

## THE KARMA BEHIND THE VIRUS AND ASTROLOGICAL FACTORS

People have asked me: "What is the karmic reason for this coronavirus pandemic?" I have some insight to share based upon the personal experiences of people I am in contact with and also based upon the teachings of my masters and the astrological factors indicating this situation. I have prepared this booklet as a guide for spiritual seekers during this pandemic we are all facing now. As a blue print for the inner work we as individuals may do to compliment and empower the outer work that the government officials, doctors, scientists, business owners and employees are doing to help humanity navigate and survive this trying situation. First, I want to say that a complex situation that effects the whole world like this is not on account of one single event or person or group of people, but due to many transgressions of every soul on Earth over time. These may be in thought, word or deed. There is no simple answer to this question, but the description that follows does indicate some part of the karmic situation that humanity is now facing and aims to reveal a personalized path to mitigating the effects of our own actions which have lead to the current state of affairs.

## THE ASTROLOGICAL INFLUENCES

The coronavirus was recognized in China in December of 2019. The first death from the virus was reported on January 9th. Two days earlier on Jan. 7th Jupiter became hemmed between two malefic Planets: Saturn and Ketu. At this point, all three Planets were in the Sign of Sagittarius. Jupiter, who is usually a great indicator of happiness, wealth, abundance, prosperity, generosity and spirituality is at a great disadvantage to stimulate these positive results due to the influence of Ketu and Saturn. Jupiter in his own sign of Sagittarius has unparalleled potential for creating spirituality and material prosperity and general well-being. When afflicted as in the case of being hemmed by Ketu (indicator of viruses and germs) and Saturn (indicator of disease), Jupiter in Sagittarius is capable of causing respiratory ailments, mindlessness, carelessness, poor management, over indulgence, petty spending, and stagnation in general.

During Feb. of 2020, Mars, who is also a malefic influence and who indicates speed and spreading joined Jupiter and Ketu in Sagittarius (though Saturn had moved onto Capricorn). At this time, we saw the first deaths outside of Asia as the virus began to spread at an alarming rate.

Currently, March, 25th 2020, Jupiter is still in Sagittarius hemmed between Ketu and Saturn. In a few days, on March 30th, Jupiter will be moving into his sign of debilitation, which is likely to bring some ease to the situation. Jupiter in Sagittarius is a very beneficial placement, and so the influence of Saturn and Ketu here is to deny all sorts of good things. Jupiter in Capricorn is a much less beneficial placement. Because Jupiter is debilitated in the Sign of Capricorn, this placement tends to bring out the more negative qualities of Jupiter. When a planet produces malefic results, it is usually helpful for its energies to be obstructed by the association with other Planets. But this situation is not over yet. When Jupiter is afflicted in the sign of Capricorn, restriction of movement, obstructed finances, lack of protection, career problems, depression, lethargy, low energy, lack of positivity, and liver problems may occur.

We must remember that Sagittarius is a sign of striving for and granting freedom. She will deny personal freedoms when our own quest for freedom impedes the freedom of others (or ourselves).

Sagittarius is symbolized by an archer and she has a nature to get right to the point. When Jupiter is in Sagittarius, we will be brought to the issues within ourselves.

When Jupiter transits from Sagittarius to Capricorn, then energies will shift and the focus will be more toward implementation of the lessons learned. Capricorn is a sign of seeking security and prospering through endurance. We must all do our very best to persevere in the practices that we are being called to do in this situation. Capricorn can have a tendency to deprive people of optimism, and many surely will become utterly discouraged by the task at hand. Some will step forward in their practice, whereas others will be so overwhelmed by the intensity of what they have begun to see within themselves that they will take ten steps back. We must not worry too much about how others react to this situation inwardly. If they are not able to do the inner work this situation is calling them to do, they do not have grace. They do not have enough positive influence on the sign of Capricorn in their natal chart. Let us not be concerned by the perceived failures of others, but focus on our own work. Ultimately, it is very difficult to see if another person is making an inward change or not. Their outer actions may seem questionable, but their inner state may be changing profoundly for the better. We can not know, so we should not trouble ourselves with the distraction of worrying about others. Some will better themselves a great deal through this situation, and others will surely backslide. But all will be blessed by knowledge. It is not for us to judge or question the perfection of the universe, but to help humanity by focusing on our own inner work.

Sagittarius has a focus on justice and will show people what inner work they must do to free themselves from suffering. Everyone will not be held to the same standard. Some will be tested a great deal while others relatively little, but we are all being challenged by this situation inwardly in some way. Let us not focus on differences, but have empathy and compassion because all are suffering. We cannot make anyone see their path out of this trouble but ourselves. Everyone is being challenged according to their own capacity, in subtle inner ways that we cannot detect. So let us have empathy and when we must be isolated by the circumstances, pray for the healing, upliftment, and realization of all humanity. This is not a problem which is affecting animals as much, because it was caused by the state of human consciousness. Let us shift that collective consciousness by shifting our own consciousness and giving up our selfish attachments. We will be given everything we need to survive this situation, if we are mindful and diligent in our inner work.

By the beginning of May, Mars will have moved away from this conjunction of Planets, into the sign of Aquarius which should bring some more relief to the situation and slow the spread of the virus. Possibly a treatment or vaccination to prevent the virus will be found by that time, though government imposed restriction of activities may continue. Mars can be an indicator of medicine and fighting successfully to protect from harmful forces. Even if Mars does allow a remedy to be found when he is in close conjunction with these Planets, the influence of these powerful malefics upon Jupiter debilitated in Capricorn will likely have a restrictive nature and create some obstacles to a widespread implementation of the remedy in the short term.

The closest conjunction of these planets has been happening now. From this time, they will be moving further and further apart and the intensity of the situation overall will be lessening. However, Jupiter will remain hemmed between Ketu and Saturn until Saturn moves between Ketu and Jupiter on Dec. 22nd 2020. Even if a cure is implemented for the virus before that time, and

government imposed shut downs lifted, it is likely that financial difficulties will continue and that the economy will be slow to rebuild until then, and that the current perilous situation is likely to persist in some form or another.

An addition factor contributing to the difficulties the world is now facing is Rahu. It is not really possible to think about the placement of Ketu without thinking about the the placement of Rahu, who is always directly opposite from Ketu in the zodiac. These two are always at odds with one another. As one places restrictions in a particular direction, the other impels people in that same direction. Rahu is an explosive force which can indicate various subtle, hidden and mystical sources of trouble. Rahu is currently in the Nakshatra of Adra, which relates to losses, tears, grief and suffering. This placement is increasing the suffering of people as they face the pandemic and its effects. When Rahu transits into the Nakshatra of Mrigashirsha on May 21st 2020, this influence should ease people's suffering a great deal.

Astrological remedies for this situation would include prayers for peace and healing. Donations to the needy, to scientists and medical professionals working to fight the pandemic, and to priests praying for a solution. Mantras for Durga, Lakshmi, Shiva, and Dhanvantari would be helpful. As would recitation of the Vishnu Sahasranam, Lalita Sahasranam, Rudra Prashna, or the Maha Mritunjaya Mantra. These remedies will be most effective when practiced in conjunction with the more specific recommendations below in the section on karmas.

In astrology, the Planets are not malefic forces seeking to wreak havoc and bring about destruction. They are benevolent forces which aim to center us and lead us to greater knowledge, happiness, and independence. Serious pandemics that effect the whole world like this, come about when people have neglected their duties to themselves and to others. People have become dependent upon external things to provide support which can only come from their own efforts. This situation is denying that external support to many and asking people to reconsider what is essential for their growth. Those who question this and adjust themselves accordingly will not suffer through this situation, but will benefit greatly. For those who protest and insist on seeking what they feel they want, this situation will become very difficult. People are in the habit of seeking what they desire in life, but they are not clear on what those things are. For example, people want to feel more love for themselves, so they seek a partner to make them feel loved. If that partner fails to make them feel loved, they abandon that partner and seek another. People are causing themselves and others around them much needless pain in this vain quest to get the world to do for them what they can only do for themselves.

I have noticed that many people now are being inspired by the intense karmic energy to seek material pacification for their inner woes in sudden, dramatic, intense, and irrational ways. I have noticed people doing this since December, even before most of the world was aware of the pandemic. This is a knee-jerk reaction to the energetic situation, which will lead to much needless suffering. It is however necessary for certain people to react in this way in order to give up the useless hope that the things of the world will be able to do what only they can do for themselves. This reactionary approach will lead to quick and intense disappointments which will enable people to focus eventually on the inner work the situation is calling them to do. Many people are abandoning long-term relationships now or trying to make other dramatic changes in their lives. If your spouse or

most dependable business partner or employee has abandoned you at this time, do not fret. Do not take it personally. Understand that they are struggling to adjust to what the circumstances are forcing them to do. Know that the experience of abandonment is a part of your own karma also and that it is an additional factor being imposed upon you now to help stimulate your own growth. Have faith you will get what you need now, and that your partner will return in time if that is for the highest good, renewed and with a greater capacity for partnership. Or that once your own work is done, your own increased capacity for partnership will attract a more suitable partner. This situation will have some tendency in general to affect business partnerships more so than other relationships, because Capricorn is the 10th Sign of the zodiac and relates to occupation. Many people are experiencing now the inability of their employer to pay them due to government shut downs of places of business. I have seen many people's marriages and romantic relationships being affected also, especially for the Cancer ascendants for whom Capricorn sits in the 7th house (of marriage) and Virgo ascendants for whom Capricorn is in the 5th house (of relationships). Depending upon the nature of the karmas, some partners will be inclined to leave, and others will be abandoned.

People are understandably emotional about what is going on. This emotion inspires them to seek dramatic changes. People should understand that major life changes inspired by intense emotions are seldom beneficial. In such cases, the decisions are not based upon a person's desire to benefit themselves, but simply to escape the painful emotions. People neglect their duty to others around them in such cases and create a great deal of karma. If you are considering making changes in life, my advice would be to wait until this situation has settled. If you are thinking about changing your career, leaving your romantic partner, or moving to a new location, I would urge you to wait. Making such decisions now will likely not be from a place of clarity and will therefore not be beneficial. Such changes also increase risk of contracting the virus by needlessly exposing you to new people, places, and situations. In certain cases, a change of profession may be dictated by the outer circumstances. People must live and people need some income to live. However if it is not absolutely necessary to make a change in your current situation, I would encourage you to stay where you are for now, for your own good.

The current astrological situation is likely to be the most challenging for people who have the Signs of Sagittarius or Capricorn in the ascendant or in Kendra or Kona houses (the 1st, 4th, 5th, 7th, 9th, and 10th) in their natal charts. It may be advisable to chant mantras regularly like "om namah shivaya" or "om namo narayanaya" to ease the karmas during this transit, especially for those with these Signs in the ascendant. The current transit is likely to present the most benefit for those who have these Signs in the 12th house of liberation or the Dushtana houses (3rd, 6th, 10th, or 11th). Of course, every chart is different, and it is not possible to make specific recommendations that will apply perfectly accurately to everyone without considering many other factors in the birth chart.

Sagittarius is a Sign which seeks freedom, and so people will want to find freedom in the world now. But we have bound ourselves to certain mental patterns and habits which hinder us greatly. When the outer circumstances limit our freedom, it is prudent to seek inner freedom within the situation. We must remember that Jupiter, Ketu, and Saturn are all very spiritual planets. Their conjunction shall demand that we abandon the selfish desires of our ego and seek something beyond. All will be required to sacrifice something. Some more than others, based upon the nature of their natal charts and their own spiritual capacity. From this sacrifice, a great deal of freedom will be gained, but we

have to give up what gives us false support and seek support from within ourselves which is eternal. We must also come to understand that any act which increases our freedom at the expense of people around us, does not really increase our freedom but tethers us to the karmas of hurt and neglect which have been the means to our selfish ends.

## AYURVEDIC INSIGHT

First, it may be useful to point out the knowledge of Ayurveda which may shed some light upon the situation. Ayurveda has knowledge that any physical health condition is not just physical. A person's mental state is always intimately connected to their state of physical health or disease. This is an understanding that Western medicine is beginning to confirm. If a person has a long standing emotional problem, the physical health will suffer. Conversely, if a person experiences a physical affliction, the mental health will be adversely affected as well. Ayurveda teaches us that when we do not allow ourselves to experience our feelings and process our thoughts around experiences in life, that these emotions get repressed and lodged into the organs in the form of toxins which hinder the capacity of the organs and create susceptibility to disease. Ayurveda teaches that specific emotions have a tendency to be stored in various organs when they are not processed. For example, the liver stores repressed anger, and afflictions to the liver are said to cause anger. Fear is stored in the kidneys. The coronavirus affects the lungs. Ayurveda teaches us that the lungs tend to store repressed feelings of grief. From the perspective of Ayurveda, in this context, it could be understood that the current situation is asking people to get in touch with their repressed feelings of sadness. Once a person observes these feelings with detachment - without hesitation; without judgement; without blame; without analysis - then they can be released. But humanity has been turning away from their grief and turning instead toward many worldly distractions. The current situation is removing people's ability to rely upon these distractions to avoid the responsibility of facing their feelings. From the perspective, it could be understood that people who face their feelings of grief, despair, and sadness will give strength to the lungs by releasing the burden of toxic emotions hindering their function. These people will increase their chances of remaining unaffected by the virus. Even those who contract the virus, will benefit from looking at the feelings repressed in the lungs. Those who refuse, may suffer greatly from this pandemic. This simple act of mental purification will go a long way in fighting the disease which is afflicting humanity now. This is only one point of wisdom Ayurveda has to share about the current situation, but it is a major and important one which may serve to shed light on the reasons for what we are experiencing.

## KARMIC REASONS

The reasons for this situation are multiple. They revolve around peoples' self-indulgent, materialistic, opulent, mindless, insensitive, neglectful, hurtful and dangerous actions. We as a society have not been mindful of the effects of our actions, our words, and our thoughts upon others around us. We have carelessly caused harm to many around us in the pursuit of our own selfish interests. People have neglected to face their own mortality, and this situation is now causing people to have to do so. Also people have become overcome by fear and have neglected their faith. When the pandemic spread to the USA, many people rushed to supermarkets to hoard toilet paper, masks, canned goods and other items. This has led to a deficiency in stores to supply needed goods to customers. This is an excellent example of peoples' selfish instincts causing harm to others. But we need not be

alarmed by people's initial, instinctive response to this situation which is ongoing and will in time lead those who are greedy to share with others around them for the sake of humanity.

Government authorities are telling us; mindfulness, sanitation and isolation from the pathogen is a key to preventing the spread of this pandemic. We should not question any restrictions government authorities place upon citizens, and we should follow any advice given with seriousness and extreme mindfulness. These restrictions and recommendations are being given for our protection in a very dangerous situation. They have been created with the input of the most knowledgeable doctors, scientists, and disease experts for our benefit. There is no reason for anyone to be withholding information or taking advantage of the situation by putting others at risk. This is a situation in which everyone could die if precautions are not taken by each individual until a remedy can be discovered. These recommendations are changing quickly throughout the world because the virus is spreading quickly. I do not intend to comment specifically about this beyond saying, keep yourself updated about the recommendations of your local government authorities and follow them to the best of your ability. Follow them like your life depends upon it, because it does.

#### KARMA OF DISEASE AND DEATH

Many people have died from the coronavirus. At the time of this writing, the total number of confirmed deaths is at 20,549. Without a cure, it is likely that this highly infectious condition will continue to spread and claim many more lives. It is possible that I may die from the virus. It is possible that you may die from the virus. In time, it is likely that not a soul living in this world will be able to claim that someone close to them has not died from this disease. This is a situation which forces people to look at their own mortality. In the West, we try to not think about death. We do not plan or put our affairs in order as well as we could. We act as if we will live for ever. When a person dies, the authorities conceal the body in a body bag so that no one will have to see it. Then as they conduct funeral ceremonies, they conceal the body in a coffin. People lie about their ages, they wear makeup and surgical procedures to conceal the signs of aging. And as people enter old age, they are confined to retirement communities out of public view. We tend not to think about death nor to ponder our own mortality. But Death will touch us all eventually. This situation is forcing people to consider this reality; to face their fears around it; and encouraging them to put their affairs in order to the best of their abilities. Death is certain for all embodied souls. We should not be afraid of it. We should not resist or ignore its impending nature. We should prepare for it consciously and willingly.

In the East, death is not feared in the same way or viewed as a curse. Death is viewed as a blessing which frees the soul from maya (delusion) and suffering. Yogis practice leaving the body consciously each night as the astral body leaves the physical body as they go to sleep. Death is the same, only that the cord of light connecting the astral body to the physical body is severed at the time of death and so the astral body does not return to the physical body. Many terminally ill people take pain killers and other mind-dulling drugs around the time of death so that they can approach the situation unconsciously. It is better to face our fears and to leave the body consciously. The state of mind at the moment the astral body leaves the physical determines where in the astral realm we project our soul. If there are troubled thoughts of fear and remorse, our astral body is projected to hellish realms in the lower astral plane. If our thoughts are lofty and spiritual, the astral body is projected toward the

higher astral realm where the soul becomes free from pain. Of course, in any case, the unresolved desires carried by the soul will lead that soul eventually to birth in a new body. We should work consciously to reduce karmic debts in life and consciously to project ourselves in the next steps on this spiritual journey at the time of death.

No that it is possible that anyone you know could die of this disease, or that you may die, it would be wise to put your affairs in order. Are there people you owe an apology to? IS there something you have always wanted to say to your children, your parents, your spouse? Do you have a will written? Do you have outstanding debts? Now is the time to pay these debts. There may not be a chance tomorrow, at least not in this lifetime. We should prepare for death as if it will come in a few weeks, but we should not fear this. At the time destined by our karmas, by the grace of God, the soul will be uplifted from the body. We may not know when this will be, and there is little that can be done to alter this. So we must not worry, but prepare. If you fear death, you can meditate on your own death. Allow the fears and worries to pass from the mind as you become the peaceful witness to your soul passing from the body. Visualize your soul rising up from the body and moving toward spiritual light. Tell yourself "I am alright. Though the body has died, my soul is alright." Your subconscious mind may try to protest as you do this, saying "I am not ready to die. I need to talk to this person or pay this debt." So resolve your affairs and then practice again being at peace with your body's death. It is not your death. You are eternal. And any business you have forgotten or neglected will carry forward to the next life, where you will have ample opportunity to resolve all that is unresolved. We should all pray for the continued health of humanity and for the upliftment of the many soul which have suddenly and unexpectedly left from this realm.

Many more have become afflicted by the virus and then recovered. It is even more likely if you are not old or sick that you may contract the virus and not die. Ayurveda tells us that simplifying the diet and eating easily digested foods, avoiding dairy and meat, will help the body to rebuild strength to combat a virus like this. But if our immunity has been compromised, it is a sign that we are neglecting ourselves in some way. We must take better care of our bodies, by getting some exercise and by eating wholesome and freshly cooked foods. We must take better care of our mental health to by taking time to tap into our emotions and allowing ourselves space and time to process them. To avoid contracting the condition we must wash our hands carefully and frequently. We must cultivate mindfulness to be aware whenever we come in contact with other people or things that they may have infected. We must get out of the habit of touching our face, our eyes, our noses when we are not certain that our hands are clean. But we must also take precautions to improve our physical and mental healthy to build immunity which decreases the likelihood of contracting disease when exposed to pathogens.

## KARMA OF FEAR AND LACK OF CONTROL

People think wrongly that they have control of various aspects of their lives. This control is an illusion. For example, I have spoken to many people who say they do not like their jobs and would like to start their own business. When I ask them, what is preventing them from doing so, they often respond that they fear that their own business could not provide a reliable source of income. I usually respond saying that no source of income is certain. I ask them, what if your place of work goes out of business? What if you are laid off? They shrug off my suggestions, because it is more

comfortable to believe that there is certainty in their situation. Many people have lost their jobs as business have closed now, and this is a great example of the unseen ways that we can lose our sources of income. Ultimately there is very little in this world that we have any real control over. We do not even have control of the mind or body as becomes clear in various medical conditions like Parkinson's, muscular dystrophy, mental illness or dementia. We are dependent upon resources in the world and upon other people for our survival, yet none of these things are certain. When we expect people to do certain things or situations to work out in a particular way, this leads to a great deal of stress.

People do realize that there is a great deal of uncertainty in life, but they do not really tend to face their fears about this uncertainty. The unknown frightens them, and it is easier to pretend that they have control of things. This is pure egoism, which denies what is within and presumes false power. People try very hard to control situations, and sometimes this seems to go according to plan, but this is because the factors that have control of the situation have aligned with that person's ego desires. If a person wants to become a doctor, for example, they can study hard and apply for medical school. They may or may not be admitted. They may not be intelligent enough. They may lack sufficient confidence in themselves. Sometimes perfectly qualified applicants are denied on account of factors that they cannot control like their race. This is a good example of the truth that we can work hard to accomplish what we desire in life, but the outcome of our efforts is always beyond our control. If people fail at one attempt, they often get discouraged and lower their expectations. They then try to surround themselves with less challenging situations to rebuild that sense of control that the ego longs for. The ego presumes it is in control, but really it is not. Without a sense of control, people become fearful. They assume that everything will fall into a state anarchy. But the world has been doing fine since before they were born. People must acknowledge that they do not have control and practice having faith.

People have their own plans for their lives. They adhere to them as closely as possible. They turn down any opportunity that does not seem to align with the future they are expecting and planning for. They close themselves off to opportunities for growth and expansion and they pass up many blessings that present themselves to them. People must learn to expand their outlook to embrace whatever comes in life. Life is uncertain, but the plan of the Lord is always much greater than we can possibly imagine. We must have faith that, though we do not have control, we will always be provided the resources, associations, knowledge, and skills needed to accomplish the tasks the Lord has set out for us. We may not be blessed with the needed resources to accomplish the aims of the ego, but these are not needed anyway. They are created by our sense of limitation. Failures force us to reevaluate our goals and determine what is really important; what is really necessary. Ultimately, the only thing we can control in life, is our own ego and its will to control. We do not have to live life like we are riding a roller coaster; going up and down emotionally as the situation changes uncontrollably. We fight this egoism within ourselves and choose to be content with whatever comes. This takes great courage, but it benefits us and others around us more than almost any other single act we could accomplish.

We can work on this by practicing having faith, and by practicing contentment. Do not be caught analyzing the past. Do not worry about the future. Tell yourself "I am alright, right now." Tell yourself "Everything is good. God is doing it all." Be satisfied with your situation, and do not worry at all.

Renounce worry. Renounce fear. If there is a feeling of fear, simply be aware of it. Feel know body shaking, and be at peace with it. Be at peace to witness the fear, because then it will pass. If you feel afraid of doing something like speaking in public, do it so you can show yourself you are greater than the fear. Tell your fear that it will not limit you any more. Now abandoning fear is no reason to act recklessly, and given the present situation it is prudent to avoid contact with others to whatever extent possible. Go onto social media and give a talk for your followers. Overcome your fear by training yourself to feel it and testing your self to function independently. Pray, pray, pray; and when you pray, offer your fears at God's feet. Leave them with him and practice faith that your prayers have been heard. Do not ask God to arrange a particular out come, for this is the ego trying to take control. Instead, say "Lord, I am feeling concerned about this situation. I feel I want this \_\_\_\_\_. Please help me to come to what is best." Then watch as things unfold. They will defy your expectations. They will test your faith. And they will lead you to greater things than you had ever thought possible. Use the mantra om shanti shanti shanti to bring peace into your consciousness and as a prayer for peace for all beings in the world. Now it is very important for us to strive for inner peace, because the world is in a state of panic. We cannot change other people, but we can change ourselves in this way, and then our peace will contribute a little to the peace of the world.

## KARMAS OF WORK

As many work places are closing, hospitals are remaining open to treat the sick and stores which sell needed food items, along with other businesses essential for humans to remain alive. People are being asked to not go to the doctor if it is not necessary to help reduce the spread of the virus. Stores are taking precautions and people are being asked to also take precautions to reduce the spread of the virus when shopping for needed goods. These workers are the vaishyas (the merchants) of modern society. Politicians and law enforcement agencies are also continuing to work. People in these fields are seeing now that their vocation has an essential and invaluable role in society. They are not able to practice the social distancing that most people in society are now practicing for their own safety. They are being called to put themselves at greater risk to do a service which is required for the survival of humanity. Some, surely, have not been up to the task and have retracted from the opportunity to serve in fear. But many, many more have seized the opportunity to act selflessly and to do what is needed. We should be very thankful for all who are continuing to put themselves at risk for the sake of our survival, and we should offer prayers for their health and well-being every day. It is more clear to many people than ever before that we rely upon others for our survival, we should be very thankful and do everything we can to help others whenever possible. It is a particular set of karmas that has drawn people to the vocations now that are continuing to operate for the sake of human survival. Some will die in service and others will not. We should all take this threat seriously and take whatever precautions we can to prevent the spread of this disease. Everyone washes their hands after the go to the market, but are we all washing our hands before we go for the sake of those who are risking their lives for us? Let us be very careful for their sake, and let us all find inspiration from their brave example to find ways we can help others in this difficult time.

Many people have been careless in the past with the spread of diseases like the flu. People cook in restaurants and work other jobs while sick, not thinking about others around them. They cough on their hands and do not wash them before shaking hands with people at work. People have been

spreading deadly diseases through their mindless actions. Now there is a fair chance that unless they become extremely mindful about germs, that they could perish.

Many people in jobs considered non-essential are being forced by local authorities to stop work. The stock market has crashed and people do not have the same resources at their disposal as they previously did. People are being forced by circumstances to reduce needless spending and to prioritize on a very tight budget what things are essential for their survival. In our state of Virginia, a recent shut down of all recreational businesses like bowling allies and night clubs and also businesses like massage parlors and barber shops has been mandated by the Governor. This puts even wealthy people in a position of having to forgo the usual indulgences of a massage or haircut or a night on the town. Many others are left with little or no money to pay their bills, their mortgage, their car payments etc. People are afraid of losing those assets necessary for their survival. The sections on fear and loss address these circumstances specifically. People are always complaining that their jobs don't allow them enough free time. They say, if only I had more time I would start that blog, plant my garden, practice sewing, writing, painting etc. We guess what? Now you are likely experiencing a lot more free time. So don't sit there worrying about the future; do whatever it is you want to do. We have been blaming our inaction on a lot of external factors and we have turned away from facing our inner blockages through various distractions in society. The distractions now are gone, so overcome the blockages and take advantage of this opportunity.

Though we must relying on others for certain things, people have become very lazy and have lost the self-sufficiency of previous generations. People go to the barber shop for a haircut and seek a massage for relaxation and to ease muscle pain. Previous generations cut their own hair and they meditated for relaxation and used homemade herbal concoctions for pain. People used to not rely upon tailors but they mended their own clothing. They grew their own foods. As society has progressed, we have regressed in these ways. Now is a great time to practice doing what we can for ourselves. Many people have a lot of free time. Is your faucet leaking? There are many great videos on youtube, teaching you how to do the repair yourself. The reliance on others for the things many things that we could do for ourselves is a result of our tendency to ignore ourselves emotionally and to rely upon others for emotional support.

Everyone is receiving a lot less emotional support now due to social distancing. We must learn to support ourselves more. Some people will work hard and come to a much greater independence in this time. They will break the codependent habits that have afflicted their relationships and acquaintances for decades. But many others will continue to avoid this inner work. They may shift a little in the current situation and turn to social media as a distraction, but after this situation has passed, they will return to their previous codependent. Let us take full advantage of the space this situation has created between us and our coworkers and clients and customers, to heal the way we relate to others. So much suffering comes about when people are mindless to the needs and feelings of others. They are very selfish and they demand that others make them feel good. If others make them feel bad, they do not have the communication skills to express this lovingly nor to ask for help. They simply run away with anger in their heart. They say, "I am angry at that person." But really they are angry at themselves for being so selfish and for not having the courage to communicate about what they need. Relationships of all sorts will always lead to some amount of conflict. People have been avoiding this. But we must lovingly and proactively address the conflicts that arise in our

relationships be it a boss, a coworker, an employee, a customer, a friend, a teacher, a student, a brother, and father or a lover. When people neglect this work, pain increases in themselves and in the world very quickly. We have become so set in our ways of avoiding this work to heal our relationships that the world has asked us to be apart and work on healing ourselves. It is as if we have begun to hurt each other so much that Mother nature has said "If you kids cannot keep from fighting, you will have to go to your rooms and be apart for a while." A loving mother would say "Take this time to reflect upon what you have done." And we should be doing just that. We should heal ourselves and heal our relationships with those we are quarantined with. We can reach out to our friends and neighbors; our acquaintances and more distant relatives via telephone or social media. Now is the time to heal what has separated us. It is the time to have those painful and uncomfortable conversations. Time to admit to things we have done wrong and apologize. There is no time better than the present for this. We do not know which of our acquaintances, friends or family will be alive by the end of this pandemic.

## KARMA AROUND FREEDOM

In Sanskrit, a word for freedom is Moksha. Moksha means freedom from all binding factors. It comes from the root muc, which means to set free or to liberate. The body and mind are bound by certain factors, certain forces of nature. Gravity pulls the body down to Earth. They are limited in their scope and ability. The soul is free from these limitations. True and lasting liberation can only come from the dissociation from the false identification with the body and mind and association with the limitless soul. People seek freedom in various ways that in reality bind them more.

In America people have a bold sense of personal liberty and entitlement which does not necessarily do them justice. People expect certain luxuries as basic human rights. Not everyone enjoys the same liberties though. Some people can easily find a partner to marry. Others can not. Perhaps they are physically unattractive or have personality traits that make them hard to get along with. Some people are blessed with many opportunities in life that others are not. Men tend to have bodies which are physically more muscular than women. Women tend to be more empathetic and intuitive and read the emotions of others around them more easily. We simply do not all have the same abilities or limitations. Yet we believe we deserve to accomplish what others around us accomplish and we want the same things they have. We gauge our success by comparing ourselves to other people, and we evaluate our freedom by comparing our achievements to those of the people around us. If we see that other people possess something, we desire that for ourselves. When a friend gets the latest I-phone, we also want a newer phone. If everyone has it, we reason, then we should too. If there is a new fashion which everyone is wearing, we should have it too. This is foolish. This is simply greed dictating our actions, which imposes many restrictions on us. People have become very wasteful, discarding things that function perfectly. They have become slaves to consumerism and materialism, yet they think this is freedom. Well guess what, circumstances may not allow for the release of a new I-phone this year. With the downward turn the economy has taken, it will surely not be possible for people to buy as much as last year. We will have to make do with many things we have, and this experience will free us at least partially and temporarily from the clutches of greed and consumerism.

I am seeing many individuals in the younger generations now are very hesitant to settle down into a romantic partnership, friendships, a home, or a career. This is a very unhealthy trend. We must realize that we as people are dependent upon society for our existence. We have a certain duty to do some productive work and to give back to society as we are able. We have a responsibility to work out unresolved karmas with friends, family, and acquaintances. More and more, I am seeing a tendency for people to try to run away from these duties. They may feel that fulfilling their duty is hard, so they think if they run away from it they will be free. But unresolved issues will follow a person wherever they go and unpaid debts will remain until eventually people take responsibility. And this is in part the fault of the parents who have begun to neglect their children in those important developmental years when the loving encouragement of a parent is so important. Nothing can replace the many examples of decent behavior which are set when a parent is present in their child's life in those formative years. But even if the parents have been absent, the younger generations must not blame their failures on the failure of their parents and they must take responsibility for themselves.

Our younger generations are not being raised with a sense of duty, and many young people I have encountered have decided to simply travel around aimlessly. Many such people have come to work at our farm for a brief time. And many of them have seemed to have no close friends, little connection to family, no romantic partner, no job or career path; only a desire to roam and seek freedom. Many have told me that they envision living sustainably and "off the grid." They envision that they will grow their own food and be completely independent from society. Some say they have been inspired by visiting such "off-the-grid" communities. But when I inquire what is meant by off-the-grid, it begins to seem like they mean something entirely different. I ask if they want to keep their phones and internet connections and they all have answered "yes." They come to our farm wanting to learn to grow their own food so they can not have to hold a productive job in society. I gladly show them how we do the work here on our farm. The work is grueling. We work in the hot Sun, the cold snow, in the rain, and the labor is much more physically demanding than most jobs that people work nowadays. The hours are very long and the yield for our efforts uncertain at best. I explain to them that because we have animals on our farm and seedlings requiring constant tending, that it is not possible for me to leave the farm for more than a few hours at a time. When they are amazed at the amount of work that goes into growing a little of our food, I explain to them that though we grow many vegetables here and that that takes up a lot of our time, I still have to come up with money to buy most of the food we eat and to pay our bills, especially in the winter when it is harder to grow things. When they see how demanding the work of growing your own food is, most have abandoned the thoughts of growing their own food, and started to try to figure other ways that they could get as much as they can from society while giving as little as possible in return. They have begun to realize that the freedom to avoid gainful employment and the freedom to depend less upon others for our food comes at a high cost. It imposes other severe limitation onto us. We must be clear about what we do as not to impose more restrictions upon ourselves. Every liberty we pursue in this world comes along with various impositions and obligations. Many it seems decide, they will simply travel around depending upon the charity of others.

There are many good things which can be accomplished if someone has a home. It could be a house they own or an apartment they rent, it could be tiny or huge, but either way, this situation provides a great deal of freedom that can not be experienced by someone traveling and depending

upon the charity of others. Certainly it requires some effort and sacrifice to gain the resources needed to buy or rent, but for most people the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. It is much easier for most to fulfill their duty in the world if they have a safe place to return to to prepare meals, rest, and take care of their bodies. But many people are not inclined to fulfill their duties. They may not avoid them to the extent of the travelers I have mentioned, but they avoid them nonetheless. They are making the same mistake. We are born into a certain family on account of our karma. We are brought together with various people to pay unpaid debts. The romantic partner we find ourselves in a relationship with has come from the past to offer us another chance to complete the karma which will bind those two souls until it has been completed. If we go away from a situation angry, we know that there are things unresolved; that there is more we owe that will draw us back to that person again. We cannot relieve ourselves from a debt simply by renouncing it, though many try to do this. They will borrow money and then say, "I don't have to pay you back. My intentions have changed. You didn't get it in writing anyway..." The courts do not allow such behavior, but would enforce the payment of the debt agreed upon orally. The universe does not forgive our debts either. What is owed will be paid. Maybe not in this lifetime, but eventually. Until our debts are paid, they will hang over our heads as a force that limits everything we do. It will be impossible to be happy and very difficult to attain even the simplest successes in life.

This is true for all kinds of relationships. Many are the sons and daughters who are angry at their mothers and fathers. This is natural because the son is like the father for their karmas are intertwined. The son gets angry at his father because he sees in him the character flaws that he has trouble to face within himself. They become estranged and put the work of healing off until another lifetime. Husbands and wives do the same, because of course it is not possible to have a happy marriage if a person has unresolved issues with either parent. In the same way, it is not possible to have a good connection to a spiritual guru if there are unresolved issues with the parents or past romantic partners. The unresolved issues from the past will always come up to sabotage the present situation. People are quick to blame the other for their problems in the relationship. They feel hurt and upset and they blame the partner. They say "that person is bad, so I cannot have a nice relationship with them." They leave the relationship, echoing the buzzwords from the media designed to empower our egos as they decide to abandon their duty in the relationship like "narcissist." People say, that relationship never had a chance, because I realized my partner is a narcissist. They feel sorry for themselves for a brief time and then move on to seek the next pleasure in life without any thought of how this might affect their partner. They are simply having trouble to face their own part in the problems in the relationship. Each partner always has a hand in the troubles in a relationship. They imagine they are freeing themselves from the work required to heal the relationship, but in reality they are only creating more discord and making the work harder when eventually circumstances force them to come back to that same partner and do it.

We have become so focused on the pursuit of personal freedom that we have been neglecting our duties to family, friends, romantic partners, career, and society as a whole. Because of this, we are now finding ourselves limited in our personal freedom. But what is freedom? We cannot fly in the sky like a bird in our physical bodies. Do we desire this? No. We simply expect it is not possible and accept it. Any limitations imposed upon us are on account of our own karma. Every relationship is not completely reciprocal. Some partners will be more capable of giving in certain ways than others. That does not change our duty. Your mother or father or husband or wife may struggle with anger.

They may be egotistical and conniving. They may have narcissistic tendencies. Narcissistic personality disorder is a very rare condition, so I doubt it... but they might. This does not change what you owe. They are struggling with their own issues. Your soul has come together with theirs so that you can learn to forgive and accept them so that you can pay what you owe. You may owe an apology, you may feel you need to express your feelings, you may want to thank them or console them, to seek greater harmony or intimacy. It does not matter what is unresolved, your soul will be bound to theirs until you resolve it. We are born into the world because we owe the world. We cannot choose what family we are born into, or what place we live in, or what people we come in contact with or decide to marry. This is has all been determined by what we owe. The choices we think we make, have been made by our karmic debts that have created the preferences within us that will lead us to continuing our work. The preferences we have as we seek a romantic partner are created by what is unresolved in our last relationship (maybe in a previous lifetime). Those preferences will draw us to the same partner, or failing that a partner who is very similar to the partner we left things unresolved with. We can pay what we owe now, or we can wait until a future lifetime. But as we wait, the situation becomes more and more difficult to resolve. It is like interest we have to pay with a loan. Ultimately we can not be liberated unless we resolve whatever is unresolved. We owe our parents for this life. We owe a great debt to society also. To be free from these karmas imposing limitations on our personal liberty, we must address this major way in which we bind ourselves by avoiding our responsibility.

To shift the karma around freedom, we must change how we have been acting. A person may think, "I am free to say what i want. I'm having a bad day. I will insult that person." They are taking great liberties to share their misery with others around. While people are free to do whatever they desire, they are not exercising wisdom about the nature of freedom when they act this way. When they say hurtful things to others, this will often cause them pain. People have a tendency to overlook the many compliments they receive but to take insults very seriously. They replay the incident in their minds many times and it lowers their self-esteem. A sensitive person will feel this pain in the person they hurt. They will seek to counter-balance that action actively and diligently until it is resolved. They may not have meant to hurt that person, but as soon as they have realized that the pain has been inflicted, they will not rest until it has been pacified to the best of their ability. They simply cannot rest until this wrong has been set straight because they feel the pain of that other person. People who are less intuitive may get a glimpse of the pain they have inflicted and shrug it off. They feel the pain of the other person, but they repress it and tell themselves "I am not responsible for what they are feeling. Their feelings are their responsibility." They then seek some distraction to help them repress the pain which is stored in their subconscious mind in the form of guilt. Now the problem for them is more complex and harder to address. They will carry with them a sense of guilt, and everywhere they go, they will act out in subtle unconscious ways which provoke others to insult them. This is the subconscious mind's way of helping a person to access the unprocessed emotions that have been stored there like garbage in a receptacle. These repressed emotions need to be addressed or they remain with a person affecting all aspects of their life. They effect their mental state, their physical health, their relationships and accomplishments. People doing spiritual practices have learned that it is not right to blame others for our emotions, because ultimately we alone are responsible for what we feel. This does not however give us a free pass to be as hurtful as we like to others. We are definitely karmically responsible for the pain we inflict upon others, whether we do it knowingly, unknowingly, intentionally or unintentionally. If we have acted in purely selfless ways, it is

no problem if others feel hurt. But when we hurt others out of anger, spite, fear, or selfishness, we create karma which does not simply disappear if we deny accountability for our actions.

With freedom comes a great responsibility. We must learn to tap into the subconscious through yoga, mantra, meditation etc. to find what feelings we have repressed and we must make amends for the things we have done to hurt others. Hurtful words have a powerful impact upon a person because people tend to attach to them more. It may be necessary to repeat a positive affirmation 10 or even a hundred times to undo the damage caused by 1 negative affirmation. We can make up for hurtful things we have said by complimenting a person or by praising them for their good qualities. We can make up for lies told by apologizing and telling the truth. We can make up for things stolen by admitting to the theft and paying the current market value for the objects stolen. For people caught in egoism and materialism, these seem like dramatic and unnecessary steps, but for the Yogi seeking the ultimate moksha (liberation / freedom) these steps are both sensible and necessary.

## KARMAS OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Governments throughout the world are asking their citizens to carefully and attentively follow certain recommendations of sanitation and isolation. More and more governments are asking their citizens to practice social distancing. This relates to serious karmas of interpersonal relations. At the time of this writing in Virginia, people are being asked to remain at home as much as possible and to avoid groups of more than ten people. In many other localities throughout the world, people are being required to remain home unless there is necessary business to accomplish. This period of isolation is causing people to reevaluate their connections with people. People who have neglected their families are being forced to remain at home spending more time with their family members. People who do not live with any family are being required to remain home alone. Parents have been neglecting their children and leaving them to be raised by the television and internet. The social and communication skills are noticeably lacking in the younger generations. Our young people are not being taught a sense of morality, decency, commitment, and duty by loving parents. Neglectful parents are being forced to be with their children by this situation. Spouses are neglecting their partners and they too are caused by the situation to spend more time together.

In recent times people have not only been mindless in their physical sanitation, but careless in the way they relate to others mentally. People negatively influence others around them by directing lustful, envious, and hateful thoughts at them. These thoughts tend to enter the aura of the person they are projected toward and hinder their health and mental well being. Intuitive people can feel this, but for many it is just a subtle disturbance piled onto the many other inner conflicts they have limiting them from a subconscious level. Many people in America have been in the habit of dating many partners or having "one-night-stands" with numerous different people. The younger generations are being influenced by the media to believe that they cannot be happy until they have experienced many different sexual partners. This creates many needless karmas and emotional bonds which adversely affect people's ability to open themselves in an intimate way to any partner. People are being encouraged by relationship counselors and public figures to stand up for themselves and abandon any relationship that feels uncomfortable. People have come to expect unrealistic ideals for their relationships and they have forgotten that a relationship helps us to grow by forcing us to change ourselves inwardly to be a good partner. So many seek brief romantic

relationships with no attachments, and they hide from the unresolved pains of the last relationship by diving haphazardly into the next and next. These people are being forced by circumstances to remain alone, because they have not been compassionate toward others and have not been mindful of the way their actions effect the people they use for their own sensual gratification. People protest saying "It's alright. We had an agreement that this would be purely physical." But no romantic partnership can ever really be purely physical. People open to one another psychically and emotionally when there is an intimate physical connection, and subtle unspoken expectations are formed in the minds of both partners. Someone always gets hurt when the relationship comes to an end. If people took even a little time to reflect upon the long-term effects of these physical connections, they would not be so quick to consent. As a result of the physical act, a couples auras are bound together for a minimum of 12 years, if not for the rest of this lifetime. Their karmas influence each other; their thoughts and moods influence each other; and they are in tern open to the energy of all the other partners their partner may choose to be with. Even when two people agree that a romantic liaison will be purely physical, there are always certain expectations which are felt though they are unspoken. There is a sense of disappointment and betrayal as unspoken promises are broken by one partner or the other. Karmas are set into motion between those two souls which will likely require another birth to resolve. The lasting harm that people do to others and to themselves through such escapades far outweighs any temporary pleasure. Such romantic affairs will have to stop during this pandemic or people will be risking their lives for a moment of sensory indulgence. Those who are finding themselves unable to take solace at this time in the temporary objectification of others should take this time to reconsider the effects of their actions and seek to heal the wounds within that make it difficult for them to commit themselves to a partner.

Even those who are in committed relationships are often forsaking their obligations and the promises they have made to their partners in pursuit of their own personal advancement. Relationships are quickly abandoned as partners seek new and more exciting distractions from the issues they neglect to work on in themselves. But this problem begins when partners neglect their duty to one another to express their concerns in the relationship and to work together to resolve and problems. Such couples will be forced to be together by this situation. Families are being forced to be together to work out the conflicts and issues that remain unresolved between them, and romantic partners are being quarantined together to work on the relationship. This will be difficult as couples learn to develop the communication skills needed to resolve their differences. Many relationships will experience great healing during this time and enjoy a greater depth of trust and intimacy. But in other cases one partner will abandon the work, blaming the other for their own actions and flee.

But it is not only about those we consciously choose to have a relationship with. People are unconsciously choosing to create intimate sexual connections with the hundreds of people they causally encounter as they live their lives in cities. People in this society have gotten into the habit of gazing lustfully at members of the opposite sex and a great deal of energy is exchanged in these lustful glances which lead to flirting and affairs. Married couples have fallen into the habit of betraying their partners in this way. Women have gotten into the habit of wearing very immodest clothing and posting lewd photos of themselves on social media which further encourages these type exchanges. They tag their revealing photos "#bodylove# or #selflove,# but they do not do it out of a sense of love. They do it to seek attention and compliments, which lustful and predatory men are too eager to give. We must learn that these exchanges of sexual energy are not necessary and

that they only increase our suffering as a race. There is a reason our souls are in different physical bodies. This defines our karma. Our body carries the karma of our past lives, and those of our ancestors, and also our romantic partners. Now we are opening ourselves more and more to the karmas of everyone we encounter by choosing to connect through the lower chakras of lust, fear, envy, and hatred. We simply need not put our baggage onto other in this way, nor do we need to assume theirs. But many peoples' sense of self esteem is now based open the compliments they receive for their yoga pants or the lustful glances they receive as they socialize. They simply don't feel good about themselves unless others are ogling or complimenting their bodies. Such people will be kept by this situation apart from others to show them that they do not need the reassurance of others and that they have neglected to love themselves. They must practice loving themselves.

A good practice for such people would be to stand naked in front of a full body mirror and repeat "I love you. You are beautiful," until they feel it and believe it as they say the words. When you truly love yourself it does not matter what others think. This is true body love. It does not require some external confirmation. It does not need to flaunt itself in salacious ways. Our bodies are a sacred temple. They do not let anyone enter the inner sanctum of the great temples in India. They keep people out to preserve the sanctity. Specially trained priests are permitted entry to perform rituals, but only after they themselves have undergone certain practices to purify themselves and to ensure that they are approaching that sacred space with a pure mind and an attitude of worship. We should treat our bodies with equal reverence and guard their purity fervently. Even the holiest of temples can be desecrated in which case they become nothing more than a building. When we objectify ourselves, we bind ourselves to the physical form and distance ourselves from the Divinity within us. Every man is a living God, and every woman a living Goddess, but we do not realize this and so we treat ourselves like mere animals. Our bodies in effect become nothing more than meat.

We have come to experience the world too much through the five senses of the body and we have lost touch with our higher awareness. To overcome this, we must practice austerities. We must fast and spend time in isolation. We must take vows of silence. Sleep on the hard floor, give up our favorite foods. Remain awake at night praying. Bow hundreds of times before God in the Temple. These practices help to loosen our instinct to experience things through the 5 senses. They help us to start to see that the body is a temple. They enable us to meditate. We must meditate on the body as a Holy Temple and meditate on the Divinity with. Once we begin to experience the Divine, we will desire that experience to deepen. In this way we redirect the desires from what is impermanent, and place the desire onto what is eternal. Until we gain that first experience of God, it can be difficult. But if we seek it sincerely, it will come. Call out to the Lord like a lost child alone in a forest at night cries for his mother. Do not give up until he comes to you. This is what we must do to overcome our desires, which have become perilous to us like wild animals in the forest.

But people are speaking hurtful words to each other and thinking hurtful thoughts also. They insult people around them to try to make themselves feel better. It is so irrational, that it seems insane. But people do it all the time. They criticize those who they fear are better than them. People try to hold back others who try to succeed and they work to hinder the successes of their coworkers. This situation will cause people to become isolated and alone with their own thoughts of self-loathing. This is very serious karma, which should be perfectly clear to anyone who is reading this words. Such people must make amends for their hurtful actions. They should admit their wrongdoing and

apologize and then do whatever possible to make amends. If their spiteful actions have prevented someone from getting a promotion at work, they should make it their duty to see to it that that person is promoted. Some people will be open to our efforts to make amends. Others, understandably, will not. They may feel hurt from the previous betrayal and find it hard to trust. In this case, we can pray for them and help others like them to free ourselves from this karma.

The current circumstances are forcing people to reevaluate how they relate to others. Now is a time to consider all our relationships. We should consider how we relate to people in general and consider especially how we relate to those close to us. We will have to come close to some people which will force us to see things. We have to step away from others which will give us the space to see things. We must evaluate with sincerity if our actions have been in the interest of ourselves and others, or only ourselves. The physical conditions demand it and the spiritual energy of the planets demands it. I have seen quite a few long-term relationships suddenly end beginning around December of last year. In these cases, one partner felt the seriousness of the karmic situation even before the pandemic began restricting our actions. Feeling completely overwhelmed by what was within, that partner fled. What else could they do? It all seemed more than they could handle.

We have all been guilty of neglecting our duty in our relationships. We must take this time to reconsider our past actions. The universe never gives us more than we can handle and what is in the highest good for one person is always also the highest good for others involved. We have to make our relationships less about our egotistical desires and more about shifting ourselves inwardly so that we can be more like the partner we would want for ourselves. Now is the time to reevaluate the various past relationships we have had; marriages, romantic partnerships, business partnerships, our relationship with our guru, and our relationship with our parents. The relationships with the parents is first in this lifetime and most important. If we are not on good terms with our mother and father, then all the other relationships will be hopeless. If we have unresolved issues from a past marriage or from past romantic relationships, we must work to resolve these inwardly. It may be possible to go back to that partner to resolve things. This is the simplest, easiest and most direct route. But it requires inner healing. We must forgive them for the things they have done wrong and release our anger and resentment. There may be fear also which we have to overcome. We can do this by sitting in front of a photo of that person and offering flower petals, or pinches of rice, or leaves, or blades of grass saying "I love you. I forgive you." We may think we have our partner pegged. We may think we understand their faults and their motivations for acting, but the fact of the matter is that if we are looking through a veil of anger and resentment, we will not see anything clearly.

Reach out to your parents. Apologize to them for your anger, your hurtful words, your neglect. Reach out to your past romantic partners and do the same. They may be receptive or they may not be. That should not matter, because when you forgive someone and seek to make amends for your transgressions, it is not for them; it is for your own healing. You may be surprised how the dynamic of the relationship can change if you drop your anger. Relationships that seemed doomed instantaneously become very positive. What was impossible becomes possible when we shift ourselves. But we must be sincere and courageous for this to happen. People reading this may be wondering, "Do you actually mean I should go back to my ex-wife, my ex-husband, or the long term partner I ended things with?" If you are not remarried; if they are not remarried; if they were not

physically abusive or endangering your life or liberty by doing things that are illegal; then yes. Absolutely. Unresolved karma between your souls had drawn you together in the first place. If you are sincere with yourself, you would likely admit that this karma has not been resolved. But if you or they are unavailable (married or in a committed relationship), then you should still go back to the relationship in your mind. Evaluate how you feel about what happened and release your resentment. Take responsibility for your part in the failure of the relationship. Do what you can to resolve karmic debts, in ways that will not jeopardize the success of your current partnership. If it is possible, you can still apologize and do what you can to make amends in certain ways even if it is not possible to continue the relationship as it was before. This work must be done. We cannot simply state that we do not deserve to be treated in a certain way and then leave each new partner when they fail to live up to our lofty ideals. Our anger can never justify the hurtful things we do in anger. This attitude is based in selfishness and pure egoism.

Wisdom understands that our karma has drawn us to the perfect partner for us, and spiritual souls never shy away from the challenge. The perfect partner will challenge us to grow and release what is unresolved within ourselves. It seems counter intuitive to a materialistic person and it defying every instinct of the ego, which fights tenaciously to preserve its current state of delusion and misery. From a higher spiritual perspective this makes very much sense, that our subconscious mind will tend to attract to us and make us feel attracted to those partners best equipped to challenge us.

Marriage and relationships do bind us in many ways, but they also save us from the much worse situation of multiple partnerships creating massive amounts of karma which will require many future lifetimes to resolve. Commitment in relationships is a good example of bondage for the sake of liberation. It is hard to live with other people and to always get along with them. Commitment in our relationships forces us to look within ourselves and to face our faults. To preserve the relationship, we must compromise. We must give up our egoism and offer ourselves selflessly to the partner. This is love, when a person sacrifices their own selfish desire for the sake of the partnership. Most people today have never experienced pure love. They are well aware of lust, but they do not sacrifice much. We must sacrifice our egoism to begin to relate to others in a more healthy way. We have to give up the selfish desires for other people to make us happy, and we have to work to make them happy. None is perfect at this, but the nature of a committed relationship will force each partner to constantly shift and become a little better each day. This is why all the major religions of the world have been advocates of marriage to one partner for life with very few exceptions. Do not worry about whether your partner is doing more or less than you. It is not a competition. Do your best and know that some days you will be able to do more, and other days your partner will be able to do more. But if there is a roadblock, do not wait for your partner to take the lead. Do whatever you can to clear the path yourself. This life is not about other people making us happy or building up our sense of self worth. We are treated how we treat others. If you do not like the way your partner has treated you, shift yourself inwardly so that you can treat them as you would like for them to treat you. This is the key for harmony in all relationships.

KARMAS OF LOSS AND GRIEF

Many people have lost their jobs. They have lost the ability to go out and socialize with friends. They have lost the ability to do many of the things they were accustomed to do. Without pay from work, people are concerned that they could lose their homes, their vehicles, their possessions etc. I have seen several people begin to lose their homes as this karmic situation began to unfold. Many others as mentioned before have lost their husbands and wives or romantic partners as a result of the energies at work in the world. We must practice faith that we will receive what we need. It is important though for people to grieve the losses. This takes us back to the beginning of this writing where we discussed Ayurveda and the connection of the lungs to grief. Even if we have not lost much, the energies at play will cause us to go back in our minds to things past in previous times. We must go into the feelings and release them. A useful practice for this would be to write down whatever thoughts come to mind on a piece of paper and then burn it. This is also a good way to release the energy of hatred and resentment. We as a race are all now facing our grief. Let us have empathy and compassion for those around us and comfort people from a safe distance as best we can.

You may feel you lost the love of your life. Do not worry. If you had done all you could do at that time to save the relationship, but your partner abandoned you, what more could you have done? You may have insight now that could have helped to salvage the relationship, but you did not have it then. You cannot worry about the past. Instead forgive your partner for the wrong they did to you. They may have been unfaithful. They may have insulted you and said many hurtful things. They may have lied to you and betrayed your trust. Do not worry about these things. Forgive them and understand they also did the best they could do from their own perspective. Grieve the loss and then move on. If you cannot be with the person you love today, love the people you are with. And if you find yourself completely alone at this time, then love yourself more. And reach out to friends and family to offer them your support. They may not be the romantic partner that your heart longs for, but positive connections can be helpful.

We must all remember that nothing is permanent in this world and that this coronavirus pandemic will pass as quickly as it began when we have each done our part in facing our collective karma. ALL THINGS IN THIS WORLD ARE FOR A GOOD REASON. This statement will seem true to the spiritually inclined who rise to the task of facing the challenges that life offers. Such people will not have their happiness or security stripped from them through the current situation, yet they will accomplish great inner work which will lead to many better possibilities in their lives than they previously imagined. To those caught in the clutches of materialism, this statement will seem untrue and crazy. They will suffer a great deal through this experience as they choose and they will see little benefit.

#### HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT OUR PART IN THIS IS?

Do not judge others. Now is the time for empathy and compassion. Everyone is struggling somehow in this situation. It is easy to think "Well, I do not have promiscuous romantic encounters, or I do not spend money frivolously, so this is not my fault." We are all responsible for this situation on account of our current actions. Blaming others will not help us to do our own part in healing the world now. Ask yourself honestly, what am I doing to create this situation? Why is this situation a blessing for me? What particular challenges does the current state of affairs present to me? Whatever your

unique struggle is in this, is the key to the inner work you must now do to fulfill your part of the healing the world is now demanding. The description and recommendations given in this article are not a blue print for your own process. They are a generalized description of the state of affairs with examples of the types of struggles people are now facing and generalized recommendations for healing. Your own path will be dictated by your own part in this. We cannot save humanity unless we first take responsibility for ourselves. It is easy to turn away from the difficult inner work we must do now, and blame others or alternately try to help others. We can only help others after we have helped ourselves. Ask yourself which parts of this article resonates with you. Read the whole thing a few times. If you can admit to some particular act of selfishness in yourself as you read a generalized description of it, then good. Work on it. But it is easy to see what we are aware of. If there are parts of this article that you become emotional about; if your mind quickly responds with a defensive, "I am not doing that!" Exploring that subject further will lead you to the real work you must now do. Many people are aware of various flaws within themselves and those on a spiritual path are constantly working to overcome these flaws and better themselves. A situation of this magnitude is generally not designed by the universe to propel people in the work they are consciously doing. It is designed to push people into deeper levels of awareness, to reveal to people what has been previously impossible to admit about themselves. This is a blessing. Many people have begun to get a sense of what they were hiding from in themselves already. But if you have not gotten that sense yet, do not worry. This situation is not over yet. Allow the knowledge to unfold for you. Welcome it. You will be given every opportunity needed to come to the unique gift of inner realization this situation has been created to stimulate within you. Some will shift themselves a great deal, propelled by this coronavirus. Others will not seem to change themselves as much. We should all pray to embody the inner change that the world needs now.

Let us remember that everything in this world, however horrific it may seem, is designed to free us, to uplift us. Though people are suffering now and interpersonal connections have been limited, the inner changes that the current situation is demanding will enable humanity to free itself from suffering and it will cause people to be able to relate in time in much deeper and more compassionate ways than previously possible. There will be much work to do. I, for one, welcome the opportunity to participate in this extremely interesting challenge. These challenges are unprecedented for people living today, and so the potential benefits are also unprecedented.

Gananathamritananda Giri  
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Old Church Virginia