma and emergency (you don't call your herbalist if you get hit by a car), it is much less effective when it comes to prevention, chronic disease, and in addressing the mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of an individual. These are precisely the areas where alternative medicine excels.

### Ayurvedic medicine

It has been practiced in India for the past five thousand years and has recently undergone a renaissance in the West. Ayurvedic medicine is a very comprehensive system that places equal emphasis on body, mind, and spirit and uses a highly personalized approach to return an individual to a state where he or she is again in harmony with their environment. Ayurvedic medicine uses diet, exercise, yoga, meditation, massage, herbs, and medication and, despite its long age, is as applicable today as it was 5000 years ago.

### Homeopathy

It was developed in the early 1800s by the German physician Samuel Hahnemann, a physician, chemist and linguist. It is a low-cost, non-toxic health care system now used by hundreds of millions of people around the world. Homeopathy is an excellent first-aid system and is also superb in the treatment of minor ailments such as earaches, the common cold, and flu.

### Naturopathic medicine

Naturopathic medicine also strongly believes in the body's inherent ability to heal itself. Propose that there is a healing power in the body that establishes, maintains, and restores health. Practitioners work with the patient with a goal of supporting this power, through treatments such as nutrition and lifestyle counseling, dietary supplements, medicinal plants, homeopathy, acupuncture, hydrotherapy, massage, mud, steam and exercise to achieve healing (Panchmahabhoot, 5 elements). Naturopathy emphasizes the need for seeking and treating the causes of a disease rather than simply suppressing its symptoms.

Vitamin therapy or orthomolecular medicine uses vitamins, minerals, and amino acids to return a diseased body to wellness in the belief that the average diet today is often woefully inadequate in providing needed nutrients and that the need for specific nutrients is highly individual. Iron, Zinc; 15-30 mg/day, Vitamin C; 500-3000 mg/day & Vitamin D are known to

shorten severity of common cold and pneumonia. Biofeedback, body work, massages therapy, reflexology, hydrotherapy, aromatherapy, and various other forms of energy medicine round out the vast spectrum of alternative medicine modalities. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) combines the use of medicinal herbs, acupuncture, and the use of therapeutic exercises such as Qi Gong [6-11].

### Under, National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), alternative Medicine finally found a place in form of AYUSH viz; Ayurveda, Yunani, Siddha, Homeopathy in the Indian Medical system of Medicine;

Ministry of AYUSH4 recommendations based on Ayurvedic literature and scientific publications, for preventive health measures and boosting immunity with special reference to respiratory health amid COVID -19 crises are as shown in (Figure 2).

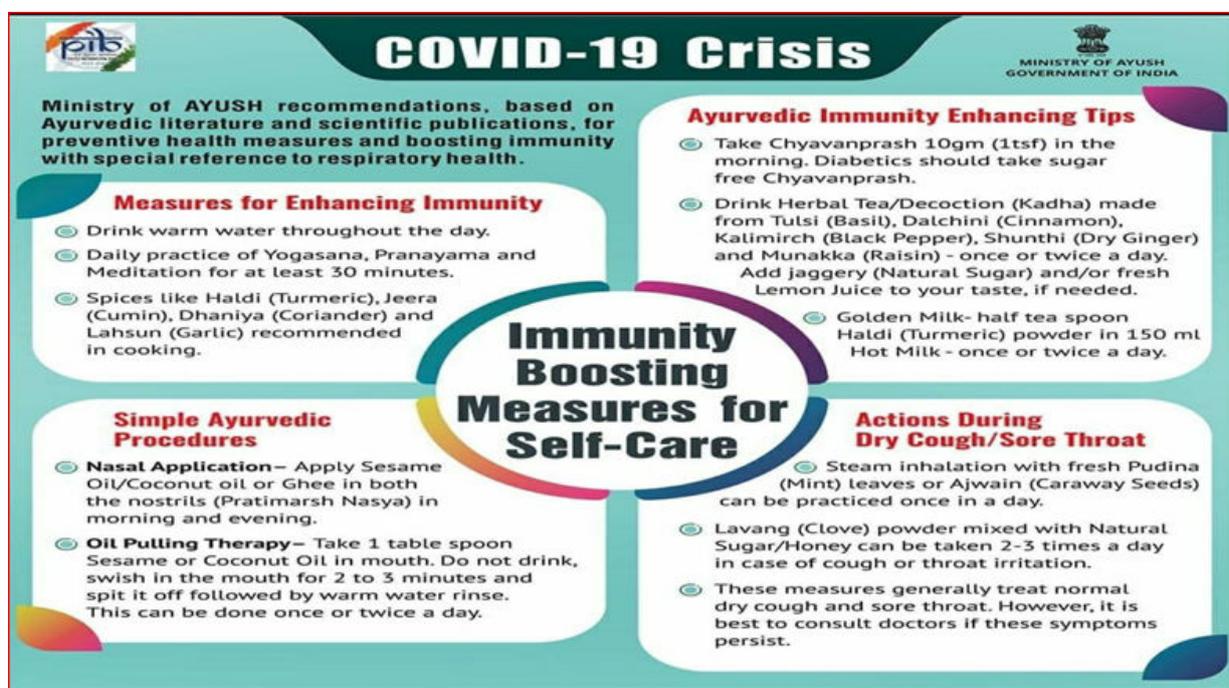


Figure 2: AYUSH -Immunity Boosting Measures for Self-Care

Who would believe; Doctors opposed the entire world on all that is natural in treatment. Today they all come to describe all that is natural, to raise immunity (in absence of a cure for Covid-19). Glory to be the one who changes the unchangeable.

### MIRACLES OF ALKALIZING DIET IN COMBATING DISEASE

The acid - alkaline balance plays a vital role in the balanced body chemistry. All foods, after digestion and absorption leave either an acid or alkaline ash in the body chemistry depending on their mineral composition. The normal body chemistry is approximately 20 per cent acid and 80 per cent alkaline. This is the acid-alkaline balance. In normal health, the reaction of the blood is alkaline and that is essential for our physical and mental well - being. By virtue of its alkalinity, the blood is able to transport the acid from the tissues to the discharge points.

Whenever the alkalinity of the blood is reduced, even slightly, its ability to transport the carbon dioxide gets reduced (CO<sub>2</sub> is converted to carbonic acid). This results in the accumulation of acid in the tissues (toxin). This condition is known as acidosis or hypo-alkalinity of the blood.

Thus, our daily diet should consist of four - fifths of alkaline forming foods such as juice fruits, tubers, legumes, ripe fruits, leafy and root vegetables, spices like turmeric, cumin, coriander, garlic (Table 1) and one fifth of acid forming foods containing concentrated proteins and starches. This would maintain the alkalinity of 80% and ph of blood around 7.4 that is slightly alkaline (neutral is 7). Eating sensibly in this manner will ensure the necessary alkalinity of the blood, which will keep the body in perfect health. The most agreeable and convenient means of

alkalizing the blood are citrus fruits juices (Table 2). The alkalizing value of citrus fruits is due to the large percentage of alkaline salts, mainly potash, which they contain. It is an error to believe that because a food tastes acid, it has an acidic reaction in the blood. One should consume 5-6 servings of vegetables and 2-3 servings of fruits per day (Table 3).

**Table 2:** Alkaline Food to boost Immunity.

<b>A - Foods Leaving an Acid Ash</b>	
Barley	Eggs, fish, Meats, Chicken
Bananas(unripe)	Bread, Cakes
Grain foods; Cereals: Wheat, Oatmeal, Rice, Corn	Lentils
Beans, Peas, Pulses	Nuts except almonds
Sugar (white and candy), Sweets, Chocolate	Fried & processed food
Sea Foods	Salt
Jam, pickle, vinegar, Sauce, Spices	Coffee, Tea
<b>B- Foods leaving an alkaline ash</b>	
Almonds, Walnuts, Dates	Milk(un boiled), buttermilk, butter, curd
Melons, Apples, Apricots, Bananas (ripe), Oranges, all fresh ripe and sour fruits, Peaches, Pears, Pineapple, Figs, Grapes	Onions, Beets, Carrots, Potatoes with skin, Radishes with leaves
Raisins, Sugar cane, Honey	Parsley
Cabbage, Cauliflower	Pumpkins
Celery, Cucumbers, Spinach, all Green Leafy Vegetables, Lettuce, Green vegetables if possible, with skin	Coconuts
Cottage Cheese	Soya beans, Green peas, Green grams
Tomatoes, Lemons, Turnips	
Fats and oils near neutral or acidic	

**Table 3:** Life style modification for Healthy Living.

<b>Eating Habits</b>	
Eat simple nourishing and freshly home cooked food.	Keep at least 3 hours between main meals. Eat breakfast before 8 AM, lunch between 11 am and 1 PM and dinner before 7:00 PM.
Eat when hungry. Avoid overeating.	
Eat according to appetite (to keep stomach three-fourth full).	

Eat slowly and chew properly.	Do not drink water immediately after or before meal. Sip water in small quantity while eating.
Eat in silence and with awareness of food.	Drink water when thirsty. Normal water is better than cold.
Eat fresh and seasonal fruits and vegetables.	
Avoid drinking tea, coffee, alcohol and cold drinks (Fruits juices only in moderation).	
Avoid sweets, fried food and fast food.	
Avoid excessive use of spices.	

**Physical fitness, Role of Relaxation**

Take rest after each meal.	Plan for pleasurable pastimes on a “regular” basis.
Consciously relax yourself when feel stressed or exhausted physically and/or mentally.	Regular health message / self-massage.
Fifteen minutes of Shavasana calms the mind and relaxes the body. Balances Autonomic Nervous system (ANS).	Gardening or walking on a regular basis.
Avoid use of stimulants such as alcohol, drugs, TV, etc.	Practice Yoga or something similar, at least half an hour each day.

**General Routine**

Sleep before 10 PM and wake-up before sunrise, avoid late nights. For those >64 years 6 hours sleep is enough but for < 64 years, 7-9 hours sleep is needed.	Maintain daily physical hygiene (bathing, tooth and tongue cleaning, etc.).
Evacuate bowels and bladder regularly.	Expose self to sunshine Avoid spitting habit.

**Positive Mind, a major part of spiritual awakening**

Develop self-awareness (at all levels – physical, mental, emotional and spiritual).	Focusing on breathing; breathing is like an anchor, helps to reconnect and reestablish harmony between brain, body and spirit by sending message to the mind saying “everything is ok and there is no need to panic”
Practice Yam and Niyam (principles of Yoga). Develop a habit of self-observance. Objective self-observance develops Sattvic (healthy) qualities.	Try to be content.
Daily meditation calms the mind and improves concentration and creativity.	
Affirmation and prayer help remove negative thoughts and develop positive thinking.	

Specific Measures as advocated during lockdown and post lockdown to prevent Corona Infection/ Preventive Measures enlisting Community participation are; General preventive measures; Hand hygiene, Cough etiquettes, Environmental sanitation, Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Social distancing, Other measures to contain large outbreaks viz; Screening, Quarantine, Surveillance, Preparedness.

## CONCLUSION

The introspection “forced” by nature, is a unique occasion to be in harmony with nature.

A society survives and thrives when a community is strong and when care is at its strongest.

Living through the crisis will be tricky for some people; we need to quickly find what suits us best and how we can make this work with people around us.

It shall need an integration of various approaches, pharmacological and non-pharmacological to alter the impact of diseases through boosting immunity.

A lot of community participation (more of a community level fight) at community level mostly related to health promotion and specific protection (life style modification and adaptation) is needed so that, patients coming to the hospital are reduced, so that hospitals are not strained.

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