



Stepping Stones to the top of the world

[The Great Forgetfulness]

A collection of essays and mind-meanderings
on how to attain mindfulness through an exploration
of all matters of the heart and soul

C.C. Saint-Clair

Spiritual Philosophy – Zen Buddhism – Psychoanalysis - Non Fiction.

A collection of essays and mind-meanderings on All Matters of the Heart and Soul

Saint-Clair, C.C.

Stepping Stones To the Top Of the World [The Great Forgetfulness]

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Stepping Stones

To The Top

Of The World

[The Great Forgetfulness]

A collection of essays and mind-meanderings on how to attain mindfulness through an exploration of all matters of the heart and soul

**C.C.
Saint-
Clair**

Also by C.C. Saint-Clair

Romance Novels

North and Left from Here (Take II)

Benchmarks

Silent Goodbyes

Risking-me

Jagged Dreams

Far From Maddy

Morgan In The Mirror

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So many years after she edited my first novel, my love and appreciation still go to Myahr B, my partner. Her ongoing support allows me the physical and emotional spaces needed to keep writing and, more importantly, to develop myself further from my heart and soul.



I cannot conceive of a God who rewards and punishes his creatures, or has a will of the kind that we experience in ourselves. Neither can I nor would I want to conceive of an individual that survives his physical death; let feeble souls, from fear or absurd egoism, cherish such thoughts. I am satisfied with the mystery of the eternity of life and with the awareness and a glimpse of the marvelous structure of the existing world, together with the devoted striving to comprehend a portion, be it ever so tiny, of the Reason that manifests itself in nature - **Albert Einstein** - The World As I See It

Contents

Introduction: Stepping stones to The Path	4
Preface: Why Am I Not Selling This Book?	7
Give freely and receive freely	
Section 1: Would The Real Soul, Please, Rise!	12
Introduction to Soul from a non-religious perspective	
Section 2: A Drop Is An Ocean	28
Separation occurs every time we think we are more intelligent, better, sexier, more understanding more ... more ... than the other.	
Section 3: Energy Field – the Energy We Put Out There	37
What being in the moment <i>really</i> means.	
Section 4: Destination - Here, Now!	42
Even as we consider ourselves thoughtful and caring, we are, to greater or lesser degrees, a part of our culture's worship of personal power and profit and therefore equally to greater or lesser degrees removed from our spirit's energy, from our energy field and the karma that is currently ours to edit.	
Section 5: In Search Of The Present	52
Though real wisdom cannot be bought, placebo can be. A point worth considering is that, in matters of spirituality, we do not truly learn anything new. We merely remember what we already know from anterior lives.	
Section 6: “And WHO are you?” you might ask	57
Although the brain is the single most documented organ in the body, most of us can access only a fraction of its power and, don't really understand what makes it tick.	
Section 7: Be Here	68
Doing life, driven only by our intellect, is as helpful to us as driving at night in a car that without headlights.	
Section 8: Karma Is!	75
We need to accept that tragedies happen for a reason, however nebulous to us. The reason is that of karma needing amendment.	
Section 9: Messages Abound, All Around	98
When I used to tell Moriya that, beyond the obvious, I saw nothing and perceived nothing, she would reply wryly, <i>“When you want to see true meaning you need a bird’s eye view. You need to stand above the mountain. If you cannot get that high on your own, what can I say? At least find yourself a ladder.”</i>	
Section 10: Before We Can Hope To Receive - We Need To Emit	106
A flat-line heart chakra means that we go about our work in the mechanical ways	

that are inherent to the material culture in which we live - efficient at times, inefficient at other times. Nothing more. Nothing less.

- Section 11: **How Energetically Pink Are We?**.....111
Doing anything, however useful and commendable on the surface is not what heart-chakra love and non-separation are about. Doing good deeds, like Tibetan villagers do, believing that cumulatively, each act of kindness buys us a better after life may be called thoughtful or religious, but it is not spiritual.
- Section 12: **A new humanitarian project? Another campaign?**118
No amount of human intervention can ever alter, let alone remove, the root cause of any of the complications - or of any of the benefits - any individual must face and enjoy in this lifetime.
- Section 13: **Made In India – not solely**.....150
Why is it that, in some circumstances, ‘our men’ are so titillated by the thought of performing forcible rape that they momentarily shut down their conscience to relieve unbridled ‘cavemen’ urges on children and on women?
- Section 14: **The Humble What-IS**165
Don’t touch it! The moment that IS needs to be left alone and accepted.
- Section 15: **Life Is School, NOT a Cabaret, Old Chum!**168
Truly, the present-moment, the moment under our feet, is all we have and it is unlimited for the time we are on this earth.
- Section 16: **Blameless? Unlucky? Innocent Victim? NEVER**171
"The content of our mind is constantly displayed as our lives", wrote Jetsunma Ahkon Lhamo, "for every single result that we are experiencing there is a cause and that cause is in our mind stream. Sometimes these things are hard to take in.
- Section 17: **A New Soul Is ALWAYS An Ancient Soul**.....177
The Great Forgetfulness: we are ALL souls’ in disguise inside a body suit of flesh and fluids.
- Section 18: **The Real Meaning of ‘Tragic’**184
Wherever we happen to be living on the planet, an inordinate number of ‘our’ children come to grief. However, on the whole, unless they are our ‘home grown’ children, we do not grieve for them.
- Section 19: **What Is It That IS Keeping Us Here - or not?**.....191
Though tobacco does kill approximately 5.4 million people yearly, it can be ruled out as one of our *definite* Life Terminators.
- Section 20: **Forgiving Is An Action**.....199
Forgiving is the action of ACTIVELY accepting What-Is. It is the action of ‘making peace’ with it.

Section 21: Dreams: messages from Soul	209
We dream, we slumber, we wake up and we forget the dream. The dream, however, contained a message from Soul. How else can she get our attention?	
Section 22: Finding Meaning	241
Millions and millions of us, hypnotized by the glitter of so-called status symbols, are equally hypnotised by images of TV series to the point where we confuse the fabricated lives of the characters with our real lives, which then reinforces our own propensity towards the free-wheeling indulgence of our lower desires.	
Section 23: Glossary Of Dream Symbols	251
Once we manage to not just decode, but also link all the various symbols together to give shape to the message, we suddenly feel more aware of the spiritual world as it impacts on us, at point blank range.	
Section 24: Perrault’s Sleeping Beauty [fairy tale deconstructed]	281
Section 25: Time to Rethink Thinking	286
<i>The road to hell is paved with good intentions.</i>	
Section 26: Our Inner Child Is Alive And Well - too much so	294
As long as we hold on protectively to our way of responding to 'life', we cannot aspire to more than doing 'life' according to the 'program' that was already implanted our psyche long before we reached our eighteenth birthday.	
Section 27: Who Are These People?	298
When Soul eventually loses all hope of our redeeming ourselves, she pushes us out of our rut, sometimes in a life-changing way. Sometimes she wipes us out.	
Section 28: Genuine Love Is Mostly <u>Not</u> About What We DO	311
Do we ever really <i>get</i> unconditional love and affection from the ones closest to us? Are we capable of truly <i>making</i> love - of creating love?	
Section 29: A Short Lesson In Understanding by Moriya	330
Section 30: Angry Planet – Global WarNing	350
Of course, we are in charge of our lives and of our plans, but only as long as nature snoozes on impassively as we collectively, haphazardly and blindly, stack on karma.	
About me, CC	373
End Notes	375

Introduction

In many aspects, the pages that follow are like the stepping stones that lead to the edge of The Path.

Whether or not one gets on The Path and has enough gumption to stay on it and keep moving forward depends entirely on how much emotional and spiritual balance the person wishes to invest in this very personal pursuit.

Genuine mindfulness comes at a price – a deliberate, constant and considered application ‘in the field’, in each of our relationships, of all that our brain has finally come to understand and accept because, *finally*, through her connection to Soul, the ego-persona *remembers*.

The stepping stones map out the way to a bridge – a bridge to soul.

While I was in the process of writing each of my novels, I would joke that I had a muse hovering above my left shoulder, as I sat at the keyboard.

How else would I have come up with seven novels in three years and the luminous or evocative language appreciated by readers that surprises even me – I, who had never thought of writing anything?

These days, I know I have a muse, and my muse is my soul.

My muse pushed me to assume my newfound knowledge and to embed it in articles treating the fathomless topic of secular spiritual philosophy.

More recently, she has prompted me to compile some of the articles that have laid scattered in various online Articles Directories to bring them in the form of this book to whomever might be interested in genuine, hype-free, worship-free spirituality.

So ... when the Queen orders, the servant complies humbly :-)

I am the owner of my karma.

I inherit my karma.

I am born of my karma.

I am related to my karma.

I live supported by my karma.

Whatever karma I create, whether good or evil, that I shall inherit -

The Buddha, Anguttara Nikaya V.57 - Upajjhatthana Sutta



I am the current owner of my karma,

I inherited a portion of my karma.

I was born with my karma.

I am defined by karma.

I live supported by my soul.

Whatever karma I add, whether good or evil, is recorded on my Karmic balance sheet with unerring precision and in real time – **C.C. Saint-Clair's** adaptation of the verse above.



In public meetings there are questions such as: "Is it true that you do not want disciples? What do you think of rituals and ceremonies? How does your teaching differ from ordinary materialism and that of better known spiritual guides?"

I say again that I have no disciples. Every one of you is a disciple of the Truth if you understand the Truth and do not follow individuals... Truth does not give hope; it gives understanding... There is no understanding in the worship of personality... I still maintain that all ceremonies are unnecessary for spiritual growth... if you would seek the Truth you must go out, far away from the limitations of the human mind and heart and there discover it – and that Truth is within yourself.

Is it not much simpler to make Life itself the goal than to have mediators, gurus, who must inevitably step down the Truth and hence betray it?

Do not quote me afterwards as an authority. I refuse to be your crutch. I am not going to be brought into a cage for your worship. When you bring the fresh air of the mountain and hold it in a small room, the freshness of that air disappears and there is stagnation" – **Jiddu Krishnamurti**



Give freely and receive freely

Am I Not Marketing/Selling *this* collection of articles written between 2007 2014?

Preface

On this, a lovely Saturday in February 2014, as I sort through the many articles I have written over the years with the view of finally collating them in a full manuscript dealing with all matters of the heart and soul, I still stand by what I thought back in 2007, as I tentatively published the first article, the first work of non-fiction on my website, a site born out of my experiences as novelist.

Here is the text I wrote seven years ago:

I still don't have a clear idea of where I am going with the idea of publishing this first article on my site but, already, I wish to flag the fact that it is not a clever and *oh so subtle* marketing ploy intended as a teaser for the next Saint-Clair novel.

Hand on heart, whether any raw 'footage' born of this endeavor ever gets edited into a book that I will ultimately publish or convert into a series of podcasts, I have already decided that this document, as well as all subsequent files I might write on all matters of the Soul, will remain publications anyone can access for free, in their entirety – from the first lines of texts to the very last full-stops.

Since I am not [yet] a philanthropist and would not want to pass for the altruist that I am not – bad karma – I should perhaps explain why I am going to forge ahead with my **free**-lance project. Yes, the pun is intended.

- The process of thinking out loud with the aim of sharing, and hopefully being understood by others, means that I have to put a great deal of order and clarity to the many thoughts that are, for now, colliding, whirring hard, sparking new synaptic connections inside my brain, inside my neural net, inside my mind ... inside my energy field.

- Not everyone reading my articles or viewing eventual podcasts will come in to these texts with as little understanding as I used to have on matters of spirituality. Therefore some of the more involved concepts and beliefs I will attempt to put forward in Moriya's pared-down style will strike a familiar chord in some, an instantaneous spark of interest in some – and a dead spot in others.

Either way, it is my opportunity to give back to the cosmos some of what it has offered to me through the teachings of Moriya, my teacher in Jerusalem, who, because of her own detachment from all that is of a material, monetary nature, is not at all interested in writing her own books, let alone having devotees attaching to her.

Though a search of the name Moriya does bring up a few links, the Moriya I am talking about has no need for an online presence, therefore she is not any of these 'Moriyas'.

- Since Moriya will not accept from me *anything* more than my thanks, how could I then 'sell' the fruit of the spiritual guidance I am receiving when it is given to me gratis and unconditionally?

No way, right?



As if to confirm my initial mindset, I was recently prompted to develop it further on a forum in answer to a start-up comment about whether one should charge or not charge for 'work' of a spiritual nature:

December 2013: Please, know that through my collections of essays and mind meanderings, I am not trying to convince anyone that a change in their emotional/spiritual intelligence and belief system is a must. Unencumbered by any monetary transaction, I am only happy to share from the heart all that Moriya has taught me.

Oh, the notion of giving free spiritual counsel, regardless of the mode is, indeed, a thorny subject.

Of course, one has to pay the myriad bills that come our way. But, you see, I tend to believe that, generally speaking, the objective of any genuinely spiritually-minded person should be to keep 'energetically' clean and uncluttered that channel to Soul or God or Archangels or Source or to whatever the person believes in.

If there is any hope, any way for us, mere mortals on the Path, to even come close to the Real Thing, how can it be done while our mind, our thoughts and hours are focused on finding ways to not only pay the totality of our bills, but also to shore up our savings?

Energetically speaking, can we afford to cheapen our 'gift' by making it a commodity not only to pay for housing and food etc. but also to afford a particular lifestyle, thus reducing spiritual work to the common of 'job'?

Besides, isn't the unshakeable faith that whichever greater entity we happen to believe watches over us and that all that does happen to us is a part of a greater Plan one of the key concepts in spirituality? As adults, don't we all know that no chosen lifestyle, no amount of money in the bank will ever keep us from whatever is in store for us, be it rewarding and good or be it challenging and testing?

The more 'other' priorities we have, the more energetically cluttered our channel and the further we are from accessing anything that comes from the highest source – though, of course, we are very good at attracting 'elements' of a much lower dimension - at the level of astral shells – and there is nothing pure about them. More on that later.



Logically speaking and just in terms of accessing a form of healing, cosmic energy, regardless of its acknowledged source, I believe that the energy, though obviously pure at its source, once it zaps through peaks and troughs of \$-driven thoughts/ actions/reactions, once it 'flows' out of a persona that is worried and anxious and/or unwell or 'driven' by monetary gain, in my mind, that otherwise pure energy becomes as contaminated as pure source water flowing out of a pipe badly in need of a clean out. No doubt, it carries with it many impurities.

Wouldn't a true pure spiritual entity prefer to use, as vehicles, the bodies/personas of healthy, focussed beings on the Path; those who crave nothing of the material world, who actively accept karma – the good, the challenging, as well as the satisfying; those who are as tolerant and forgiving of the 'enemy' as they are of the merely 'annoying ones'; those who are content to live simply, spiritually, in a clean, safe, independent, urban context, afforded by a modest income derived from say, typing and editing manuscripts for local professors, as in the case of Moriya, my 72 year-old teacher?



Right! But before anything, I need to flag that, although I have jokingly used the cliché expression 'bad karma' on the first page of this preface, it is seriously erroneous to think of karma in that way.

Karma is neither good nor bad. Karma is.

Like the sea around the swimmer, it just is. More on that later, as well.



Now that the groundwork has been laid, let's cut to the chase and start with the relatively easy bits – some of the fundamentals I have come to understand and accept:

- I am the current incarnation of my soul.
- My soul, like all souls, is energy.
- Cosmic spiritual energy is pure. It cannot become impure.
- When someone questions my integrity or when I get deeply startled, I know my hand flies to the center of my chest, not to my brain, not to the spot where I can feel my heart beat. So rather than think my soul radiates or floats above my head like a halo or a beacon, I accept that my soul-energy permeates the spot in the center of my chest.
- My soul, like all souls, is ancient. She has been incarnated many, many, many, *many* times over. Personally, I have no interest in tracking down any of

my past lives, as I have plenty to work with figuring out this one, the only one that matters, the only one I can maybe alter, one moment at a time, if and when I am able to transfer the theory to the practice.

- The only thing my soul, any soul, aspires to is to be taken offline – off the incarnation cycle.
- My soul cannot escape from the incarnation cycle until I, C.C., and all my soul's subsequent incarnations, have managed to edit out all karmic debt out of 'our' energy field – the theory being that, as the universe is perfectly harmonious, no soul can walk away leaving behind a mess of unfinished business because of karma not having been amended at the earliest opportunity.



Guilt and prayers, remorse and flagellations only amount to emotional crutches intended to make us feel better but fail - which brings up the well-worn phrase *Consumed by guilt.*



Genuine love is the ability to accept the other as he or she is without having the desire to change that person in any way. Demonstrating genuine love means being always available, always emotionally present and supportive. Feeling love from the heart chakra transforms us into the 'ideal' mother or father, regardless of the blood link with that person - **Moriya**

rench film about a

introverted man, an antiquarian, who accidentally runs over an eight-year-old girl, offers a thoughtful illustration of what amending karma can look like.

Indeed, the only way to karmically right a wrong is to *undo the wrong* by reversing the deed through personal involvement and from the heart - not out of a sense of duty.



Karma can only be amended when we can repair *directly* with our *victim* – should we be so lucky as to still have her/him within reach. There is no other way.



N.B. I have decided to refer to my soul as *she* as I don't think 'it' would be appropriate, not even with a capital 'I', and I cannot possibly refer to MY soul as *he*, not even if spelt with a capital H, even though I know all souls are genderless – such are the limitations of language, but here is not the place to be pedantic about language.

Having said that, dear Reader, if you are more attuned to the word God, Cosmic Energy, Celestial Force or any other name than to the word Soul, as you read on, do feel free to transpose the name you are more comfortable with.

Names are words. Words are man-made and, as such, words are limiting. They can never label correctly anything that is intangible - certainly not anything that is as uncharted and as profound as is the realm of life beyond the material world.



Just as a computer has a motherboard – our brain, for its functioning, relies on a software program – so, too, does our energy field in which our karma is encoded.



When I am in a 'mood', this *mood* in all of its vibrational characteristics is encoded in my energy field.



Karma is our personal, accumulated, fateful load – our score sheet as inherited from our soul's previous incarnations, compounded by the karmic balance of what we have managed for ourselves in THIS incarnation, this lifetime.



Put simply, since I am past 'middle' age, and since I show no signs of turning into a clone of mother Teresa or of passing as a credible entrant in a Gandhi think-alike contest, it is safe to assume that my soul has already been screwed out of any early plans of Nirvanic retirement.



I, who never ever used to spare a thought for my soul, have come to accept that we do not merely 'get' a soul in a random way. Instead, it can be said figuratively that a soul puts its little hand up to accept us as the new vehicle through which she hopes to process some of her karmic baggage. Souls pick us to be their upgraded vehicle to karmic enlightenment – go figure! – which is why it is tacitly accepted that we ARE able to overcome all and any of the karmic challenges that come our way – if and only if we can tackle them in a spiritual manner which, of course, is not the way our western culture has ever taught anyone to overcome anything.



It can be said that, like a net, our energy field hardens around us, a little bit more with each passing incarnation, making it each time more difficult for us to amend *the way we are*. Which is probably why, by now, unless we get a *very* strong wake-up call – a sometime metaphoric, a sometime literal, blow to the head – it is that much easier to go with the flow and keep on *being ourselves*.



I have come to realize that the only spiritually correct answer to “Who am I?” is **I am my soul!**

So, who is this person looking back in the mirror? The one with spiky gray hair who, every morning, gels up her hair and picks around till she finds the right sea pebbles or the right plugs to push into her earlobes?

Ah, yes, that one! Well, her name is C.C. and she is an ego-persona. She is my soul’s flawed vehicle for this lifetime.



We do not usually hear the whisper of our soul over the din of the monkey chatter, the erratic whir of our mechanical actions/reactions as they cruise in and out, like teenagers at a party.



Some time ago, while trying to clarify a point on a forum I moderate, I came up with a little analogy that has helped me understand better the relationship between the soul – pure, clean energy – and the ego-persona/energy field.

It goes like this: imagine there is a pond and, lying at the bottom, there is a quartz crystal. This crystal has been there for quite some time and, looking at it from the edge, it appears dingy green, perhaps from pond slime.

In my mind, our ego-persona/our energy field is symbolized by the pond water while the crystal symbolizes the soul that is unable to shine through our emotional clutter, turmoil and the resulting relative negativity of our energy field.

While I was working this out, I initially thought that the crystal WAS green because it had become contaminated by pond slime. Thus, I thought what needed to be done was scrub that crystal clean to allow it to shine freely, as crystals do – but I was wrong.

The crystal, our soul, NEVER becomes impure or contaminated. It always remains pure energy. It is just that its energy cannot shine through the stagnant water of the pond.

So what needs to be done is simply purify that water till it is all clear and then the crystal's energy and brilliance can radiate through the water, all the way to the surface, even as it remains at the bottom of the pond.

Make sense?



Souls cannot think straight in the face of our ego's gross matter – our energy field loaded by the energy released by the myriad of desires and weaknesses we indulge daily, monthly, yearly, even though we all manage to repress some, maybe even most.

There is a misconception that some souls can become dark and bad.

Souls are souls, divine energy, and so they remain, no matter what we get up to.



Every time we pay into the culture of our culture, we fail to be present.

Pleasurable pursuits such as retail therapy, sex and holidays are all good, harmless and legal, but they are all engineered to take us away from the moment, from our *present*. They are, after all, called *escapes*.



We taint the moment energetically by releasing *spikes* of energy, of adrenalin, each time we want to possess whatever object, person or moment because as well as the exciting high of the chase, such pursuits trigger irritation, anger, fear, resentment, disappointment and insecurities.

Even the rush to end-of-year sales triggers its spikes. However harmless they appear to our ego-persona, all add negative blots to our energy field – to the general karma that we actually need to edit out of *our* energy field.



Possessiveness is an indulgence that denotes emotional insecurity, whether what we are losing is a lover, a friend, a pet, an object, or a way of life.



Adult possessiveness is no different from the fear a child has of losing her teddy bear or that favorite hair band that cannot possibly be replaced, in her eyes, at least.



No action ever happens in isolation. Every action triggers a reaction. Always.



Moriya told me a Zen tale that has been around for a while:

A man stood on a hill. Three men were out walking and notice the man in the distance. They began to argue about the man's purpose in standing there.

One said, 'He has probably lost his dog.'

The second disagreed: 'No, he's probably out looking for a friend.'

The third said, 'He's only standing up there to enjoy the fresh air.'

The three could not agree and were still arguing by the time they approached the man himself.

The first man asked him, 'Tell me, have you lost your dog?'

'No, sir', was the reply. 'I have not lost him'.

Another asked, 'Have you lost your friend?'

'No, sir, I have not lost my friend either.'

Finally, the third man asked, 'Are you here to enjoy the fresh air?'

'No, sir.'

One of the men finally blurted, 'Why, then, are you standing here for since you answer no to all our questions?'

The man said, 'I'm just standing'.



With any possession we clutch to our bosom, physically or figuratively, comes the fear of losing it. The two make a whole.



Because I accept that my moods, my anxiety, have twin corollaries imprinted in my energy field, even the buzz that I am feeling, as I type these words, is questionable.

If, as agreed, I am *only* my soul's vehicle for this lifetime, then the thoughts lined up on these pages are all hers. I am only the keyboard operator.

As long as I recognize my little spike of excitement for what it is, I know I am aware.



No different, either, for A.A.s or Weight-Watchers: amendment, editing out of detrimental habits, begins *only* after a sincere wish to change has been formulated *and* is followed up by rigorous self-observation.



"Tov [OK, good, in Hebrew], C.C.," said Moriya. "Here is a little humor for you to decode in a spiritual way because a little humor goes a long way towards helping understanding.

A man who was obese went to a doctor for advice.

The doctor said: 'Look, I've just put together a new weight-loss plan that I think would suit you.'

The patient agreed trustingly, and the doctor led him to a very big hall and left him there, locking the door behind him.

Out of nowhere appeared a beautiful naked woman who smiled at the man. She said: 'Catch me if you can, and I'll be yours!' She trotted off and the large man ran after her, around and around until the doctor returned.

When the man climbed on the scales, it was clear that he had lost three kilos in two hours!

The doctor asked: 'Are you mabsut [satisfied] with the result?'

'Oh, yes,' replied the big man. 'Mabsut meod, Doctor. Very satisfied, indeed.'

—

"On his way home, this man met a friend who was equally large. Proud of the three kilos he had lost in two hours, he recommended the doctor's treatment, saying that, he, himself would be returning the following week.

And so, the friend also had his first session in the big hall. However, after the doctor had locked the door behind him, instead of the gorgeous naked woman he was anticipating, it was a huge man, a body-builder, who jogged towards him – totally naked.

"Hey, mister!" called out the body-builder. "Start running now because — if I catch you – you're mine!"

The poor man ran with all his might to stay ahead of the naked man whom he thought was hot on his heels.

When the doctor returned and had the man weighed, he asked, 'Are you mabsut with the result?'

The big man answered: 'No, I'm not! Why is it my friend had a hot chick to run after but I had Hulk running for my buns?'

'What did you expect?' replied the doctor. 'Since he doesn't have any insurance cover, your friend paid full-price for the treatment'

'And so?'

'And so, he gets the most enjoyable treatment. You, on the other hand, your paperwork shows that you'll be able to claim all of it back, so ... it's all free for you, so what are you complaining about?'



Admittedly, though that little piece made me smile, I was like, "OK, but where's the spiritual content here?"

So, here is Moriya's deconstruction from a spiritual perspective.

"C.C., what we see in this story is that both men were very large and wanted to lose weight, yes? Symbolically, the extra weight the two men carry represents the emotional clutter that weighs them down. This clutter,

that weight, though they despise it, gives them the illusion of being insulated from the world. Their extra weight is a metaphor for hiding the self behind something as large as the Great Wall of China.

They went to the same doctor and both of them lost the same amount of weight.

Their decision to seek treatment means they agreed to get rid of their weight clutter and because they were ready to pay for it in one way or another, they expect results. Though the first man didn't know what he was in for, but trusted the doctor, the

second man clearly expected the experience to be wonderful – not too challenging, not too confronting, and totally enjoyable.

Serious question: Why was one of them happy while the other one threatened to sue the doctor?

“Because one had a most pleasant experience while the other one thought he had had a hellish one. But, really, C.C., you have to agree that it’s all very subjective, yes?”

What if the second large man had been gay? Would he have objected so much being chased by the muscular, naked man?

Again, if the first large man in the story had also happened to be gay, would he have enjoyed having to run two hours non-stop after the naked woman, however gorgeous she was? Would he have run fast enough to lose three kilos in two hours? Would he even have bothered with it at all?

If we look at this from a spiritual point of view, the process the men underwent shouldn’t matter at all as, in the end, they both got what they paid for – a weight-loss program that worked. But, C.C., surely you can see how the whining ego-persona got in the way of the second man’s progress. You see, the second man wanted exactly what the first man had had, like a child who wants what his little friend has. When he didn’t get it, he became angry. Later, he will probably whine in self-pity, but what has happened is that the second man had a hidden agenda for joining the program. He had expectations; he would not be risking much of himself, not much out of his wallet, either. And though the program worked for him, the hidden lesson is that he needed to trust, to give more of himself, to be ready to dig deep inside himself and for the right reasons – not out of fear.

And so, what this joke tells us is that, when on the spiritual path, we get back exactly what we put in. I mean, the greater the open-hearted commitment, the greater the reward.

But also, C.C., the doctor’s behavior is not spiritual, either. You see, he made a difference between a client who paid full-price and the other one who would get a

rebate. No matter how you look at it, this is separation. This is not universal love, which is about treating everyone equally and from the heart.”

“Groan,” I moaned, once Moriya had finished. “So much for a little light humor!”



It is true that, to some degree, ignorance is bliss. At the moment, I do not feel ignorant and I do not feel blissful. Now that I know what I know, I also know what I don't know and I feel my practical work on the ground still sucks big time. And if I let this perception turn into frustration then, it will be the sure sign that I have dropped out of the present-moment, that I have let old thoughts intrude, that I am no longer flowing. Grumble, grumble.



While I was in the process of writing each of my novels, I would joke that I had a muse hovering above my left shoulder, as I sat at the keyboard.

How else would I have come up with seven novels in three years and the luminous or evocative language appreciated by readers that surprises even me – I, who had never thought of writing anything?

These days, I know I have a muse, and my muse is my soul.



The main stumbling blocks to my spiritual evolution are finite words, lazy thinking and the lack of awareness that my ego-persona leads me 'by the nose,' as easily as the farmer leads his cow by her nose ring. That – and my western education.



Imagine a maze of labyrinthine proportions. Imagine it white. Imagine darkness all around it. Now, half a meter into the maze, imagine a tiny white mouse.

This little mouse, nose a-twitchin', scootles through and around a few sections until she hits a dead-end.

The little white mouse scoots back to the nearest opening and trots off, seemingly unperturbed, in another direction altogether. This mouse is actually quite a clever little mouse. There are some, you see, that would keep trying to get through the same passage way, again and again, so sure that the piece of cheese is right there, on the other side, but they get zapped again and again.



Back to our clever little mouse. Luck is on her side. With a clean run ahead, she puts a wriggle in her wiggle – she has things to do, places to see and she senses that the piece of yummy cheese is within her reach. Woohoo!

Oh, ouch! Just as she thought she had this nailed – ZAP!!! A little shock on the tip of her pink nose makes her whiskers twitch. She sits on her haunches, shakes her head a couple of times, scratches behind an ear and off she goes again, but in another direction altogether.



Like the ball in a pinball machine, totally random, bouncing off from stimuli to deterrents, the little mouse keeps going – the blind little mouse that she is.

She cannot guess which section of her labyrinth will take her on the long and happy run to the nice bit of cheese nor can she anticipate which turn will lead her to yet another dead-end or, worse, to the electric shock that zaps the tip of her nose.

After all, our clever little mouse is no more enlightened than all the others.



The way I see it, these days, the cause of our miseries is not so much the sequence of dead-ends inherent to the karmic maze we have been dropped into pre-birth, little mice that we are. I accept that the cause resides in our ego-persona that has learned, from the dawn of time, to follow her nose, her conditioned *lust* for life and

her creature comforts which include, unlike all other creatures, her need to crave and hoard more than she needs, yet seldom feel she has enough – as well as a damning compulsion to sift the present through the tight mesh of her memory.



Every time we have an itch, you see, our first impulse is to scratch it, to indulge it.

This works well for our pets and for all other animals but, we, humans, need to know that emotional itches should not be scratched any more than physical ones, otherwise the bites never cease to itch; they get puffy, infected, creating the extra side-effects that keep us in our blind-mouse ways, disconnected from our soul, and oblivious to the added dots of unhelpful karma that connect in our energy field.

Sure! My soul is looking down the barrel of an ongoing cycle of incarnations, along with most of the souls currently incarnated which, for our souls, amounts to nothing less than an endless string of life spans spent in captivity, with a disorientated sort of 'feeling', even though in the eternal spiritual realm, lifetimes are over and done with in the blink of an eye.



Our soul *can* suffocate over time. When she does, we become terminally ill, psychotic, or chronically depressed because *she* has given up hope of any karmic amendment from us, and she is sinking.

It has to be understood that matters of the soul can only manifest themselves to us at the mental/physical levels – how else would we take notice?



As long as we react from an automated response system, what we put out comes back to bite us on the tail, and we complain about our bad luck and the futility of life.

Our souls cannot exist independently from our thoughts and our deeds.

What we sow, they reap.

Karma is our personalized Unlike our bank statement, keyed in by a human, the spiritual tabulaequeences is infallible.



Here is a quick checklist that recaps essential soul-facts, as I currently understand them.

- Every soul is ancient. As such, she is loaded down by the karma accumulated by *all* her previous incarnations.

Just as a mother is responsible for her child, or a scientist for her creation, be it Frankenstein or C-3PO [**Star Wars**], Erasmus [**Dune**] or one of the Decepticons [**Transformers**], a soul is responsible for *all* her incarnations' actions. However, like Sonny, the blue-eyed robot in **I, Robot**, we have become misguided.

For over two thousand years, our ego-persona [our energy field], has been our body's built-in *party-girl*, one who seeks happiness through sensory gratification and impulsive behaviours, while our soul seeks to secure for us the highest source of happiness - nothing less than paradisiac happiness - through good old-fashioned spiritual enlightenment. Which explains why, by now, our karmic tail is probably as long as the tail on comet Hyakutake's. Back in 1996, its tail, as recorded by the Ulysses craft, spanned some 571 million kilometres.

- Compounded by our karmic inheritance, the compulsive nature of our struggle to hold on to what is impermanent and illusory - like the child who tries to trap water in her fist only to watch it drip away - maintains our soul permanently captive of our ego-personas.
- Because of our karmic baggage, we, as incarnations, have an ego-persona [energy field] made up of energy that is known as *gross energy*.

Point to remember: the more evolved we become - the thinner, the more sensitive our energy field becomes. The more powerful, too, because it is cleansed of [gross] low-frequency vibrations.

Imagine how much better our old car would run if we treated it to more than the humdrum grease and oil change and kitted it out with a new carburettor complete with its assortment of pumps, valves and tubes? Moriya might well be right when she says, "It would fly!"

- It is important to remember that our soul is our higher self – it is pure energy – it cannot be made impure. Never. No matter what we get up to.
- Since our ancient soul is the only real *I* and the only real *me* we have, it is our responsibility to amend some of the cumulative karma created by all her previous incarnations, as well as the karma we create every minute we are not *in the moment* in this, her current incarnation.

But wait! There's more!



Après moi, le deluge [After me, let the deluge come i.e. come what may] the French phrase usually attributed to Louis XV, but that might actually have been spoken by Madame de Pompadour, represents the antithesis of how we need to concern ourselves with what will come to pass ... after we are gone.

In fact, the most important thing - the one over which we have the most control - is to **not** create any new karma for whoever will inherit our soul, once we shuffle off our mortal coil.

- The task of our ego-persona [our energy field] is to be a tool that is clear and pure, so as to enable our soul to gain realization, awareness and enlightenment **through** our own doing, through **our** actions – a step on the upward spiral of spiritual evolution. *Our ultimate aim should be to surrender the controls to our soul, to let her see through our eyes and to let her guide the vehicle that we are.*
- Karma *forces* souls to cycle through the incarnation spiral. The selection of souls operates according to Cosmic order and hierarchy. Guides - maybe angels - are a part of the selection process.

- No soul can walk away from a karmic debt and, so, the magnetic force of karma will attract our soul back to earth until she has amended all that her incarnations have left unfinished.
- As I understand it, souls that have to re-incarnate too soon cause the incarnation to be emotionally unstable. I am going out on a limb, here, thinking that, if this were to be true, then, a mass murderer's actions might be prompted by an ego persona that is unusually powerful - but diagnosed as having a severe mental condition.

Having said that, I do believe that a soul - which is constant, pure energy - cannot deliberately lead the ego-persona to commit a heinous crime.

- Any crime committed is executed under the influence of our ego-persona. I tend to think that the same reasoning applies to individuals who suicide.

An overly powerful ego-persona creates a massive short-circuit that causes it to destroy the life it was intended to protect.

I suspect something similar happens with individuals who are overly charismatic. They enslave those of their followers who depend on them for a sense of personal worth while they, themselves, are often deeply miserable and misguided human beings.

- However, drugs, alcohol, hardcore pornography, as well as mental disorders - all blur the senses and clamor like a flock of parrots in a tree, over a soul's whisper. Extreme doses of this erratic clamoring lead some individuals to robotic, *dead-heart* behaviors that are humanely incomprehensible.
- What our civilization amounts to is some 6 billions worth of egos going about their business as usual, while some 6 billion souls are suffocating, only able to whisper or weep but, mostly, I suspect, they are asleep.
- Gaining realization through successful karmic *edits* made by the ego-persona is sublime. At its best, it is about uniting with the highest energy there is and becoming whole. For our soul, it is the final Homecoming - the end of her incarnation cycle. Free at last.



As ego- personas, each one of us can only aim for some sort of evolution. We must set ourselves goals.

We must go beyond dreaming, beyond wishful thinking. We should open ourselves to the challenge of hearing our soul's whisper over the din of our existence, but, gently, gently.

As Moriya likes to remind me, "*Too high a voltage in too small a bulb and the bulb explodes.*" And the only way to safely increase the capacity of 'the bulb' is to be monitoring ourselves, our spikes, how our buttons are being pushed in our present-moments.



Every soul wants very much to get to the end of this current life. She wants to be free of the human vehicle, her incarnation in this lifetime. However, always the person clings to the fear of punishment as much as to the fear of being as alone in the after-life as in this current one. Instead of looking inward, people pray science and medicine will afford them a reprieve and they do all they can to extend their life-

Moriya

A Drop Is An Ocean

Separation occurs every time we think Me first or Mine first. Simple as that.

Separation occurs every time we think that we are cuter, sexier, smarter, richer, gentler, more religious, more understanding more ... more ... more than our sister, our colleague, our neighbor - more than the person in the queue in front of us and more than the stranger we love to hate.



Separation occurs whenever we think we are more deserving [of something or other] than someone else.



Separation occurs when we think that as long as we act for the benefit of our children, our family, our friends, we can push someone, anyone, out of the way to obtain whatever it is we are after.



Though separation happens everywhere in its ugliest forms, for most of us separation is made most graphic on the news. Sometimes it comes in the images of looters in the aftermath of disaster. Sometimes it comes in images of otherwise *nice* people pushing and shoving each other out of the way, trampling each other to grab, to horde, what they think they need to survive – they want it for themselves and for their family – they want it at the expense of someone else's family. It comes in images of bullying and ostracizing.

Separation: favoring one child over another, in the home as in the classroom.

Separation: taking one look at someone and, on face value, deciding we can't possibly "connect", so we actively, if unwittingly, activate the feeling of difference – the feeling of separation.

Separation: thinking we are good and righteous because we care for our loved ones whilst donating to a cause, but shutting down our heart energy as we pass the grungy homeless tucked away in a bus shelter near where we live.



An adjunct to **Proverbs 15:17** which states: *Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fatted ox and hatred with it*, is a parable given to me by Moriya, my spiritual teacher. It is an adaptation of Erel Segal's interpretation, which offers a great shortcut to understanding universal love and the concept of non-separation.



Once upon a time, there was a rich merchant who wanted to amend his karma by preparing a feast for the local poor. He had a couple of his best ox slaughtered. He despatched some servants to the market and others to find flowers with which to adorn the great hall where he would entertain the wretches. He also brought in a group of fine musicians.

As evening drew near, he surveyed all that he had brought forth and felt puffed up with pride. Only a truly rich man could produce such a feast. Only a truly good man would bother going through so much trouble for the town's wretches.

During the dinner, however, as he looked about the splendour he had bestowed on the wretches, he began to resent the dirty, uncouth folk who had invaded his great hall like an army of rats. His mind began a tally of the *money* they had cost him.

Why, he thought, I could have gone through the same trouble but invite my dearest friends instead. Or I could have entertained my equals, or even the creditors, whom I need to maintain in high esteem, instead of wasting it all on such hapless creatures who are so cursed by God that they are unable to help even themselves.

And these thoughts created such a disturbance in his mind that, by the end of the dinner, he could no longer stand the sight of these paupers drinking his wine, licking their lips and finding merriment in the sounds of his music.

All of a sudden, he stood up. With sonorous claps of his hands, he muted the musicians. His guards returned the paupers to the streets.



At its simplest interpretation, the moral of this tale is simply that it is preferable to give someone a simple meal, even a dinner of *herbs*, but treat them with LOVE, therefore respect, than to go beyond our comfort zones and resent them for what they stand for which, in the short and long term, can have no other outcome than duplicate resentment on their part.



An added layer of interpretation could focus on those who receive for they, too, obey their own motives. Given the choice between a banquet of sweet meats at the table of a host who will treat them, at best, with polite indifference but from which they will walk away dispirited but full in the stomach or sitting in front of a simple plate of pasta at a table where they will be treated with compassionate respect, which would they choose?

The latter would be the wiser choice, but not everyone is able to choose wisely.

Not everyone's intentions are pure.



And so, there is still more to squeeze out of this parable: On face value, alone, we do not know for sure which of the characters in the parable is the better person.



The banquet-giver, then as now, seeks love, respect and acceptance by 'giving to charity.'

The receiver accepts the offerings, but gives nothing in return – nothing tangible, that is.

Although it might be unintentional, what the receiver does for the one who truly wants to give and assist, be that in a financial, artistic, emotional or spiritual area, is give us the opportunity to practice universal love.

In exchange, if such a person were able to accept and replenish their own heart-energy while, themselves, practicing flowing and letting go of the past resentments, to just be in the present-moment, they, too, might find themselves in the position of feeling love and compassion and respect.



It is the search for love through overt acts that are disconnected from pure heart energy that create a type of resentment that can easily turn into hatred.



Political squabbling aside, the international arena is one where we can observe that, generally speaking, financial but mostly impersonal AID to third world nations has not, over the past fifty years, generated much pro-west gratitude and respect although billions and billions of dollar-equivalent, from many countries, have been *donated* to relieve plight-stricken countries.



Karl Marx may have been right when he said that, "What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers." But, in the spirit of the topic at hand, he totally missed the point when he thought that its fall and the victory of the proletariat *alone* would yield a society fair to all.

Karl Marx, it is safe to assume, did not factor in the destructive drag of separation and conditional love.



One main step to editing some of our karma in this lifetime is to not separate ourselves from anyone. Though we might see ourselves as individuals, the difference between us is only skin-deep and truly minimal. When we think of it, there

are only so many ways anyone can react to any stimulus and I suspect that at various moments in our many lives – past and present - our reactions have been tainted by most of the colors on the palette: from petty and nasty to generous and heroic.



The bottom line, as I see it, is that we are neither better nor worse nor any more *unique* than any one pixel is from all other pixels that make up one huge panoramic billboard.

We are neither more nor less unique than all the other drops that make up the oceans.

It is therefore most unfortunate that so many children are brought up in the notion that they are *individual* and *unique* and *special*.

It is wonderful that each child is indeed so dear to each of their parents, however, as tiny little pixels amongst 6.6 billion others, they are not unique and neither are we.



As an aside, it would be a very useful thing for parents who teach moral values to their children to also teach them the link between good thoughts and the genuinely good intentions behind *good* actions. The sooner a child learns his or her direct input to their own karma, the better because simply being *nice* and well-behaved and a good student and doing the parents proud is really not what this is about.



When it comes to non-separation, what seems to happen is that we forget that we are *only* souls in disguise. By that I mean that we are only the vehicle, the host, for our souls, right?

Truth is, this is another concept that I have not yet totally integrated. I understand it with my mind, but it is not one I can readily apply to my perception of people around me. The idiot in the car in front is still an idiot in the car in front. The best I can do for

him, but mostly for myself, is breathe in deeply and practice an active acceptance of What-Is.



Remember that we interpret things differently, you, me and everyone else in between. And we, mere actors, are taking our roles way too seriously. We forget that we are only play acting on a world stage defined, therefore limited, by our *perception* of it.

So ... our brain is full of ideas, most of them trivial and well beyond their use-by-date: some by a moment or two; some by a week or two; some by a decade or two; some by a hell of a lot longer.

If food, they would be too toxic to keep on our pantry shelves, yet we do not regard them as too toxic to guide the face behind the mask as we surf, sink, swim - and dunk or drown the other - through the peaks and troughs of our daily life.



Understanding all of this is easy enough for me, but I still have massive problems implementing the concept of universal love and of non-separation, as discussed so far. The hard edge that is tattooed in my energy field, the one that slides in the minute I lose my focus on the moment, the one that blinds me to the awareness that the *other* is not separate from me, is linked to the obscure insecurity that keeps me from basking contentedly in the pleasant life that I do have. It keeps me from *just being*. It keeps me from being at peace with myself and it keeps me from hearing my soul's whispers. Hence the need to practice, practice, practice.



A graphic way to remember that separation is not a logical par-for-the-course is to remember that our human body is made of a myriad of things like high glam ones such as atoms and synapses, arteries and blood, organs and muscles. It is also made up of less glam components such as bone, cartilage, water, bowels, fat and skin.

Though clearly our society certainly favors muscles over fatty tissues, we cannot separate, we cannot pick and choose, the bits of karma we like and the bits we'd like to spit out.



Understanding non-separation is to understand that, just as we cannot be whole and healthy while missing even a fraction of our components, let alone separating muscle from fat, neither can we separate ourselves from anyone else, not even people we would normally not choose to be near. There is no healthy way to separate fat from sinew or atoms from bowels. Not while we are alive.



The good news is that when it comes to universal love, we don't actually have to go out of our way to *act* good or physically touch anyone.

The concept of equality is well entrenched in the constitution of most countries, but at best that equality only takes into account our physical and intellectual potentials.



Non-separation understands that rich or poor, dumb or bright, honest or criminal, karmically, we have all been there and done that, not only in greater or smaller ways in this life time but in spectacular ways, time and time again, in our previous lives.



To understand the concept of non-separation, it helps to see this lifetime as just another patch on the huge tapestry that each of our previous incarnations has woven for itself, with our soul onboard.

It is essential to admit that over the millennia our soul has not always inhabited such a reasonably well-balanced, harmless body, as she does in this lifetime.



When I am serious about my practice of non-separation, I try to imagine myself and my students as so many pixels all interlocked with each other. Indeed, we are all inter-dependent on each other in the classroom and in the playground. We know how inter-dependent we truly are the minute a school tragedy flares up.

The same inter-dependence becomes very graphic the moment a bomb goes off somewhere or a train derails. As a victim, if only of a fainting spell, we are on the whole ever so grateful when a passer-by gives us a helping hand and sees us to safety.



It is an unusual person who, in a weakened state, refuses the help of that stranger who peevied her a few moments earlier.

A more mundane awareness of non-separation is helpful in the classroom, my learning ground, my testing ground.

I need to remind myself that my interaction with my students is symbiotic. Should all my students decide en masse to become self-disciplined and active learners – a wish in my less enlightened moments – how would I test my own developmental processes and hone my skills? Where would my challenge lie?



Our differences are only skin-deep, most of us already know that, but since we ALL have a soul at the helm and since we ALL have an energy field, we impact on each other in ways we cannot imagine.



I have come to believe that we are as unique and different as cookies on a slab once the cookie-cutter has done its thing.



What universal love requires mostly is for us to alter our personal 'energy', not necessarily our behavior. Similarly, when we 'go out of our way' to do a good deed but resent the hell out of it – we do not score points – bad energy.

When it is an ulterior motive that prompts us to do whatever for someone else, again no point scored – bad energy.

Where does that leave the *selfless* person who cares for a dependant, perhaps an elderly parent or a disabled child, but does so perfunctorily because only out of duty?



Whether it is in regards to our crap boss or dude who gave us the finger or the bitch who did ... whatever, non-separation is about practicing feeling *energetically neutral*. No spikes of adrenaline. No repressed anger.

If we respond in kind, a finger for a finger ... tsk, tsk - more points in the red.

Besides, we all know how arguments can escalate out of nowhere.



Be quiet like the fish in the stream. Don't argue. Don't explain yourself. Don't complain. Don't say *kloom*- say nothing at all. But accept What Is and say *toda raba*- say thank you and say, *sli'ha*–say sorry and make sure your heart is open. Say that your heart is open - **Moriya**

Energy Field – the Energy we put out there

Road rage is a great example of energies sparking off each other, but there are smaller rages happening in our households all of the

What is an argument if it is not a swapping of commingled by action/reaction, button pushing/reacting to each other's energies?



Energies attract each other like magnetic poles.



I have come to accept that *the other* is my mirror. No matter how calm I may appear to me, no matter how my lips may smile, my energy field bounces off yours.

For example, when you annoy me, it is because something in you triggers something in me that is *about* me. And, so, unless I can stay energetically neutral and in the present-moment, I spike – I react, usually negatively – and you and me are locked in a tango that is all too familiar.



Many a time, I have found myself in the aftermath of a present-moment that should have been inconsequential but did not end well at all.

Why not? My voice was calm. I was calm. My words were not inflammatory and yet there was a blow up.

One minute we were just talking and the next there are doors slamming.



Our energy field betrays us time and time again. There is nothing our energy field can do about it.

Although we can influence other people up to a point, but only IF the person is open to the idea in the first place, as anyone's daughter, as anyone's girl friend or partner, we already know that we cannot, not truly, alter anyone else's take on life. We can only try to adjust our own and remember that *likes attract likes*.



The only way to attempt a permanent shift is by checking that we are *in the moment* particularly when interacting with a *difficult* person or in a stressful moment.



We need to aim for being not just present but aware 'in the moment' ALL OF THE TIME. We need to flow through the other's negativity like the bow of a galleon ploughs through the water [or let it flow over us like water off a duck's back] but the shift will only happen when we are aware that our heart energy is present even at the loggerheads moment, not by feeling victimised, not by shrugging the other off, thereby setting up the next round.



Ironically, being in the moment means not reacting, through a sense of déjà vu, to a moment produced in the present. Let's Not Drink Today out of yesterday's cup.



We are back to the need of being in the present-moment, of not allowing our energy field to spike, of not being confronting. All we need is to practice being in the present-moment. We need to flow through it, in neutral, instead of opposing it – instead of hunkering down.



We only need to practice observing our reactions. Not letting spikes of energy, excitement, apprehension, adrenaline, resentment or whatever *taint* the moment.

The moment we spike, we 'touch' energetically. Whatever we touch sticks to us, just like the invisible germs that stick to our hands when we do not wash them carefully.

Whatever sticks to us is what we have to deal with sooner or later, again and again.

Sometimes we end up with a bad case of gastroenteritis.

Sometimes we end up with yet another argument and having to deal with its aftermath.

Sometimes we end up with one argument too many.

Sometimes we end up with a nervous breakdown, a cancer or a heart attack.



Our connection to all others is palpable when we catch a cold from *someone* at the office. It is so easy to accept that strangers sue strangers over passive smoking and that we depend on everyone washing their hands before they prepare our food.



And when a killer disease like tuberculosis or a flu pandemic make the headlines, even if countries far away, we pay attention. The HIV virus has taught us that we are all connected, even if worlds apart, but we drop the connection the minute we delude ourselves into thinking that the skin that keep us all wrapped up and *pleasant * to look at also makes us a truly individual being, an island of self-realization.



According to Paul Brunton in his book **What Is Karma**, *“The esoteric interpretation of karma recognizes that a wholly isolated individual is only a figment of our imagination, that each individual’s life is intertwined with all of humanity’s life through ever expanding circles of local, national, continental and finally planetary extent; that each thought is influenced by the world’s predominant mental atmosphere; and that each action is unconsciously accomplished with the cooperation of the predominant and powerful suggestion given by humanity’s general activity.”*

He adds, *“the consequences of what each of us thinks and does flows like a tributary into the larger river of society and there mingles with waters from innumerable other sources [...] That is to say *I*, an individual, share in the karma generated by all others, whilst they share in mine.”* [1]

Not unlike a storm water out of a pipe, really. Sure, we are all connected.



One afternoon, as we watched a rainstorm drown the coastline from inside the shelter of a beach cafe, my partner pointed at the sea right in front of us.

“Look at that!” she exclaimed. “One minute that sea is blue, dark blue even, and the next ... look! It’s like all polluted.”

She was right. The waves coming in had actually become brown. Their sparkling white crests had become dingy.

“Storm water from the drains on the other side,” interrupted the waitress, as she pointed to a rocky outcrop off to the right.

My partner and I looked at each other over our glass of perfect dry white wine.

“Look how it’s spreading out seawards from waves closest to the shore.”

Sure enough over a matter of minutes brown water had bled into an ever-expanding area of the sea.

“Ugly. Very nasty,” is all I could reply, mesmerized by the graphic illustration of what karmic *pollution* might look like in our energy field.

The following day, I went looking for the storm water pipes near the outcrop and, sure enough, though the rain had long stopped, tannin-colored water was still meandering through runnels it had cut into the sand on its way to the sea. By then, though, the ocean had processed it all and was back to its normal colors- varied hues of blue and green.

Like the ocean, our ego-persona appears to be managing well on the surface. It absorbs. It hides. It deals – up to a certain point. But our ego-personas have great limitations. They only rely on past memories.

The past is static and memory is fallible.



Should you now feel ready for a charming, cute and quaint DVD through which to pit your understanding of soul vs ego, spiking vs being in the moment and separation vs non-separation, I encourage you to view *Ratatouille*, directed by Brad Bird, Jan Pinkava.

It has all the right ingredients – great verbal and visual wit, a vibrant 3D animation and an unlikely but adorable main character, Remy, the rat.

All films can be deconstructed from a spiritual perspective by those of us who enjoy that extra layer but most, like *Brave One*, starring Jodie Foster, considered *good* in spite of their violence, showcase the dark, mechanical side of the universal ego-persona, whilst *Ratatouille* is simply delightful.



Happiness is achieved once there is no longer any attachment to the material world. Any attachment, even a small one, brings with it the fear of loss or the fear of loneliness - **Moriya**

Destination - Here, Now!

Being a good person, by anyone's yardstick, is one thing but, though it is essential, it is not what THIS process of karmic amendment is about.

Western philosophy and science trap the universe in the network of words, thoughts, equations and substitutes as well as an ongoing confusion of rules, laws, grammar and mathematics called *reasoning*. Sadly, we take in this network and make it rigid. We then use it as so many weapons against the ordered and logical spontaneity of nature.



As a rule of thumb, I will say that even as we consider ourselves thoughtful and caring, we are, to greater or lesser degrees, a part of our culture's worship of personal power and profit and therefore equally to greater or lesser degrees removed from our spirit's energy, from our energy field and the karma that is currently ours to edit.



The ever-spreading juggernaut that has become western-styled culture is one of upgrades and supersizes; of heroes who hit, throw, bounce or chip balls of varying sizes; of great, easy sex; of I want it now-I want it to be easy-I want it to be cheap-I want it to be fun; of self-indulgent behavior, of blame-shifting, of anger flare-ups, and of il[legal] drugs.

Our lifestyle menu is as full of mind-numbing options and escapist behaviors as a jellybean jar is full of beans.



The only assumed power we have is that of trying to 'make things happen' in a hit-and-miss manner, usually with a success that is relatively short-lived.

As the amateur juggler knows well, there are only so many balls that can be kept in the air before one is dropped. The juggler blames gravity. We blame karma.

The reality is that most of us are unaware of how any thought, any decision, any un-decision will boomerang ... somewhere, anytime, anyhow ... to hit us on the head or, if we are lucky, to simply bite us on the tail.

The sad thing is that by the time that moment occurs we will, as always, have lost awareness of its connection to that one action, or decision, made back in time. Yet, this synchronistic connection will nonetheless be real.



I have found viewing *Babel*, a film directed by Alejandro Gonzales Inarritu, an excellent way to fast-track understanding of cause and effect/action-reaction and karmic consequences.

I would recommend also having a look at the bonus disk, as it takes us behind the scenes where the turnstile of synchronistic connections and the invisible threads linking each of the characters to each other, are unraveled.



Being in the present, the only way to be if attempting to edit any karma, means not being mentally absent as we eat, talk and think. It means that we should be aware of ourselves, in the present moment.



Editing karma does not mean that we have to stop doing things we find pleasant. It merely means that we need to observe ourselves in the middle of the little moments spent alone or in our tribe, little and everyday moments that are as innocuous as the small breaths that link to a sigh.

Editing our karma begins with the observation of ourselves whilst riding the crest of the waves; the moments of pain we are desperate to avoid - the ones that [almost] break us; and others, usually the rarer ones, the ones we live for, the ones that are said to make life worth living.



The question at hand is where are we in between these peaks and troughs? Where is our head, where are our thoughts in between our highs and our lows?

Though children do not have adequate means of dealing with fateful karma, as soon as they become young adults, they do.



The theory is that our karma, through our soul's guidance, will never lead us to challenges [commonly known as bad karma] that we cannot overcome through a spiritual approach - an approach radically different from anything usually taught, practiced and observed in all consumer-driven societies.

A genuine spiritual approach is one that rips us away from the impulsive needs and greed of our mechanical ego-persona, i.e., the emotional buffers, the crutches on which we rely and no longer question because 'everyone is doing it'.



If you, reading these pages, consider yourself a good person and if others tease you about your generosity by calling you a 'bleeding heart', even you might have to overhaul your modus operandi just like the rest of us self-centered folks.

Even those of you who *fight* for a cause or would *kill* for it might have to reassess your MO if, once the laudable deeds are done, you pollute your own energy field as well as that of others - as with second-hand smoke - with bad moods and bristling energy.



What we are talking about here is mostly not about being good Samaritans.

Most of us do give to charity or help the Girl Scouts fundraise by buying their cookies. Some of us might even do volunteer work at an animal refuge or nurse the dying.



Whether in flashy ways or in tiny little ways, most of us are basically kind people. But most of us also come home fuming because the boss is trying to squeeze us dry or because we missed out on that 'perfect' opportunity or because our mother-in-law is at it again or because some asshole did this or did that *to us*.

Some people press our buttons and some occurrences do put us in a foul mood. Once home, we slam the fridge door, bark at the dog, at the kid, at the girl friend or demolish an ice cream tub, a bottle of booze or retreat behind a Do Not Disturb sign blissfully unaware that whatever we feel inside has permeated our energy field, our aura.



It is in our energy field that our karma gets calibrated.



Paul Brunton states that, "Thoughts tend to be creative and sooner or later it produces karmic fruit in our general environment. It is not necessary for your thoughts to translate themselves into deeds before they can become karmically effective. If they have sufficient intensity and if they are prolonged over a sufficient period they will eventually bring [appropriate] results even in external circumstances." [2]



People should be warned that cause and effect rule in the moral realm no less than in the scientific realm," he wrote. "They should be trained from childhood to take this principle into their calculation. They should be made to feel responsible for setting causes into action that invite suffering or attract trouble or lead to frustrations." [3]



Accidents do not happen by accident. In fact, they do not just *happen*.



Accidents are created inside our energy field. On the one hand, they are the karmic by-product of thousands of years of karma while on the other they are the by-product of however many years we have already celebrated in this lifetime.



Death, setbacks, illnesses, melt-downs, all in their many forms, are not mere confirmations that **Life Sucks and Shit Happens**. These blow-outs are orchestrated by our soul. They are the only ways she has to get our attention when the time has come to force us to rethink our modus operandi.

Isn't it only once we are stopped 'dead' in our tracks that we are finally willing, albeit under duress, to reassess our priorities?



As agreed in regards to the soul - if we have an energy field, as we do, what is its purpose?

Why hasn't it been evolved out like any other feature that became redundant over the millennia of our evolution?



I have come to take seriously the reality of our aura a.k.a. our energy field as intrinsic to karma and it is where the quality of our presence in the moments gets encoded.

Lip-service, self-righteousness and doing the right thing because pressured to do so do not seem to register as bona fide amendments.

Amending karma is not a matter of mind over matter.

It is more of a matter of energy over matter - the *matter* in question being the gross matter in our energy field.

It is our responsibility, as our soul's current incarnation, to amend some of the karma that she has accumulated during the millennia and certainly to amend the karma we have contributed to our energy field for X amount of years.



It is generally accepted that toddlers do not have an ego as such, not until they are about seven years old. But, of course, there are always exceptions. How else to explain child-murderers? I imagine that what triggers action so early in life has got to be something encoded in their energy field - a strong karmic debt hanging from another life - no different from those triggered in an adult killer.

Just as it is not generally understood that, just as our entire life is hard-wired into our energy field, which operates like a software and holds the code to our karma, so, too, it is our earthly karma to override...our karma.



Karma is not about us suffering, literally, any god's will. Karma is about self-actualization and, aptly, its literal meaning is "doing."

Just like the sea in itself is neutral, neither good nor bad; just like a pizza in itself is neither good nor bad to ingest, all occurrences that come our way, in themselves, are neither good nor bad.

When we respond to them in an energetically balanced way, they remain balanced. Love is only love; duty is only duty; family is only family - but tip either by reacting mechanically - through the usual range of negative energy spikes and Me-first behaviors - and out come their evil siblings; jealousy, possessiveness, dependence, authoritarianism, extremism - as ways to control the other - the one we love.

Love is love but when we mishandle this love by turning it into a possession/obsession, we alter its very nature and like the mad alchemist, we turn it into bitterness, even bitter hatred.

Similarly, the mishandled love of a god can turn to a fanaticism that excludes all reasonable thinking.



We forget about the duality of the physical world, and when we try to separate one attribute from the rest, its evil twin perks up.

Every action triggers a counter action - a reaction. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Put simply for now: if we pull back a branch to get through a forest trail, we should be mindful of how that branch will snap back into its original shape.

If we prune a branch, it will grow back producing many new branches.

If we do not water a plant, it will die.

If we merely tap the surface of a pond with our hand, we will create ripples.

If we throw a rock into a pond, we will create a splash.

If we let anxiety, anger or bitterness rule our emotions, we invite cancer into our cells.

If we chose to reduce the natural side effects of menopause by taking HRT, we invite in much worse, chemically induced side effects.

And the list goes on and on. This list is as endless as all our combined efforts to manipulate our moods, our lives, each other, our society, and the world beyond.



There is no such thing as an action that does not trigger a reaction.

The duality we experience within the physical world is as inescapable as the duality that reverberates to and fro from the physical to the spiritual.

Psychological fears are unhelpful as they play with our imagination and taint the context - the present moment.

Fear is good when we fear Nature's eruptions or a wild sea or when trekking solo in the wilderness.

As long as we flow one moment at a time, here now, and keep our energy field neutral, harmony is preserved - Karma is not disturbed.



Let us imagine that karma editing works like editing of topics in Wikipedia.

Let us imagine that our main topic is broken up in two sections:

1. Our karmic destiny - the one inherited at the instant our soul picked us as her

vehicle.

2. The karma that we have created for ourselves through each of our interactions with whomever our life has already intersected in a myriad of synchronistic ways.

Let us observe how our main topic on Wiki is being edited daily, many times a day. One erratic entry from me will attract, magnet-like, another unavoidable entry from someone else - action/reaction - as unavoidable as the polarity of two magnets.

Basic magnetism works on the simple principle of attraction and repulsion. The north pole attract south pole, just as the south pole attract the north pole.

Inasmuch as I understand the principle, it seems that only a few elements in the periodic table are attracted to magnets.

None of the elements, taken separately, make permanent magnets, though they make more adequate temporary magnets when close to another magnet. Similarly, the fact each one of us is attracted to certain individuals, certain locations, certain pathways, or even certain foods must stem from that inner software that is destined to lead us towards a specific goal because, supposing we were born as blank as a blank sheet, wouldn't we be attracted to everything and everyone, willy-nilly? Or to nothing at all?

Beyond what parents try to instil in their children, often without much long-term success, it is our soul and therefore the karmic software that has been hardwired within each one of us, pre-birth, that define our ego-persona.



Once we begin to establish a firm connection with our *soul* moderator, we begin to write in new entries and these appear to no longer be editable by others. In other words, our field of energy is upgraded and aspects of the old software are disabled.



It is only by taking charge of our own program that we can release ourselves to varying degrees of past karma, conditioned and nurtured *bad edits* to become freer souls, attracting different people, different situations and different outcomes.

Our destiny, our karma, is to resist being pricked and energized by the shrapnel of past events that we carry barely below our skin and to simply *get over them* or beyond them, but in an energetically wholesome manner.

Should we fail - no harm done, as All Is As It Should be at any given moment. No matter how many bad entries we have missed, we can always have another go at them tomorrow.

Karmically speaking, anytime we kick into the 'me first' or 'mine first', we blow it - no matter how many old ladies we have helped across the street.



Time to inject a little humor into this topic. any of you may know the story of a Scout leader telling her little group that at least once a week they ought to do a "good deed".

At their next meeting Chrissie, a ten-year old, was the first to volunteer an answer.

"Me and four of my friends, we helped an old lady across the street."

"Oh that's lovely, but ... did it really take five of you to help a little old lady cross the street?"

"Yes, because she kept pushing us off saying she didn't want to cross the street in the first place!"

If there is a lesson in this, it is that a string of random good deeds, alone, is not going to make us good people.



I have to admit that my personal conditioning has made me a rather self-centered sort of person, very much into the 'me first' pole position. However, I have come to realize it is my ego, my sense of separateness, that is flawed and that it sometimes leads me to flawed ways of thinking, reacting, being and needing.

Since I have begun delving into this business of the energy field that surrounds us all and the more I read what great Thinkers have to say on the topic, the more I am now convinced that IF we can indeed alter the quality of our energy field, over time we can edit our karma. Sure we can, but only IF we can accept that, separately and

collectively, we are not truly the *individuals* we think we are; there is nothing *unique* about any one of us.

We cannot be truly unique, as some of our thoughts are inherited from our previous incarnations, while others are passed on by our parents, teachers, the societal values in which we have grown up, and our own experience of life so far. They are even influenced by those of the group from within which we have chosen to rebel.

Indeed, even if we are rebelling, no matter how we are going about it, in how many ways is our rebellion truly unique?



The world we see that seems so insane is the result of a belief system that is not working.

To perceive the world differently, we must be willing to change our belief system, let the past slip away, expand our sense of now, and dissolve the fear in our minds -

Gerald G. Jampolsky

“Another illusion is that we are awake. When we realize that we are asleep, we will see that all history is made by people who are asleep. Sleeping people fight, make laws; sleeping people obey or disobey them. The worst of our illusions are the wrong ideas among which we live and which govern our lives.”[4]

In Search of the Present

Yes, I am on a quest of sorts – I am searching for a connection to my soul, right here, right now.

Admittedly, I have an ulterior motive – quite a strong one at that: I am trying to edit some karma out of my energy field by altering its properties.

This, from me, who a year ago thought about my soul as often as the molecular composition of my body, which was never.



What has since happened is the weirdest thing. As luck would have it or, should I say, as karma would have it, some thirteen months ago, totally inexplicably, I happened to connect with a woman, Moriya, who turned out to be a spiritual healer.

It soon became clear that this woman felt that her karmic mission in *this* lifetime was to guide whoever happened to be drawn to her approach to spirituality.



Putting faith in the old saying we find The Teacher we need once we are ready to learn, I assumed I had already found my spiritual teacher a few years prior in the form of the founder of a healing center whose hands-on approach to PsychoBioEnergy Psychotherapy made more sense to me than not.

Though each workshop cost \$500 to \$700 a weekend, a considerable drain of my savings, I felt privileged to attend all in the program over a two-year period.



If it is true that enlightenment comes at a price, when scanning the advertising section in any of the top selling spiritual magazines, one would be excused for thinking that the *price* in question has to be of a financial nature. It therefore stands to reason that the proverbial single mother of two is not likely to get much enlightenment in this lifetime. And this is perhaps her karma.



Though real wisdom cannot be bought, placebo *can* be. And a point worth considering is that, in matters of spirituality, we do not truly learn anything new. We merely remember what we already know from anterior lives.



The more the channel to our inner self is open, the easier it is to retrieve this memory.



Any 'new' insight comes not from our ability to learn and absorb, but is accessed from our soul. The events that trigger a search for spiritual enlightenment are merely the catalyst that gets us moving.



Moriya's spirituality is such that anyone who knows her initially thinks that this woman should live the protected life of a Rinpoche, a *diamond* in Tibetan terms, or at least that of a spiritual leader in a holy ashram somewhere in remote Galilee where the hills and the forests meet the sea.

There, she would be shielded from the hustle and bustle of modern living by a retinue of adoring disciples who would tend to her earthly needs, however basic, while keeping visitors at a respectful distance.



Moriya is not a woman of great wealth, at least not in terms of money in the bank. She has to earn her living as most of us do and balance her checkbook at the end of every month but, oddly for a modern day spiritualist, she has not yet charged

anyone, not even a *shekel* – she lives in Jerusalem – for any of the spiritual guidance she has been dispensing, humbly, quietly, in a selfless way for the past twenty years.



For the truly spiritually evolved one, our blocked and somewhat ‘charged’ energies can be energetically painful in ways I cannot even fathom but Moriya has accepted her mission as handed over to her by her soul - to make accessible and credible, from within an ordinary modern life, all that she knows, without the help of any spiritual-religious trappings whatsoever.



It is Moriya’s belief that by living and working unprotected, and in the thick of it all, her inner strengths are best tested which, she says, frees her from the possibility of ever feeling that she is *special*. In addition, Moriya neither feels at risk of burning out by having her spirit energy drained out of her and/or of becoming victim of her own ego, two well-documented conditions that affect many otherwise well-intentioned and genuine spiritual practitioners.



Long story short, never in my wildest dreams had I ever thought the universe would connect me to someone like Moriya.

I was even less prepared to become such a person’s spiritual protégée. And yet, it is how the situation has panned out, one enlightening email at a time, daily, over the past seven years.

Moriya has never missed a day. She has never skipped a reply. She has never taken shortcuts in her teachings. She has never asked for a postponement.

She has never asked for anything at all.

She has taught me all that I know on all matters of the Heart and Soul.



Besides Moriya's fluid decoding and seamless interpretations of the anodyne, but symbolic *messages* that come my way via any of my daily moments, each email contains an eclectic mix of teaching points, spiritual parables, and pointed analyses distilled from the hundreds of books of which she has an intimate knowledge and which cover all strands of religious and spiritual disciplines, from the most ancient expressions of the human spirit to what is now considered classic and esoteric thinking in metaphysics. Moriya has made it her business, over the past twenty-years to read and accept - or reject - all that

the major thinkers and theosophists have written on karma, the energy field, matters of the soul and reincarnation.



Since Moriya has generously gifted me many of her books, a fair chunk of her private collection is now sitting on my bookshelf. Every time I run my hand across their spines, I am aware of the challenge each book yet unread is posing me. My time is as elastic as old putty. It is not expandable.

I bump along like a little pinball from one deadline to another, from one situation I feel I could have handled better to another I could have handled differently.

Even when I manage to not blot my notebook, the ghosts of moments – past and future - invade my thoughts like so many phantom-limbs.

Was I ever an octopus in a previous life? If so, why can't I reconnect with the octopus's ability to *just be* - one simple propulsion at a time?



Moriya's approach to spirituality is the only one I have come across that requires no ritual, no picture, no mantra, no paraphernalia, no god worship, no expense of any sort, no workshops, no merchandising.

Put simply, we do not need anything beyond establishing a connection to our soul - this element of the divine, that is already within us, is all we need to tap into.

As Moriya, herself, is a massive anthology of all of that is esoteric writings, when receiving her teachings first-hand, even books are optional, if not for the intellectual stimulation of reading source material.



Life, even a mostly pleasant life such as mine, has never stopped presenting me with challenges of varying emotional charge which, I have come to believe, probably stems from not having been anywhere near unconditional love, certainly not as a child and a young adult. Yet I know that if I could stop fretting for a moment - right here, right now, if I could stop sifting through a miasmatic past while blinking apprehensively at the future, I do believe my days would flow better. Much better.



My life, you see, is unfolding right in front of my nose, under each of my fingertips, in the present, as I press each of the keys that make up these words. If I could just *be* in the present and *not* keep loading up **now** with the stale emotional clutter of yesterday, of **the last time**, of whenever, if I could refrain from playing forward ethereal scenarios released by an insecure mind, I believe the quality of my energy field would shift.

I believe it would allow me to be more like a little mountain spring - fresh, clean and transparent.

I believe I would not only be better at all that I do, as being a woman, someone's partner, a high school teacher, a daughter, a friend, a writer, but I would also have time to become a serious reader of inspiring thoughts with a lot of extra time on my hands in which to contemplate the meaning of my soul's current life, this life - my life.



Man is a machine, but a very peculiar machine. He is a machine which, in right circumstances, and with right treatment, can know that he is a machine, and having fully realized this, he may find the ways to cease to be a machine – P.D. Ouspensky

“And WHO are You?” you might ask

A few months ago I would have answered by rattling off personal specs: gender, age, profession, sexuality, social status, personal achievements, hobbies, likes/dislikes and so on.

Over the past few months, however, I have come to realize that I, C.C., am but an ego, a persona - the physical and physiological incarnation of my soul – and this is a concept I am still struggling with although intellectually I do understand it.

Roughly, as **V**, one of the main characters in *V for Vendetta* explained, “What was done to me created me.”



Until recently, I believed that the ME whom I tidy up every morning in front of the mirror was ME from the inside out - *my* choice of me, as I crafted myself minute by minute over the past fifty years - matured to perfection.

Now, I accept that all of what makes Me, this *individual* who needs to be seen, not necessarily heard, is not the end product of any creative free choice, as my Leo star sign would like to suggest.



Who is this Me, strong and independent, who feels all droopy on Day 2 of a miserable cold.

Who is this Me, normally so calm and collected, who ‘loses it’ when my partner, my mother, my boss, the person in the queue ahead of me *pushes one of my buttons*?

Can I really look in the mirror and say that I know *who I am*?

Or can I accept that whatever I see in the mirror and what others perceive of me is all there is to me?



2 [5]

Technically I am both Jewish and Catholic - the former because any child borne to a Jewish mother is Jewish by default. The latter because my paternal grandparents had me baptized when I was just a few months old – possibly in the hope of counter-acting any inherited Jewish tendencies.

Then, for reasons definitely beyond my control, I endured three years in a school run by nuns where the First Communion followed by Confirmation were compulsory for all Catholic students.

Having said that, as far as I am concerned, there is no god, great or small - only a huge cosmic force, yes, a creator of absolute order and precision, and an arbiter that keeps checks and balances through karma, personal and global – the same force that keeps the planets spinning however they need to spin to maintain life on earth.

However, what chaos there is in our lives, in our world, on our planet is 100% *man* made.



Me, my, myself and **I** – all four of us are one thinking, loving, eating, spending, working, drinking, ego-driven [...] *entity* – I almost said *zombie-like*, because mostly asleep, but I pulled back thinking it might sound a little too hardcore at such an early stage of my ramblings.



I accept that I am a divided entity: I have an intellectual self, an instinctive self, a moving self and, not least of all, an emotional self.



Though I consider myself a rather mature, introverted and quiet sort of person, I accept that my four selves, as ego-centric as juveniles, are running *my* show as, as for now, they have a will of their own.



I accept that I am the main source of my own misery. Well, not me, C.C. but, me, as my ego-persona, which is really me, C.C. Arrghh!

I accept that my moods, my anxiety, have a twin corollary imprinted in my energy field.



Reality check #1: I am made up of approximately 70% to 80% liquids and though my brain is the single heaviest part of me and the most documented, sliced, diced and quartered on innumerable science programs, I can only access a fraction of its power and, basically I don't *really* understand what makes it tick.



Reality check #2: My personality has been molded by an imprecise series of events; two or three massive ones, but mostly what has shaped ME is the repetitive imprint left on my psyche by a series of relentless, but seemingly innocuous happenings – *life, as interpreted by me.*



Reality check #3

All I have described above is, after all, not the real me. I have simply described my ego-persona – my soul's vehicle in *this* lifetime.

The real ME is my soul.

My ego-persona, me, as C.C., is not having much fun at the moment because I am not whom I thought I was - yet I am not in need of a straightjacket.

I am not delusional.

In fact, I have probably never been more aware of my constructed self as I am at the moment.



I used to think I was my own person and that, since I had always lived in *free countries*, all that I did was act out free will.

In reality, all that I *do* and *feel* and *say* has been pre-determined by the miasma of previous actions and reactions that go so far back my human mind cannot deconstruct it.

Put bluntly, I react freely to an endless range of stimuli, yes. But I do not act out of free will. I do not believe anyone does.



There is a story about a man who came to visit a spiritual teacher and the teacher inquired: "Why did you come in with all this crowd of people?" The man whirled around in astonishment to see who had snuck up behind him.

"Of course," Moriya explained, "there was no one. The 'crowd of people' that he came with is his clutter of old ideas; the conventional, but arbitrary, concepts of right and wrong, good and bad, and about love, life and death. He lugged all this around with him wherever he went, as people do.

"In order to be free of our ourselves," she added, "to flow spontaneously like water, and have faith in the course of things - knowing that our soul, our true mother, will never fail us - we need to discard all this baggage of conventional values."



Clearly, objective thinking seriously kills the fun factor. It's a real dampener.

In fact, the only way I can begin to understand *who* I am is by keeping my ego-persona very still.

By not saying anything.

By not wanting anything.

By not making anything happen.

By not **touching** anything energetically – by not reacting to the programmed knee-jerk reactions that make our personality.



We all agree that we cannot drag any of our possessions to wherever souls migrate to, once six feet under ground.

Possessions, in this text, refers to any baggage – emotional or physical - that weighs us down; any clutter that turns us, inside and out, into the familiar cartoon image of a turtle with its house stacked so high it totters on its back.

I am sure you have seen it - the expression on that turtle's face is always one of incomprehension and weariness.

This cartoon turtle never smiles because this turtle does not understand how her possessions have become so heavy.

She does not know how her clutter has become so unmanageable.

Does this mean spontaneity has to go and I have to develop the personality of a cucumber? Not if I find a way to be in the moment, as I do **spontaneity**.



On the train to Brindavan, a Swami sits beside a common man who asks

him if, indeed, he has attained the self-mastery that the title "Swami" implies.

"I have," says the Swami.

"And have you mastered anger?"

"I have."

"Do you mean to say that you have mastered anger?"

"I have."

"You mean you can control your anger?"

"I can."

"And you do not feel anger?"

"I do not."

"Is this the truth, Swami?"

"It is."

After a silence the man asks again: "Do you really feel that you have controlled your anger?"

"I have, as I told you," the Swami answers.

"Then, do you mean to say, you never feel anger, even --"

"You are going on and on -- what do you want?" the Swami shouts. "Are you a fool of a man? I have already given you an ans--"

"Oh, Swami, this is anger. So, I was right. You have not master--"

"Ah, but I have," the Swami interrupts. "Have you not heard about the tormented snake that lived near a temple? Let me tell you the story.

On a path that went by a village in Bengal, there lived a cobra that used to bite people on their way to worship at the local temple. As such incidents increased, everyone became fearful, and many refused to go to the temple. The Swami who was the master at the temple was aware of the problem and took it upon himself to put an end to the problem. Taking himself to where the snake dwelt, he used a mantra to call the snake to him and bring it into submission.

The Swami then said to the snake how wrong it was to bite the people who walked along the path to worship. He made the snake promise sincerely that it would never do that again.

Soon afterwards, the snake was spotted upon the path by a passer-by but it made no move to bite. Once it became known that the snake had somehow been made passive, people grew unafraid.

It was not long before the village boys were dragging the poor snake along by the tail, as they ran laughing here and there.

When the temple Swami passed that way again, he called the snake to see if he had kept his promise.

The snake humbly and miserably approached the Swami, who exclaimed, "You are bleeding! Tell me how this has come to be".

The snake was near tears and blurted out that he had been tormented ever since he had begun keeping the promise made to the Swami.

The Swami shook his head. "I told you not to bite", he said, "but I never told you not to hiss!" [6]



The best way I can connect with the real me is by *being* in the moment.

Not by interpreting and analyzing the moment to keep the sweet bits and spit out the rest.

And being in the moment is what I can *not* yet do with any measurable success.

But then again, I know I should not even be measuring and comparing anything.

So, it is back to Square One and the practice of *just being* - and observing.



I have accepted the challenge of interacting with the REAL me.

It is what my quest, the search for the present- moment, under Moriya's guidance, is all about.



In his preface to **Understanding the New Religions**, Jacob Needleman recalls the first class he attended as a student of philosophy. When the instructor asked the class what they expected from the course, Needleman responded enthusiastically, 'I want to know the meaning of life'.

"I will never forget the silence that followed. At first, I simply did not understand it; I assumed the teacher was waiting for me to say more, and so I went on talking while vaguely beginning to suspect that something was not quite right.

I don't remember anything of what I said, only that it all centered around the question, 'Why are we here?'

Suddenly, I noticed that the teacher was smiling. I almost said 'sneering' but that would probably be an exaggeration. At the same time, I noticed my classmates shaking their heads and I heard some sniggering as well.

I stopped cold. 'Go on, go on', I was told.

Bewildered and frightened, I did try to go on and speak about all the questions that had been troubling me, but my voice was hollow and I soon had to stop.

After another terrible pause, the teacher said (and this I remember precisely):

'Yes -- well, that is exactly what philosophy is not about. You are not going to get psychiatric help here (great laughter), or religious guidance (more laughter). No, you are going to be taught what it means to think clearly and well, to examine your presuppositions, to criticize and argue. That is philosophy.' [7]

Personally, it is the exploration of this type of thinking, which is also Moriya's, that is keeping me interested in the fathomless and all encompassing topic we are discussing here.



Over the past thirteen months, I have come to trust Moriya as implicitly as I do my life-partner – certainly much more than any doctor, specialist, healer, therapist, I have ever had to consult. Even more than the highly respected, and genial psychiatrist-healer who, some five years ago, decided that all I needed to get over my childhood issues was to take up chakra meditation. It is under her guidance that, on a weekly basis, I began the healing of my energy field and a couple of years later, met my first spiritual healer, the woman I was talking about earlier.



If it had not been for these two women's approach to matters of the soul, I would never have been able to recognize Moriya as a true spiritual guide - my spiritual guide.

Neither would I have been open to accept trustingly the regular sessions of distant healing she directs at my energy field. Meeting these three women, in the sequence just described, amounts to synchronicity at its best.



So "what's a good woman to do" when, like myself, she gets so frustrated by her struggles with the practical application of basic spiritual tenets?

If this woman is ME, she sorts out what her head and heart have come to *accept* from what she *understands* but has not yet integrated - the stuff that tests her mettle as she is finally awake and on The Path.



I am so totally convinced that you, and many readers, will value a shortcut of the teachings I have been receiving from Moriya that I propose to commit what I can to paper – *with her explicit support and encouragement.*



Once I had begun sorting through the notes derived from my correspondence with Moriya, with a view to embarking on this project, I came to the page in Andrew Harvey's, **Journey to Ladakh**, where Thuksey Rinpoche tells him, a writer and a poet in search of self, "*You do not need to stop working, but you need to strive for a new relationship with your work. You do not need to stop writing, you need to explore another way to write, to build another awareness to write from. You will probably not find this quickly. You will need patience. Many people will tell you that you are misguided, ridiculous. You must listen to what they have to say, learn from their criticisms, but not be swayed by them.*" [8]

That brought a great grin to my lips.



As I expose the sky-high citadel of my struggles with the lessons that are forcing me well beyond my comfort zones to expand my mind and my heart to finally grapple

with concepts never previously considered, I will at the same time share Moriya's interpretation of all that I find relevant to the topics discussed in any one section.



I will keep this as free as possible of both mumbo-jumbo hype and the highfalutin language of academia, hopefully as clear as the waters of that little mountain spring.

Hopefully, I will be able to give it back to you as fresh and clean as distilled by Moriya herself – for you to find as refreshingly fresh and full of light, as I do.



And so today, though I still only stand a little further up The Path, both my feet are firmly planted on it, as I experiment with the elusive but corner-stone concept of the absence of the *moment* in our wakeful hours, as discussed by Alan Watts in **The Way of Liberation**:

“We are living in a culture entirely hypnotized by the illusion of time in which the so-called present moment is felt as nothing but an infinitesimal causative past and an absorbingly important future. We have no present. Our consciousness is almost completely preoccupied with memory and expectation. We do not realize that there never was, is, or will be any other experience than present experience. We are therefore out of touch with reality. We confuse the world as talked about, described, and measured with the world which actually is.” [9]



One word of warning, even about the greatest philosophers and theosophists: all we can accept from them is their ideas.

Like most sport coaches who train high-profile athletes without themselves living the daily rigor they impose, most great thinkers have not, themselves, excelled in the spiritual actualization of their own beliefs. Alan Watts,

considered by many as one of the greatest minds of the twentieth century, was no exception.

In fact, the old *do as I say and not as I do* motto is best kept in mind when reading what the world's greatest philosophers say on matters most of us have neither time nor inclination to think about. That way, we do not risk being either hypnotized by

the brilliance of such great minds or tempted to disregard them for being as flawed and damaged as the rest of us.

Having said that, I am totally convinced that Moriya *walks the talk* of her teachings. With peace and acceptance in her heart, Moriya deals with the rub of every day life in Jerusalem – a healer of this the world, but no longer involved with this life's standard preoccupations.

Even if a confused and incomplete person makes a lot of money or earns many trophies or acquires a rare coin collection or an amazing spouse or sails around the world or goes into space or acquired many mansions in one way or another, that person is still a confused and incomplete person – Anon

Be Here, Now!

Though her life is hectic, Moriya tends to the connection to her soul daily, moment by moment, as she bounces email and faxes in cyber space for most of the same work-reasons we do. She tends to this connection while she edits manuscripts and theses for a select few professors in Jerusalem. She tends to this connection while neighbors drop in unexpectedly and through the incessant ring of the phone. "Typing," she says, "as a mechanical task equalizes the spiritual side in me."

She, herself, is convinced that her soul will keep her shielded from discomfort and unhappiness until the time of her death which, last time we talked about it, was expected to occur in her eighty-sixth year, twenty-two years from now.



Understanding the concept of being in the present, in the moment, in the present-moment, simply means being aware of ourselves within the endless string of random and boring little moments that connect our all major ones - the happy ones and the devastating ones - like the many small breaths that connect each of the *big ones*.



On the one hand, our 'big-breath moments' are the sharp-edged moments we live for while, on the other, they are the gate-crashing moments against which we have absolutely no protection and no way of keeping out; the bad news, the dark moments, the metaphoric blows to the head, in their myriad of forms.



To put it another way, being aware 'in the present' is what fits neatly within the space caught between two words: alert [...] passivity.



In his book, *The Fourth Dimension*, **P.D. Ouspensky** wrote, "*Another illusion is that we are awake. When we realize that we are asleep we will see that all history is made by people who are asleep. **Sleeping people fight, make laws; sleeping people obey or disobey them.** The worst of our illusions are the wrong ideas*"

among which we live and which govern our lives. If we could change our attitude towards these wrong ideas and understand what they are, this in itself would be a great change and would immediately change other things.”



I Need To Wake UP

Have I been sleeping?

I've been so still

Afraid of crumbling

Have I been careless?

Dismissing all the distant rumblings

Take me where I am supposed to be

To comprehend the things that I can't see

Cause I need to move

I need to wake up

I need to change

I need to shake up

I need to speak out

Something's got to break up

I've been asleep

And I need to wake up

Now [10]



Being in the present moment simply means observing ourselves in the tiny little present that in truth is the ephemeral present. We are aware of it, but let's not give it a name. Let's not qualify it or our response to it.



The present moment that links breath-to-heart only needs to be made tangible and quantified – acknowledged, but not judged.

It does not need to be labelled in any way, for the minute we slap a label on that tiny, bubble-thin moment, the minute we give it a rating, *that* moment is already of the past and we have missed **being** in it.



I have read it in enough books to accept that being in the present simply means shutting out the monkey-chatter, the relentless flow of random thoughts that are not part of any problem solving process – it is about shutting down thoughts that invade our brain the minute we stop talking.



Actually, I will even go as far as to suggest that most of our talking – en masse, as a society – has evolved as sabotage against being present in the moment and in favor of robotic responses to our buttons being pushed.

“We always think our negative emotions are produced by the fault of other people or by the fault of circumstances. We *always* think that. Our negative emotions are in ourselves and are produced by ourselves. There is absolutely not a single unavoidable reason why somebody else’s action or circumstance should produce a negative reaction in *me*. It is only *my weakness*.^[sic] No negative emotion can be produced by external causes if we do not want it. We have negative emotions because we permit them, justify them, explain them by external causes, and in this way, we do not struggle with them.” [11]



*“Here is a little story that could have been found in the back pages in **The Jerusalem Post**,” said Moriya in her usual light-hearted manner. “There had been an accident on the highway during peak hour traffic and a lot of cars were stopped bumper-to-bumper. People left their vehicles to have a look along with others who came out of nowhere to get closer to the action, as people like to do.*

The scene of the accident was very crowded. A journalist who happened to be there tried to get closer himself, but couldn't because of all the people rubbernecking. So, he thought about it for a while, and finally he came up with a brilliant idea. He started to push his way through the crowd shouting, "Let me get through! Let me pass! I am the son of the victim! It is my father out there!" Immediately the people parted to let him through. Once the journalist, camera held above his head, reached the scene of the accident, he saw that the victim of the collision was a donkey!"



Films are popular mostly because however improbable the plot, the characters supposedly react as we would.

The next time you are settled in front of your screen, observe the characters as they go about their business, supposedly *our* daily business, and decide how much thought goes into any of their decisions.

Have their buttons been pushed and they react on impulse, even if embarked on a course of action after a quick tete-a-tete with their brain?

Are these characters doing a knee-jerk tit-for-tit or tit-for-tat or are they present in the moment, energetically contained, operating from a balanced view of themselves?



Being in the moment simply means that once we have quietened our mind, we only need to focus on whatever it is we are doing at any specific moment – the moment under our feet.

All things equal, how would your actions/reactions be any different?

When I first learnt to rollerblade, I can guarantee that from the moment I would get up on my blades to the moment I unlaced them, I was totally **in the present**.

Ninety-nine percent of the time. No other way but. The second I would take my mind off the stride, I would invariably end up on my bum.

Whoever remembers the absolute focus that seized our brain while on our first driving lessons *knows* what it means to be present in the moment.

Oppose the novice's alert awareness to the zoning out that usually overpowers experienced drivers when we cruise on the highway, or even in our back streets.

Compare it to the blanking out that takes over as we scan supermarket aisles – which may well be the same zoning out that overpowers us as we lift food to mouth over breakfast. It may well be the same as the blanks we bring home, even after a sedate get-together with friends when we only remember some snippets of the conversations and the general look, perhaps taste, of the food we ate, but we can't remember what the person facing us was wearing or what else was going on around us – provided no one created a scene.



Being in the moment can even be made fun as we look at EVERYTHING the way a tracking ranger would observe every branch, twig, scrape in the dirt and inspect every animal dropping to get meaning out of the scene in front of her. Except that, ideally, being in the present moment means that the looking and the analyzing are done through our soul's eyes, not our 21st century brain. In this lies the challenge that karma presents to each one of us – the line in the sand that not many wish to cross.



Being present, in the moment, simply means understanding that whatever we are doing - want to do, or feel we ought to do - might have to be put on hold or even postponed indefinitely.

Such is the cosmic wisdom in which we need to trust since we, little blind mice that we are, have no idea of the fine mesh that settles invisibly around us until it holds us in its snare of spiritual lethargy.



Below an abstract drawing of what can only be that of a bloated frog, bearing a slight resemblance to Jabba the Hutt, is a thought left dangling by Alan Watts: "If you think by sitting you can become a buddha ..." [12]



OK, so I understand the theory, but I find the practical application, the day-to-day application of the theory very, very frustrating. Shouldn't being aware of ourselves within our present be as natural as breathing?

For me, it is as easy as breathing under water.

If I attempt a rating of the inner contentment I feel, I can only rate it a puny 5 out of 10. And that is because the amorphous lump of anxiety that sits heavily in the area of my solar plexus acts like a lead apron that smothers even my relatively carefree moments.

It is the price I pay, very much unwillingly, for *not* recognizing the unique newness and freshness of each moment as it presents itself.

The more I think of this, the more I understand that each one is, in fact, as *fresh* as the proverbial morning dew.

However, I can categorically say that some moments have an imprint that

seems very familiar. They look and feel and just about taste like ones that have already been played – over and over.

These moment bring on an “uh-uh! Here we go again” gut reaction.



Like the ocean, our ego-persona appears to be smooth enough on the surface. It absorbs. It hides what churns below. It deals - up to a certain point. But our *ego-persona has great limitations. Unlike the ocean, it is never renewed. It only relies on past memories. The past is static and memory is fallible.*



Reality check #1: no such string of seconds, strung one after the other, has ever presented itself to me in the past.

Not as it presents itself to me now.

Not as it will present itself tomorrow.

The irony of it is that I respond to most **new** moments within each **new** day through the jumbled and sticky mesh of past experiences.

Put simply, I deal with today-moments as I dealt with yesterday-moments.

I taint them with the same energy spikes.

How comforting is it to me knowing that I am not alone in doing this?

Resolution: *“Let’s not drink Today out of yesterday’s mug,”* dixit C.C. :-))



Being present in the moment means that I cannot let writing absorb all of my time and all of my thoughts.

As I type this text, there is a workman on our patio. He is adjusting the slant of our gutters. I am standing by to hear his call through the screen door, as he will want to explain this and that about the state of the rusted guttering and how he proposes to repair it.

Should his call catch me in mid-sentence at the keyboard, I will hit ‘save’ and I will get up.

It will be my cue to practice stilling my mind long enough to listen to what this workman wants to tell me and be in the fresh moment that has just presented itself to me.

If Moriya were here, she would know how to decode this man’s *chitchat* about my gutters to give me a string of messages of symbolic spiritual relevance - such is another of her gifts.

“Hello?” A man’s voice calls out from the patio. “Are you there?”

Oops, quickly hit ‘save’. Prac time!



Remember that a bad day is not a bad life.

A bad haircut does not make a bad person - **Anon**

Karma Is! Entry level 101

The present moves like a brook, a stream or the sea.

We cannot hold on to any part of it, not for more than a few seconds. But, then again, the present is also eternal because it is ALWAYS there.



If we could dredge deep down into the ego, we would bring out all the forgotten clutter from time immemorial. Everything past still exists there. Everything past creates and recreates ceaselessly our response to each present moment, which is the root of our struggle.

Again and again, just as waves form and break, again and again our reactions to situations, our actions to reactions remain unchanged and so does the magnetic duality of all we do.



We can only breathe in real time. Just as we cannot breathe under water, we cannot breathe in the past any more than we can breathe in the future. Truly, the present-moment is all we have and it is unlimited for the time we are on this earth.



Interestingly, when we run into a spot of *good luck*, it might be a break we have earned but again maybe not. It might simply be a positive windfall from general good karma that has latched on to us in a nicely synchronistic way. "Never look a gift horse in the mouth," they say.



These days of climate change are making it graphically easy to see first-hand how inter-connected all of us we really are.

Not only do we have to trust that, at a time of drought and water restrictions in a city like Brisbane where I live, everyone – including the neighbors I never see - are doing the right thing. However, beyond trusting Australia's politicians to put in place the best eco-strategies possible, we need to trust that the citizens of all countries will also do the right thing.



On the topic of group or societal karma, it is interesting to ponder why, globally, the western world is such an avid consumer of books – fiction and non-fiction, films and TV series that rely on violence.

Most of the seemingly innocuous family-viewing TV shows feed us violence, mental disorder and death, even as we try to enjoy our dinner.

Mainstream horror films like **Psycho**, the **Saw** series, forensics and even clever police/detective films like **The Bone Collector**, *thoughtful* films like **A History Of Violence**, action films like **A Man Apart** and *thrillers* like **Panic Room** must surely add up to 90% of all that is consumed for *entertainment* and escapism.

They all hinge on the violent, often vile or, at the very least, unstable aspects of the human mind.



Serious question: why don't we all, or at least 70% of us, demand *different* great books and *different* memorable films, ones that do not deal with violence, by boycotting 80% of what has been flooding the entertainment market?



Another serious question: on a continuum, where might the karmic responsibility of those involved in all aspects of these industries be placed?



Absorbing too much violence works out the same as eating too much of the same food - eventually the body rebels.

Whether the food in question is too much violence, too much salt or too much chocolate - the body brings it back up.

Again, Karma is inseparable from the whole.



Karma is thought of as being mostly bad and static, not usually good.

Since karma is energy, it is OK to compare it to the sea and its ebb & flow in the sense that it is never either good or bad – it just is.

Is the sea *bad* because a foolish swimmer strayed away from the patrolled area and almost drowned [or drowned].



Karma could also be compared to the sun that is neither responsible for the fools' melanomas nor for the scorched earth of drought-stricken lands nor for the fire that, in October 2007, spread along the Californian coastline, destroying much of the grand real estate, partly because 50 percent of the new housing development had been built in a severe fire-zone.

Fire just is.

The sea just is.

The sun just is.

Karma just is.



Yes, we can separate the peas on our plate from the broccoli and the pumpkin, but how can we separate the sunlight from dusk and the wind from the sky or from the trees? How would crops grow without sun or rain? Which is more important?

How would they get to our stores if the farmers and the truck drivers did not work together to put them there?

How would we get rid of our smelly rubbish if it were not for the garbage men and all those who work in the refuse industry?

How would we keep our cars on the road without mechanics?

How would we experience a fine holiday without the staff or the locals at the other end? After all, they do make our beds, feed us and entertain us. And if we happen to be there at a time of karmic payback, they do mend us the best way they can.



Because we often receive without thinking, we need to practice an awareness of the symbolic acts of giving and taking.

Though this thinking is best done without expecting anything in return – otherwise it only amounts to manipulation - in return we sometime get a smile, a little more care, an extra L for love added to our alphabet soup.



The 'bad' bits - the present-moments we notice, motifs woven into our life, the small corner of the huge tapestry that spans our soul's life - are simply challenges we must overcome without getting bitter and twisted, on our way to growing and evolving spiritually. How else can we do it, if not by dealing appropriately with the events of our lives?

Good intentions do matter, but because they are 'forced' intentions, I really do not think that they can do much for any of us, when it comes to karma editing, not any more than mantras, holy water, joss sticks, crystals, offerings, flagellation, praying and absolution, because they are often mechanical and exterior to our selves. It would all be too simple.

Karmically, all the decisions we make under the influence of our *instinct* or while asleep at the wheel, even the so-called unimportant ones, weave us inside the tapestry that becomes our lives.



Here is a story written by Simon Roof who spent some time in a monastery in Bengal. I have edited it for style, but only slightly. On the one hand, I couldn't help myself but, on the other, I did restrain myself from doing more with it.

There was a happy young monk who possessed only a water jug and the threadbare garments he wore on his back. One day, as was his habit, he penetrated deep inside a forest to meditate. There he stayed for a few days.

All went well except that at night mice came to gnaw at his robe. So, to protect his clothing, the young monk went to a nearby village and brought back a cat.

All went well for a while except that the cat was accustomed to milk and howled every time it had to drink water instead. So the young monk arranged to have a cow.

All went well for a while except that the cow wanted fresh grass to chew.

So the monk bartered with a farmhand to clear a pasture and to care for his cow.

All went well for a while except that the farmhand eventually got lonely and brought his family from over the hills to live with him. And so the monk and the farmhand constructed a suitable farmhouse to house the newcomers and the farm.

With all that and the monk playing his part, the farm prospered.

All went well for a while except that farm and household affairs became too time-consuming to manage for only two men. So the monk invited a distant cousin, a young woman who was said to have a good head for matters of commerce, to come to help them.

All went well for a while except that the girl soon thought that, since she and the monk shared the same house, perhaps it would be better for them to get married.

One day the former monk, now white-haired, was approached by one of his grandsons, a boy who was about to become a monk and wanted advice on how to lead a good and simple life. And the old man, musing over the question, suddenly remembered how his life had come to be such as it was. He sat bolt upright: "Child, whatever you do," he said fervently, "do not ever get a cat!" [13]



This story reminds me of the need to be in the moment and aware of what I am doing and why I am doing it. What may seem easy, logical and practical in the short-term may have me blind and hog-tied in the long-term, which is no way to evolve and amend karma.



Admittedly, though calibrated exactly to provide us with the challenge we need to grow beyond the trenches of our comfort zones, not all situations that come our way are karmically induced as a result of anything we have done, either in this life or in previous ones. There is no way of telling what stems from which, nor should it matter.

What is ... is and needs to be addressed in as much a spiritual manner as possible.



Using humour and parables, as she does to help separate emotions from objective thinking, Moriya sent me the following humorous piece in one of her teaching emails.

"There was a young woman who married a rich old man. Once she understood how boring a marriage she was into, she decided to take a lover. Whenever her husband went about his businesses, she would invite the lover to her house.

One day, while she was making love with him, the husband returned unexpectedly and the woman helped her lover make a narrow escape out of the bedroom.

Seeing her lying on the bed in her best lace undergarment, the husband was quick to interpret the situation.

He shouted, "Where is he?"

The woman feigned innocence and watched as her husband roamed from room to room, opening closets and searching inside cupboards. When he couldn't find any trace of a lover, he ran to the garden.

In front of the house he saw an open-top sports car. A young man was sitting at the wheel, using the rear-view mirror to adjust his tie.

"Ha!" cried the husband finally satisfied. "Here's the one who cuckolded me! Bastard, I'll show you!"

As it turns out, by the gate was an old wooden chest ready to be taken away to the rubbish dump. High on adrenaline, the old man heaved the chest above his head and hurled it at the car with all his might.

Now, the scene takes place in Heaven.

An old man approaches the gate and the angel asks, "And so what brings you here, old man?"

"Well," said the old man, "I returned home unexpectedly one day and found my wife in a compromising situation. I found her lover in his car ready to drive away. I was so angry that I picked up the old chest by the gate and threw it at him. Alas, the chest was much heavier than expected. My heart gave up and so here I am."

Then came a young man to the gate, and the angel asked, "What brings you here, young man?"

The young man shrugged. "All I know is that I was parked in the street, minding my own business, waiting to take my mother for a ride in my new car when suddenly a huge chest came crashing me from above, and here I am."

And then came a naked young man and the angel asked him, "So, what brought you here, young man?"

The newcomer replied, "All I know is that I was hiding from an irate husband inside an old chest and ... here I am."



At first glance, it might seem that the common factor in the demise of all three men is the old chest. But a chest is a chest is a chest.

On its own it is quite unable to create any drama.

So whose karmic energy was the catalyst for the culminating event that led to the three deaths?

As in all good thrillers, *Cherchez la femme*.

The woman, in this joke, provided purpose, time and place for all participants to come together, while the old chest is a mere instrument.



Nasrudin used to take his donkey across a frontier every day, with the panniers loaded with straw.

Since he admitted to being a smuggler when he trudged home every night, the frontier guards searched him again and again. They searched his person, sifted the straw, steeped it in water, even burned it from time to time. Meanwhile he was becoming visibly more and more prosperous.

Then he retired and went to live in another country. There one of the customs officers met him, years later.

"You can tell me now, Nasrudin", he said. "Whatever was it that you were smuggling, when we could never catch you out?"

"Donkeys", said Nasrudin – **Idries Shah**

Karma Is! Level 201

There are four major points to remember about Karma.

1. It is not exclusively the bringer of disappointments, pain or death. Though it operates in a way that our intellect cannot comprehend fully, karma is neutral. It is even-handed.

It is only our societal bias that gives it a color.



Karma is why some win at the lottery. It is why others fall in love. It is why we get the promotion that we've worked hard to get or the *lucky break* that, from a near-sighted perspective, we think will solve many of our problems.

2. Once two persons meet, their energy feeds off each other and as long as neither acts as a circuit breaker by reacting *non-mechanically*, their karmic destiny will be played out.
3. The culminating moment of any karmic situation is orchestrated according to the law of attraction and repulsion, as is encoded in our magnetic field, in our energy field, which works exactly as the magnetic poles of one, two, or a multitude of magnets all brought together for one karmic intervention, scheduled at a designated place, at a specific time and driven by one participant's energy.
4. There is no such thing as anyone having ever been in the wrong place at the wrong time.



The string of anodyne little moments that placed the sports car driver in front of the old man's house were set in motion by the cosmic plan, not by Lady luck or coincidence.



Whether they are ours, our friends' or strangers', from an individual's perspective, life's events, taken in isolation, appear as moments that can be reduced to stories by ourselves, by our friends or by the media.

All we have to ask is, "What's happened?" and we have all the facts neatly arranged in chronological order.

If we are addicted to watching other people's karmic events in full graphic color, news programs that run 24/7/365 give us the fixes that answer our craving. If not for this addiction, why would we watch strangers' glory moments and, mostly it seems, their moments of sheer agony and despair?



This is how karma works: someone's loss is our gain. A heavenly moment for us may mean that, for someone else, they go through hell.



Regardless of the number of participants in a karmic culminating moment, known or unknown to us or to each other – the karma of each participant being different from ours – they will be affected in varying degrees.



This is illustrated in the following humorous tale. *"There was once a man who was having a guided tour of heaven. Everything appeared as he had expected until he noticed a man, a very old one with a long white beard. The visitor found it odd that there should be a beautiful young woman seated on the old man's lap.*

So the visitor asked the angel, "What's the meaning of this?" And the angel answered, "For the old man? It's paradise. For the woman – it's pure hell."



Admittedly, though calibrated exactly to provide us with the challenge we need to grow beyond the trenches of our comfort zones, not all situations that come our way

are karmically induced as a result of anything we have done, either in this life or in previous ones. There is no way of telling what events stem from which, nor should it matter.

What is ... is, and needs to be addressed in as much a spiritual manner as possible.



I have come to realize that doing life, driven only by our intellect, is as helpful to us as driving at night in a car that without headlights.



Unlike the fly's eyes that are six times more sensitive than ours and can detect ultraviolet frequencies in the light spectrum that is invisible to us, our eyes are a function of the limitations of our human body and our largely untapped intellect. They enable us only to perceive what is directly in our line of vision. Like the most basic Gen 1 Sci-Fi robots, we can see only a few meters ahead. However, unlike robots, we don't usually scan and observe all that is there. Most of the time, unless we are involved in a research, creating something that requires our undivided attention or we are in love, we merely glance at what is directly in front of us.



We lack omniscience. We cannot see one minute ahead of where we are. As such, we can but have a limited understanding of the metaphysical laws that govern the cosmos.



We are saddened by the news that it was a baby's fate to die from cot-death or that of a toddler to be mowed down by a drunk driver who ploughed through the fence of the garden where this child was playing. Beyond a humane emotional response, and for practical reasons, we need to accept that such tragedies happen for a reason, however nebulous to us. The reason is that of karma needing amendment.



We can be as sentimental as we wish for as long as we wish, but we must not forget that a child's soul is, in fact, quite an ancient soul which has a purpose to fulfil in this lifetime. If this means being incarnated in a particular baby with a preordained short life, so be it.

As callous as it may seem, I am coming to accept that such a child's karmic purpose in this lifetime is to give the ones who are grieving the pre-destined wake-up they need in order to tend their spiritual selves. Which is not necessarily the response generated by a personal loss of this magnitude. Often, in fact, deep grief drives us further into our mechanical selves and makes us even more dependent on emotional crutches.

What? Lesson not learned? Like at school, we will be given another opportunity to learn what we must learn, either in this lifetime or in the next or in the ones after that.



Once our karmic rendez-vous is locked into our energy field and our nemesis is set on course, not unlike a *sleeper* spy, nothing can prevent our destiny from happening – neither how *good* we may have been, nor any geographical distance, however great. Though we know such things happen all of the time, here is a sample confirmation of what I am talking about.

News headline: Crash bus had been overtaking

The tour bus that crashed in Egypt killing six Australians overtook a second bus just before it rolled, the operator of the tour said today.

Witnesses have stated that the driver had not been speeding, that he had been driving well up to that fateful moment and that there was no explanation for his decision to overtake at that specific moment. The bus driver survived, but he has to process his role in this tragedy. Here again the bus is only the instrument.



Local Sydney headline: **Lawyer shot down aiding woman**

A GOOD Samaritan shot dead after going to help a woman in distress in Melbourne this morning was a 43-year-old solicitor.

The unnamed lawyer was one of two men who went to the aid of the woman who was struggling with a man near a taxi on the corner of Flinders Lane and William Street, in Melbourne's CBD, about 8.15am (AEST). [14]

In all, three people were shot before the gunman fled.

The solicitor was shot in the chest at point-blank range and died at the scene an hour later, despite the efforts of paramedics.

The other man who attempted to intervene, a 30-year-old, is in a critical condition in hospital after surgery.

The woman, 24, is in a serious but stable condition in the intensive care ward of Royal Melbourne Hospital.

Police said this afternoon they had identified a person of interest believed to be the gunman.

The gunman was on the run this morning after shooting three people on the corner of Flinders Lane and William Street, killing the man and wounding a woman and a man.

The gunman fled on foot after the 8.15am shooting and police later found a handgun at a nearby construction site, which was believed to be that used in the incident.

As heavily-armed police searched for the shooter, aged in his late 20s or early 30s, office workers were told to stay put and not panic.

Witnesses and police said the gunman appeared to be involved in a violent domestic dispute with a woman in a taxi and when two men intervened, he shot all three down.



This sad story appeared on the front page of my local newspaper, *The Courier-Mail*, on the 18th of June, 2007, at the time I was writing this article.

Like that of most, upon hearing the news that such a nice man had been blasted in the chest at point blank range in such particular circumstances, my first thought was *how unfair*.

Recently, here, in the Brisbane area, a 16 year-old boy stabbed his mother and his twelve-year old sister to death.

We are horrified when we hear of such a 'horrible' crime and of 'innocent lives lost'.

We are horrified at 'the injustice of it all'.

We are shocked to hear that such crimes do happen within 'lovely, quiet families', as is so often the case.

We are shocked to hear the killer described as friendly, polite and quiet by friends and neighbors.

Once the dust has settled, we find it difficult to accept that such a 'cold-blooded killer' is often unable to explain his/her actions.

The point to remember is that karma is the sole instigator of it all.

The killer is only the tool by which a karmic act comes to pass, but between the murderer and the victim, no one is ever innocent.

It is karma that, with impeccable timing, carefully choreographs the tragic moment from its embryonic beginning, years and years back, to the culminating act behind the shocking headline.

Karma guides protagonists towards each other. As in a play, film or novel, each has a role to play. Each decision takes them one step closer to unavoidable point of no return.

Karma drives them to that special climactic mood when the killer 'loses it.'

Karma magnetises all its puppets to a very specific, fateful meeting point.

Karma does all that with unerring precision and it does it for a reason. The difficulty is to understand that the crime, the pain, the agony and/or the death of the 'victim' have little to do, if anything, with moments created entirely in this lifetime.

Bottom line: there is no such thing as a coincidence. There is no such thing as being in the wrong place at the wrong time. There is no such thing as good luck and bad luck. And in the Court of Karma, there is no such thing as a 'innocent victim'.



Moriya, however, was quick to point out that the Lawyer's death, like all other deaths, particularly violent ones, happen so that the survivors have a chance to redirect/amend their lives by looking inward.

Their karmic mission is to refrain from knee-jerk responses intended to pacify their ego-persona, whether by seeking *vengeance* as opposed to justice through the Courts or revenge beyond the Courts; whether by indulging in endless grief; or by becoming agora-phobic or bitter or nuts or whatever – further starving their soul and adding more negative entries to their energy field. If this happens then, truly, it can be said that that person's death will have been in vain.



If we remember that our souls are ancient and that they have not always been incarnated in such wholesome and honest ego-personae as ourselves, then a swift death, here and now, can be attributed to amended karma. After all, one of our past incarnations might have been strung up on a medieval torture rack and pulled apart until death ensued. Or in more modern times, s/he might have died a slow painful death in a hospital bed or left bleeding to death in a back lane. In this lifetime, however, as in the case of the Good Samaritan in Melbourne, it was estimated that a quick, painless death was the just reward for something beyond our understanding.



In Proverbs 26:27 it is said: "He who digs a pit will fall into it, and a stone will come back upon him who starts its rolling."

Come on now, who do you, who do you, who do you, who do you think you are?

Hahaha, bless your soul.

You really think you're in control?

I think you're crazy Just like me - (Lyrics) Crazy by Gnarlz Barkley [15]



Karma Is! Difficulty Level 301

Spiritualists say that the world, as we know it, is only a manifestation of what is organised in the cosmos. They say that the real world is the cosmic world because it is from there that come, magnetised to us, all the impulses - the minute ones and the massive ones, the good ones and painful ones - that shape the daily lives of every one in our global communities and have done so since the Big Bang.



"All the world's a stage," Shakespeare wrote in As You Like It.

"And all the men and women merely players:

They have their exits and their entrances;

And one man in his time plays many parts ..."



What if, in a previous lifetime, the lawyer shot in the Melbourne incident, had killed someone with a sword, with a gun, with an anvil? Why not accept the possibility that this *someone*, in the current time- warp mirror-reality, turned out to be the gunman towards whom he was inexorably magnetised, through the catalytic energy of the woman in distress on that Melbourne street corner?

A role reversal if you will.



A tragedy played out according to the Cosmic plan, but from a cosmic perspective who is the real hero? Who is the real villain? It is not for us to know. From a spiritual perspective, any judgement passed by anyone in our world is purely arbitrary.

All we need to accept is that through the events interwoven in the huge tapestry that is our soul's life, karma is the unerring Great Adjustor. What we sow is what we reap. That is the certainty. What is totally uncertain is *when* and *how often* and *how*, in the millennia, our soul's incarnation will reap *our* harvest.

"*Pashoot meod*," says Moriya in Hebrew. Very simple.



Moriya said to me one day that the world that, according to the Christian calendar, is a couple of thousand years old is in fact nothing more than a perpetual masked ball where everybody's true identity is hidden by their ego-personae, our ego-personae. And although there have always been councils and tribunals set up to punish wrongdoers and criminals, when these miscreants reincarnate under a different mask, they can no longer be identified as such and they pass as innocent and pure entities. Having said that, we can, here and now, identify evil-doers in two ways. Either they are seen to repeat their evil deeds in a robotic way or they sacrifice their lives for the benefit of others.



If our world is only a mirror and we are only reflections of the real images, we need to turn the mirror around to look at events in reverse.



There are three more points I would like to make most respectfully, as I continue the deconstruction of the karma of The Good Samaritan in the news item.

1. Because it is a karmic impulse that cost the lawyer his life, not the gun, and not his encounter with the killer, the energetic baggage he will bring into his next incarnation will have been amended most positively.

This man died while aiding someone, in this case the woman who, incidentally was the karmically appointed catalyst. If it hadn't been for her presence on that pinpoint-specific space on the street corner, this particular drama, with these specific participants would never have happened.

2. The impulse to be at the appointed time, at the appointed place to participate in one specific event, even if only as an eyewitness, is hardwired in our aura. It cannot be resisted.

When destiny summons us, we go where we need to go.

With the precision of homing pigeons, all four participants in the shoot-out came from wherever they were, moments before, following their own impulse to come together, on a couple of square meters, right at the corner of Flinders Lane and William Street, while everyone else of the 3,850,000 people in Melbourne were off-stage.

3. "The other man who attempted to intervene," shot three times in the upper body, was revealed later as a Dutch backpacker who just happened to be there, in downtown Melbourne. He survived.

In all likelihood, only a few persons, not necessarily the ones closest to both these men *knew* them as they really were in *this* lifetime at that particular point in time, and probably no one has a clue as to what these men were like in their previous lifetimes - as is usually the case for each one of us.

Thus, the theory is that when in the *eye of the storm*, the more spiritually evolved the victim – *we do not mean, here, do-gooders or religious zealots* - the lesser the energy invested in the incident/accident, which explains why some people stare death in the face but walk away against seemingly impossible odds.



Moriya explained, "*C.C., let's say, it is your karma to one day get lost in the desert, OK? So, it's not going to be a nice experience. Maybe you suffer from dehydration. Maybe you come across reptiles and maybe you even get bitten. You get sunburnt.*

Maybe you also come across thieves. Interestingly, they only want your camera and your wallet.

Sure, you're unhappy and sure you're frightened, but when it's all over, you agree that the experience could have been much worse at every turn. So, although you got lost in the desert, you got rescued. You didn't die there and actually whatever has happened to you will become an anecdote to share with friends or to write about in a book. Look, put plainly," she adds patiently, "a karmic situation that turns out to be less serious than otherwise expected is like slipping in a mud puddle and falling on your buttocks instead of cracking your head open on the pavement."

Grazes, emotional pain, physical pain, agony, death - no one knows what is in store for us ... further up the track ... in the next moment.



To revisit some of the main points made earlier in this file, Moriya sent me another humorous piece to deconstruct from a karmic perspective – a part of my homework on that particular day.

"A young man who had to go away on international business wrote his girlfriend love letters every day. He wanted to do it the romantic way, via the post, not by email. After the 200th letter, his girlfriend got engaged to the postman."

Deconstruction: The culminating moment is set in motion when the postman became mediator between the girl and her boyfriend. Then the boyfriend, through his letters, becomes the mediator between his girlfriend and the mailman. The boyfriend and the mailman have swapped roles, but the three participants are the same. Karma changed their position.



In one of her emails from Jerusalem, Moriya, who translates her thoughts directly from Hebrew, gave me an analogy to illustrate the concept that karmic events are indeed *God sent* opportunities for us to move on.

"C.C., let's imagine that our life is a very long road with many refilling opportunities along the way," she wrote. "Tov [O.K./good, in Hebrew], you have a car and your car will work only when you put fuel into her, right? Now, suppose you just fill the tank and drive a long distance until you run out of fuel.

You wouldn't say: Wait, wait, I need to find the same gas station where I last filled the tank, would you? What you would do is be thankful for the first station along your way, fill up and drive on. Our ability to get energy from any gas station along the way is very liberating and is essential to our survival, yes?

The first station symbolizes our starting point in life. From there the sky is the only limit. However, people forget how to use their spiritual wings -- or maybe that they have wings at all - they settle in the state of chrysalis without ever evolving into a butterfly.

You see, people function in the same way as the car and its fuel. We eat and our body changes our food into energy. We also absorb energy from plants, from the air (prana), from other people and also from objects. Of course, we also have some karma to edit and some karma to live out. All this is energy. It's very freeing and very functional that we can and, in fact, are expected to refuel along the way, again and again.

C.C., there comes a time when people who have worked or lived together run out of fuel. They are meant to separate. They seldom do so voluntarily, preferring to return to what is energetically familiar over and over again regardless of whether or not this energy is healthy for them and regardless of how much travelling they could have done, if free to move.

What I'm saying is that there comes a time when we need to be separated, otherwise we live under the same regime of repetitions as older students being made to do again and again the same lessons that they were doing in early years. When, energetically, we refuse to budge, we are made to separate and move on by a karmic event, an incident our ego-persona interprets as a nuisance, a setback, or even a tragedy.

It is a very good opportunity to evolve and progress without being linked to the familiar gas station forever. But although people know all that and know that all of us will die one day, most live in denial and cling to emotional crutches and physical crutches and are too afraid to even look for a new gas station up ahead. After all, isn't there always another station up the road?"



Karmically, whether we survive a mishap unscathed or with only slight bumps and emotional grazes or whether we die on the spot, no one knows what is in store for us ... further up the track ... in the next moment.



Michael Reardon was one of the world's leading free solo climbers, a rare and highly dangerous extreme sport that entails climbing sheer cliffs, some 900 feet high, with only the gripping power of finger tips and rubber-tipped soft shoes - without any safety equipment whatsoever.

"On July 13, 20007, Michael was standing below a climb he had just completed.

The photographer, Damon Corso, was about 30ft away taking pictures of him. He was about 10ft [5 meters] above the sea and he had his hands out, celebrating, to say he had completed the climb of his life. But then a *rogue* wave just came in.

The wave hit him on the knees and he lost his balance and slipped on the algae. He was shouting for help but there was nothing Damon could do." [16]

Interestingly, Michael's personal saying was: "*Climbing may be hard but it's easier than growing up.*"



When a karmic incident comes crashing down on us, it is very appropriate to ask *Why is this happening to me?* or *Why is this happening to us, as a community or even as a country.*

Spoiler: It is appropriate, provided the tone is firm and inquisitive for, indeed, it is essential to try and get as close as possible to a spiritual answer.



Every mainstream religion reminds us about the consequences of our actions. Ultimately, though celebrated with different words and through different rites, I do believe that, once pared down and free of fanaticism, each of the mainstream religions share common spiritual beliefs.

In spite of this, I will risk saying that the greatest catalysts of wars of religions, past and present, aside from masking fear and greed, have been waged because of semantics.



On paper, all this makes a lot of sense. However, internalizing 'all this' until it becomes a part of my core understanding of the meaning of life and death does not come without effort. And so, as I learn more, I practice a shift of perceived values, slowly, slowly, one present-moment at a time. Daily I *practice* the acceptance of everyone, without exception. No matter how hard and against the grain.



The good news is that I do not have to deal with anyone's opinions or religious views and, in fact, I do not have to DO much at all, least of all talk.

All I need to do is simply accept them. But like anything related to this topic, acceptance has got to be genuine – from the heart, not merely from the head, not from the lips.



Giving of self IS what unconditional love and universal love are about. It is not about sending feel-good vibes to whoever we are naturally attracted to or comfortable with at the time of our choosing. It is not about being kind to the ones we like and love

and being indifferent to others. That would be way too easy and hardly the stuff of spiritual evolution.



It is only the skin that seals us up along with a cultural perception of the individual that give us the illusion of our uniqueness which, in turn, creates and maintains separation and isolation.

Basically, I'm getting to think that we are about as unique as any cookie can be unique on its baking tray, once the cookie-cutter has done its thing.

And this introduces another key concept, that of **separation** or rather, that of **Non-Separation**.



We, human beings, in our actions and in our thoughts are attached to what is already known to us, what it engraved in our aura, which is why we are only able to reproduce past thoughts, past actions again and again - **Moriya**

Messages Abound, All Around

“CC, don't you see the messages in all that is around you?” Moriya is persistent and my selective blindness when it comes to symbols does not deter her, quite the contrary. *“You have to learn how to look, and you will only progress further on the Path once you stop relying only on your physical eye-brain connection and switch to your eye/soul connection.”* She urges, *“Only then you will see and understand your messages. Soul only speaks to us in whispers and through symbols. What can I say, C.C.? *Ze ma-yesh.”*

The fact is that we are already reacting all the time to symbols, but we only interpret them from our persona's eyes and our eyes are connected to a brain that has long ago forgotten how interpret life beyond its linear way of thinking - That's because the brain cannot see a whole picture but only pieces which it tries to connect together - unsuccessfully.



The ability to interpret symbols correctly is one of the signs of spiritual evolution, as it affords us an overview understanding of the greater scheme of things.



When I used to tell Moriya that, beyond the obvious, I saw nothing and perceived nothing, she would reply wryly, *“When you want to see true meaning you need a bird's eye view. You need to stand above the mountain. If you cannot get that high on your own, what can I say? At least find yourself a ladder.”*



“Here's one of the first moments I experienced with deconstructing symbols intuitively,” Moriya wrote one day. *“It happened one afternoon when I went with to the bank with my mother. It was a long time ago, but I remember how my mother went inside and, as usual, I waited outside, leaning back on a railing and watching people go by.”*

There came a man with a bicycle. He tied it to the railing near me. Immediately I thought of balance.

Then an old woman with a walking stick exited the bank. Over her shoulders, she had a large white shawl. She passed me by only a few steps and then stopped. And I just KNEW she wanted to pull the shawl on her head.

The old woman turned around, looked at me and stood in front of me and without a word between us, I raised the shawl from her shoulders to drape it gently over her head.

The old woman said, "God bless you!" and she walked on.

Moriya explained further, "This was very symbolic because the old woman leaning on her walking stick symbolized the ego-persona, while the white shawl I pulled over her head represents the white light of when we are enlightened and blessed – the light from the Crown chakra.

"In regards to every wakeful moment as in dream interpretation, CC, you know I believe in accepting, in surrendering, in having total faith in our soul in the connection we have with her.

**Kamoovan, I also completely believe in being her servant. Unless I am willing to do that, everything else is just words and theory and more words and more theory. No different from the people who pass the theory part of their driving test but simply cannot pass the driving test in real streets."*



It is only recently that I have learned to accept that it is only an illusion that we are in control of our lives. Like the one who is learning to drive, we are in control as long as nothing unexpected pops up in front of us. We are in control as long as the road is dry and we are not distracted by anything. Having said that, the moment we are caught in the rain, have to go around a tight corner or brake unexpectedly, we lose control. We misjudge; we mishandle; we overcompensate; we brake too hard – we break down.



Looking at it objectively, we have to agree that from the cold that makes us feel miserable to the loss of partner or job or money to the mere suspicion that a night time intruder is in our garden, all manners of happenings from the tiniest to the disastrous have the potential to unnerve, unhinge and flatten our spirit for an undetermined period of time.



When we suffer or have anything else that makes us miserable,” Moriya added, “it means we have strayed away from our soul. Hey, it’s just like little kittens who are protected and happy around their mother, but afraid and unprotected away from her. So, as long as we stay close to our soul, things flow and we are protected, but the moment we are tempted to seek gratification away from her – we are vulnerable and exposed to dangers. What we reap from that will simply be of ourl our making.



Going back to the connection we need to have in our soul, it can only be established through a practice of unconditional acceptance of the other, *of all others* – including and particularly the *others* we don’t understand, don’t like and resent. There is no glory at all, no spirituality, in liking or loving only the few individuals on the planet with whom we get along, the ones who only push our nice buttons.



Men are born and remain free - equal *in* rights - as stated in the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Admittedly, it is left to us, women, to infer that we are included in this doctrine written in 1789.



Beyond physical equality, anyone who is asserting that they are on the spiritual Path has to accept that beyond the physical boundaries of our bodies – the same gross matter for one and all - we are also all equal energetic bodies – the same energetic matter for one and all.

And it is because of this energetic sameness that we need to grow beyond the illusion that we are quantitatively/qualitatively different, deserving, worthy and separable from one and all.

Indeed because of this sameness we can contact each other and understand at all the meaning of what we see and hear.

The spiritual reality is that we cannot be separated one from the other, not anymore than the rays of the sun can be fractioned and splintered off. Not anymore than the water contained in a wave can be separated in drops.

The most illustrious example is the ocean's waves. Their rushing and foaming and going and coming are our most delusive vision, because we are hypnotized by their outer appearance and cannot see that the real being is underneath, not moving, not reacting.



Having said that, it seems that the religious leaders of all established religions who preach about unconditional love actually practice **active separation** and **active conditional acceptance in all areas of their lives – even with their followers.**



I am quite sure that each of the mainstream religions has dictats equivalent to these found in the Bible:

Leviticus 19:18 - Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

Leviticus 19:34 - But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

However, when women are not allowed to rise to an echelon higher than that of nuns; when it seems clear no one is going to look for the soul of next Dalai Lama in the incarnate body of a infant girl; when homosexuals along with heterosexual divorcees are excommunicated; when enough Jews, once known as God's Chosen Children, agree that it is a good idea to build a wall that is 703 kilometres long and 8 metres high around the west Bank; when domestic abuses and sexual scandals seep up from the bowels of most fundamentalist of religious groups, when imans fight to kill other imans and their devotees – when religious leaders of all

denominations condone violence and murder 'in the name of God' - **in spite of the commandment at the root of every major religion to NOT kill** - I conclude that, if there is any truth in what Moriya says about the need for unconditional acceptance, then all of these religious people, starting with their leaders, must be repeatedly failing the practice part of their spiritual driving test.

Serious question: how dare they, then, speak in the name of God?

Serious question: why do millions and millions and millions of 'fervent ones' fail to see through the mask of religious hypocrisy?



Shame, or so methinks, on anyone who thinks that attempting to physically **remote control** anyone is a wholesome spiritual practice particularly when the controlling is done through exclusion, ostracism or emotional or financial blackmail, deprivation of privileges - regardless of whether it is done by a parent, a government, an educator or a religious leader - to a child, an employee, a congregation or against the *others* who happened to have been placed by karma on a different side of the fence.



*"So, what I repeat again and again, *ahoti haketana," said Moriya, "is that the only way to gain access your inner temple is to have faith in your soul, to observe yourself in the moment, and to really SEE the mechanical reactions of your ego-persona moment after moment, day after day, without ever regressing to what is easy and simple because, if it is easy and simple, it is mechanical and contains no spirituality.*

Just because billions of people have unhealthy eating habits, it doesn't mean they are good for you. CC, gradually you'll awaken more and more and one day you will see as clearly as I can. And by then you won't need your little ladder anymore to see rise above the material obvious."



Through an acquaintance of mine who occasionally sends me list-email, I received this amazing picture of a tiny deer. As I looked at this little animal, all I could think of

was how amazingly vulnerable and frightened it looked. I sent the picture to Moriya asking her to, please, deconstruct it for me.

*“C.C., you’re asking me about this picture of the little deer because all you see through your persona’s eyes is a baby deer that looks vulnerable and scared. *Ma? Can you not find the more important symbolic interpretation by yourself?”*

I answered the way I had answered the same question many times before.

“No, not yet, Moriya, I need more of your **savlanut*.”

“Savlanut, I have plenty,” she chided back. *“But don’t forget to trust your soul and to do your own homework, ahoti haketana,”*

“Yeah, yeah, I know. I have to do my own homework,” I grumbled resignedly.



Responding to Moriya’s emails is homework - long homework and hard homework.

Keeping up with the pace she has **imposed** however nicely - and for the best of reasons requires a lot more self-discipline than I thought I had. But, as she says, the real homework needs to be done *out there*, in the physical world, away from my keyboard.

Not only does such homework need to be done daily, it has to be done constantly, mindfully, moment by moment – in a state of Sati – the Buddhist term for being awake. And, yes, like Moriya, you, dear Reader, might already have guessed that the daily reading and the thinking and the writing come to me a lot more easily than execution on the terrain.

Unfortunately for me, Moriya is lot more interested in the quality of my daily homework than she is in my writing original material inspired by her teachings.

Ze ma yesh.

***Ze ma-yesh** = it is how it is

*** Kamoovan** = of course ***ahoti haketana** = my little sister

***ma** = what? ***Savlanut** = patience

Giving of myself - of my time, of my money - deprioritizing my persona's priorities in preference to addressing matters, items, activities in the order in which they present themselves and in the matter of their true priority – not according to which I am in the mood for - or which I think I can get out of the way the fastest. Awareness through each moment is the practice of being in the moment.



Before I say more about the flow of messages that are brought to us in our wakeful moments as well as our sleep, I need to explain that the channel through which we can interpret them correctly is blocked by the emotional clutter, the attachments, the fears, the clinging, the grasping, the craving, the wanting and various other limitations generated by our persona.

So, before we go any further, it is essential to take time to understand and *accept* one essential concept – one that, admittedly, I am still struggling with - that our persona is but the channel between soul and body. **Nothing more. Nothing less.**



You see, our soul knows all of *her* past incarnations, while all we know is *this life* seen through in keyhole mode through the interpretation of our brain that keeps churning up old patterns while living in fear of an elusive future.



Our soul sends us messages endlessly, relentlessly – while we are asleep in our bed or sleep-walking through our daily tasks.



The thing to remember is that our soul - bright and pure energy - is always awake, forever trying to shake us awake to the reality “that all things are impermanent; and that the self is not personal, not permanent, not static; and consequently that the individual does not exist as a permanent and identifiable entity,” wrote Jane Hamilton-Merritt in her book on Theravada meditation. [17]

So, as Moriya has explained it to me, our soul tries to establish a contact through our dreams. “*She use dreams as her most important tool to deliver the messages, and you have only to see how many people have nightmares or bad dreams because*

they are too mechanical or too sleepy, in order to see how hard our soul is trying her best."

Which is why before trying to latch on to bits of dreams, it is essential to clear the channel through which these messages are delivered and the channel is the persona - us.



Nasrudin was thinking aloud, "How do I know whether I am dead or alive?"

"Don't be such a fool", his wife said. "If you were dead your limbs would be cold."

Shortly afterward Nasrudin was in the forest cutting wood. It was midwinter. Suddenly he realized that his hands and feet were cold.

"I am undoubtedly dead," he thought. "I must stop working, because corpses do not work."

And, because corpses do not walk about, he lay down on the grass.

Soon a pack of wolves appeared and started to attack Nasrudin's donkey, which was tethered to a tree.

"Yes, carry on, take advantage of a dead man," said Nasrudin from his prone position, "but if I had been alive I would not have allowed you to take liberties with my donkey" – **Idries Shah**

The meaning of the story is quite simple: we associate life with the ability to 'think' and to 'do' things. But, although we are technically 'alive' and 'active', we are also quite 'dead' because of our inability to grasp the real meaning of life.

Before We Can Hope To Receive - we need to emit ...

This is a good place to share with you a poem, **Your Thought And Mine**, by Khalil Gibran, as it illustrates beautifully the duality between our persona and our soul.

Your thought is a tree rooted deep in the soil of tradition and whose branches grow in the power of continuity.

My thought is a cloud moving in the space. It turns into drops which, as they fall, form a brook that sings its way into the sea. Then it rises as vapour into the sky.

Your thought is a fortress that neither gale nor the lightening can shake.

My thought is a tender leaf that sways in every direction and finds pleasure in its swaying.

Your thought is an ancient dogma that cannot change you nor can you change it.

My thought is new, and it tests me and I test it morn and eve.

You have your thought and I have mine.

Your thought allows you to believe in the unequal contest of the strong against the weak, and in the tricking of the simple by the subtle ones.

My thought creates in me the desire to till the earth with my hoe, and harvest the crops with my sickle, and build my home with stones and mortar, and weave my raiment with woollen and linen threads.

Your thought urges you to marry wealth and notability.

Mine commands self-reliance.

Your thought advocates fame and show.

Mine counsels me and implores me to cast aside notoriety and treat it like a grain of sand cast upon the shore of Eternity.

Your thought instils in your heart arrogance and superiority.

Mine plants within me love for peace and the desire for independence.

Your thought begets dreams of palaces with furniture of sandalwood studded with jewels, and beds made of twisted silk threads.

My thoughts speak softly in my ears, "Be clean in body and spirit even if you have nowhere to lay your head".

Your thought makes you aspire to titles and office.

Mine exhorts me to humble service.

You have your thought and I have mine.

Your thought is social science, a religious and political dictionary.

Mine is a simple axiom.

Your thought speaks of the beautiful woman, the ugly, the virtuous, the prostitute, the intelligent, and the stupid.

Mine sees in every woman a mother, a sister, or a daughter of every man.

The subjects of your thought are thieves, criminals, and assassins.

Mine declares that thieves are the creatures of monopoly, criminals are the offspring of tyrants, and assassins are akin to the slain.

Your thought describes laws, courts, judges, punishments.

Mine explains that when man makes a law, he either violates it or obeys it. If there is a basic law, we are all one before it. He who disdains the mean is himself mean. He who vaunts his scorn of the sinful vaunts his disdain of all humanity.

Your thought concerns the skilled, the artist, the intellectual, the philosopher, the priest.

Mine speaks of the loving and the affectionate, the sincere, the honest, the forthright, the kindly, and the martyr.

Your thought advocates Judaism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam.

In my thought there is only one universal religion whose varied paths are but the fingers of the loving hand of the Supreme Being.

In your thought there are the rich, the poor, and the beggared.

My thought holds that there are no riches but life; that we all beggars, and no benefactor exists save life herself.

You have your thought and I have mine.

According to your thought, the greatness of nations lies in their politics, their parties, their conferences, their alliances and treaties.

But mine proclaims that the importance of nations lies in work – work in the field, work in the vineyards, work with the loom, work in the tannery, work in the quarry, work in the lumberyard, work in the office and in the press.

Your thought holds that the glory of the nations is in their heroes. It sings the praises of Rameses, Alexander, Caesar, Hannibal, and Napoleon.

But mine claims that the real heroes are Confucius, Lao-Tse, Socrates, Plato, Abi Taleb, El Gazali, Jalal Ed-din-el Roumy, Copernicus, and Pasteur.

Your thought sees power in armies, cannons, battleships, submarines, aeroplanes, and poison gas.

But mine asserts that power lies in reason, resolution, and truth. No matter how long the tyrant endures, he will be the loser at the end.

Your thought differentiates between pragmatist and idealist, between the part and the whole, between the mystic and materialist.

Mine realizes that Life is one and its weights, measures and tables do not coincide with your weights, measures and tables. He whom you suppose an idealist may be a practical man.

You have your thought and I have mine.

Your thought is interested in ruins and museums, mummies and petrified objects.

But mine hovers in the ever-renewed haze and clouds.

Your thought is enthroned on skulls. Since you take pride in it, you glorify it too.

My thought wanders in the obscure and distant valleys.

Your thought trumpets while you dance.

Mine prefers the anguish of death to your music and dancing.

Your thought is the thought of gossip and false pleasure.

Mine is the thought of him who is lost in his own country, of the alien in his own nation, of the solitary among his kinfolk and friends.

You have your thought and I have mine. [18]



The only way to morph our thoughts into something closer to Khalil Gibran's is by doing daily *clearing* homework and, to mine, I have recently added the practice of *non-separation* and *unconditional acceptance* of **What Is** as opposed to letting my mind drag me into its favourite game of **What-ifs**. So let us unpack this a little before returning to the topic of messages.



What better place to practice *non-separation* and *unconditional acceptance* of **What Is** than with the teenage students of the inner city high school where I teach?

The challenge of non-separating between students on the grounds of intellect and behavior is a major one any educator *on the Path* needs to overcome. This is partly because the choice we have made to become educators - though a free choice on the surface, like all other choices we apparently make freely, this one was not as free a choice as we would think.



The *spiritual* reality of the matter is that our soul 'manipulates' us in one direction or another according to what we are meant to learn, amend - or give back – in this lifetime.



It is true that most of us, educators worldwide, tend to 'process' our students. We dispense separatist, often stagnant knowledge, mostly on fossilized topics, in a bid to prepare a generation for a lifestyle in flux and for jobs that, for the most part, do not yet exist.



We do this in a climate of separation – the labels of *good* and *bad* students being the most obvious, along with those of *good* colleague and *bad* colleague; *good* parent and *bad* parent.

We hand out forms, tasks, instructions, pats on the back as well penalties along with assessments of our students' character and intellect on the *strength* [or should I say *weakness*] of what we observe within the hermetic and subjective environment that are our learning institutions.



Serious question: Good intentions notwithstanding, as educators, how active is our **heart** chakra, as we go about our daily business? How accepting are we? How inclusive are we?

Reality check: If we haven't tried to engage our heart chakra even before we got out of bed this morning, chances are it is flat-line.

Accepting the validity of this fact would go a long way towards explaining why education, world-wide, is as uninviting as Dr Seuss's "Green Ham and Eggs" - or soggy cereal.



A flat-line heart chakra does not mean that we are uncaring, unpleasant human beings.

Not at all.

It simply means that we go about our work in the mechanical ways that are inherent to the material culture in which we live - efficient at times, inefficient at other times.

Nothing more. Nothing less.



In June 2010, Bill Gates was again on the cover of Time Magazine. The headline was: **How to help those left behind** [*how capitalism can make the world a better place*].

"When I talk to executives from pharmaceutical companies," said Bill Gates, "they tell me that they want to do more for neglected diseases [like malaria, tuberculosis and HIV that decimate sections of the population in emerging countries] but *they, at the very least, need to get credit for it*. The Access to Medicine Index does exactly that." [19]



When you feel my heat, look into my eyes
It's where my demons hide

Don't get too close, it's dark inside
It's where my demons hide – **Imagine Dragons**, Demons lyrics

How Energetically Pink Are We?

*And so, you built a life on trust
Though it starts, with love and lust
And when your house, begins to rust
Oh it's just, metal and dust*

*We argue, we don't fight
We argue, we don't fight*

*And all foundation that we've made
Built to last, they disintegrate
And when your house begins to rust
Oh it's just, metal and dust - London Grammar - Metal & Dust-Lyrics 2013*

In 2013 115 Billionaires pledged to give away more than half of their fortunes. [31]

Very noble, indeed!

Very timely, too, as at the time of editing this chapter, in January 2014, more than 2.3 million Syrians have already found refuge in camps across Jordan and Lebanon. These camps could well become permanent 'cities' spilling over with some 85.000 refugees. [20]

But how open is the heart chakra of this powerful group of individuals who have it in their power to save millions of lives and dispense relief from pain to people who cannot dream of one day ever being able to afford it themselves?



Doing anything, however useful and commendable on the surface is not what heart-chakra love and non-separation are about.

Doing good deeds, like Tibetan villagers do, believing that cumulatively, each act of kindness buys us a better after life may be called thoughtful or religious, but it is not spiritual.



The truth of the matter is that each one of us - in whichever occupation we happen to be in – paid or not – we are in it for the same purpose: that of doing what we are doing through an open heart chakra.

Aren't doctors in the perfect arena to dispense unconditional love to their patients instead of simply repairing bodies wrapped up in consent forms?

Why has their profession worldwide been under such strong criticisms?

Why do doctors need to secure such hefty insurance plans against malpractice that many can hardly make a living out what remains of their salary?

Isn't the writing on the wall for doctors the same as for teachers as for nurses?

The same as for lawyers who, like mercenaries, process their clients, guilty or not, for a fee by dancing deftly through loopholes and around technicalities?

The same as psychiatrists who could do much worse than lower their fees, throw their desk clock into the trash can but open their heart to their clients instead.

Homemakers, retail and trades people are not exempt.



When it comes to us, educators, most of us can claim that we have been instrument in helping a handful of students over the years; that if it hadn't been for our support, understanding and selflessness at a particular moment in their lives, these students would have been chewed up and spit out by the system.



This is lovely indeed, but the point I am trying to make here is that relating more particularly to a few students here and there and *reacting* to their situation according to our needs and mood is a practice of active *separation*.



Besides, how truly altruistic are such rescue missions?

Do we not get congratulated for them?

Do they not trigger this “Gee, am I good or am I great” feeling?

Even in the absence of gratitude, do we not feel righteous and proud of our success?

Isn't the writing on the wall for parents the same as for educators?



Far too many generations of parents have confused the material *well-being* of their children with accepting love and spiritual integrity.

I am not a parent for I chose not to be, but I can still ask *how unconditional is parental love?*



Why are there so many children in child care?

Oh, as a feminist from way back, I know that women have to access the same freedom of choice, the same buying power as men, but the question is why do we, women and men, pay into the societal focus of aiming to accumulate money and more money to pay for more and more services as well as an ever-growing dependence on ephemeral pleasures and disposal goods that have been spawned - by money makers - for our *entertainment* as well as that of our children?



If it is true that money allows the rich to walk away from their mistakes – a line spoken in a film my darling and I watched last night - it never allows them to walk away from their karma and the ever growing tail of *unfinished business* they drag behind them as they 'live the life'.



I don't know about you, but when I read that Mark G Parker, the CEO of has earned a total of US\$8.8m in total compensation during fiscal year 2008h includes his salary of \$1.377m, stock awards, option awards and a non-equity incentive plan compensation of \$2.683m, I am glad that I have not contributed a penny to his little nest-egg.

Still, I can't help feeling a little queasy because clearly this possibly very nice man is not the only billionaire of our time.

Having said that, I also can't help but wonder about the state of his Mark G Parker's health and the stated of his emotional life – and it might be best to not think about the state of his spiritual life just at the moment. Bless his soul :-)



The financial and emotional fall-out of children raised in care is commensurate to the inability of moms and dads to better control their priorities.

Another side effect – or simply an excuse – is that putting their child in care prevents parents from practicing heart-chakra love with their infant or toddler – if they happened to be that way inclined.

Similarly, shouldn't the role of the childcare worker, as that of the aged-care worker, to deliver their ministrations from the heart, not just with their hands?



In one of her daily teaching emails, Moriya wrote: *“I see, for example, Tama, a friend, who works with little children while her children stay with other women, other children’s mothers.*

The sad thing is that these women take care of the strangers’ children better than they do their own children, especially because they come home tired and have no more savlanut for them.

In Israel, where the Hasidim, the ultra orthodox men, do not work because they spend all their time at the yeshiva, here are the crazy ways of the situation: on the one hand, the government and the Hasidic community urge women to have large families of 10 children. The women are asked to make the care of their children their first priority, but on the other hand, the government and the Hasidic communities encourage these same women to work outside of the home to bring in money for the family – which means they have to neglect to a great extent their own children while they take care of others’ children.

These women do drive and they come home even more tired after having also carried from the market heavy bags of groceries for their large family and climbed flights of stairs to reach their front door. And now they are to cook a lovely comforting dinner. Of course, they struggle to do this task with love.

From the angle of spiritual wholesomeness – nothing to do with the feminist doctrine - the separation of women from their children for the pursuit of money and the separation of the fathers from their wives and children in their pursuit of questionable ‘holiness’ through reading scriptures eight hours a day is very lo tov practice for all parties concerned.”



If physical comfort is not the same as emotional comfort which is different again from spiritual comfort, the question to ask is which 'comfort' are we giving to those we love?



Non-separation and **unconditional acceptance** mean not favoring one individual over another - not even in the privacy of our own thoughts – not even a child over his/her siblings.

That's it. That's all it means.



Serious question: what if, en masse, all of us, educators, had been drawn to the profession to practice one of the most essential skills not many in our culture can claim as their own - genuine real heart energy and compassion?



The good thing about practicing *non*-separation and acceptance is the same as practicing unconditional love.

It is not about **doing** anything physical.

It is not about doing **more** on the material level.

It is not about giving up more of our time or donating money.

It is not about hugging anyone or condoning anything that should not be condoned.

It is not about turning a blind eye.

It is not about accepting What Is, our daily reality in a *resigned* manner.



It is about opening our heart-chakra and letting our soul energy spread outward from within.

The good news for someone like me is that there is nothing tangible to see or do.

No one needs to know. How cool is that, huh?



Though I did say earlier that I was practicing *unconditional acceptance* and *non-separation*,

I have come to realize, as I am type these words, that what I am mostly doing is practicing **doing nothing**, which means *not* spiking energetically, not **touching** energetically.

I am practicing remaining neutral, even in the face of adversity at work and in the classroom.

OK, granted: it is seriously not for the faint-hearted. but if it were. it would not be karma amending. It would not be soul to persona channel-clearing either, would it?



Being angry or at the very least being annoyed is the sure sign that we are not accepting **What Is**.



Anger, resentment, annoyance occur because we would like to wave a magic wand to alter the reality facing us.

We cannot alter it and yet we seldom accept it = we become agitated, anxious – sick. Wanting to change any particle of **What Is** is a non-spiritual approach to problem-solving.

We cannot change anyone who is not biddable – or *bribable* - enough to be jollied along: not a student, not a child, not a parent, not an employer, not a neighbor, not even our cat.



Reality check: Accepting **What Is** is an extremely active endeavor that has absolutely nothing to do with ‘not caring’ or ‘giving up’ or ‘can’t be bothered’ the ‘victim syndrome’ or the fashionable ‘whatever’ shrug.



There is a type of person – often envied by others - because of their apparent ability to cruise through life, shrugging off any complication and moving on - literally losing no sleep over it - but as much as a careless or a cavalier attitude to life might reduce the risk of stress-related illnesses in the physical world, it does not place the person any further up the Path.



It is the realization that “constant decaying and changing is common to all things. You, the moon, this desk, all things are changing constantly. Happiness does not come from liking or not liking things which are impermanent,” wrote J. Hamilton-Merritt in her book, *A Meditator’s Diary*.

If it is true that **non-attachment** to all that is impermanent – the Buddhist concept of *anicca* - is fundamental to spiritual evolution, it is equally true that nothing changes when the person is not awake - not aware - of why the situation has occurred.

There can be no karmic amendment, no personal evolution without intent – for the greater good of all and the greater good of self.



There is nothing passive about practicing an *active* acceptance of **What Is**.



As an aside, gratitude, as any other emotion derived from our 'good' self, goes a long way in making our heart healthier or, at least, in slowing down/minimizing our 'tests' according to the degree of active acceptance and selflessness we manage to muster on a regular basis.

When the heart chakra is open, when we actively accept What Is, when we actively forgive and when we are 'painfully' aware of our blessings, enough so to feel genuine gratitude and humility ... surely that takes a BIG load off our tick-tocking human heart.



Spiritual enlightenment means that we understand that – while within the artificial environment people have created and from which they fight each other for a piece of bread, of land, a sum of money, a better position, a new mode of controlling each other this way or that way – in the real dimension things remained unchanged, exactly like the tumbler of water. They are as harmonious and perfect as ever-

Moriya

A new humanitarian project? Another campaign?

If altruism, like selflessness, is defined by the practice of concern for the wellbeing of others, true altruism is defined by the understanding that one has sacrificed something 'dear' for the benefit of others.

Bill Gates has once again been named by Forbes as the richest man in the world – for the 20th year running. [20]

That's in spite of past donations to charities of more than \$US 28 billion. [21]

Awesome!

Having said that, perhaps even more awesome is the stunning reality that Gates keeps getting richer all the time and that in 2013 he was \$US7 billion richer than the previous year – that's in spite of his best efforts to give away the vast majority of his wealth.

Such a massive commitment to aiding those not blessed as he and his family have been by good fortune definitely puts him in the category of mega philanthropist.

However, because neither he nor his children nor his children's children will ever live long enough – and presumably not madly enough - to make more than a dent into the Gates' fortune, neither he nor they have *sacrificed* anything 'dear' in the pursuit of donating the vast majority of the Gates assets – and so the box of the elusive 'True Altruist' is not yet his to tick.



The realm of love, reason and justice exists as a reality only because, and inasmuch as, man has been able to develop these powers in himself throughout the process of his evolution. In this view there is no meaning to life except the meaning man himself gives to it; man is utterly alone except inasmuch as he helps another – E. Fromm [22]

Truth: There are already **so** many projects out there, most of which have been implemented in one form or another for **so** long and, yet, not only poverty still exists in the hotspots of the 60's, but it is growing, so is man-made famine, so is political violence, so is refugee displacement, so is domestic violence in all its hurtful variations, so is the rate of diseases and fatal illnesses along with the rate of anxiety disorders etc. Sadly, our young ones do not seem better off for all the freedom that is theirs to enjoy along with the support they get from society, the education system, their connected peers and, presumably, their parents.



Although many more projects and campaigns for time-honored causes as well as the never-ending line up of new ones world-wide are getting the green light as we speak, there is no reason to believe that any of them, old or new, can bring on the sort of lasting differences that the target-groups need to access a modicum of Contentment.

Sweeping statements and observations are, of course, always inadequate, but it **is** very true that there can be no hope of inner Contentment for people in need of humanitarian support, without a minimum of all-around comfort. And yes, the current cultural belief is that IF we can make a difference to 1 let alone to 100 or 1000 lives, then, any project or campaign will have been worthwhile.



Though only a small percentage of 'lucky ones' in need of comfort and assistance get to access the support their situation would seem to require, yes, indeed, social and humanitarian projects do make emotional, psychological and financial 'differences' to a relative few. However, the motivation behind any such assistance altogether side-steps a massively concrete, though invisible, balance sheet many of us prefer to not know or think about because it places squarely the onus of care on the 'victim's' shoulders and that balance sheet is the 'Karmic Plan'!



No amount of human intervention can ever alter, let alone remove, the root cause of any of the complications - or of any of the benefits - any individual must face and enjoy in this lifetime.



From this angle, there is something else worth considering most carefully: penetrating the surface of any calm pond, if only with a caring hand, will inevitably create ripples. However soft and gentle this penetration and these ripples may be, they will displace the arrangement of the water and its components, both on the surface and also below - invisibly. When the water settles again, the same elements will be present, but differently arranged.



From a spiritual perspective, as surely as a bough bounces back when pushed, it is best understood that every action generates a counter action, a reaction, that will manifest short or long term, regardless of our best intentions. Thus, in terms of humanitarian endeavours, the big question is How can we, little blind mice that we are, anticipate the ramifications of the disturbance of any 'What-Is', let alone how this disturbance will ultimately, karmically, affect the ones we are planning to assist? Or, for that matter, when and how, in the fullness of time, might our personal lives also be rearranged by the resulting displacement created by our involvement?



Understandably, in our culture, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to separate tangible, quantitative, hands-on humanitarian support from considerations that are to us, mere humans, invisible and unfathomable – the unreliable whispers of 'guides' and 'higher selves' notwithstanding.

However, as this text is intended for an audience conversant with various aspects of spiritual philosophy, it should be acceptable to talk about karma without offending anyone and without seeming callous. Having said that, let's agree that karma, in this text, is not meant as the retributive, heavy-handed payback from a vengeful god for I have absolutely NO understanding of that sort of belief.

If, among ourselves, we have differing understandings of the nature of angels, of ego, of spiritual guides, of astral shells and of our inner self, higher self a.k.a. Soul or Higher Self or whatever we choose to call that cosmic energy, it is inevitable that we also have differing views on all that is karma, personal involvement in our lives as in others' lives – in the What-Is that make any current circumstance such as it is.

The belief that drives this argument is that it is through our soul that we have 'inherited' some karma, just as we also create our own. Soul is the watchful arbiter of our predominant thoughts and deeds from the moment our karmic balance sheet becomes activated sometime in our early teens.



The next most important understanding is that, we, seven billion individuals alive today, have been given time on this planet as our soul's vehicle in this lifetime for the sole purpose of amending as much of our karmic load as is truly in our power to amend. We have not been born just to eat more than we need and make our bodies sick and to work mostly to pay bills we don't need to generate.

We have not reached adulthood simply to create a family we, at times, wish we didn't have. Neither is it to say 'I love you,' but mean, Please, don't ask too much of me. Nor is it to create a remote network of friends to fight with or play with –when we are not asleep.



Once one is able to espouse the belief that if the bad as well as the good and the great moments that befall us do befall us for a reason, the next leap of faith is to accept that the intention behind each of these loaded moments is to assist us in our duty to act for the higher of self as well as for the higher good of others. We assist others covertly, from the inside-out, with heart-warmed energy that blurs separation. We assist others overtly when they tap us on the shoulder, asking for our help.



Regardless of the tenor and color of any such moment, each is but a hotspot intended to push us beyond our usual modus operandi, beyond our auto-pilot reactive impulses, beyond our fears, our insecurities, our wailing - and even beyond our outraged self-righteousness – just so that we can be heart-REAL and, thus, begin to amend a teeny-weeny portion of our individual karma, as we go.



At the center of this belief lies the notion that ‘fate’ never gives us more to bear than we can manage, if only we cared to dig deeply, not merely into our emotional reserves but, most particularly, by accessing the pure spark of cosmic energy that is present in each one of us - regardless of what we choose to call this spark.

However flippantly they are stated in our culture, the tandem beliefs that ALL happens for a reason and that there is NO such thing as coincidence are correct.

Oh, easy said, for those of us who belong to the white middle-class of a democratic country, one powerful enough to protect its borders, yet wage wars elsewhere. Easy, too, for those of us who, as far as we know, are, for the time being, of sound mind and body. Yet, within the framework of our own circumstances, we, as everyone, have our share of karma to amend from the inside-out.



The sooner we begin making our little ant-like tracks on that path, the better, for the haul is mighty and it is long. In fact, our current path has been centuries in the making, if not more, and remains centuries in the making, one of our soul’s incarnations at a time – with us on deck, right here, right now.



An exploration of the intricacies of group karma, such as the karma that has ‘plagued’ the Jews throughout history, or the ‘Gypsies’ or the people on the African continent and that of the generations of slum-dwellers born and bred on mountains of smouldering refuse exceeds the scope of this chapter, as does the very difficult topic of child suffering through ill-health and/or parental abuse.

Having said that, a theory of what might be at stake in such otherwise incomprehensible situations has been previously discussed.

Serious question: when it comes to rescuing people from their own circumstances, how do we know for sure that, karmically, it is in their KARMIC best interest, as well as in ours, to be partners in this rescue?

Interfering in people's circumstances could be akin to playing god without having either a god's omniscience and omnipotence. Best intentions notwithstanding, our meddling can potentially become a rather loaded business that creates ripples of varying degrees in our lives as well as in those of others. Basically, instead of amending karma, such involvements might be counter-productive by being, not value-adding, but 'karma- adding'.



Regardless of any humanitarian righteousness, how karmically-wise is it to assist the picking and choosing of anyone's circumstances? What if, in the fullness of time and unbeknownst to us, though our role would only ever have been that of a karmic 'tool', our assistance turned out to be a case of tossing someone out of the frying pan into the fire – and scalding our hand in the process?

The invisible, fathomless, but nonetheless constant flux of the karmic mesh that links us to a number of unknown others is well worth considering, if only for a moment, through the lens of our cultural habit to get involved and DO something i.e. whether, negatively, to manipulate and interfere or seemingly positively, to improve and assist, which characterises active involvement in other people's lives.



Whether any situation in progress is a 'good' one or an 'unfortunate' one, we never know anything about how and why the anterior, long-gone mesh of protracted moments has generated the energies that magnetized the said situation for the persons in question.

We, mere humans, are never in possession of that information first-hand. We are not in the loop of any need-to-know arrangement. All we ever get are one-sided, personal interpretations, often emotional, of something that came to pass. Similarly, we have no idea how subsequent moments will begin unfolding for these persons, be that at the emotional level or at the physical level. A snapshot in time, witnessed or retold, is only ever a snapshot.



We are also neither omnipresent nor omniscient in the lives of the ones closest to us. Perhaps a more disturbing truth is that, unless that person chooses to disclose their most intimate thoughts and needs to us, we can never penetrate the realm of their psyche. Of course, quite tragically, the double secrecy of thought and needs inherent to our species is also inherent to us.

Assuming that we ‘think’ we know what has come to pass or what is currently going on in another’s life is vastly different from truly knowing anything that beyond the facade. Which goes a long way in explaining why it is so painful say, for parents, relatives and friends to not have known, let alone guessed, that a child, regardless of their age, was feeling so distraught as to commit suicide – or feeling so unheard as to wreck havoc in others’ lives, as retribution for their own unavowed pain.

Partners, relatives and friends are also surprised when getting confirmation that the one they thought they knew so well had also acted ‘against character’ by being unfaithful to promises made and had acted unethically – over a period of time, sometimes years.



Like the incessant cosmic energies of the sun and moon that control our lives in a vast number of ways, many of which are intangible, the energy of karma is always at work.

A fait divers that comes to mind as an illustration of the invisible connections that connects cause and effect even through an often long retardant fuse is, for example, that of the woman who was helped to escape a violent relationship.

A kind neighbor offered to bundle her and her young daughter into his car. He drove them to what seemed a safe place away from the woman's raging partner.

A few weeks later, the woman happily took on the job of cleaning person for a nice middle-class family of three and counted her blessings. That arrangement remained satisfying until one day, while the family was away, a friend of the family's son arrived at the house drunk. Too drunk to successfully force himself on to the woman – he was not too drunk to inflict a near fatal blow to her head, as she defended herself. Left alone in the house, the woman haemorrhaged in the hallway until her young daughter found her close to death. Using her mother's cell phone, she is the one who punched in the numbers for an ambulance. The mother underwent cranial surgery and needed many long months of rehabilitation. Her young daughter is still in foster care.

It is quite probable that the kindly neighbor has had no opportunity to hear of the end result of his well-intended intervention and any cause-and-effect ripples energized long before his intervention - and as a result of his intervention - will simply have vaporized.



When the causal links are still fresh and obvious, If only I hadn't/If only she hadn't ... are likely regrets that many of us have had occasions to utter, even if only to ourselves. However, it should be understood that nothing we attempt will ever alter anyone's karma. Thus, we must not hold ourselves responsible for any rescue that does not end as we had intended – nor should we compliment ourselves for any rescue that ends as wished, at a particular point in time. All we have done is displace and alter, the time, the place and the 'tool' of an outcome that was ultimately destined to eventuate.

Having said that, even accepting that everyone is always at the right place and at the right time, when asked directly, one must never refuse assistance to another, regardless of the person, place and time of day - regardless of the nature of the complication – as in that spontaneous giving of help lies a karmic challenge crafted specifically for us, for we, too, always find ourselves at the right time and at the right

place to meet the new challenge intended to ‘push our buttons’ and challenge our comfort zones.



One thing to keep in mind for now is that but very few of us are able to monitor more than snapshots moment in the lives of anyone we rescue and in the lives of anyone featured in the media. We are simply not omnipresent and neither are we omniscient.

In any case, if that woman’s ‘bad luck’ story seems too extreme, a closer look at circumstances that have preceded some mishaps, tragedies [as well as ‘good luck’ stories] might help bring the point home. Interestingly, though unaware of any particular reason for doing so, this article began taking shape at just about the time cyclone Sandy hit ‘landfall’ on October 29, 2012.

A few days later, a précis of what I meant to explain materialized via the New York Times’ clever attention grabbing ‘teaser’ to an article entitled **Storm Deaths, Mystery, Fate and Bad Timing:**

They stepped in the wrong puddle. They walked the dog at the wrong moment. Or they did exactly what all the emergency experts instructed them to do — they huddled inside and waited for its anger to go away. The storm found them all. [23]



The flip sides of tragic circumstances are amazing stories of karmic ‘good luck’ and a most heart-warming good luck story is that of Ahmed Mustafa Kelly, the 19 year-old Iraqi born with four dramatically underdeveloped limbs. Ahmed, now a competitive swimmer, represented Australia at the Paralympic Games in 2012. [24]

His story goes like this: Ahmed had been dumped in front of the Mother Teresa Orphanage in Baghdad and, particularly as a quadriplegic, he was not expected to live. One day, in 1998, at the age of 6, he ‘met’ Moira Kelly, the founder of the Children First Foundation. Touted in some circles as a modern-day saint, Moira Kelly formally adopted Ahmed [along with his also disabled brother and his two co-joined

little sisters]. Their benefactor created a vastly different future for Ahmed, a highly charismatic child - as well as for his siblings. The rest is history, as the expression goes, but the real rest still lies ahead in the future and remains veiled to all.



What should be clear to all is that once the 'message' has been delivered, in this case the message of unconditional acceptance/love delivered by Moira Kelly, the message has to be fostered, cultivated and passed on in the same manner- unconditionally and freely – without the trap of any monetary compensation.

It would, then, seem that Moira Kelly's karma was to pass on the baton of unconditional love to four Iraqi orphans in this very particular manner. Thus, it could be said that such a selfless person as Moira Kelly was karmically made blind to any doubt or fear – blind, also, to the cautionary advice we can only imagine she received from some well-intended family and friends.

Though there is no human accounting for the way karma does its thing, the ability and eagerness to 'pay it forward' in an equally spectacular, but humble and selfless manner, is the likely karmic mission intended for Moira's children, irrespective of their own physical handicap and irrespective of their own emotional potential. As is generally agreed: it is what is on the inside that counts – the most.



At any given point in time, the aftermath of a disaster reveals a number of 'good luck' flash points that gladden our hearts. As the physical walls of separation come tumbling down, disasters tend to bring neighbors and communities together.

For a finite period of time, some of those at the epicentre of any tragedy actualize the real meaning of the exhortation to *'Love thy neighbor as thyself'*.

Most recipients, many of which would, ordinarily, 'rather die than accept help from strangers', accept this heartfelt assistance whole-heartedly.

The reward for those who have lent a hand and/or have given of self, the kind ‘souls’ they showed themselves to be in a particular instance, is that the media glorify them as ‘heroes’ and, for a few days, they can bask in the glow of the fifteen minutes of fame coined by Andy Warhol. In our culture, this is as good as it gets when it comes to ‘loving’ others.



However, in the chapter entitled **The Practice of Love**, Erik Fromm, in his book, **The Art of Loving**, explains that our culture is more comfortable with the modern maxim ‘to do unto others as you would like them to do unto you’ because we are commonly unwilling to ‘love’ our proverbial neighbor, anyone within our circle of ‘energetic’ influence. To love means to feel responsible for someone, to care for that person in an ongoing manner.

Love goes beyond doing. Love goes beyond problem-solving on anyone’s behalf. Love has nothing to do with saving a life.

‘Doing unto others,’ says nothing about love and its over-arching exhortation is to simply treat the ‘other’ fairly. “But,” adds Fromm, “the practice of love must begin with recognizing the **difference** between fairness and love.” [25]

Indeed, the practice of love must also include a reflection on the limitations of ‘lending a helping hand,’ which is usually as close as the best of us get to ‘loving our neighbor.’



Having said that, the post-Cyclone Sandy coverage has gladdened us with more than a few personal stories of survival against the odds and of neighborly ‘love’.

These accounts are heart-warmingly similar to those revealed in 2011 in the aftermath of the floods that devastated the state of Queensland, here, in Australia, where 70 towns and over 200,000 people were affected, and 35 persons died. And these stories were very similar to those that flowed on from our Black Saturday bushfires that killed 175 people in 2009, and those that came in the wakes of

Cyclone Tracy, Hurricane Katrina, the 2011 Slave Lake wildfire, in Alberta Canada, and those stemming from the 2011 Tohoku earthquake in Japan.

Clearly, tragedies and disasters do bring 'us' together for a finite period of time but, with growing awareness, they should be seen as delivering the cosmic message that we are, collectively, indeed, quite able to love our neighbor as ourselves and act selflessly.



The other message these disasters, as every other mere 'incident' bring us is this: if what we had built or bought had to be destroyed or lost, it would then be childish and karmically futile to even dream of rebuilding or resurrecting in the same manner, for the same reasons and following the same pathways as whatever has just been taken away from us.

Everything that happens, does happen for a reason, right? And yet, what most people itch to do, the moment their insurance company gives them their pay out, is to rebuild what was destroyed, often in the same place, usually with the same aspirations and with a feeling of we shall overcome and nothing can stop us.

Very few would be those who, particularly when the insurance company appears to be obstructionist, would intuit that the karmic reason for this 'cruel, compounded, heartbreaking setback' is to give them time and opportunity to realign their geographic location and their priorities with the ubiquitous need to rethink thinking - a bid to reshape from the inside-out an important element on the karmic blue-print of their lives.

The added message from any tragedy or disaster can only be to flag the need to [un]clutter, [un]think, [un]possess, share and cleanse, as is literally done for us by the fires, the tsunamis, the run-of-the mill rains and, more spectacularly, by the supercell storms.

Superstorm Sandy killed many more people in Haiti than in the States but, there, not only did it flood a great number of cities, reaching deep into their foundations and

weakening them, as floods do, but it further pushed the point for deep-root cleansing by flooding an unprecedented seven subway lines.

Underground tunnels being reputed for their generational layers of dust, grim, debris, sewage, rats, shady deeds and, at night, the potential source of dark primeval fears, the message could not be any clearer for anyone interested in thinking past global warming and past a godly wrath.

As an aside, it has come at great cost to us as a civilisation, that, for all intents and purposes, the focus on materialism has eons ago supplanted the focus on the real purpose and real power beaming down on us from the supernatural realm.

Sadly, the only aspect considered supernatural we like to hear about and invent things about is that of dark occult practices and all that is ghoulish – our immature interest in ‘ghosts’, astral shells, and ‘creepy places’ seems to be the sum total of our understanding bar, for a shrinking few, a genuine, old-fashioned faith in any religion.

Yes, it is most unfortunate that the concept of good luck - and its flip side - have become separated in our vernacular - therefore in our consciousness - from the superstitious belief that supernatural and deterministic forces were the one and only ones to dictate the course of events – not random fluke.

When Cyclone Sandy developed into a hybrid storm feeding on differences in temperatures and air pressure, forced by the Arctic air pattern to veer towards heavily populated areas of the Northeast United States, the consensus among many scientists was that it was largely due to bad luck.

Given the accepted general line of thinking, Andrew Cuomo, the Mayor of New York, had nothing more insightful to say than, “We need to make sure that if there is weather like this, we are more prepared and protected than we have been before.”

[26]

He is absolutely correct in thinking that better preparation is more necessary now than ever before – at all levels – from the inside-out.

Unfortunately, we, along with our leaders, keep making incorrect links between 'cause and effect'. We, as them, are as blind to the tremendous collective energies created by personal, group and societal preoccupations world-wide, as we have been, for eons too long, to the more visible pollution we have been tacitly creating together.

- ❖ Because of the breadth and depth of the link of our collective/personal karma to ongoing acts of Nature, the last chapter, **Angry Planet – Global WarNing**, is entirely devoted to it.

We are all acutely aware of the ravages man-made pollution [*is there ANY other?*] has inflicted upon the planet in the name of progress. From the first steam engine to the washing machine to the computer and beyond, all manner of automation has been thoroughly welcome into our homes. Humanity has been lured by the promise that less physical effort around home and work would produce happiness in home and heart.



It can be said that the conflict of modern economy vs the people began as far back as the philosophy of John Locke [1632 –1704] and the principle embedded in his famous Treatises of Government that stated that money served to buy labor.

The subtext was that it made no difference whether the labor bought was produced by animals, machines or humans. Thus, this man's notion became ours, regardless of spoilage and regardless of the disparity in wealth it created among social groups.

Adam Smith [1723 – 1790] enshrined that model by linking wealth to god's will and to this day, the American dollar affirms this through its motto: In God We Trust. Yet, let's not ponder whether the shakers and the movers of our current economy feel closer to god than the folks who line up at their local soup kitchens.



Eventually, advertising became the mouth-piece of the handful of capital owners, those who truly shaped modern economy according to their 'greater ideals'. The generations who preceded us swallowed the hook. The generations alive today have no other model than that of living as if they truly believed that adding more bling to life and maxxing out plastic cards would, eventually, generate happiness. Besides, is there any other option than consuming as much as we can to 'save jobs' in order to keep the economy going?

Even though we are painfully aware of the obvious lack of correlation between an automated, a digitalized lifestyle and any degree of inner contentment, as a herd, we go on seeking and embracing more and more so-called progress.

Whether living in the hubs of ultra modernism we all know and love, on the steppes of Mongolia or in the dammed deltas of the Mekong River, more and more of us worldwide are daily attempting to buy into the delusion.



It is easy to understand how masses in the first generations born in the wake of the American Founding Fathers' philosophy on modern economy would have been energized to claw the best they could their way up the yellow brick road of capitalism being rolled out in front of them as smoothly as Astro turf. But what about the next ten generations? Or the last five? Or ours?

After all, nineteen generations later, we go on acting as if incremental degrees of physical comfort and getting things done faster with less personal involvement lead to a palpable heightened degree of inner contentment.

We go on acting as if the time and effort saved by not having to do the laundry by hand enabled us to spend quality time with our children. We go on acting as if time saved whizzing around in a car rather than a cart was spent making the home a better place.

We go on acting as if the source code of our digital gadgets enhanced our emotional love life and boosted our inner contentment. Thus, very few of us are seriously willing to trim down our consumption of what keeps exacerbating the problem.

Assuming we even know about the links between, say, the ubiquitous use of tourmaline and coltan in the electronics industry, most famously that of our smart phones, and the effects of this mineral trade on the lives of most Congolese, how many of us, 7 billion people, would put their hand up to say NO to the mining of such minerals?

Shock! Horror! Australian mining giant, Rio Tinto, is currently well into a \$6.2 billion project intended to extract 1.2 billion pounds of copper, 650,000 ounces of gold and 3 million ounces of silver each year from the Gobi desert, in Mongolia. All is already in place and mining is planned to begin early in 2013.

Yes, we can point the finger at megalomaniac mining companies in general. Yes, we can shake our heads at the mistaken Mongolian government, at the jubilant surveyor who was first to realize the site's potential.



Yes, we can also *'tsk, tsk'* at the misguided Mongolian folks ready to swap the mustering goats to drive gigantic machinery, thinking that millions of ounces and pounds of minerals extracted from their grazing plains will enable them and their countrymen to finally access the American Dream - the key to their inner contentment – glimpsed in grainy images on TVs set in a 'corner' of their yurts.

But imagine the [presumed] sacrifices we, in the west, would have to make if Rio Tinto, and those companies who have been ravaging Earth's crust and drilling her core, walked away from any new mining pursuits! Imagine the limitations to our lifestyle, to our 'progress' if the Sudan- Saudi Arabia alliance dissolved in the Red Sea basin instead of beginning deep-water mining it as of 2014!

Oh, no, no! Let's not imagine any such changes because should any such imaginings come true, on a grand scale, they would crash world economy forever! It would be far worse than during the Great Depression of 1933! Imagine how the suicide rate would sky-rocket!

Only dedicated utopia-seekers into minimalism with a penchant for subsistence farming would pump the air shouting, "OK! Game on! Bring it on!"

Imagine, leaving the car in the garage, if only on a part-time basis!

Imagine doing away with our cell phones and tablets!

Imagine saying no to all plastics!

Imagine making do with much less dazzle and bling in our department stores!

Be that as it may, the bottom line is that as long as we can only react, we react no better than little blind mice in a maze, scooting along from impulse to impulse.

Sooner or later, it might even become more and more difficult for us, as a civilization, to go on 'outsmarting the surge'. [27]

In the meantime, as this article is being written, the 'unfortunate' folks on Staten Island emote their dumfounded sense of loss with such graffiti as the one that has gone viral, "Goodbye, Sandy. You broke our hearts," and we read, too, that, "Mother Nature sent in Sandy's cold-hearted little sister, the storm called Athena, to mess things up a bit more." [28]



The damning thing about our collective belief in random and fatalistic good/bad luck is that it absolutely strips us of any personal responsibility, which could explain why we choose to hold on to that belief as actively as a baby to her mother's breast. To accomplish great things, we must dream as well as act – individually and collectively – quietly, in the moment, one moment at a time, from the inside-out, starting with what should be simplest to manage - our heartfelt energies. Sir Isaac Newton did state in his Third Law of motion that

- whenever one body exerts force upon a
an equal and opposite force upon the first body
- for every
- forces always come in equal pairs

which can be summarized by saying that every 'object' persists in its state of rest or uniform motion on its trajectory unless it is compelled to change that state by forces imposed upon it.

Let us not assume for a minute that merely because we have been endowed with a brain, we, humans, are exempt from this universal law.

Most often, it seems, certainly on the news, anyone who has survived a would-be fatal incident or illness puts it down to good luck. Anyone who finds themselves at the wrong end of any incident puts it down to bad luck and often adds with a dismissive shrug, "Not meant to be." However, each of the major religions, be it god-based or prophet-based, holds notions of blessings, or their lack, as a system of rewards and punishments, administered by a supernatural force in response to human deeds.

In Islam, for example, the concept of good fortune and its opposite are determined by Allah according to the merit of choices made at any one time. In Hebrew, *Mazel tov* is used to mean Good luck or even Congratulations. Its literal meaning is good 'drop from above'.

When the Talmud states that we are not subject to mazel, the intended subtext is that we are not to feel hindered by a pre-destined path and pray for the 'good drop' from heaven. Instead, we are enabled to alter the blue-print of our destiny, according to our own actions, the only ones that ultimately determine our fate. Even Gautama Buddha explicitly taught his followers to not believe in random luck. Interestingly, the ultimate aim of Buddhism and Taoism is not about the correct belief in a god, but about the righteousness of actions.

Secular folks seldom think of god unless a sudden turn of events has frightened them. Then, like children, immediately they turn to 'Father' for a quick-fix solution. Father will make it all go away, is what they seem to believe.

Still, when pushed to think seriously about the big questions, the catalyst for life and the directions all lives take as if they, indeed, had a life of their own, even secular folks tend to agree that whatever befalls us is ultimately the result of a god's decree.

Ironically, though such a belief should go a long way in prodding secular and religious folks alike into an active acceptance of their circumstances, they, too, on the whole favor the idea that random 'good fortune' or 'bad luck' are the source of life-shuffling events. Instead of shouldering, from the inside-out, whatever testing event their god has supposedly given them as a challenge, they do all they can to squirm away from the source of their discomfort regardless of where this discomfort sits on the sliding scale of moments – even if true anguish and despair, alone, should be positioned at the top end of that Richter scale of emotions.

Funnily enough, rare would be the person to so actively squirm away from a joyful moment or implore 'Father' to remove any good luck from their life and, yet, such moments, too, are intended as testing challenges, albeit unbeknownst to them. Good moments, 'lucky' breaks and near misses, too, need to be shouldered correctly – not merely dissolved either in champagne flutes or in rounds of tequila shots.

The only way a lily-livered attitude to life's moments makes any sense is in the belief that, equally, any sort of luck or a god's whim remove from us any sense of personal liability or personality.



Objectively speaking, actively favoring the notion of randomness above all others makes little intellectual sense, if any. Pushing a little further along this line of reasoning, atheists should have no problem whatsoever in accepting the concept of karma over that of random luck, as it is not god-driven.



Philosophic existentialists are convinced that they have no inner selves and that they amount to no more than what they appear to be.

However, Kierkegaard said that truth was subjective and that people were best understood from the inside. On the topic of personal authenticity, it would be a misled existentialist who would think that values are unrelated to choice and therefore to actions. Most erudite existentialists understand that our world is not that absurd.

The fact that, for such folks, a thinker's free will equates the will to decide on one's moral actions does not mean that the arbitrary line between good and ugly morals is blurred. A genuine existentialist knows to take responsibility for reactions to actions. Therefore, even an existentialist who is not a fence-sitter should not wail when the reactions to actions, the fruit of free will, are either unpleasant or tragic. Though stoicism befits such a person, perhaps sadly, mishaps of any sort fail to lead to any learning/growing curve.



The blue-print of our lives comes from an energy that has no name and has no shape. It has never asked for the trappings of ritualised religion. It has never asked to be worshipped. It has never asked to have any of its invented names and pronouns referring to it written with capital letters. This energy for some is called 'god'. For others, it's called 'soul'. For others it's called 'karma' while others call it ... whatever they respectfully call it.



If this energy has not asked to be either personified or anthropomorphised - sure signs of human interference in search for that ultimate good but stern father figure – regardless of the sacred documents we link to it, it does however expect us to go forth and multiply ... our heartfelt deeds. It expects that we make our conscious moments that much more conscious and worthwhile. In exchange, incremental degrees of personal wellbeing will be eventually added to our lives, all in the fullness of time - it does not run on a bartering model.



We, as a group and as individuals, even as atheists, would stand to benefit a lot more from the content of our lives, if we actively accepted that what keeps us ticking is no more our efforts to lead a healthier lifestyle than that of offering prayers and rituals than the 'satisfying' trappings of success within our social status.

Similarly, it is not being poor or having a penchant for at-risk lifestyles or being trapped in dead-end relationships that cause our demise. If it were so, rock climbers

and deep-sea divers, thrill-seeking folks, food-indulging ones and folks trapped in dysfunctional relationships with self or others would be quickly despatched to 'the next world', while all millionaires, home-bound folks and 'health-fanatics' would live on to inherit the earth. Clearly, it is not so.



In the spirit of pointing out what should be obvious to us all, a lovely story of 'good luck' comes to mind: last October, while keen to reveal hidden maritime secrets, and working alongside treasure hunters, Jane [not her real name], a local conservationist, an experienced diver, was attacked by a three meter shark. Though Jane never caught a glimpse of the creature, it bit her on the thigh and buttocks. Jane was airlifted back to Australia and the skin grafts eventually reacted as intended.

Thankfully, some three weeks later, at the time of the writing of this article, the young woman is already planning resumption of her lifestyle in the pursuit of all she likes to do.

Sadly for Jane and sadly for our edification, all accounts of the incident, including quotes from her and from her parents, only bear testament to 'bad luck' on the one hand and 'good fortune' on the other. For them, this random ordeal must be dismissed. They must 'get over' it as quickly as possible so that each of them can return to their self-focused M.O.

Sadly again, as in all cases in which 'luck' of any sort is cast as the central purveyor of good and bad tidings, karmically speaking, our resistance to accept a modicum of responsibility for all that befalls us, equates to yet another taylor-made, yet missed, opportunity – the opportunity to learn, grow and evolve beyond the single-minded, Asperger's-like, pursuit of what we like to do or want to do.

When reflection is absent, the understanding of Self is also absent and so is the understanding of one's true personal purpose in this lifetime.

Spoiler ahead: by the time any current challenge is to have been handled correctly from the inside-out, unbeknownst to us, another test is already on its way. From

above to below, from our soul to our consciousness and through our physical body, one thing certain is that, no matter how we choose to see it, the next text will definitely not arrive to us as randomly as a big bird poo falling out of the big blue sky.

Complication: the follow-up test of other tests failed will be harder to overcome than any of the previous ones.

Returning to the personal events befalling Jane, as a means to illustrate the last point made, interestingly, it is worth noting that this young woman had already been

- air-lifted by the navy during gale-force winds and that, on other occasions,
 - she is said to have been 'lucky' to weather-out a couple of cyclones while at sea.

And now that various BIG opportunities for self-reflection have been missed from the inside-out, it can but be assume that another challenge is already on its way to Jane.



Serious question: once all connective links of cause and effect have vanished like footprints in the sand - not knowing how the person we have assisted is faring physically and emotionally - are we entitled to feeling at ease with the humanitarian impulse that gave us that definite sense of goodness and social purpose?



One of the two most avoided personal truths is that all of us share in the universal longing for unconditional acceptance. We want to feel actively accepted by the ones we love and also by the ones we want to love the most. Though modest, this need does not come our way easily. The second most avoided truth is that each one of us needs to give Love in the same ratio as we need to receive it.

Again, unfortunately for us as a civilisation, giving has become fused to receiving. Therefore, giving anything valuable to us, including Love though by nature it is infinite, has become a measured exchange through which the ones who [in their mind] have given of self feel unappreciated, cheated even, when they do not

perceive an adequate return for their investment. Love and giving have been reduced to a commodity – objects of transactions bargained and argued about, as are transactions of a material nature.



Too many limitations and defences imposed by the separation of the me/I/we from you/them do tend to cloud and taint many of our most caring, altruistic and philanthropic impulses.

In a way, it might be accurate to say that we are hardwired to care and to forgive – to Love - but, conditioned by a culture that encourages to the nth degree Being/Seeming and Having instead of Being authentic, an essential ‘wire’ to a mind/heart/soul connection has become detached. It ‘sparks’ randomly and only occasionally.

E. Fromm wrote, “There is no meaning to life except the meaning man himself gives to it; man is utterly alone except inasmuch as he helps another.” [29]



Hedonism and narcissism are the signature behaviors of our era that delude us in regards to our actual importance to anyone but our selves. The former makes us prioritize avoidance of anything considered unpleasant while pursuing all that is pleasurable, including events and moments that, in other times, might have been considered character-building. The latter exacerbates the separation between me/us and you/them. It is against this backdrop that what acts of caring appear self-less are applauded sometimes beyond merit. Interestingly, for those who get ‘hands-on’ with the lives of others, the point worth pondering is who, of the rescuer and the rescued, is doing the other the biggest favor.



Committed voluntary humanitarian pursuits fill up the vacuity in our lives. Even as they drain us, such efforts make us feel good. Through them, in spite of sometimes bitter or passionate in-house disagreements regarding the method of delivery, once

successful, it is from that successful snapshot moment that we reap pats on the back, badges, certificates, plaques, interviews, weblinks and so on. We get rewarded in many non-monetary ways when others show their appreciation of our 'self-less' devotion to people in need, our devotion to a cause. It is then that we get our just reward when strangers look at us, eyes filled with gratitude. Our reward is to feel appreciated – to feel Loved.



It is through that intense feeling of appreciation, admiration and Love usually reserved for saviors that humanitarians get their biggest rewards – their heartfelt reward. Having said that, even though the glow of that snapshot moment may linger beyond days and months, the actual waves of Love diminish soon enough and the fizz is gone. The time has come to move on to another project and work our way up to the next intervention that will generate a new wave of Love. Those who have experienced that wave of Love find it difficult to walk away without trying to revive it again and again because they know that nothing else they might do outside of their cause, certainly not the humdrum of daily living, will give them that amped-up feeling from the inside/out.



Feeling loved is an addictive sensation. Politicians, celebrities and athletes of international renown, even those old enough to be enjoying the warmth of the hearth after decades of 'selfless' devotion to the public, feel a wave of Love each time they perform for their fans. It is not the love of politics, sport or music that warms the cockles of their hearts - not even the lure of monetary rewards – it is the tacit understanding that, as long as they can deliver their brand of product to their fans, the fans will love them back. And the possibility of losing it all to bad reviews, attrition or ... age must be a frightening monkey on many of their backs.



If we consider that the 'hapless' beneficiaries of outreach ventures allow themselves to be rescued, we have to accept that, in spite of our safer, more comfortable lifestyles, we are as equally needy of Love as they are of safety - and Love.



We are all hungry for true Affection – for True Love. We overtly hope to find this love in our romantic relationships, if only once in our lifetime. We covertly seek this love by doing whatever we do at home, at work and everywhere in between. Even apathetic people, those who feel lethargic, depressed, lacking a certain 'get up and go' or ambition, who seem to do nothing more than while the time away in a non-productive lethargy are subconsciously, pursuing the same goal as the rest of us – that of eliciting Love from whoever shares our lives.



We are all hungry for an unconditional acceptance from all and any who behold us - from near or far. We are needy for a validation, an active acceptance of the sort we seldom get, even in childhood, from the people closest to us, our parents, our friends, our partners. We stop receiving this unconditional acceptance, this love, once they develop a set of reasons that make them feel that we have become unworthy.

For some folks, it means the perception that we have been disrespectful.

For others, it means that we have been selfish.

For others, it means that we have been found untrustworthy, while for others it means being thought guilty of having committed a deadly sin.

For others, it might simply mean that they find us boring.

In every family, there exist many such perceptions that taint the Love we are intended to feel for each other and reduce it to a distracted attention, proximal abandonment, laced with sentimental attachment.



All such considerations aside, the good news is that there will always be people drawn to attempting improvements to the lives of others, in a myriad of ways, but mostly always for the same types of very personal emotional rewards. The more committed the individual, the more desperately hungry for true acceptance is this individual, and thank goodness for their presence in our midst - Karma always knows best.

Sure, there is a need for more opportunity and more equality in our world, but having more opportunities and more equality does not necessarily generate more fulfilling lives. It simply means that, in theory, hours are spent more comfortably than would otherwise be the case. More money, in itself, also fails to boost contentment by any degree once the ebb and flow of money can sustain our basic needs but, yes, of course, the ratio of rich to poor worldwide has to be inverted.

Sure, there is a need to approach work, rest and play, as well as our built and natural environment holistically.

Sure there is a need to end all violence to both 'man' and beast, be that violence emotional or physical.

Yes, there is the need to help, defend and protect all those who cannot do so by themselves. And the reassuring news is that there will never be a shortage of well-intended folks who will be drawn to such humanitarian pursuits.



There is an economic down-side in regards to the mega billions of dollars invested in areas of humanitarian care that, some 40 years later, have yet to make a dent of difference. Such spectacular 'apparent' failures can be explained from a spiritual perspective: no amount of good can ever eradicate karmic unease, illness and suffering.

Our involvement might force 'things' into different patterns but, in essence, the overall tapestry remains largely unchanged in tenor.



Committed outreach workers do not take karma into consideration, except at its simplest level i.e. if 'these people' find themselves at the right time and at the right place to receive support, that opportunity must have been karmically orchestrated - and indeed, maybe so.

But, not so fast! Before the need to be rescued came the 'unpleasant' situation from which rescue is needed. Why is it, then, that outreach workers do not apply the same reasoning as above to that situation? Why not think that if these people' found themselves at the right time and at the right place to become caught in that unpleasant situation, that situation must have been karmically orchestrated?

Either way, when it comes to mounting an intervention, what can never be anticipated are the karmic ripples above and below the surface of the pond in which we have thrust a hand and agitated our fingers.



Let's say that the karmic blue-print of 'projected' key moments intended for each one of us in this lifetime will simply rework itself in regards to time, place and form. It will repair itself no differently than the myriad of components in the disturbed pond water will settle back in a somewhat different but similar arrangement by the time we resume our walk. This imagery holds true as long as we, each individual - no exceptions - shy away from altering, from inside-out, our responses to whatever directly or indirectly annoys us, makes us happy or makes us angry, delights us or hurts us, be that a small moment, a consequential event or a life-threatening happening.

Anyway, these ripples created by any intervention, such as it is, will go on expanding concentrically far beyond the visible 'alteration' of What-Is. Thus, we have only altered the time, place and format of what was ultimately meant to be. Unbeknownst to us, we have neither excised nor lanced ... anything.



When the Hebrew Talmud declares that "Whoever destroys a soul, it is considered as if he destroyed an entire world. And whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he

saved an entire world” [30], it speaks about saving a life about to be extinguished. It doesn't say that it is anyone's duty to assist in the alteration of the Divine Plan and its actualization in anyone's life circumstances.

Doing so ignores that the 'soul' purpose of being incarnated within specific circumstances, in this lifetime, as in every other, past and future, is for us to amend karma. The supernatural realm and its amazing cycle of incarnations have not been developed just so that we can spend a haphazard number of years on planet Earth endeavouring to sleep comfortably, eating our choice of food, dodging what doesn't appeal, topping-up bank accounts as a security for a future that only ever exists in our thoughts and indulging - or die trying – in all that leads to sensory gratification and blessed calm in the home and at work.



Scientists are only able to explain what their most sophisticated tools allow them to see and what the total percentage of their brain power they are able to control. From that, they are able to create theories –many theories but only theories. Science will never be able to help us make meaning out of life. Having said that, coming closer to understanding the true purpose of our existence becomes intellectually easier once we understand that our species, the most physically helpless in the universe is governed by invisible Laws – the same ones that govern the also invisible and fathomless cosmic system.

One question that has just come to mind: if, as the plethora of Nature programs suggests, our universe has been purpose-built for the survival of each species, human, fauna or flora and that in nature there exists nothing redundant or gratuitous – not even a single speck on the spine of a leaf - then why have we been endowed with such a large brain that burns up more energy than any other organ and which is potentially super-powerful when scientists tell us that the best we can do is tap into a fraction of this phenomenal potential?

One theory might be that we are intended to make use of all of our brain's potential and, why not, develop a sixth and a seventh sense but, as long as we allow our

selves to be driven by existentialist and consumerist concerns, we are simply unable to rise beyond our basic 'ability' level.



Back to the original topic: our existence is an opportunity to amend the karma 'inherited' from some of our souls' previous incarnations, along with the karma that we have created steadily since our teens. If we understand that karma is as neutral as the figures in the debit and credit columns of our bank statement, then it's easier to understand that our only duty in this lifetime is of a very tailor-made nature: to limit our insecurities, our wailing and our hoarding of the commodities we do have, be that love or money, in a bid to shore up the future as it exists – and will only ever exist in our thoughts.

Understandably, being totally committed to a cause, any cause, often excludes all else, even quality family life, so one might ask: how to give without receiving? Once we understand that concern and support, a.k.a. charity, begin at home, we are able to do it humbly, unconditionally from the inside-out. Our actions need involve neither money nor bribe-gifts, nor frantic lobbying or fundraising, which is why this type of involvement, so dynamic, so intensively personal, so emotional, is so difficult to maintain even on the small, intimate scale of involvement with our personal entourage.



The culminating understanding is that to amend karma correctly one must practice altruism by giving of self while humbly shying away from any form of recognition bar a quiet 'Thank you'. Sometimes, the closer a person is to us, ironically, damningly even, the more difficult it is to open our hearts to that other. Hence, it is often much easier to spend a few moments of utmost sincerity with a stranger on a plane or on a train, one we know we will never see again, than risk divulging a fraction of that honesty to a partner, a parent - even to a best friend.

Similarly, it often seems more gratifying to spend hours upon hours organising and assisting strangers in need of humanitarian support than to devote the same efforts,

concerns and energy to a parent, a child or a partner in need of our attention and love. Actually, even in long-term debilitating illnesses, after an initial burst of concern and assiduous bedside presence, too soon, many of us lose our focus - sooner rather than later, the more difficult the person or the more unappreciated we feel.



“Time is money”, we say and we often act as if it were true, as if spending quality time with anyone, for their sake, without counting sucked dollars per hour out of our savings account. Opportunities to amend karma by being less self-centered than usual are missed - again. Another karmic test has been failed.

Sobering reality: all perpetrators of violence have had someone in their circle who professes to have loved them. That was possibly the case, but obviously that love failed to hit the mark. Perhaps that love was conditional to performance of one sort or another. In any case, that love failed to sustain. It failed to calm.

All suicides had someone in their circle who professed to have loved them. That was most likely the case, but that love must have been conditional to performance of one sort or another. In any case, that love failed to sustain. It failed to calm.

Every person who suffers from depression, from an anxiety-related disorder or has any sort of cancer has people in their circle who profess to love them. That is quite probably the case, but obviously that love, too, has failed to hit the mark. It failed to sustain. It failed to calm.

Every elderly person left to spend hours, days and weeks lonely in their own home or in a retirement village has people in their family and friends who profess to love them and to like them a lot. It is highly likely that that love and that liking have been conditional according to expectations left unmet. That love and that liking have failed to sustain. They failed to appease the heart.

Every workmate who becomes unhinged because of bullying, harassment or overwork has people in their circle who profess to like them and to care for them. That is quite probably the case, but obviously that love has failed to hit the mark.

Perhaps that love was conditional to performance of one sort or another. In any case, that love has failed to sustain. It failed to calm.



Every child who throws tantrums or has ADHD or displays anti-social behaviors or is involved in at-risk activities of one sort or another has parents, siblings, relatives and friends in their circle. In varying degrees, they all profess to love that child and/or to like that child a lot, depending on the nature of the relationship to that child. That is quite probably the case, but obviously that love and that liking fail to hit the mark as each of the above behaviors are LOVE-seeking behaviors.



Millions of children world-wide have been running on empty for too long already. However unpalatable or painful the thought, it helps to understand that it is ALWAYS in order to access sustaining doses of love from us, adults, that children of all ages get sick. In the same way as adults do, some of them make themselves very sick in the same crazy search for love. At times, some of us allow ourselves to be touched deeper by a child or a loved one who is hurt, sick or in trouble than by them healthy. But often that heart-opening lasts for a while only. Often, it happens too late.



Regardless of their age and status, some people deprived of that good ole unconditional love go through life throwing tantrums. They may be violent. They may be bullies. They may have numerous affairs. They may appear to have a perfect life. They may become anorexic or obese. They might become healers. They may become sex addicts. They may become victims or develop the victim mentality. They may be 'driven' and succeed in their chosen field. But, sooner or later, most give up the search. They give up the wait. Silently or loudly, they exhibit the symptoms of LOVE-deprivation in their own way. Eventually, most teenagers become parents. They perpetuate the myth that Time is Money and that there is always something much more important to do than BE with the ones they love and show them – from

the heart, not from the wallet – how much they are loved, just as they are, ‘warts and all’.

Eventually some children and some of adults die – eventually some kill others and some kill themselves.

Heads up: Conditional, performance-based love fails to sustain. It fails to calm.

All of us are as intimately bound to each other as are hands washing each other. We are all needy ourselves. Equally, we are all surrounded by people who need assistance from the heart – from and to those who are closest, whether at home, at work or in our streets – because we are all involved in various circles of family, relatives, friends, colleagues and neighbors.



We now know too much to think that it is merely a collection of either good, indifferent or unfortunate coincidences that brings us, humans, together at any given point in time.

The assistance we and they require at various times is no less of a humanitarian nature than the assistance required by scared or heart-broken refugees fleeing from war zones. It is no less of a humanitarian nature than the assistance required by victims of exploitation. The assistance we and others in our circle require at various moments is no less of a humanitarian nature than the assistance required by victims of indifference.



So ... the question begging, for those of us who understand various aspects of spirituality in varying degrees is, *Who in our family could do with less talk, less scolding, less gifts from us, less pampering but with more heart - from us?*

Who, in our family, could we learn to love differently, regardless of *where in the world* our karma has placed us?

*The following section was originally written in response to a question posed in Nilanjana Bhowmick's Time Magazine article, **India: After New Delhi Gang Rape, Should the Culprits Be Executed?***

Made In India – not solely

Why kill these men?

That may spare the culprits from years festering in a prison cell somewhere in India and, generally speaking, from the unavoidable secret ache of remorse and guilt, but go nowhere towards assisting the healing of the [surviving] victims and/or their grieving families. It would go nowhere, too, in regards to karmic amendment that both culprits and victims need to address, through any tragedy, in this lifetime.



Oh, of course, though many of us understand the notion of karma being a tally sheet not terribly dissimilar to our bank statement, actual acts of karmic amendments are as rare as they are because they are incredibly difficult to attempt. It is very difficult to live by the rules of active acceptance of what has come down and the rule of deep-hearted forgiveness while entrenched in millennia old cultures that thrive on self-righteousness, pride and retributive vengeance.



In the realm of karma, killing 'anyone' - for any reason - is a crime that befalls the person [or persons] who orders it, just as much as the ones who execute the orders. Yes, that goes for soldiers and government officials, as well.



So, in a better world, in a culture better tuned to the moral ethics expected by the karmic realm, to truly balance karma and justice, three conditions need to be met:

1. if they didn't feel spontaneously moved to do so, culprits in general, would first of all be helped towards WANTING to apologize from the HEART to the person they

have hurt and/or to each member of the grieving family of the person they have killed or maimed.

2. remorseful, sincere, humble apologies must ALWAYS be accepted.

3. culprits would, then, WANT to humbly serve the one they have hurt or, in the case of murder, the family of their victim ... until further [karmic] notice.



The complicating factor is that only the victim can ever absolve/forgive a perpetrator. Thus, in a case of murder, the perpetrator cannot ever be free of the karmic energy attracted by the crime committed. That is, not until victim and murderer, their specific karmic codes recognizing each other, find themselves locked inside a different scenario - in each of their soul's future incarnations. Each, then, will have a specific altruistic task to perform for the other, but for reason they will never know.

Be that as it may, humble service to the victims' families serves as a means to amend the karmic debt and 'soften' the hearts of all protagonists, so as to access a somewhat better karmic status for their soul's next incarnation.

Win-win situation = Justice has been served. Punishment has been given. Karmic amendment has been achieved or at least attempted by all parties concerned.

Indeed, if the victim were alive, karma would be amended hourly, daily, over a period of years - as close to 'eye for 'eye' as possible - without the karmic energy of violence and death attaching itself to the 'avenging angels' of the judiciary system.



Going back to the events currently unfolding in India, any person, man, woman or child, feeling particularly 'shamed' by the dark deeds of his/her compatriots could similarly help 'repair' while paying forward - or back - their own prior, current or upcoming misdeeds. Knowing *what's what* is not for us, humans, to know.

It is for the ones who are energetically concerned to humbly do something useful, free of charge and kudos, for a victim or a victim's family – even if that victim's ordeal will not make the headlines.

Loss-loss situation = in some countries, culprits just rot away in jail, never to be heard of again. This might be deemed a fitting punishment, here and now, for persons guilty of headline-grabbing misdeeds. However, as ephemeral as bubbles in a champagne flute, are the very temporary emotional release of some and the euphoria of others, both tied to the mistaken belief that the more dire the penalty [or the greater the financial compensation awarded from the Courts] the better the wrong has been 'righted'.

The added notion that either might be a strong deterrent to other would-be criminals equally affords, in the darkest hours of each and every night, very little solace to either of the concerned parties. Nothing short of a truly heartfelt deed of repair will ever begin to erase the memory of the ordeal in the victims' minds. Neither will the memory of their acts ever leave the assailants' conscience.



Beyond a much needed explosion of anti-rape outrage triggered by the string of mediatised, horrific incidents in India, we have not forgotten, have we, that similar incidents have been ongoing in great number and in all democratic nooks and crannies of the free world. We cannot discount that some 2,700 forcible rapes have been declared in New York alone, in 2001. Though somewhat dated, it is the most recent statistic available at the time of writing, and there is little or no reason to think that the number of these declared aggressions will be significantly reduced in 2013 – and in the next few years ahead. Many such incidents lead to enduring, debilitating shame, frequently to a permanent disability and, even at times, death – be it at the hand of the aggressor or by suicide at a later time.



It is assumed that the culture of the penis-as-a-weapon is as ancient as cavemen's bones but, what is clear, is that this primitive mindset has attached itself to the very

ink of even the most 'evolved' pages in history. From the primitive culture of plunder, pillage and despoilment of women as the way to break the enemy's morale, girls' and women's bodies [occasionally, too, those of boys] are commonly objectified, violated, made expandable – discarded – even to this day.

One of the many serious questions that beg to be asked is this: how is it possible that such barbaric abuses have endured through the millennia?



Another question is: why is it that, in some circumstances, 'our men' are so titillated by the thought of performing forcible rape that they momentarily shut down their conscience to relieve unbridled 'cavemen' urges on children and on women?

When we look at who these men are, it is clear that they have not descended upon us from Planet X. They are not mutants. It is clear that have not been 'cultured' inside a petrie dish in a laboratory by an evil professor.

These men are invariably fathers, sons, husbands, brothers and uncles to ... someone. Whether in India, in America, in China or in Europe, these men belong to their families.



"According to our culture, women should be careful about how they dress," explained most earnestly Hardeep Singh Ahlawat, a caste council leader in India. "They should dress simply. [...] There's too much outside influence on our culture these days. [32]

And according to Michael Edwards, reporting in the same ABC news program, *"Many men here see changing cultural values as causing problems such as rape. In recent times, the caste councils have issued decrees banning women from wearing jeans or using mobile phones and even ordering them to marry young, all with the stated goal of preventing sexual assaults."*



Isn't it surprising that so few males, be they politicians, leaders or simple citizens, in India - or elsewhere - are willing to clearly state that the core *physical* reason driving

the culture of rape in our societies is the tacit, covert acceptance that, given certain 'trigger' circumstances, males are unable to control their sexual urges?



Again, whether in India, in America, in China or in Europe, these men belong to their families. These families belong to the culture of their countries and there must be some very warped thinking embedded in the culture of every country, for in every country rape is far too often STILL considered the woman's fault.

In the west, could it be that this very warped thinking is confirmed each time an indulgent adult thinks, says, or acts in a way that suggests that *Boys will be Boys* and that some behaviors are genetically programmed and, therefore, innate aspects of the male species?



Truth: Isn't it a fact that, generally speaking, historically and in our current societies, boys and men are 'served' by their mothers and by their sisters?

Doing the laundry, making the beds, tidying up the boys' room and performing house chores in general such as making bread, cooking meals, baking deserts, washing up, soothing worries off a boy's furrowed brow, nursing his sickly body or his broken heart, even allowing him to inflict bouts of manly anger on the rest of the family - all these activities are of the caring but 'serving' nature.



It is a fact that these activities in India as in many other cultures, even to a great extent in the west, are generally performed by mothers and sometimes assisted by their daughters. These gendered activities at the *service* of others, specifically males, are very different in nature from their tinkering under the hood of a car, mowing the lawn and taking the rubbish out to the street and doing the washing up. Doing things to *'things'* is vastly different from doing *'things'* for another human being – for a being we cherish.

They are also very different from the genderless action of going out to work – regardless of the type of work involved. As a result, some males, it seems, do not

differentiate between accepting the caring service and support provided by the women in their household and forcibly relieving their pent-up frustrations on random women.

“New figures released by the Delhi Police reveal that a woman is raped every 18 hours or molested every 14 hours in the Capital. Shockingly, the majority of the attackers are below 25 years.” [33]

Much more than the age of the aggressors, the shocking fact is the frequency of declared rape and molestation, knowing of course that, in emerging countries as in the west, rape is by far the most under-reported crime.



Beyond clamoring for improved police response to sexual assaults, the throngs of demonstrators in India and elsewhere need to also clamor against the Indian culture of ‘eye-teasing’ - claims of harassment shrugged off by parents, neighbors and the police] as harmless. The film producers, actors and actresses involved in the almost ubiquitous scenes of rape and submission inherent to many Bollywood films should also do some serious soul- searching for, karmically, they also share some responsibility in these matters and so do many of the multitudes of viewers of both sexes who keep this industry buoyant.



Obviously, the same karmic reasoning applies to the various elements of our own ‘entertainment’ culture that help maintain the practice of rape through series and film plots, novels, lyrics and video games. It also, of course, applies to those who are ‘entertained by it.

It is, after all, difficult to imagine that ANY rape survivor feels empowered by seeing a graphic rape occur on the big screen or by reading explicit details of fear and horror in the pages of a novel. *It is* difficult to imagine, isn’t it?



Serious questions: considering that, as per the cultural values of their country, the great majority of mothers and sisters in India and in many other emerging countries raise boys as 'privileged beings', how many more husbands, sons and brothers of the thousands of women demonstrating against the government, in India or elsewhere had already committed the act of rape?

How many of these boys and men will have *since* committed a new act of rape or incest?



When it comes to dark, incestuous rape in our midst and elsewhere, it is usually with a gasp that we hear the wife, the mother claim that she had no idea that *it* had been going right under her nose. Oh, of course, it's easy to imagine a wife, a mother, so entrenched in the business of 'living', of 'making a living', of making a family that she might miss various tip off clues – but then again, no - not *really*.



When it comes to the matter of girl infanticide and the culture of genital mutilation, there again, men alone would have been incapable of maintaining such practices from century to century. Everywhere in the world, men who insist on such practices are tacitly assisted by the women in whichever culture they belong.



Ironically and sadly, too, these women are the same ones who very much still feel in their flesh the loss and the abuse done to them years hence. Without the tacit consent of women, none of the practices that defile the body of girls and women and/or inflict permanent damage to their psyche or their body could have endured for so long.

Bottom line: without women's consent, no man would be ever able to force himself on to a child, a sister, a stranger and, in this lifetime, remain unpunished in one way or another.

Yes, of course, women, themselves are victims of their own culture but, through learnt helplessness and a sense of self-preservation, they have been the active guardians of 'cultural' practices that enshrine repressive laws and practices of abuse deemed by men as non-negotiable, necessary shields against their own insecurities and their own libido.



Serious questions: would tribal men have dispensed truly retributive punishment if, as one, all the women in any given region had banded together, eons ago, to indicate to all their men that **No More** meant **No More**?

What would have happened 'over there' and here, in the west, if eons ago women had suspended all manner of services to adolescent boys and men until social leaders had worked out a moratorium of these practices?

If the group protection theory that '*there is safety in numbers*' is true, then ... globally, such immoral practices against women would surely have been stamped out by now.



Reality check: Yes, of course, there would have been casualties, but aren't there always casualties in the fight of Caring vs Abusive?

Serious question: over the centuries and through to current time, when it comes to anticipating the number of women casualties from the ranks of actively 'opposing women', would the overall tally have been *that much greater* than the overall tally of women who have been – and will be – unwitting victims?



Clearly, here is not the place for a feminist rant thus this one is no more than a round-about way of getting back to the concept of karma in action.

Karmically-speaking, it stands to reason that silent collaboration – an energetic accomplice to overt practices – cannot be karma neutral. It, too, spins an energetic

web through the person's energetic field that, in its own inimitable way, affects the perpetrator's circumstances in this lifetime.

There can be no doubt that, any and all, overt and covert practices that hurt, maim or kill anyone, be that family, friend or foe, are karma-*adding* in this lifetime.

Equally, there can be no doubt that the total sum of the karmic debts these persons have accrued will, to a degree, spill across to the next incarnations of their souls.

Sobering thought, perhaps, as this 'passing on' of unamended karmic debts obviously also applies to each one of us but, then again, Ecclesiastes 1-9 does state that, 'What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.

And this, surely, rings true, unless we chose to alter, right here, right now, our personal M.O. and, hand-on heart, set out to earnestly amend what we can in this lifetime. That's provided the persons we have hurt in varying degree, deceived or loved inadequately are still in this world.

Once we no longer have access to them, any amending becomes impossible.



Though they might make us feel better, remorse, prayers and absolution cannot amend anything on our behalf. Thus, our karmic deficit shadows us like the Repo Man, the dreaded debt collector, shadows the debtor and eventually blocks all escape.



Women's learnt helplessness is also evident in the culture of child brides.

In Rajasthan, "Every year, millions of Indian girls are married as children. In some instances the brides are no more than 4 or 5 years old." [34]

The practice is unfortunately not limited to India, and on 12 October 2012, yet another headline on Child brides appeared online: The terrifying world of child

brides: **Devastating images show girls young enough to be in pre-school who are married off to older men.** [35]

In cultures that practice this arrangement, it is not unusual for a father to exploit his daughter's servitude to the point of a non consensual incestuous interaction with her. The mother uses her child as her assistant to fetch, carry and ... serve in all the ways *she* is expected to fetch, carry and ... serve. Then as now, in such circumstances, the girl's mother in-law is usually more callous than the girl's own mother ever was. She, along with her daughters, use the little newcomer to escape many of the less pleasant demands placed upon them by the men of the household. Generally, the little girl's new husband is of the age of her father – a man of mature age. Many such very young wives die in child birth. Think back to the story of Cinderella, but with nastier twists and an unalterable hellish ending. This human tragedy is enduring and common in some areas ofandand, also, in various 'remote' regions of Europe. Be that as it may, the practice of older men marrying [very] young girls was also rife in European courts during the Medieval era and throughout the Renaissance. Historical accounts yield a plethora of such circumstances across centuries similar to that of Richard II of England who, in 1396, married eight-year old Isabel of France.

Generally speaking, though such young girls may have been clothed in 'royal' robes, not many of their older husbands, be they in their twenties or forties, bestowed upon them many marks of genuine kindness – many treated them with a degree of contempt that translated into abuse of one sort or another.

Sure, there are many parts of the world today where physical violence towards mother and child alike are the culturally accepted norm. It is 'the way'. It is 'tradition'. Some men and women even claim that such practices are done in the name of the god they revere and/or serve to preserve the mental and the physical integrity of their women. Female genital mutilation, rolled out exclusively by women, is one such practice.

It can be argued that a Type 1a intervention, which consists in the removal of the clitoral hood or prepuce, is comparable to that of a boy's circumcision. However, other grades of interventions involve the partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora or the narrowing of the vaginal orifice with creation of a covering seal by cutting and appositioning the labia minora and/or the labia majora.

However inconceivable, these interventions can only be equated to the slicing off of a section of the penis itself or to its reduction to a mere knob and, why not, the added emptying of at least one testicle.

Though *this* ritual may have ultimately been said to be empowering, too, it has never been practiced within any culture.

In short, it could be said that in any culture and social group in which modern day Children's and Women's Rights are severely flaunted by men and women, even as the mothers simply aspire to a degree of relief and respite from hardship, by being compliant, they put their own needs ahead of their little girl's well-being.

When it is accepted that everything happens for a reason, including one's place of birth and social status, active parental love is an essential cornerstone of the blue print of the lives within which we are all meant to be genuinely loving – as loving as our soul, our conscience, would have us be – in this lifetime.

Cultural mores and self-serving purposes may well alter the 'surface' of our conscience but, all the same, it would pay to understand - and actively accept - that any compliant act that puts at risk the physical and emotional well-being of a child can but attract weighty karma of the darkest kind.

Though perhaps comprehensible on the level of cultural reality, from a karmic perspective, one can only ponder these women's heart energies and how far might travel the karmic ripples created by such self-protecting misdeeds ultimately exercised out of 'free choice'.

Though all characters involved in such situations can justify, absolve their *own* actions by coldly explaining that their habits are ancestral, cultural, empowering and, religious, in the karmic realm, abuse performed in the name of ancestral, cultural and even religious traditions doesn't cut it.

Abuse is abuse. Neglect is neglect. Murder is murder.

Dark energies cling to the aura. Here, there, wherever they are created, they vibrate and pulsate from one abusive act to the next. They vibrate and pulse from one life to the next. In this lifetime, they can eventually make the perpetrators sick or spin a web of purpose-built unhappiness and bad luck around the unwitting protagonists. Yet, as always, '*all*' is as it should be.

'*All*' [especially the sum of all wrongs] always contain the moment within which one is intended to wake up, take charge and right their wrongs.

Karmic opportunities always present themselves, waiting for us to redress our wrongs. The major complication is that karma can only be amended when one repairs directly with one's victim, which is always an option up to the moment the soul leaves the body - ours or that of the ones we have neglected to actively love and actively protect.



Yes, of course, redressing any wrong face-to-face can be emotionally extremely difficult to execute, but doesn't this make [karmic] good sense?



In India, during the anti-rape demonstrations, a recurring protest placard was ***Punish Rapists Not Protestors***. In the west, from years past, the ongoing quiet murmur has been ***Punish the Rapists Not The Women***.

Serious question: why is the protection of women and girls still expressed in such a low-key murmur in our own cities, so many years after the passed in France in 1948?

This question notwithstanding, just as spider webs extend far beyond the spiders, karmically speaking, the dark energy of misdeeds and wrongdoings extends far beyond the moral culpability of the aggressor-participants. In varying degrees, that energy extends to all who have assisted the crimes, regardless of their overt intentions.



The overt intentions of ‘privileging’ males in our culture, regardless of their age, the overt intention of hoping to give a child a better life by selling her [or him] to a stranger, the overt intention of sparing a child a hard life by killing her at birth, the overt agreeing with a government’s One Child policy favoring boys, all generate dark energy commensurate to the fear, pain and despair they generate. In the pulsating realm of karma, each of these deeds results in karma-adding dark energy.



Presumably, for the sake of this discussion, it is generally agreed that, though we never know why, a force we don’t for the most part understand is constantly buzzing around each one of us. Thus, presumably, too, it is agreed that nothing in our lives, nothing in the world is ever a random occurrence unlinked from everything.



Serious question: how could the acts of ‘touching’ reality, of interfering with our What-Is, of manipulating, of removing any essential aspect of our lives such as a child, or to condone any sexual, physical or emotional abuse, regardless of our intentions, possibly be karma-free?



Bottom line: It is our duty to protect the helpless, the ones who, always for a karmic reason, have manifested in our reality, be they children, the sick or the elderly - full stop.

It is our duty to endure philosophically, but with an open heart, whatever we perceive as our personal ‘plight’, as we do our very best to soothe the ‘plight’ of those put in our care.



Daily life is about balancing physical occurrences with our energetic responses to needs - no differently than our 'bank manager' balances our responses to our expenses. Options are limited: in the red or 'in credit' – self-centered, deflecting actions or conscience driven, soul driven, altruistic actions.

It is agreed that every action triggers a reaction, that everything we *think* and *do* creates karmic ripples that are seldom neutral. These ripples may be beneficial to us, in the short or long term, just as they may be detrimental to us.

The ripples of silence and inaction are as karmically charged as the ripples of overt actions. In our Justice system, whether in civil or criminal laws, there exists the notion of the **Duty to Rescue**, also known in France as **Non-Assistance to Persons in Danger**.



Parents worldwide always have the karmic [moral and ethical] duty to rescue their children.

Deliberately failing to provide assistance to any person in danger, regardless of their age and sex, is a crime.

In the karmic realm, whether the law of the countries or local culture condone this sort of non-assistance to children, women and the elderly, does not come into the equation.



How many Presidents and male Prime-Ministers have gone on record saying something like, "I am naturally anti-rape and anti abuse to children and women. If that sort of abuse is not wrong, nothing is wrong" and, then, go on demanding that some laws be changed, that others be passed, that they are implemented by the justice system of that land and that they are allowed to evolve to address the cultural mores that have contributed to making situations as dire as they are – worldwide for children and women.



I live in one of the main cities in Australia, a democratic, modern, affluent country.

Today's online news headline: **Australia's sexual assault shame: One in six women a victim, putting Australia way above world average**

Another related headline: **Australia, Botswana and Lesotho had the highest average per capita of reported rape from 2004 to 2010.**

And another: **Australian women are being sexually assaulted at twice the rate of women worldwide.**



It is painfully glaring that the enduring social culture of forcible rapes and gang rapes of girls and women of ALL ages [and of boys and men] is certainly not Made In India solely but, from India, to Australia, to the Democratic Republic of Congo all the way to Switzerland and Sweden, the hard question begging is: **Where have mothers, grandmother, sisters and aunts - by the millions - gone wrong in the education of their men who are invariably fathers, sons, husbands, brothers and uncles?**



Could it be that so many centuries after Euclid pronounced his common notion #1 sometimes between 323–283 **BC**, that *things which equal the same thing also equal one another*, so many billions of people have not yet accepted that women and men are equal and that, ultimately, the whole is much greater than the parts?



“Drink your tea slowly and reverently, as if it is the axis on which the world earth revolves - slowly, evenly, without rushing toward the future. Live the actual moment.

Only this moment is life” - Thich Nhat Hanh

The Humble What-IS

What-Is, at any given moment is truly our special, private testing ground.

It is the *test* we should cram for - and breathe through - because it is the *test* that, in this particular moment in our life, we *finally* have to pass – no matter the struggle – because, possibly unbeknownst to us, we have *failed* this particular test way too often already :-((

“Shame,” as my students would say.



Another way I am practicing ‘not touching’ and accepting What Is while being in the moment, is that of not planning events such as outings and holidays too far ahead of time – not even holidays to Europe, which from here, in Australia, do require a certain amount of advance planning – particularly because Australia being an island continent that can only be left by air - or by boat if one has a *lot* of time and money on their hands.



The idea is to imagine a loose framework but not get all tied up with early payments and advance bookings - not until ‘concrete’ deadlines truly have to be met – not months ahead because I cannot contain my excitement; not because I am afraid someone will take **my** seat on the plane or **my** room in hotels and *to be sure, to be sure* I will beat them to it by booking early. As Moriya has been reminding me, “If you are intended to be on a particular seat on a particular airplane, no one will be allowed to sit in it but you. Have faith in the system.”

Grumble, grumble – but then again, what do I know, little blind mouse that I am, beyond what I WANT?



Ok, so let us say that I *want* to leave on such a date on such an airline and that I *want* to spend a specific amount of time in that specific place in a specific hotel or rented studio. I also *want* to return home on a specific date of my choosing.

Fine, nothing wrong with that except that, beyond knowing what I *want*, I cannot lock in the * hassle-free, great time* option at the moment of my bookings and I cannot anticipate what the reality of this trip will bring my way.



Since I do not have the gift of foresight, how can I possibly be know which flight will afford me the safest and most pleasant 29 hour journey to Europe on any particular day?

There is a lot more at stake than airplane safety and airport security.

I don't know about you, but I would rather not travel near a snorer or a baby that cries most of the time.

I would rather not be up there, if it means ploughing through a lightning storm and associated turbulences.

I would rather not have to report my luggage lost upon arrival.



All things equal, I would rather have a pleasant Customs Officer to deal with than one who will single me out for a cavity search because s/he has a thing about women who have wrist tattoos and heavy lugs in stretched earlobes.

Once in the hotel in which I so wanted to secure a room - maybe because we had such pleasant moments the last time we stayed there - I would rather not have on my floor a couple on their honeymoon, the Brady Bunch or a party-girls on the trip of a lifetime or a team of footballers. And I would rather a bed with a firm mattress than a soft one. OK, you get my drift.



So, sure I can want and I can demand and I can be upset when my demands do not change *What is* and I can complain to partner and we can blame each other for not having made the booking earlier and I can spread my bad mood energy all around.

I can do that but I can also start out with a 'soft' focus on the framework. I can start out in easy gear and not be too attached to specifics, knowing that since I am on the path and I am practicing **active** acceptance, all will be for the better.



Reality check: even if in spite of my acceptance of What Is, things on the terrain do not go according to plan, I will still not know how much worse they would have been *if...*



It is by practicing all of the above and more - daily - that we clear the channel and open our heart to our soul's whisper and our mind to the symbols and messages that

are set in our path and move beyond a mechanical response to live, blind little mice that we are, trapped in the huge maze of live that is really a lot larger than we think.



Not knowing what we don't know is human, but thinking that what we think we know is all there is to know is ... limiting – **C.C. Saint-Clair**

The Time to Rethink Thinking is Now!

Life Is School, NOT a Cabaret, Old Chum!

Moriya explained, "C.C., let's say, it is your karma to one day get lost in OK? So, it's not going to be a nice experience. Maybe you suffer from d Maybe you come across reptiles and maybe you even get bitten.

You get sunburnt. Maybe you also come across thieves. Interestingly, they only want your camera and your wallet. Sure, you're unhappy and sure you're frightened, but when it's all over, you agree that the experience could have been much worse at every turn.

So, although you got lost in the desert, you got rescued. You didn't die there and actually whatever has happened to you will become an anecdote to share with friends or to write about in a book."

"Look, put plainly," she added patiently, "a karmic situation that turns out to be less serious than otherwise expected is like slipping in a mud puddle and falling on your buttocks instead of cracking your head open on the pavement. But, you must not forget that whatever the outcome, it always contains a message from Soul – a message it is your responsibility to understand."



The present moves like a brook, a stream or the sea. We cannot hold on to any part of it, not for more than a few seconds. But, then again, the present is also eternal because it is ALWAYS there.

We can only breathe in real time. Just as we cannot breathe under water, we cannot breathe in the past any more than we can breathe in the future. Truly, the present-moment, the moment under our feet, is all we have and it is unlimited for the time we are on this earth.

Karma could also be compared to the sun that is neither responsible for the fools' melanomas nor for the scorched earth of drought-stricken lands nor for the fire that, in October 2007 [and since], spread along the Californian coastline, destroying much of the grand real estate, partly because 50 percent of the new housing development had been built in a severe fire-zone.

Fire just is.

The sea just is.

The sun just is.



Karma loading = illness = a metaphoric *blow-to-the-head*

As I have said many times, *nothing* that happens to our body and in our body has not been triggered by knee-jerk reactions encoded in our energy field. In other words any illness, regardless of where in the body it has lodged itself, is a karmic *blow-to-the-head*.

A grave illness is the heads-up that our awareness of the moment; our Active acceptance of What Is; our connection to our soul has been too.... tenuous for too long.

Knowing that all little mishaps and all illnesses considered humdrum, these days, are karmic nudges - warning beeps - telling us we are going the wrong way, any serious *blow-to-the-head* amounts to a strident Wake Up siren to the measure of karmic load our accumulated *momentary* lack of spiritual judgement have loaded into our energy field.

Unless Karma, for any number of reasons, has resulted in a personal drama early in life, it is true that, as we advance towards the age of retirement, more and more of us come home one day with a Doctor's diagnostic NO ONE ever wants to hear.

And I do believe the *treatment from hell* entailed by the diagnostic makes good karmic sense after some 50 or 70-odd years of doing all sorts of things to escape

from our *real time* moment and DO life asleep at the wheel, cruise control fully locked in.

These escapes - through alcohol excesses, often in pursuit of an elusive life filled with ongoing Great Sex moments - and other *highs* through at risk behaviours - even simple holiday blindness - all of these escapes from *the moment* such as it was, have been compounded by barrel loads of Me-first/mine-first moments; moments of I want this NOW; moments of I need to get that happening NOW/I know exactly what best for me/this is who I am like it or lump it; moments of Wtf is this happening to me? and moments of I hate whites/blacks/gays/women/Muslims/my X/ my boss/my mother in law/thin people/fat people/Buddhists/lawyers/my sister/ my neighbor/my children/animals/I hate myself.



Karma IS Karma

In his book, **Destructive Emotions**, Daniel Goleman explains that, “One of the four laws of karma is, if you do not create the cause, you will not experience the result. If you have created the cause, you will definitely experience the result. All of this is individual, so the experiences you have are tied into your individuality. The world you’re existing in, you created as an individual. There is no source that is common to everyone.”

If we could dredge deep down into the ego, we would bring out all the forgotten clutter from time immemorial. Everything past still exists there.

Way back from our soul’s numerous incarnations to our own daily thoughts, actions and private agenda, everything past creates and recreates ceaselessly our response to each present moment, which is the root of our struggle.

Again and again, just as waves form and break, again and again our reactions to situations, our actions to reactions remain unchanged and so does the magnetic duality of all we do.

Action_reaction_action_reaction_action_reaction_act\\#@/ argh! Too late!!

Blameless? Unlucky? Innocent Victim?

NEVER!

Something about the Poor-Me/What-have-I-Ever-Done-Wrong Syndrome

A few years ago, I read **Reborn in the West**, by Vicki Mackenzie, the one and only Jetsunma Ahkon Lhamo, born Alyce Louise Zeoli, an enthroned tulku within the Palyul lineage of the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

In the late 1980's, she gained international attention as the first Western woman to be named a reincarnate lama.

Jetsunma Ahkon Lhamo is still serving as Spiritual Director for Kunzang Odsal Palyul Changchub Choling, a Buddhist center in Poolesville, Maryland, which, according to Wikipedia includes one of the largest communities of Western monks and nuns in North America.

In answer to the recurring question 'Why Is This Happening To Me?' she wrote, "*The content of our mind is constantly displayed as our lives*", she wrote, "*for every single result that we are experiencing there is a cause and that cause is in our mind stream [...] sometimes these things are hard to take in. [...]*

I often get caught myself. I have a friend whom I saw recently whom I consider to be suffering tremendously.

I grieve for him in my heart. I somehow feel that he has been victimized. As a child he was abused, and I know that many circumstances made his life very difficult. It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking that we could suffer without a cause, that somehow we are victims, that somehow the circumstances have occurred to us and that we are "blameless and innocent."

That is never the case.

"The problem is [...] that we can only see a continuum that started with our birth. And even that we can't remember. But according to the Buddha we have lived many lifetimes, uncountable lifetimes, of every life form since beginningless time.

That's when we first considered ourselves "I".

The Buddha talks in terms of beginningless time. So our history stretches to literally out of mind. And we can't understand how many ingredients we have in our karmic soup right now.

At the moment we only see a small slice of our mind's continuum from some stage in this life and we don't see all the factors which are there. It is this that keeps us away from spiritual activity.

If we saw the whole picture we would have no problem in diving into dharma, sweaty and wild-eyed," she added laughing.



Front-Loading Karma = where did *that* come from?

Last night, Myahr and I had dinner with some dear friends of ours. Early in the conversation our host mentioned another common friend who should have been with us last night. She had been invited and a couple of days ago, just as we had, she had accepted the invitation with great pleasure.

This friend was not with us, we were told last night, because she was in the hospital having a shunt set up in her chest. The shunt had to be put in place so that she could receive the toxic cocktail of chemo.

This friend of ours, a retired woman in her 60s who had acted in a professional manner during her active work life - a good mother - a trekker - a go-getter - a traveler - a fun-loving, kind and decent person by everyone's yard-stick has been diagnosed with cancer.

She will have to report to the hospital 3 times a week - weeks on end - for hours-long

shunt-drips. And the hostess ended her explanation with a bemused question regarding the cancer: where did THAT thing come from?

Headlights Switched Off - blind little bats, we are

Admittedly, though calibrated exactly to provide us with the challenge we need to grow beyond the trenches of our comfort zones, not all situations that come our way are karmically induced as a result of anything we have done, either in this life or in previous ones. There is no way of telling what events stem from which, nor should it matter.

What is **IS**, and needs to be addressed in as much a spiritual manner as possible.

I have come to realize that doing life, driven only by our intellect, is as helpful to us as driving at night in a car that without headlights.

We lack omniscience. We cannot see one minute ahead of where we are. As such, we can but have a limited understanding of the metaphysical laws that govern the cosmos.



Karmic Amendment – Does anyone really think life is a cabaret??

We are saddened by the news that it was a baby's fate to die from cot-death or that of a toddler to be mowed down by a drunk driver who ploughed through the fence of the garden where this child was playing.

Beyond a humane emotional response, and for practical reasons, we need to accept that such tragedies happen for a reason, however nebulous to us. The reason is that of karma needing amendment.

We can be as sentimental as we wish for as long as we wish, but we must not forget that a child's soul is, in fact, quite an ancient soul which has a purpose to fulfil in this lifetime. If this means being incarnated in a particular baby with a preordained short life, so be it.

As callous as it may seem, I am coming to accept that such a child's karmic purpose in this lifetime is to give the ones who are grieving the pre-destined wake-up they need in order to tend their spiritual selves. Which is not necessarily the response generated by a personal loss of this magnitude.

Often, in fact, deep grief drives us further into our mechanical selves and makes up even more dependent on emotional crutches.



What? Lesson not learned?

Not a problem. Like at school, we will be given another opportunity to learn what we must learn - either in this lifetime or in the next or in the ones after that.

One major difference is that unlike at school, we cannot eventually graduate simply because we've become too old to be kept back.



Understanding Karma - better today than yesterday

Every mainstream religion reminds us about the consequences of our actions.

Ultimately, though celebrated with different words and through different rites, I do believe that, once pared down and free of fanaticism, each of the mainstream religions share common spiritual beliefs.

In spite of this, I will risk saying that the greatest catalysts of wars of religions, past and present, aside from masking fear and greed, have been waged because of semantics.

On paper, all this makes a lot of sense. However, internalizing *all this* until it becomes a part of my core understanding of the meaning of life and death does not come without effort. And so, as I learn more, I practice a shift of perceived values, slowly, slowly, one present-moment at a time.

Daily, I 'practice' the acceptance of everyone, without exception. No matter how hard and against the grain. Practice, they say, makes perfect.

These days, what I think is that sometimes practice DOES make perfect --- in the fullness of time and not a moment sooner.

Bottom line, as I see it, is that on the topic of *genuine spirituality* as on the topic of gym fitness, the result tends to be commensurate to the Active effort output. NO cheating allowed.

The good news for me is that I do not have to deal with anyone's opinions or religious views and, in fact, I do not have to DO much at all, least of all talk.

All I need to do is simply accept them. But like anything related to this topic, acceptance has got to be genuine - from the heart, not merely from the head, not from the lips.

Giving of self **IS** what unconditional love and universal love are about. It is not about sending feel-good vibes to whoever we are naturally attracted to or comfortable with at the time of our choosing. It is not about being kind to the ones we like and love and being indifferent to others. That would be way too easy and hardly the stuff of spiritual evolution.

It is only the skin that seals us up along with a cultural perception of the individual that give us the illusion of our uniqueness which, in turn, creates and maintains separation and isolation.

Basically, I'm getting to think that we are about as unique as any cookie can be unique on its baking tray, once the cookie-cutter has done its thing.

And this introduces another key concept, that of separation or rather, that of Non-Separation.



Karma Deficit – If only....

What if we lived in communities where we understood the messages our souls sent us?

What if it was understood that any sort of foot/leg injury was the symptom that we were energetically/spiritually unbalanced?

What if it were commonly accepted that any kind of ‘accident’ was the message that we had fallen asleep at the wheel, spiritually speaking - and that we needed to wake up?

What if we lived in a society where at-risk behaviors, unhealthy lifestyles, even accidents and fatal illnesses were accepted as visible symptoms of *spiritual ill-health*?



Drink Up! Cheers!

If we squeeze the same old dirty sponge in every fresh glass of water we drink, we keep drinking the same toxic brew.

Drink All Day - Play All Night ... These are the lines of a VERY popular song at the moment and it is what, in varying degrees, many of the people we know and love long to do, one day - when life becomes sweet.

What are your views on the meaning of LIFE, here and now?

Health crises notwithstanding, what motivation have we to do more than Drink all day and Play all night - or think that Life is a Cabaret? Huh?

A New Soul Is ALWAYS An Ancient Soul –

We are MUCH more than what we think we are!

The Great Forgetfulness: we are ALL souls' in disguise inside a body suit of flesh and fluids.

We can be as sentimental as we wish for as long as we wish, but we must not forget that a child's soul is, in fact, quite an ancient soul which has a purpose to fulfil in this lifetime. If this means being incarnated in a particular baby with a preordained short life, so be it.

As callous as it may seem, I am coming to accept that such a child's karmic purpose in this lifetime is to give the ones who are grieving the pre-destined wake-up they need in order to tend their spiritual selves. Which is not necessarily the response generated by a personal loss of this magnitude.

Often, in fact, deep grief drives us further into our mechanical selves and makes up even more dependent on emotional crutches.

What? Lesson not learned? Like at school, we will be given another opportunity to learn what we must learn, either in this lifetime or in the next or in the ones after that.



A Message from Soul – more than a train ticket's worth

One evening on my way home, I was tested on my ability to unconditionally accept *what was* and I failed the test miserably. Since life is school and not a as Moriya likes to remind me, I understood that I would be tested again until I passed that particular one. The event I am about to recount happened over six

months ago, and I am still being tested on the same topic; that of unconditional acceptance.

For the record, it is important to remember that unconditional love [which I now prefer to call *unconditional acceptance of What IS* since, in our culture, love often implies some sort of contact and giving of something material] does not require us to pat or cuddle anyone or to Nor does it require us to do anything physical for anyone – in any shape



Though we usually always drive into town, on that particular evening, my partner, Myahr, and I decided to go green and hop on a city train and so we found ourselves in a crowded compartment.

With *me* leading the way, we settled on the only two spare seats, not taking any notice of who was already seated directly across from us until *he* came into my line of vision.

The man seated by the window seemed to be in his 50s. He appeared tall and toothpick-thin with a mop of matted white, very white hair. His complexion was blotchy pale. His eyes, though pale blue, were blood shot and rimmed in red.

What initially struck me about this man were the dingy white shirt, the black suit and the pockets that bulged with crumpled paper tissues – *how weird*, I thought.



What struck me next was how the man facing me looked like a *fallen* gentleman in his dignified but stained clothes. Sitting placidly, he reminded me of a dishevelled bohemian aristocrat.



Very quickly, my nostrils picked up the sweet stench of stale urine. A couple of offended nose twitches later, I knew the smell emanated from the man.

As is typical of people seated facing each other in rush-hour train compartments, our knees touched and, wedged between the window and Myahr, I had no room to move.



I glanced at my partner. Seated placidly near the aisle, she was looking straight ahead, but I sensed she was deliberately not returning my look.

Looking around, I noticed the various passengers who, lips tight, shook their heads in silent disapproval of the man – clearly empathising with my predicament.



I didn't silently curse that man. I did not wish him ill. But I certainly wanted to move away from him. I worried about lice and what weird rashes probably covered his unwashed body. I worried about what other germs we might be inhaling through such proximity.

Fair h, you might think, but the bottom line is that I did not feel anything near an unconditional acceptance of him. I tried to look past the man's finely chiselled face and the white stubble on his chin. The person next to him stood up with a mutter.



I tried to focus on what Moriya had told me earlier about 'soil garments'.

Such garments on anyone, in this material life, should be understood as a throw back to *my* soul's past incarnations for she – as that of anyone financially comfortable in this lifetime – would have been hosted at one or other by incarnations who wore the soiled rags of the beggar, the step the destitute. Hence the need to accept the poor and the filthy with a heart that is truly accepting. There is no need to *embrace* – all that is required of us is an honest, non-judgemental, peaceful acceptance.



And so I tried to activate some heart chakra energy, but I simply could not get past the smell. Then again, how can one generate nice heart energy when one is in a state of stress?

As Oogway says in **Kung Fu Panda**, “There are no accidents.” :-))

As truly nothing happens gratuitously, instead of being hypnotized by this man’s physicality, all I had to do was ask myself why I had been magnetized to that particular spot on the train.



All I had to do was observe this man as my teacher and accept the message he was giving me. Instead, I tried holding my breath for as long as I could.

After fifteen minutes of a thirty minute journey, I just could not take it any longer. I signalled Myahr and we went to stand by the doors.

Someone muttered something about how homeless folks should not be allowed on trains and someone else added that such a thing should not be happening in *our* city. “Having to put up with this *here!* I mean really!”



Strange how this man’s face and the sweet stench stayed with me for days!

I ended up relating the incident to Moriya who helped me deconstruct this very symbolic moment.

“Your life is your play, CC, and you have already written about that,” Moriya began, “So what is the role of this homeless man in *your* play?”

This is the question and, once you admit the true answer, such situations will disappear from your stage. For this one scene, your stage was a train compartment and you already know that a train symbolizes the rise of kundalini energy, the energy of life. The man’s appearance with a suit and a white shirt represents the trappings of the mechanical persona which society respects the most.”

“The man’s homelessness symbolizes what spirituality is about – no emotional crutches, no attachment.

The stench is intended to attract your attention to something that is wrong, not in harmony.”



“Suppose this man was a regular person with no stench attached, you wouldn’t pay so much attention to him? Of course not. And yes, you were magnetized to sit right in front of him – not near the aisle like Myahr.

With no room to move, the intention was to force you to see and to feel.

“Truthfully, CC,” Moriya added, “this homeless person gave you a quality workshop experience that was free of charge. So, what are you complaining about?”

Being homeless = symbolically means free from the material clutter that weighs us down. The more we possess, the more we want. If not, why aren’t a modest but comfortable home, a ten year old car that runs well, and a job that covers our basic needs and a bit more, not considered worth crowing about if we’re past the age of twenty? Why are so many of us, already comfortable as middle-classers are, aspiring to have more? Why do the rich keep wheeling-and-dealing to have more?

Why do those who do not own a diamond want one, however small? Why do those who already have one want another one, and those who already have a few want a few more? If your kitchen pantry is as cluttered as mine, I rest my case.

Reality check: how much we own is proportionate to our fear of losing it; the greater the cost to insure and the deeper the vault in which we store it, the less we get to enjoy it because of our fear of losing it.

“It’s like for the Crown jewels, CC,” Moriya explained, “We parade fake ones, which in turn is symbolic of the fake love we give ourselves and each other. How can we not understand that unconditional love is the only wealth that we can flaunt and the

only one that can never be stolen from us? It is also the only wealth that can keep us healthy.”

Being homeless, or even simply camping, symbolizes freedom from the compulsion to indulge in ‘thinking’ about all the what-ifs that create so much anxiety in our daily lives.

I truly believe that it is the myriad of what-ifs that drive our existence. It is what drives our anxiety and our neuroses.

The pockets that bulged with crumpled tissues = this symbolizes all the *kish-kushim* you carry inside you, like everyone, inside your mind. It’s all useless and soiled and it needs to be thrown out and yet you hold on to it as if it was precious to you.”

Yes, Teacher. Guilty as charged.

“The symbol of the man’s pockets bulging with dirty tissues should have acted as a reminder for me to cleanse from within, to make a bigger dent in my physical and emotional clutter because, as Moriya added with her usual straightforwardness, “it will start to stink if you don’t. It will be just like the food left out in the heat.

Sooner or later, it will start to rot. When you don’t flow, when you are not in the moment, when your heart chakra is closed, your energy is blocked and starts to smell not nice. I mean on the energetic level, *kamoovan.*”

Of course, indeed!

“Really, when you clean with unclean object, the dirt won’t go away. Correct? So, it means that when you are afraid to open your heart and do things with pure intentions, you need lessons to teach you that you need to clean thoroughly before your kundalini can rise. Look at it this way,” Moriya added. “In the visible world you saw a man wearing a suit with a lot of dirty tissues in his pockets, *ken?* From the limited understanding of your persona, you interpret it as if this man is trying to look dignified in spite of his being homeless, *ken?* And you think it’s a pity to see a man like him in such a sad state. *But that’s all you feel.*

In the *invisible* world and in a previous life, this man would have been a rich and dignified person, and he showed his wealth to the world by wearing the best suits of his time. The dirty tissues and his smell also create another message.

It says: *look, I was a rich man once but I did dirty deeds. Now, I've lost my wealth, even my most basic possessions in order to amend in this lifetime and cleanse myself.* He now has to stand naked and at nature's mercy, to amend and return a little of what his previous incarnation took ruthlessly. But, CC, as long as such a man stays 'dirty' on the inside, feeling sorry for himself, dreaming of revenge against the god that put him in this situation or of wealth that was not his to have in this lifetime, relying on alcohol to get through, he will remain 'dirty' on the *outside* because things can only shift from the *inside out*."



"Karma does not dump us or push us into cold water so that we swallow a lot of salty water and suffocate," Moriya explained further. "No, no! From Soul with Love, karma only sends us what we each need to grow and thrive – what we need to evolve – not necessarily what we want, or think we need, which is why our ego-persona, like a child used to getting her way, is not very fond of Master Karma – the absolute arbiter."



If a 'coincidence' ever became a 'Koincidence', we would be one K closer to understanding Karma – **C.C. Saint-Clair**

The Real Meaning of 'Tragic'

205 Palestinian children died in the war in Gaza in 2009.

24 children is the death toll for November 2012 in the same area.

9 children were among those killed by a rogue American soldier who went on a house-to-house killing spree in Afghanistan.

Hundreds of children have been dying in the Congo every year, for many years.

5 children died in Delhi, India, when a wall collapsed on December 12, 2012.

69 young people died when Anders Behring Breivik hunted them down on the island of Utoeya, Norway, in 2011.

Some 3.3 million American children witness domestic violence in the 'sanctuary' of their homes. How do we estimate the number of children this violence kills, directly or indirectly, every month?

2,000,000 Vietnamese civilians lost their lives in the Vietnam War. Thousands of children and infants were among the dead.

4 children died there, too, on December 4, 2012, while playing with an unexploded shell they had just found.

Every year, approximately 1 million children die of pneumonia.

Wherever we happen to be living on the planet, an inordinate number of *our* children come to grief. However, on the whole, unless they are our 'home grown' children, we do not grieve for them. When they are our 'home grown' children, some of us empathize with their parents – or we imagine we do – for as long as our attention span allows it – and then we move on.

Indeed, we have allowed TRUE acceptance/empathy (the bedrock of TRUE love, of BROTHERLY love, of NEIGHBORLY love) to be squeezed out of the fibers of our

culture for a few centuries too many. And the worldwide cultural socio/economic model we have allowed in its place has left all of us very vulnerable.

If we remember that we are ALL accountable, ancient souls disguised in our dense body-suits of flesh and bones, it becomes easier to accept that karma will go on delivering its lucky breakthroughs and its tragedies to us, individually, to communities, to countries in every nook and cranny of our civilization - and that karma will reject all prayers for postponement.

In regards to a lingering common concern: How to address the Sandy Hook tragedy spiritually or, for that matter, any mass tragedy involving children, I think it's a fair answer to say, 'The same way as any at-risk groups and communities worldwide have addressed their own losses. At least, in America, one blessing is that the grief-stricken community of Newtown, and those affected in sympathy, are able to access many more services to help them process the horror of their tragedy.

In the immediate aftermath of the Sandy Hook primary school massacre, a world-wide outpouring of emotional support embraced the community of Newtown, Connecticut, in a manner probably never extended to either the distraught families of the Gaza strip - or those residing in any war-ravaged African community.

The magnitude of this emotional support would indicate that the death of twenty American children in their class rooms, shielded by their teacher, was more of a 'world-shattering' event than the deaths of other groups of children, shielded by a grandmother or by an older sibling, 'mowed down' like buds in a meadow.

This outpouring of emotion might also indicate that death-by-shooter is felt more emotionally than death-by-missile, death-by starvation or even death-by-parental neglect. Or it might suggest that 'these' young lives lost were perceived as having been more 'beautiful,' more full of potential' than others, which would amount to a case of Us vs Them, signalling that 'our' losses count more than 'theirs'.

Though it is undeniably the case for the American people, it is unclear why it should also to be the case for the rest of the world. Unless, of course, even when oceans

separate us, we empathize with the trials and tribulations of cultures similar to our own – proof of how long is the range of the separatist thinking of **Us vs Them**.



Though it always is a matter of utmost concern, it is no use pondering WHY the Newtown shooter - or any other shooter for that matter - picked a particular location to go on a rampage on a specific day, at a specific time.

Honestly, how ultimately comforting is it to eventually find out that the Sandy Hook shooter was an introvert who fell out of bed hearing voices clamoring for revenge or that his brain had been short-circuited by an overdose of chemicals or that he was a political lone wolf making a statement.

Similarly, how comforting is it to know the exact motivation of a war-lord willing and able to decimate entire villages – or that the perpetrator of the crime was an indoctrinated suicide bomber?

How comforting can it be to know that hundreds of parents involved in domestic violence kill their children BECAUSE they are unable to deal with the pressures they built into their own lives? Or that, on the physical level, the REAL cause behind most of the thousands of youth suicides every year in the States is that their significant others were, for the most part, unaware of the depth of their despair?



The damning thing about our collective belief in the west regarding random and fatalistic good/bad luck is that it absolutely strips us of any personal responsibility, which could explain why we choose to hold on to that belief as actively as a baby to her mother's breast.

When it comes to disasters, it is fruitless to wonder why one single child was spared while her classmates were shot in a classroom at Sandy Hook primary school, why one child died but her twin was spared, why three passengers survived a plane crash in which 240 were killed, why an elderly woman was killed in her garden by a vehicle out of control, why a 'loving mother of four' died crushed by a crane on her

way to work - or why a family living on the poverty line won a dazzling huge sum at the lottery.

Similarly, it is most important to refrain from attributing events to either good luck or bad luck. Equally, it is important to avoid the oft-trotted reference an 'unfortunate chain of events' or to *vacuously* utter, 'It's a miracle' because, doing so veils the entire karmic system from our consciousness and renders it made null and void in terms of our lifestyle and daily preoccupations.

As it fails to offer a considered explanation and as it usurps any honest introspection into the depth of our personal M.O., how can the belief in mindless randomness be in any way helpful and comforting - if only at the intellectual level?

Neither should we ponder, let alone make judgement, on the karma of parents or loved ones afflicted by a tragic loss, regardless of its shape or form, because karmic intentions are not crafted for popular edification.



Sure, when it comes to 'innocent lives lost', just as bomb and rocket control is needed in warfare, arms control is needed in America. How to explain that 'assault weapons,' somewhat different from other legal, concealed weapons, are as easily accessible in 'picture perfect' American towns, perhaps even more cheaply, than from an arms trafficker in Afghanistan or Colombia?

Having said that, except in some sci-fi scenarios, weapons do not lose control. They do not press their own triggers – not even assault weapons - but people do kill other people on a grand scale, mostly always out of anger, envy or resentment. Our cultural model tacitly permits this hecatomb of citizens by citizens, even in the absence of civil war - even as the judicial system is staggering under the weight of murder 'files' it processes daily across the united States.

As an aside, it is difficult to comprehend why, in this day and age, little boys STILL go around shooting people with their index finger and thumb cocked and/or with toy guns, presumably bought by well-intentioned parents and relatives.

After all, for us, adults, parents, and law-makers, it has been a fair while since the last Hollywood epic battle between *Cowboys and Indians* - a long time, too, since the last John Wayne movie. So, why hasn't this socially 'mal-adjusted' boy behavior been phased out in 'our' homes world-wide, in 'our' gardens and in 'our' school yards? Why has the ongoing roll-out of films and TV series portraying death set in our streets, in our work place, in our homes, in our bedrooms, with husbands and wives, mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters - at times the perpetrators and at times the victims - NOT rang very shrill alarm bells?

Everything that happens to us, individuals, to us, as a country, does happen for a reason, right?



Clearly, tragedies and disasters do bring 'us' together for a finite period of time but, with growing awareness, they should be seen as delivering the cosmic message that we are, indeed, **collectively** responsible for what befalls some of us – or all of us – in turn. Tragedies also show us that we are really quite able to love our neighbor as ourselves, to act selflessly – provided we are moved to do so.

Though it is heartbreakingly difficult to accept, sometimes impossible, tragedies befall us for a reason: they are intended to expose the real 'us', the truly vulnerable part of us – our heart.



Tragedies are intended to strip *us* of all we have been taking for granted.

They are intended to expose *us* to ourselves.

They are intended to bring *us* together as a better functioning *single* unit and they are intended to bring us together with our *loved ones*.

They are meant to bring us together as a community - as a country.

Us = members of one family, first and foremost.

Instead, the family too often fragments under the pressure because, at the crux of the pain are hearts that are closed to all but to their personal pain.

Us = us and our extended family.

Too often they remain attentive for a finite period of time.

They, too, often fragment around us. What has befallen us has not touched them ENOUGH to really touch their heart though, of course, they do care a lot.

Us = the 'others' closest to us, friend and colleagues. They, too, on the whole, show they care with flowers, good words and personalized attention but, basically, they remain unchanged and are keen to return to their *own* lives and get back to whatever it is they have been doing, to whatever they are aspiring to – the manipulation of their perceived reality and the pursuit of their own sets of person-centered goals.

Again, everything that happens, does happen for a reason, right?



Serious question: what if it were according to the 'manner' in which those who grieve for their children [and those who grieve for their loved ones generally-speaking] process their loss ... from the inside/out ... that their karmic tally sheet would be edited in the fullness of time?

What if our karmic tally sheet 'out there' just as much as our emotional health, here and now, were adjusted for the better by our ability for forgive from the depth of our heart, to bond with our loved ones from the depth of our heart and move on from grief *tempered by the ordeal*?

What if surviving a tragedy from the inside/out were our purpose for this lifetime?



"Let us ask ourselves," said Moriya, my teacher, "why it is so hard to forgive and accept from the heart? Let's first look at what is clear," she began explaining. "The part of us we call 'heart' is mostly filled with insecurity and guilt. Both grow and thrive like weed from the inability to truly forgive and forget. Also like weed grow dislike and

hatred. They are on the same sliding scale. Worries grow out anxiety about situations that for the most part are played out in our minds and they grow, too, also like weed, in regards to fearful situations invented about a non-existent future that blossomed out of this insecurity and guilt.” Then she added, “They are all connected together like beads on a thread. By removing any one bead, we make enough room to bring in another of a different type. That one new bead is the start of a new pattern which will develop over time. That’s why forgiving is as good for us as it is for the other – regardless of the other’s actions.’



Over Jerusalem, today the sky is clouded by dark clouds and it’s been raining all day and all night, but I do know that above and beyond the great dark clouds, the sun is already shining and that it is already warm - **moriya**

What is it that IS keeping us here - or not?

Justify Your Existence! demanded the large decal on the rear window of the big, black, sooped-up SUV ahead of me, as I pulled up at a red light earlier this morning.

Maybe it was the dark appeal of the vehicle itself that swayed my thinking, but I felt the slogan had strong whiffs of ultra-rightist ideology. I then pondered the impossibility for anyone to truly justify their existence.

I mean, we can't get away with it simply by saying I need to exist because I'm a good person or Because it's my right or Because i was born or Because I'm a mother or Because the work I do is important ... can we?

And then, I realized that the only way to answer the dare, *Justify Your Existence!* would be to reply: Sure, no problem. My purpose on this earth, in this lifetime, is to amend the karma that is mine to amend - the one that's encoded in my energy field, the one that's been passed on to me by all of my soul's previous incarnations - as well as the karma that I have created for myself through my words, thoughts and actions – not that I suggest this reply to the next person who should pose the question :)

Serious question: is there any other way to *Justify Our Existence* in 'this' lifetime other than by indulging less our needs and our fears to begin fulfilling our True Destiny?

That's once we have figured out who we really are. Having just said that, another question demanding a hard answer is Who are you?

Indeed, *WHO are we*, really?

We can't simply answer by stating our name, as our name is only a name, a label of sorts, and not much would be changed in our life if our name happened to be a different name from the one we have.

We can't get away with it either by adding our nationality because that refers only to a place of birth. Even if we grew up there, this location has, at best, only given us

some of our traits and some of our cultural habits. Neither explains WHO we, personally, ARE. They only explain some of our reactions.

So, we could add facts regarding our ancestral lineage, the level of our education, the area of our expertise and our social status, as well as bits of information about what makes us tick but - serious question: would the sum of this information, even if we threw in our age and our zodiac sign, accurately answer the question Who are You? I believe it would not.

I believe that all these combined facts about ourselves only amount to facts - the facts with which we have been dressing up our persona. These facts simply declare our preferences such as the car we drive, the type of house we live in, the brands we prefer and the jewellery we like to display on our person. these facts are the mere results of reflex actions dredged up from the low end of our ego.

So **What**, then, is the correct answer to *Who are you?*



If we are open to the idea that there most definitely are other higher, much higher planes hugging our physical selves like the rings of an onion, we can agree that, indeed, we are souls disguised - not in a fat suit of the sort used in films - but hidden in a *body* suit. Alan Watts referred of our physical self as a mere bag of bones and fluids but for aesthetic reasons, I much prefer the idea of my body being a body-suit.

Less messy.



Those of us who accept the idea of a state of things that lies beyond what we can see, smell and touch if only through our entertainment screens will understand that the only REAL reason we are alive in this body suit, as in every other incarnation - past or future - is to amend karma. That's it.

Really, is there any other truthful way to handle the question?

Those of us open to an alternative idea to This is Me/This is What Makes Me Tick would already have noted how convincingly the eager little ego leads us like a toddler's hand towards the new shiny toy, the current whim and that candy-cool Must-Have. Of course we would have observed how our little ego also curls up from its own fears as it does from its sadnesses and disappointments.

It curls up in a little ball of despond just as easily as it strikes out in anger. Surely, the cosmic engineering needed to get us *out there* - or should I say 'right here' in our lifetime - civilization after civilization over the millennia and the sustained planetary maintenance THAT requires – can't be merely so that we can merrily zone out, grab, grasp and clutch according to our ego's whims.

Next comes the need to cast a fresh eye on the inevitability of death – and its often unsuspected immediacy: Once we internalize the reality that some forty-one million three hundred and seventeen thousand people have died last year, with more or less two others dying every second, the next point begging for attention has now got to be ... What is it that keeps us alive for as long as we remain alive?

Good luck? Good genes?

A healthy lifestyle?

A good doctor?

Money with which to pay a team of specialists?

Wikipedia tells us that the 'longest documented lifespan is that of Jeanne Calment of France. She died in 1997 164 days after her 122 birthday. 'Calment was still in good shape, and was able to walk until she fractured her femur during a fall at age 114 years and 11 months [...] Calment became ill with influenza shortly before her 116th birthday. She smoked until the age of 117. [36]

Although we tend to be more afraid of the unknown *after* death than desperate to break Jeanne Calment's longevity record, almost as one we have aligned ourselves with the voice of the Surgeon General that has branded smoking tobacco as a major hazard to our health. And so, one of the things many of us have done hoping to

prolong our time on earth, here and now, has been to lose that pack of cigarettes, ween ourselves from the ubiquitous ashtray – and celebrate our willpower by indulging in some retail therapy at the end of each fiscal year.

Fine, but cigar-totting George Burns, a famous American comedian, moved upstairs at the age of 100. Because he died of a heart attack, some say he was the 'living proof that smoking between 10 and 15 cigars a day for 70 years contributes to one's longevity. Maybe the old comedian was one of a breed and they don't make 'em that way anymore. So be it, but Bob Dylan smokes 80 cigarettes a day, and he's still kicking. John Lennon was a chronic smoker too, but tobacco is not what killed him.

The flamed-haired comedian, a smoker all of her life, Lucille Ball, died at age 77, but from a dissecting aortic aneurysm. And when it comes to the one known as the grandfather of the world, Joan Riudavets Moll, a lifelong smoker himself, he died in 2004 at the mature age of 114.



Bottom line: though tobacco does kill approximately 5.4 million people yearly, it can be ruled out as one of our *definite* Life Terminators.

No idea whether he smoked or not but Mozart, considered a musical genius, died at 35. Henry Purcell, my favourite Baroque composer, died at 36 while George Gershwintook a break from Earth at 39. Janis Joplin died at 27 - at the same age as Kurt Cobain. In their own time frames, Syd Vicious died even younger and Buddy Holly died younger again at 22. Shannon Tavarez, a talented Broadway performer who played in the *Lion King*, died at the very unripe age of 11.



Bottom line: musical genius notwithstanding, no matter how steeped into any genre of music one might be, no amount of popularity shields us from the ultimate Death Glare.

Acting would appear to be equally ineffective a shield. Heath Ledger moved on at 28 while a few years earlier but in a similar timeline, James Dean preceded him by 4

years and River Phoenix by 5. Marilyn Monroe died at 36. Though arguably death came to her too soon, she did outlive by 10 years the platinum-haired Jean Harlow.

Dolly the sheep caused a much bigger sensation around the world when she was born than when she died 6 years later.



Bottom line: being in the lime light for whatever reason, even being a sex symbol is no better shield against death than a being a musical persona.

The media tell us that health and fitness are the keys to a well-rounded lifestyle and, presumably, to a longer life. Yet, many of us will remember that day in 2010 when we heard of the shocking death of a young athlete, Georgian luge racer, Nodar Kumaritashvili, who died in a horrific crash while training at Whistler, Canada., *only hours* before the winter Olympics opening ceremony.

- Gary Coleman, a body builder, collapsed during a competition and died in a hospital shortly after.
- Legendary Bruce Lee is as much a legend in this century as in the previous one, but he died at 32.
- Though Fran Crippen is not as legendary as the Kung Fu icon, he was a member of the U.S. national swimming team. At 26, he died during a race in the United Arab Emirates.
- A Pitcher for the Los Angeles Angels baseball team, Nick Adenhardt, died at 22 while Washington Redskins Sean Michael Maurice Taylor a.k.a. Meast [his fans' abbreviation for half man, half beast] died from a gunshot to the leg. He was 24.
- Thomas Casarotto, a cyclist of international standing died while racing in the 2010 Italian cycling Tour of the region Friuli Venezia Giulia. Another 10 cyclists are logged in as having died while training in that year.
- A few years earlier, Australian Amy Gillett, a top cyclist herself, was killed when a car swerved into the group of cyclists training with her.

Bottom line: from the many children of all ages who die to the very top international athletes, any level of fitness is no more a guarantee against an untimely death than being in the lime light, a sex symbol or a musical genius.

Pulitzer Prize winners do tend to grow to a 'reasonable old age', but the list of writers who met an untimely death is long. Just to name a few, Thomas Wolfe died at 38, Stephen Crane died at 29 and so did Anne Bronte - Charlotte's sister. Silvia Plath died at 30 at the same age as Emily Bronte, the *other* sister whilst Rimbaud shuffled of this mortal coil at 37.

On the topic of 'mortal coils', Hamlet is said to have died at some unspecified point between his fictitious 17th and 30th birthday – either way, the death of young characters dying on a page brings to mind Romeo and his Juliet.



Bottom line: any degree of fitness is no more a guarantee against an untimely death than being in the lime light, a sex symbol or a musical genius – neither is literary creativity – neither is being a famous Shakespearean character.

- Grand Duchess of Russia, Maria Nikolaevna, was assassinated in 1918. She was 19 years of age whilst in the 15th century, Joan of Arc was executed for heresy when she was also only 19 years old. As an aside, it would have been entirely feasible for Maria to be Joan's latest incarnation but surely no one in their right mind would claim a famous persona as a past incarnation!
- 22 year old Robert Wadlow, the tallest man ever, didn't die because his head was too far above from his feet, but from an infection of the left ankle.
- Princess Diana was 36 years old when she strapped herself in the back seat of the black Mercedes-Benz that failed to bring her to her intended physical destination.
- Queen Victoria's husband, Albert, *died* in 1861 at the *young* age of 42 and the Queen wore black for the rest of her days.
- John F Kennedy Jr died at 38. Jesus was 33.



Bottom line: any degree of fitness is no more a guarantee against an untimely death than being in the lime light, a sex symbol or a musical genius – neither is literary creativity – neither is being a famous Shakespearean character - neither is being extremely tall, being a 'royal' or having a famous father.

OK, so by now, some of us might be thinking, *wtf ...might as well die young and stay pretty or die young and make a beautiful corpse*. Ah, easier said than done!

Opting out of the 'body suit' is not as easy as one might think. There are, as you know, an incredibly high number of earnestly failed suicides. Suicide, we think is complex and, we think, it has all to do with the person's will to cut their own life short but ... Halle Berry failed in her attempt to end her life through carbon monoxide poisoning. Drew Barrymore tried to kill herself at 14, but survived long enough to get the treatment that has kept her going.

Why Adolf Hitler's suicide came good in 1945, I'm not sure as many would have preferred to have him in solitary confinement for a minimum of 6 million years - no parole.

It might have been the double combo of gunshot and cyanide poisoning did the trick. Still, even that didn't *just happen*.

As one assumes that anyone who has repeatedly attempted taking their own life must have, at least once, given the matter thoughtful reflection, when Wendy O. Williams, front woman for the Plasmatics, finally succeeded in shutting herself down for this lifetime, the note she left behind failed to consider *why* her previous attempts had failed – they had after all been pretty much, point blank. Once she stabbed herself in the chest with a knife. Another time she took an overdose of ephedrine.

Finally, the bullet she fired at herself did find a sweet spot, but the note apparently only said: *I don't believe that people should take their own lives without deep and thoughtful reflection over a considerable period of time*. [37]

With this in mind, my very 'noir' but favorite account of a failed suicide is that of the woman in New York who leapt to her death from a balcony enough storeys high only to have her fall broken by a sidewalk awning. Unfortunately, a pair of newlyweds

happened to stroll by at that nano-second and the weight of the metallic structure weighted down by the woman's body collapsed on top of them – crushing them to death.

There is a quirky English colloquialism referring to the chest deep, often overweight sopranos, that states that it ain't over till the fat lady sings but, truly, those of us who are open to considering that real control upon our persons is not ours to yield, we can agree that it ain't over till soul says so.

For some of us, this understanding makes a lot more sense than the theory of random bad luck/good luck or that of being in the wrong place at the wrong time because then, the next hard question begging is **why** were we corralled into being at the wrong time at that wrong place?

Robert Gary Jones, a 38-year-old father of two, died instantly while jogging on a beach in South Carolina. He was hit from behind and died instantly when a plane hit him as it made an emergency landing. The last thing and only thing Robert heard was the tune pumping through his iPod earphones.



At some point I remember looking out the window and seeing a man hiding behind a tree. I knew I could kill him, but some part of me kept saying, No, don't hurt anyone -
Marine Sergeant David Lindley

Forgiving Is An Action

Independently of what it may or may not do for the 'other', the act of forgiving heals us from the inside/out.

Forgiving is the dual action of controlling both Ego and Pride by putting them where they belong - in the back seat of our thoughts and under strong restraints.

Forgiving is the action of ACTIVELY accepting What-Is. It is the action of 'making peace' with it.

For some, **What-Is** is a part of the divine plan. For others it is a part of the karmic plan. For others, What-Is is a totally random chain of events driven either by others' pettiness – or driven by bad luck with occasional lucky breaks that are few and far in between.



For those who believe in a divine plan, for others who believe in a karmic blue print, ACTIVELY accepting/positively processing means having [or developing] a total faith in a god, or in an omniscient, omnipotent force or in Soul.

Forgiving means ACCEPTING whatever has happened to us or to others we profess to love or care about. However unfair, however emotionally or physically hurtful, what has happened is, each time, an event especially crafted for us, here and now – for a reason.

That reason, it is believed, is never the act of a vengeful, angry anthropomorphic 'god-father' nor is it retributive punishment for something or other done in this or in a previous life. Whether we label events as pleasant or as unpleasant happenings, each is sent to us to test not only our character, but mostly our spiritual mettle.



Just as it is unthinkable to refuse or abort an event perceived as a 'lucky' breakthrough, it should be unthinkable to refuse what we perceive as an 'unfortunate', cruel or tragic setback.

Yet, even the 'lucky breaks' are laden with invisible ripples, not necessarily all benign, that will shape - for better or for worse - our days and years ahead.

How each lucky break will go on to affect us will depend mostly of how holistically, from the inside-out, we process the spin-off of each situation – for the greater good of self and the greater good of all around us. Perhaps sadly, *that* requires a lot more of us than throwing a party or 'throwing money around,' while drowning our unbridled joy in bubbles.

Equally, not forgiving, hanging on to resentment, even if not being outwardly angry, is a state of mind and heart laden with invisible ripples that will shape for better or for worse our days and years to come. All matter of spirituality aside, resentment and anxiety go a long way to shaping our health which in turn shapes, over time, the physical comfort and quality of our life.



If on the mental and physical level, the inability to forgive constitutes a chronic at-risk behavior as detrimental to our health as Nicotine, on the spiritual level it denotes a lack of faith in the greater power. The inability to forgive, thus to accept, has us reacting as teens who, whenever they don't get their way, even on trivial matters wail, "Awh, what did *you* do that for? You are SO mean! I'll never trust YOU again. You're off MY list!"



Ego/automatic pilot, the aspect of us which creates mind/feeling/action connection for us is, indeed, like this teenager who can only react through knee-jerks of lesser or greater magnitude and who is 'totally gutted' by any perceived slur or indifference in others.



We observe our teenagers' reactions and we shake our heads and yet ... though our bodies have matured considerably, our emotional response to some of life's challenges, to pleasure and pain, has not matured significantly – particularly not when a *strong* happening manifests in our present reality - in our 3-D reality.

Forgiving means being emotionally and spiritually growing up.

Forgiving means accepting what manifests in our physical environment - not merely as character-building, but also as spirit-consolidating.

Easy said but, admittedly, damned near impossible to achieve, unless one's [blind] faith, one's heart, is literally in the right place.

Still, the harder the forgiving, the harder one's trust in the Plan, the greater the rite of passage into mature adulthood.



What I'm thinking these days, is that Judgment Day is not a massive triage that happens after we have died. Look at it this way: If one believes that [a] God or cosmic energy or whatever CAN keep track of all of what we do/think/say, then waiting till our life is over to give us a score is like, "Hey, buddy, you could have spoken up a bit earlier, don't you think?"

So what I think is that the spiritual/divine entity in which we believe, the one that is able to work with a balance sheet that spans eons and eons and then a few more years to today can surely, as easily, make macro decisions about our performance on a daily basis.

Conclusion: Judgment day is every day - one moment at a time - and the lucky breaks we get and the setbacks we get, as well as the many in-between bits, are ALL the result of specific entries on that ongoing balance sheet.

It's totally performance based - performance from the heart is the absolute expectation - no edging possible – not even by a 100th of a degree.

Sucks, huh? – **C.C. Saint-Clair**

About A Dream – a message from Soul

Back in 1988, I woke up one morning, close to dawn, with my head dizzy from the dream I had just had. I had been the observer as well as the subject of the observation. I had been both an eagle circling slowly, protectively around my self, and I had been myself, naked, perched atop a sky-high desert pinnacle of red rock - seen through the eyes of the eagle.

In those days, one of my trusted friends was Rahouna. She taught meditation and yoga classes but, then, I was no more interested in such pursuits for myself than I was in using the garden hose for my morning showers.

At 35 years of age, no yoga for me, no weaving, no mantras – only a few pretty crystals scattered here and there in the living room. In fact, my idea of spirituality was encapsulated in the chunk of rock crystal that dangled from my neck. It definitely looked ‘the part’. That, and a strange feeling of humility that overcame me at the odd times I found myself alone in the garden, gazing momentarily at a full moon.

In due time, I shared the very strange dream I had had with Rahouna who, a few days later, surprised me with an aquarelle, a water color, rendition of what I had described to her.

I hung it in my bedroom.

A few months later, mostly to escape the comfortable, humdrum day-to-day reality that had pushed me to write my first novel, *North and Left From Here*, I decided to leave Brisbane where I lived at the time to return to France, my home country, and settle in Paris.

The aquarelle first became ‘immortalised’ in that novel by Alex, the 30 year old narrator:

As I undress for the second time tonight I can't help yet another sigh, but this time one of resignation, as I shrug out of the Tunisian robe I'd been

wearing. It billows to settle around my feet like a collapsed rice paper lantern.

The panels of sliding glass that lead to the sundeck reflect me, as I stand there in the middle of the room, undecided and naked. I'd like to let in the cooler air of the night along with the heady fragrance of frangipani and jasmine blossom. The idea of sleeping with the door to the garden wide open is very tempting. How safe is it, though?

Another sigh of resignation, another shrug. Even if the neighbourhood peeping Tom doesn't get me, I reckon, the mosquitoes will.

Slowly, ponderously at first, the long blades of the ceiling fan begin their rotation above the bed. Quickly they gather speed. A flutter swirls over my toes before widening its circular reach to cool my forehead. Another thought – What if one of those metallic blades should snap off from ...uh, from something like metal fatigue? I chuckle, feeling silly. OK, but what about the fan's rotating head becoming unscrewed? I mean, it could happen, right? A Courier-Mail headline prints itself out of my thoughts:

Unscrewed Fan Blades Decapitate Sleeping Woman

"Oh, for chrissakes!" I thrash about on the mattress. Still the body. Still the thoughts. Sleep. That's the theory.

Hot and restless, I turn over again. Arm bent over my eyes, flimsy barrage against the horde of negative thoughts piled one on top of the other, itching to wedge sideways into my consciousness, I make myself lie immobile, ears trained on the regular monotony of the fan's humming patterns. White noise, is it?

Around and around go the blades, less than two metres above my head. I concentrate on the swirls of displaced air, on the cool caresses each whirring rotation leaves on my bare skin as it catches my eyelashes and the fine hairs of my arms and thighs.

Each blade sweeps over one breast then the other before its feather lightness moves over my stomach. As mindless as a merry-go-round, round and round goes the fan. I close my eyes. I shut down the day.

I see a sea rolling gently beneath me. I bring the sea into a sharp focus, a tight focus. I am an eagle gliding on air streams. The immensity of the sea shrinks to rise and meet me. Displaced waves ruffle and dip. The sea's skin crawls towards an invisible shore. I am the eagle. Hypnotised by the myriad of diamond-headed crests that clash within it, I hover above the patch of translucent water. Sparkling dervishes race up and down and round and round its surface. They jump and skim the shimmering swirls of gently churning water. The girl is safe under my wings. She will always be safe. The Shimon, warm wind of the desert, is playful. Playful for the moment.



Though I travelled light in those days, Rahouna's aquarelle came with me to Paris. When I returned to Australia to resume life in Brisbane six years later, the aquarelle was still with me, of course. Though I moved houses a few more times, the aquarelle always found itself hanging on the wall of either my bedroom or my study, directly within my line of vision.

And, as if it had been waiting all these years to fulfil another purpose, as soon as I became aware that I would be collating a first series of published articles in a 'proper' book, the drawing drew my gaze to it. It was decided right there and then - it would become the cover of my eighth book – the book that would never be for sale.

Interestingly, Moriya and I 'bumped' into each other online. Quite a common occurrence these days, but such a common one back in 2006 in the pre-Facebook, pre-LinkedIn days.

Knowing that there is no such thing as luck, I'll still say, "As 'luck' would have it, one day while Moriya was online, ccsaint-clair.com popped up on a sidebar. Immediately, she noticed the name: C.C. Saint-Clair.

Deconstructing that name, as she does everything that comes directly into her awareness, Moriya decoded it as *See-See Saint Clair/Clear* which, for her, morphed into *See See Clear Sight*.

Intrigued by what this person who could **see-see** through **clear sight** wrote about, Moriya bought the ebook of one of my paperback novels, *Silent Goodbyes* which, unbeknownst to her, had a storyline focusing on the ups and downs in Emily's life, the life of a lesbian high school teacher.

Why did Moriya pick that specific novel and not one of the other six?

The title, *Silent Goodbyes*, she explained later, seemed pleasantly ominous of an incipient separation between life as it had been, with the soul leading it off in a different direction. *Out with the old*, the ego-persona and *in with the new* – guided by Soul.

Little did Moriya know :-)

If things had gone according to the expected *plan* ... I probably would never have heard of Moriya, the 64 year old, Hebrew speaking, urban mystic from Jerusalem, Israel. She would have remained the anonymous buyer of one of my ebooks. She would have contributed \$4.99 to my bank account and nothing whatsoever to my life.

But the transaction did not go according to the 'expected' plan. The download was glitchy. So, Moriya did what most people do in such a circumstance. She found the Contact form, typed her very polite query about not being able to access her download and hit Submit ... to me.

The rest is history and Moriya, through her daily teachings of spiritual philosophy, has helped me get myself on track, on the Path, in a manner that I could not have anticipated.

The knowledge she imparted on me is 70% responsible for the heart-based, level-headed awareness through which I now deal with the moments in my life, such as they present themselves to me, as a high school teacher of 40 years experience, having taught in the same school for the past 17 years who, as 'luck' would have it, is in a *very* long term lesbian relationship.

Through Moriya's no-nonsense guidance, I became committed to developing myself to be my best, in several ways: as the best daughter I can be, now, at the ripe age of 60, as the best teacher to my students and, finally, after several decades and many attempts, as the best partner and friend I can be – from the inside out.

And all from a serendipitous download glitch!

A few months later, still in 2006, at my behest, Moriya revisited this synchronistic karmic 'glitch'.

"I see now that my purchase of your *Silent Goodbyes*, without being hypnotised by any other information on the site about your life or the themes of your novels, was the karmic way Soul managed for me to reach you. There is never a coincidence.

Remember codes, CC, codes! All our connections and all the intended outcomes, everything, is already coded in our aura, the energy field. If we don't let the ego-persona impose its biased reactions to condition our reactions, Soul or God, depending what you believe, they will guide us through all our moments. In your dream, the good eagle that flies slowly around you is the symbol of Soul protecting you."

In those days, I believed neither in God, nor in gods or goddesses and beyond thinking that, yes, I might have a soul, I had no further understanding on the matter. I had never asked myself, What is the point or purpose in having a soul?

Lamely, I typed a reply back to the one who was to become my spiritual teacher and my spiritual older sister:

“I didn’t realise I had come to the attention of the cosmos. Am I out there waving a little flag that says, ‘*This way! Here I am! I need to be reached*’? If that’s the case, how cool is that, huh?’ :-)

In an email dated 5.10.2006, only four months into our correspondence, Moriya was already alluding to what she called my *Book 8*.

“Soul is the source of your inspiration, CC. She trained you through the experiences and the discipline it took to write your seven novels. But while these plots focus on a chase to find happiness and on the emotional distress of your characters, your next writing will be strong, too, but it will offer enlightened solutions to your readers. It will no longer be a book of fiction.

Totally dumfounded by Moriya’s vision, I replied: *Hah!!! Clearly, you seem to know a lot more about this 8th book than I do. I have absolutely no thoughts about it and no knowledge whatsoever to even begin ‘thinking’ about writing such a book.*

Moriya explained: *But I told you shortly after our first communication that this Book 8 will become real and that it will be something very different from the previous ones. And, of course, you already have in your heart all the ideas you need to start writing this book. They have already been sowed within you. You only need a lot of patience to remember what you already know from your soul’s existence. Let the seed become a big tree.*

Looking again at the aquarelle Rahouna drew, oh so long ago, of me perched high enough to touch the sky while a great eagle glided protectively around the pinnacle of red rock, I can only nod. Yes, spiritually speaking, unbeknownst to me ... already then, I was out there – my soul was out there - waiting for my teacher to arrive, as the cliché Buddhist says, because *she* was ready for me to say ‘silent goodbyes’ to my ego-persona, to my old way of doing life.

Much more recently, last week in fact, when I emailed Rahouna's aquarelle to Moriya to show her the intended book cover, she replied with a question:

"CC, *who* do you think projected this image of you on that pillar on the top of the world?"

Being naked mean no karma left to amend, no more debts, total freedom from past emotional crutches."

Moriya added:

"It's clear that you, as CC, ego-persona/puppet persona, as we all are, could never climb up such a rock face, especially not naked." I imagined her wry smile. "So, as soul is pure spirit, pure energy and cannot be seen with our eyes, she put the picture of you there, as an icon, to send you the message that you were *ready* to begin your climb – ready or not - aware or not.

Truth is that another 8 years came to pass before I took the first step. Each of these years had been as laden with its load of trials and tribulations as a Moroccan farmer's donkey.

Eventually, synchronistically, the karmic purpose behind each heavy event, was to establish connections intended to move me towards the lead up to the steepest of climbs. In hindsight, each of these situations, however undeserved and grim they seemed at the time, did its bit to get me 'climb-ready' for the moment *Silent Goodbyes*, the ebook, got stuck in a download glitch.

As an aside, Moriya did end up reading not only *Silent Goodbyes*, but also *North and Left From Here* and *Morgan in the Mirror*.



Dreams: Messages From Soul



Dream Messages for Personal Growth

One of the few things I can say FOR SURE we all have in common is that WE all DREAM. How we perceive the bits of thoughts that some time cling to our consciousness well after our 1st cup of coffee ... this is the essential part that differs.

Our dreams and the messages that are woven through every mundane moment in our daily life, as well as our Karmic tests - be they tiny or cataclysmic - are all intended to keep us awake, to make us aware of ourselves.

They are all intended to guide us into an observation of our physical automatic reactions; of our automatic emotional reaction; of our automatic What-ifs - all of which amounts to ourselves being on automatic pilot.

For every one of us, Moriya keeps reminding me, these messages and tests are only catalysts intended to keep us sane.

They are intended so we can find meaning in everything, as opposed to seeing none.

The more we can understand and decode for ourselves, the more our real Self

grows and we feel less and less desire to identify with and respond to our ego-persona.



Dream Symbols - symbols must not be ripped from the whole

"Messages are reminders like little flags," Moriya continued. "Minute after minute, moment after moment, they come in quick succession. Symbols, messengers, messages - the show is right before your eyes. It is a live performance and it is very interesting, never boring. And if you should forget to observe and fall asleep in the middle of the show, a fresh messenger will come to awake you with a blow on the head. And see, you don't even need for this long, long show. It is set up just for you and it is all free.

Through each of her incarnations your soul, CC, has accumulated more and that you can access once you free yourself of your ego. Most traditional eam interpretations separate the symbols from the dream's story, which is not helpful. It's no good to interpret dreams as horoscopes do in the newspapers or on the net. Our soul never thinks in such basic linear ways, honest."

The point to keep in mind is that the content of our dreams is made up of messages sent to us by our soul. It's no good interpreting such messages as if they were intended for the ego-persona who can only understand things literally while dreaming events that are of a higher

For instance, the traditional interpretation of a snake is 'deceit' because of the serpent's involvement with Adam and Eve but, really in times even more ancient, the snake was already considered the symbol of wisdom and of kundalini. This is the reason why snake imagery all over the world became the symbol of healers and, even to this day, the symbol of doctors represented by the caduceus.

"CC, ze lo tov," added Moriya. *"It's not good transferring to animals negative aspects*

of our ego-personas such as deceit or cowardice. They are our brothers and sisters. They deserve better from us and what they really symbolize is our ability, as humans, to evolve - to love unconditionally and not be greedy."



From our Ancient Soul - Karma in our dreams

"To make my point clearer," Moriya offered, "let's look at another example: the traditional interpretation of a lion in our dreams.

Books usually say that the lion symbolizes great strength, aggression and physical power which is interpreted as overcoming our emotions as well as our challenges.

This interpretation exists simply because, in the modern world, the lion is seen as the king of the jungle. Centuries back, the lion also represented royalty, leadership, pride and dominance.

"When a lion comes to me in a dream, for me it won't mean that I'm about to take over a situation and impose my will on another being. It won't mean that I have to exercise restraint in my own personal and social life.

What it will mean is a reminder for me to not regress into indulging any of my lower desires, the ones triggered by the base and the sacral chakras.

*Look, here is a how a lion came to me in a dream: I am walking alongside a woman through a very big hall. We arrive at the top floor where a lion is asleep in the hallway. I say to the woman: "What will happen when the lion awakes? *Ze lo beseder that a lion should be lying like this in the middle of the hallway."*

* It's not good

Inside the large hall that we finally reach, there are many people.

Suddenly the lion rushes down the stairs, jumps toward the entrance and starts to struggle with another lion. Then, the lion returns and approaches me. I just sense that I have powers to block him. So I point a finger at the lion and say forcefully: "Lo! No!"

The lion retreats but returns again. I extend a finger and again, while looking directly into his eyes, I say: "Lo! Lo! No!"

The lion retreats one more time. Then, suddenly again, he jumps towards me, but stops at my feet and lies down. As I look down, all that there is at my feet is a big white dog with very long hair.

"So I look at this dog in wonderment until his minder comes out of somewhere and stands by me. This man holds a strap that he ties to the dog's neck.

He smiles at me and takes the dog with him. While they walk away I see that the dog has become once again a lion.

And now, CC, let's look at the interpretation of the various symbols present in that dream:

Lion = animalism - lower desires from our base chakra and fed by our ego-persona
Big hall = our ego-persona/ourselves. The more we are developed, the greater is this symbolic hall
A lot of people = our reflected inner being.

They symbolize the various *I*s that we are inside our persona and, for sure, they are numerous. If we see people doing their tasks without conflicts, this symbolizes our inner harmony.

When we can master all our various little egos and keep them on a leash, they are under control and ze beseder gamoor. All good.

Dog = unconditional love, faith

White = enlightenment

"CC, it can be added that the lion's minder symbolizes my ability to control my lower desires and my ability to turn them into positive ones - from lion to dog.

In short, this dream has nothing to do with power and dominance or about being a violent carnivore, but what it tells me is that when I control my ego- persona, I tame 'the beast within', as the expression goes.

These lowly materialistic urges vanish and I remain enlightened.

The lion that changes into a dog and then returns to its original form is the reminder that these aspects of ourselves always exist, no matter what. They are always lurking. It is good to remember that they can, and do, take over in turns, depending on how we feed - or starve - them in our day-to-day dealings with others and ourselves."



Dreams Are Not About the Future - Dreams are seldom premonitions

*"Do you remember, CC," Moriya asked, "how many times I have told you that as our true self, as Soul, we already *know* everything we need to know in order to be realized? I have already told you that we don't need to learn anything more besides opening our heart to let our heart-chakra energy flow, one interaction at a time. Pashoot meod." Very simple, Moriya concluded.*

Uh ... right!!

It seems that what we define as learning is simply finding ways to remember from the ancient wisdom that, along with our karma, has been passed on to us through our *recycled* soul - bless her - and messages from the realm of Dreams are Soul's only way to communicate with us, the only way she can nudge us in remembering what our Ancient Soul has already known all along. I mean, think about it: short of hitting us on the head, how else could Soul get our attention, huh?



Dream Messages are about our persona - Early Morning dreams

While, Moriya was coaching me via email, as always, on the topic of dreams, I happened to have a vivid dream that I could remember, maybe because it was one of these early morning dreams that are said to come straight from the soul.

Here it is:

I looked out of a window and I saw that my car, a red jeep-like 4-wheel drive appeared a lot bigger than expected.

The soft-top that protects the cabin had been removed and the support frame appeared to have been torn off. Bits of metal protruded unevenly from the rest of the body.

The damage to the car is clearly irreparable and further along the dream, I learn that it was a friend of mine who did this as a joke.

Calmly, I try repositioning the soft-top cover again, but it is not something that I can do on my own.

So I wait patiently for the arrival of a friend; the one who turns up is the one who admits to the deed done to my car.

She gets on her phone and begins chatting with someone else while watching me wrestle with the problem.

So I tell her that I don't get the joke and that maybe she could help me fix the mess she created.

Reluctantly, she joins me in my efforts. Together we try to climb on the roof structure, bits of which have just reappeared but we still can't do much.

Finally some young men arrive. They climb on the roof and they attach the soft-top to it. Visibly, they have the strength to push and pull things into place that we didn't have.

Deconstruction:

car = higher self

- I look out of a window and I see that my car (much bigger than in real life = inner expansion, increased awareness
- the soft-top that protects the cabin had been removed = my disguise - how my persona presents itself to the world - exposing the self as one does through teaching and writing
- torn off as bits of metal protruded unevenly = all kinds of thoughts and emotional clutter that were covered up are now exposed
- a friend of mine = protection, support

- who did this as a joke = take things easy like a game - not take myself so seriously
- calmly, I try repositioning the soft-top cover again = patience and good control over emotions and thoughts
- it is not something that I can do on my own = still unable to evolve on my own -in need of help
- so I wait patiently until the arrival of the friend = protection and a connection to soul
- the woman gets on her phone and chats = inner communication with higher self
- I say that I don't get the joke and that maybe she could help me fix the situation she created = I still need help on The Path
- together we try to climb on the roof structure that has just reappeared but we still can't do much = still unable to climb high enough
- some young men arrive. They climb on the roof. They have the strength to push and pull things back into place = help has arrived.

Conclusion: I have all the assistance that I need in order to expand and evolve on The Path, and the feminist that I am need not be bothered that it is through male help that I was able to get things done. The nice young men in my dream represent my Yang - my male side :-)



“We dream, we slumber, we wake up and we forget the dream.
The dream, however, contained a message from Soul.
How else can she get our attention?” - **C.C. Saint-Clair**

Dream Symbols Are Hard to Grab - Quickly they arrive & quickly they vaporize!

For those of you interested in analyzing your dreams, I would suggest keeping a notepad and a soft-lead pencil, rather than a pen, by your pillow.

It is crucial to jot down if only a sentence, a phrase or a mere impression when awaking from a dream in the middle of the night.

Though dreams tend to fade the moment we open our eyes, it sometimes helps to turn on our right side, eyes closed.

It also helps to move from one side or position to another as the dream is likely to return to our consciousness once our body finds itself in the position it was in during the dream phase.

It also helps if, just before dozing off, we tell ourselves, "I'll remember my dreams when I awake", as this can act as a brain trigger.

Beyond that, the best thing when awake is to just float like the dandelion on a breeze and observe what presents itself to our consciousness.



Dream Interpretation: making connections

I always have a go at interpreting symbols in my dreams, but I still rely on Moriya for the final deconstruction of the images that come to me, both when asleep and awake. She is still actively trying to get me to the stage where I do that on my own and "stand on my own two feet."

As I have already told her, "By the time I am able to decipher all that I perceive, I'll be flying, not walking and certainly not merely standing."

For now, the best I can do is nod at the connections Moriya makes between my dreams and the myriad of symbols that pop up in my day-to-day because they make perfect sense. I see how their interpretation is relevant to the physical reality of my life.

Reality check: It does not matter that we don't initially interpret our dreams accurately.

What does matter is to notice the recurring symbols. What is important is to accept that our moments and our dreams have meaning and that these moments of *awareness* are triggered by a higher entity trying to establish contact with us.

At this beginning stage of the process, what we need is time and patience - *savlanut* in Hebrew, Moriya's language.

We need a lot of *savlanut* at every step we take on The Path. And, as always, we need to observe ourselves from within.

What makes things more complicated than they should be is that, as a civilization, we have forgotten altogether that we live only in a symbolic world of pictures, impressions and symbols, perhaps because we deal with them daily in a mechanical way. You can but agree that a credit card and the \$ sign, the face of David Beckham or Madonna, along with the logos of BMW, Prada and Gucci and a plethora of generally more accessible demi-gods and lesser icons, all spell out D.e.s.i.r.a.b.l.e p.r.e.s.t.i.g.e s.y.m.b.o.l.s for the average person, yet the objects coveted are as invisible to their eyes as they are to ours.

Instead of choosing to deal directly with the symbols and the messages, as they stream directly at us - or should I say past us - we chose to merely experience their interpretations in physical, material terms, totally oblivious to the fact that these signs and messages are intended to guide us through our karma.



Understanding Dreams: spiritual development

What we need to do is accept that we have not been incarnated from the dawn of time just to manipulate our days so as to eventually accumulate the most symbols we can grab, while forever pining for the ones that will forever remain out of our reach. Our soul has not reincarnated again and again over the millennia just so we can have fun here and now. As Moriya often reminds me, "Life is school, not a theme park."

As a way to illustrate the need for spiritual development , as a way to free ourselves from the basic, staple desires that are simply about indulging the senses, Greek mythology gives us Tantalus.

There he is, kneeling at the edge of a stream. Very thirsty, he cups his hands to bring water to his lips, but his hands cannot reach his mouth, which illustrates the unending pain and frustration we suffer from our inability to satisfy our primary desire to feel and own, be it our car, our children, our tastebud sensations, our lovers, our house or a holiday and, of course - more, more and more of each, as our appetite to possess is as gargantuan as our penchant for all that blurs our reality - drugs, sex and rock and roll. **Oh, To Dream ... and Remember: Soulfulness in Dreams**

An extract from the ancient texts of Upanishads, translated and selected by Juan Mascaro, give us a succinct but potent summary of the relationship between the ego-persona and the soul.

"Know that when the eye looks into space it is the Spirit of man that sees: the eye is only the organ of the sight.

When one says, "I feel this perfume", it is the Spirit that feels; he uses the organ of smell.

When one says, "I am speaking", it is the Spirit that speaks: the voice is the organ of speech.

When one says, "I am hearing", it is the Spirit that hears: the ear is the organ of hearing.

And when one says, "I think", it is the Spirit that thinks: the mind is the organ of

thought.

It is because of the light of the Spirit that the human mind can see, and can think, and enjoy this world.... and the man who on this earth finds and knows Atman, his own Self, has all his holy desires and all the worlds and all joy." [38]

Martin Luther King's best known sound bite is, "I had a dream."

Luckily for the Human Rights movement, his dream did not fade away the moment he opened his eyes, not like mine did this morning, around 5.15 A.M.

Dream Interpretation #1 - No Words Needed

A while back I had a dream that, as always, I sent to Moriya for a deconstruction and here is what I sent her:

The setting looked like an ancient but restored theme park set inside high and uneven shaped-walls in post apocalyptic state and still smouldering in areas. It had been razed to the ground except for a few sections but people were walking around, as tourists do.

To find the toilet I was looking for, i had to clamber over debris, climb up on walls and down narrow stone stairs. Still didn't find anything that resembled what i was looking for.

So down again I went over a treacherous little trail.

In this dream you, Moriya, happened to live somewhere in that area - very, very high above this terra rasa. From your verandah, we looked over the entire area. You looked as you normally look and wore standard jeans and t shirt, as you do. I couldn't tell which language was spoken down on the ground, but I sensed you didn't speak it well - less fluently than you speak English.

High up in appeared to be where you lived, it was also ramshackle, barren and in ruins, but it had most of the essential commodities. There was a shower and you had one while i waited on the verandah. Actually that strange apartment though.

We went down to your luxuriant and very cool garden. There, you explained a few things to me that i no longer remember. Later we went to the streets. I was surprised to see you do what appeared to be part-time work behind the counter of a makeshift post office.

You wore a tight, zipped up, padded, sleeveless vest that seemed to be a part of the uniform.

Three girls were playing in the sand, making mounds and hollows to jump over. The oldest girl couldn't make the jump. So she sulked and pulled up the hood of her jacket over her head. Later an ambulance came up that street. By pointing to your finger, you explained that the girl had hurt hers and how silly that an ambulance had come for something that benign.

Moriya's deconstruction:

The setting looked like an ancient but restored theme park set inside high and uneven shaped-walls in post apocalyptic state and still smouldering in areas.

****** The ancient/modern park symbolises our life the physical/spiritual domains.*

It was razed to the ground except for a few sections but people were walking around everywhere, as tourists do.

****** Razed to the ground means free of the emotional crutches on which people rely as if they were physical crutches needed to stay upright.*

I had to clamber over debris, climb up on walls and down narrow stone stairs. Still didn't find anything that resembled what i was looking for. So down again I went through a treacherous little trail.

**** Huh-huh! that's an incredible description of the hard work that is needed to cleanse and evolve.*

you, Moriya, happened to live somewhere in that area - very, very high above this terra rasa.

***** Oh, this is a beautiful description of me guiding you into self-realization.*

I don't know which language [...] You didn't speak it well - less fluently than you speak English.

**** the only language needed is that of symbols, little sister. It is the language of pictures where words are not needed.*

I was surprised to see you do what appeared to be part-time work behind the counter of a makeshift post office.

******Post office = distributing mail and messages.*

You wore a tight, zipped up, padded, sleeveless vest that seemed to be a part of the uniform.

***** This uniform symbolizes union, as uniforms do. Sleeveless = more freedom to move and no need for authority. Uniforms hide the persona.*

in your apartment, it was also ramshackle and made of stone

***** the persona is falling apart, which is a very good symbol.*

there was a shower and you had one while i waited on the verandah.

**** purifying the channel*

that strange apartment though barren and in ruins had most essential commodities.

***** shedding old peels, unveiling true self*

We went down to your luxuriant, cool garden.

***** the inner blooming of the open chakras. Spiritual realm.* There, you explained a few things to me that I do not remember.

**** maybe that was about the need to be in the moment, little sister?*

Then we went to the streets.

**** daily needed interaction with the physical world.*

3 girls

***** 3 = imbalance*

were playing in the sand, making mounds and hollows to jump over.

**** sand is moving and shifts i.e. not being grounded enough = being moved by every whim and caprice.*

The eldest one couldn't do it. So she sulked and pulled up the hood of her jacket.

***** hood over the head i.e. thoughts in head. She pulled up the hood over her thoughts to silence them.*

By pointing to your finger, you explained that the girl had hurt hers

**** fingers symbolize touching because you feel the touch via them, ken? It is with your finger that you poke and prod or with fingers that you grasp tightly, yes? A finger can also point the right way.*

an ambulance had come

***** Ambulance is a saving/helping tool; its white colour symbolizes spiritual help not just hospitals.*

“CC, the decipherment of this last part is that for people who touch’ their way through life by blocking the natural flow of things and trying to control their life - and also for the so-called spiritual ones who try to control by going to one workshop and to another - being spiritual tourists, as you say - for them, no amount of spiritual help will be useful.

*So, yes, sending an ambulance to rescue the one who *touches* instead of simply being is a waste of time.*

The overall message that your soul has sent you is very clear and very lovely. You know how to apply all of it to your moment.”



Our Soul Talks To Us - Why bother interpreting her messages?

Our soul speaks to us through pictures and symbols. We notice that the same messages and motifs repeat themselves again and again in our dreams. They tend to have a recurring theme or subtext.

We just need to understand one basic rule: dreams are messages directly from our Soul and the more we pay attention to them, the more we benefit from our ability to snatch these messages almost out of thin air. We are intended to use them as clues directly linked to our current, present moment, situation on the Path - whether we are on the Path willingly or unwittingly - for everyone, by the sheer nature of karma, whether Aware or Asleep, IS on the *obligatory* path to amendment.

The Soul Show - Brain over Soul over Brain

Though real wisdom cannot be bought, placebo can be. And a point worth considering is that, in matters of spirituality, we do not truly learn anything new. We merely remember what we already know from anterior lives.

The more the channel to our inner self is open, the easier it is to retrieve this memory.

Any *new* insight comes not from our ability to learn and absorb, but is accessed from our soul. The events that trigger a search for spiritual enlightenment are merely the catalyst that gets us moving - and so is the correct interpretation of our dreams.

Our brain, you see, functions as a processor. It processes every thought, every emotion, every wish, every desire and every fear we have ever felt. All these add up to create our energetic make-up and produce our reactions to the multitude of moments that make up each of our days, year in/year out.

So, for those of us who are truly interested in personal growth, it is essential to move ourselves away from the limited understanding of Self that has us thinking and sometimes say, "This is WHO I am and this is how I react," the subtext being: like it or lump it! It's my way or no way!

It is therefore essential to widen our range of responses to enable ourselves to adjust our response at the right moment, in real time, in the moment that is under our feet - instead of regretting it later and saying, "Oh, why did I say that? Why did I react this way? Why didn't I ... What will s/he think of me now etc. etc. and even, "Why didn't I say/do anything. How could I just stand there and let that happen?"

In short, it is best to attempt NOT interfering with our moments. It is best to accept them as they are in order not to create blockages within our mind with unnecessary what-ifs thoughts/emotions during our waking state.

As Moriya says, "When we flow and accept things without resisting, reconstituting or postponing them all is well and the flow of thoughts/reactions comes and go smoothly and **yo-fi.*"

*good/great

When we INTERVENE and TOUCH in order to try TO CHANGE unpleasant events by rejecting or ignoring or resisting we create blockages that block the flow. Life is an incessant flow of moments and events and we cannot stop this flow to trap the previous moment just as we cannot catch the wind."

Basically, it's only when we are asleep, that the brain can perform its function and arrange our thoughts, emotions and desires in an orderly manner to enable the persona to function at its most lucid best once we've **bounced** out of bed to land in the moment under our feet.

The first part of our sleep is usually dedicated to our brain fitting our desires, thoughts and emotions in the correct jigsaw formation and equalizing the mind as much as possible.

What our brain arranges for our consideration is the dream we have in the first part of our sleep. Usually these dreams, inspired by what's been keeping us awake too long, contain a fair dose of restlessness. The images deal mostly use daily events,

our confusion and our inability to flow. This is the REM phase of our dream/sleep. We see pictures by day and by night. By day, our *logical and intelligent* mind interprets these pictures as it pleases leading us to interpret what we see and experience through thoughts, emotions and words.

By night we can but absorb these pictures and their symbols naturally - like the air we breathe.

The proof of this is that in our dreams we do experience amazing situations that 'defy gravity' - often literally - and we just flow with the story line.

We never think it's unnatural or crazy to be *doing* such things, no matter how strange - at least not until we wake up. Not until our logical and intelligent brain resume its processing.

While we dream our body is not functioning. It is asleep and our senses are dormant as well. That enables our soul to take control without body-persona interfering.

Knowing that the body is like a battery which nourishing and sustaining us during our daytime activities, Soul recharges it with cosmic energy. The more we resist What-Is coming down in our daily moment, the more we try to manipulate outcomes to fit the delusion that we KNOW what is best for us, the more we spike with adrenaline borne out of anxiety, resentment, annoyance and anger and run after elusive goals, the faster we deplete our energy.

Good sleep is restorative, in more ways than one.

Our state of suspended animation while asleep also allows our soul to deliver messages of support, love and acceptance - of selfless advice on how we need to redirect ourselves, as beings endowed with more than a body filled up with urges and desires.

Once this first operation is completed, our *channel* for lack of a better word is now clearer, cleaner, better able to receive messages from the other dimension.

We have now entered the phase of deep sleep.

In this relaxed and peaceful state, we are like the clear and still pond at the bottom of which we perceive the glint of a white pearl.



When In Doubt - brute force will do

Myahr and I are walking through a strange landscape, like a big market in the desert.

**** The desert is the symbol of inner harmony, as it's sterile, without words or thoughts, which of course is optimal.*

The market is a symbol of the mechanical system of give & take, of reaction and counter-reaction, which equals the mechanical ego-persona within the huge void within.

We become separated.

****You are on the spiritual path, but she is not yet following you.*

I look for her everywhere. Then somehow, I am alone on a desert trail when a man appears. He has sexual thoughts on his mind [again!] He tries to grab me, and I am scared but not that much. What is interesting is that I'm not walking. Instead, I seem to be moving a little above the ground in a long lopping gate, as I move away from him.

Looking over my shoulder, I warn the man that I will denounce him to whichever authorities and he replies that he doesn't care.

He's the sort of 'man' who has nothing to lose. Anyway, he disappears.

I make my way home through that desert and a very interesting visual is that I grab the surface of the hills and upward trails.

They almost look as made of very dense cloth and I haul myself up the steepest ruts and hill. I grab a handful of that hill at the time and climb my way up.

I come across other strange people, women, who just drift across my path and finally I find 'home' and my darling is there, pulling closed the curtains for the night.

But there are a few more women in that house and a couple of them seem to have made a shop or an office in the house and somehow, my eyeglasses that happen to have very thick black frames lay shattered on the floor. So I try to buy a new pair from one of these women, but there's not much of a selection in their display case. So ... no glasses to see with.

***** First is the symbol of the male gender. Always disguised by "sexual thoughts on his mind [again!]" so you try to run away from him, i.e. from the need to face your reaction to the male gender in general.*

and I make my way home through that desert and a very interesting visual is that I grab the surface of the hills and upward trails.

*****This is about flowing in order to come home.*

grab the surface of the hills and upward trails.

**** in order to elevate you have to flow without touching anything.*

They almost look as made of very dense cloth and I haul myself up the steepest ruts and hills that way.

I grab a handful of that hill at the time and climb my way up.

**** Wonderful image of elevating yourself by sheer brute force. Very encouraging message.*

I come across other strange people, women, who just drift across my path and finally I find 'home' and my darling and my darling is there, pulling closed the curtains for the night.

But there are a few more women in that house and a couple of them seem to have made their store or office in the house.

*****Coming home = union with your true self. All the people in every dream represents aspects of the ego. Your darling will be there to welcome you, even if she is passive for now.*

Somehow, my eyeglasses that happen to have very thick black frames are just shattered. So I try to buy a new pair from one of these women, but there's not much in their display case. So ... no glasses to see with.

**** CC, very good message again when the thick black frames are shattered, which means making a break through your personal Great Wall of China i.e. all your blockages, and when your glasses are unusable -you won't need them anymore because you are able to see without them."*



Dreams - messages from soul

The bigs that - awake or dreaming - all the messages, signs or symbols we do not see, blind mice that we are, amount to so many arrows pointing to the "Yellow Brick Road" we need to be on.

They are the emergency light pinpoints that line the central aisle of an airplane, the ones intended to guide us in the advent of a catastrophe.



Karmic Dreams - Soul over Mind _ or is it over Brain?

In our relaxed and peaceful state of deep sleep, we are like the clear and still pond at the bottom of which we perceive the glint of a white pearl.

As soon as we wake up, however, our brain/persona immediately takes back control and the Soul Show fades awake like this eclipsed by the light of dawn.

Our clear *channel* or frequency is once again blocked and we returned to our Me First/Mine First myopic patterns of separation behavior.

Our very first thoughts on any given morning is always related to either *I* or *Me* or *My* and to the world outside of our control - outside of our jurisdiction.

And hop, we go for another ride on the merry-go-'round.

The longer we can maintain our state of relaxation upon waking, the more we can remember of the Soul Show.



Dreams Matter - Dream, Dream! Talk 2 me!

My friend, Jayne, had a dream.

"Whoaa! just had a bizarre and scary dream," she wrote. "And so I'm writing it down here so I don't forget in the morning (yep, still not got paper & by pillow, as you recommended. Here's how the dream went:

I'm at some kind of show/expo type thing & go to a stall which has some long rectangular glass fish tanks full of rats.... well the first tank they look all cute like mice & there's some baby ones but then in the last tank they are fully grown & huge long things (honestly, I don't mind rats at all - am not scared of them).

The woman there says they were not supposed to have had babies & they now have more than they should & would I take some.

So off I walk with about 8 of them in a big armful & they are all wriggly & it's hard to stop them from dropping.

The rest is a bit blurry now but I remember being at the top of a huge chute or slide and because they are so wriggly the only way to all get down is to slide them 1 by 1 down first & then me follow.

But I didn't anticipate how fast they'd go 'cos of their wee size and they fly down....

awww ... this is sad, hence me freaked by the dream.

By the time I get down & look to find them all, one by one, I see them dead or in serious pain with all their limbs bent & broken from the bad landing :(

Then I guess I pick up the okay'ish ones & take them home & then what woke me up was my husband seeing them & saying something like "Why'd you want those? They are all broken" & taking them from me & smashing them against the wall !! Not nice.

Hmmm I'll have words with him later :) BTW, as he does love animals & pets, this dream is out of character.

Here is the deconstruction I sent back to Jayne:

3 voices = yours, mine and Moriya's.

[Hebrew fast-tracking: *Ken* = yes - *Kishkushim* = rubbish, nonsense

Lo = no *Tov* = good/fine *Tov meod* = very good *Ahoti* - my sister *Khol hakavod* = well done]

You: I'm at some kind of show/expo type thing

Me: the show of life?

Moriya: Ken, but it's Jay's show. Remember, WE are the writer and the main actor because everything happen INSIDE our mind.

You: & go to a stall which has some long rectangular glass fish tanks full of rats

Me: these rats in a tank are prisoners and go around in circles. And ... ?

Moriya: rats symbolise our weaknesses as rodents chew at our thoughts and at our resolution to evolve.

You: in the first tank they look all cute like mice

Me: that's about separation. It's about being hypnotised. Cute vs ugly, but they are rodents all the same.

Moriya: *Tov*, and these *cute* rats symbolize desires, temptation that gnaw and bite us on the inside.

The long rectangular glass fish tank is very important to this dream. You see,

although rectangular has four angles it is not perfect like a square in order to represent perfect balance. A glass symbolizes the separation between the spiritual/physical worlds. So, this rectangular tanks symbolizes imbalance.

You: & there's some baby ones

Me: every thought start small. baby thought will soon get bigger and get out-of-hand.

Moriya: Ha-ha, I'm smiling, because my little sister is an expert on this topic. In fact, Jayne's 'baby ones' symbolize our mechanicalness because it tends to repeat itself automatically and they seem like new born babies although they are the same old rats.

You: but then in the last tank they are fully grown & huge long things

Me: the worse of our thoughts? The ones that are the most engrained?

Moriya: *Lo, lo*, CC, it means that by being obsessed by thoughts, they overwhelm us. Just like when Jay became so stressed over the baby rats and couldn't think normally anymore.

You: The woman there says they were not supposed to have had babies.

Moriya: It means that by being in the moment you let go and you are not clinging to any thought. That allows thoughts to come and go freely... No attachment to the thought or to a what-if outcome.

You: 8 of them in a big armful & they are all wriggly & its hard to stop them from dropping.

Me: the person clutches such thoughts to their bosom because afraid to let go of them.

Moriya: Wriggly means mechanically agitating yourself, automatic movement. Again, this is about attachment and ken, afraid to let go, and so lost control (=hard to stop them from dropping).

You: The rest is a bit blurry now but then I remember being at the top of a huge chute or slide and because they are so wriggly the only way to all get down is to slide them 1 by 1 down first & then me follow.

Me: Is a slide downward is the opposite of a [spiritual] elevation?

Moriya: CC, a slide down starts from above, so the meaning is that in order to stop the mechanical (wriggly) of the persona and to her being overwhelmed by her own thoughts, jay needs to reclaim control by being in the moment and letting her thoughts out of her mind one by one - and to stand guard.

You: By the time I get down & look to find them all, one by one I see them dead or in serious pain with all their limbs bent & broken from the bad landing.

Me: I know this is not about being sorry for the poor little mangled beasts, ken? That's simple cultural sentimental kish-kushim, ken?

Moriya: Ken. Tov meod. By taking matters in her own hands, those thoughts that were gnawing at Jay either died or no longer have much power.

You: Then I guess I pick up the okay'ish ones & take them home

Me: still holding on to the same crutches and *kishkushim*. Afraid to let go.

Moriya: *Tov, ken.*

You: & then what woke me up was my husband

Me: husband = protector/soul?

Moriya: Her yang aspect - the one she needs more of for balance.

You: seeing them & saying something like why'd you want those they are all broken & taking them from me & smashing them against the wall !! Not nice.

Me: 'not nice' picture, indeed, but a necessary one to keep in mind as our mechanical patterns need to be terminated.

Moriya: *Ahoti, kol hakavod.* Who said she doesn't know how to decipher dreams, huh? You do well.

Me: One day, Moriya, one day - with your help, I'll get there :-)



Dreams Karmic meaning - Dreams symbols

Our human brain has already been trained to derive meaning from all that comes within our awareness.

Grey clouds in the sky warn us of incoming rain.

A flag stands as pride of a country. At half-mast, it stands for mourning.

Barbed wire symbolizes loss of freedom, while a dove symbolizes love and freedom.

We understand the tools represented by each of the icons on our desktop.

We know what a thumbs-up means, just as we understand the symbolism of a fist raised in defiance, which is different from a fist pumping the air in exhilaration.

A baby symbolizes life and softness as well as unconditional love and so does a puppy dog.

Fluffy toys and dolls symbolize cuddles - even unconditional love.

Strangely, diamonds evoke enduring love.



Dreams + Symbols - Everything HAS meaning

Feathers make us think of Native American Indians and the flight of our soul.

Typically, a policeperson symbolizes protection.

A yellow rose symbolizes friendship. Interestingly, although a red rose has come to signify true love, red being the color of our lowest chakra - the one from which stem our primitive instincts and our knee-jerks - it is no wonder that true love tends to wither quickly.

The color green represents nature and wellbeing, as well as jealousy, while the little green person inside the traffic light tells us when it is safe for us, pedestrians, to cross the street.



Dreams Do Point The Direction - for real time use

In reality, everything and everyone who comes directly within our line of vision to connect with us, personally, is a message-carrier that, as clearly as any other semiotic code, has a meaning that is intended for us - personally.

Whatever comes to our awareness - while asleep or awake - wants us to be aware of it.

Beyond guiding us towards our potential, symbolic signs and occurrences are sent to us to remind us, to encourage us, to confirm that, spiritually, we are on the right track.

They are also sent to us to warn us when we are on the wrong track. If we are not aware, we are asleep at the wheel, and if we are asleep at the wheel, the question worth asking is

What,
then,
is
driving
us?

Dream Flat - sharp prick

Here's another dream I had a while ago.

I'm walking towards my car and notice that one of my rear tires is very flat. I look at it puzzled till I noticed a nail embedded in the rubber.

Me: the car = me; the tire = stability diminished
message = need for greater spiritual stability?

Moriya: yes, but what about the nail? It symbolises your irritation or your annoyance

with things, which is a failure to truly accept what is. It also reflects a lack of patience with yourself. The nail is very sharp and put the air out of your tire, i.e. when you're in the mood, as above, you lose energy and consequently you lose your balance.

These days, around 4 am, I am totally aware of having just emerged from a *riveting* and clear dream, but the minute I open my eyes and begin holding on to the ephemeral shreds that have lingered inside my consciousness ... they simply vaporize :-~



Dream Message From a Manic Snail

Yet another dream:

This morning although I know I had just had another long dream - I can only remember one weird messenger of sorts.

I walked past a large flower pot when my eye got attracted by rapid movements inside the plant.

I looked more closely and there it was, a snail - a large snail but one of normal proportions for a snail and that snail was swaying from side to side, right left/right left with amazing speed.

Every time it tilted to one side, it revealed a large and hard mouth - not unlike a shark's. That snail was scissoring right through the plant it was *eating*.

The snail carries his shell-house on his back and thus it symbolizes the persona and all her clutter, physical as well as emotional, that she can't but drag with her everywhere.

Swaying from side to side = the need for balance while the amazing speed of the movement signifies the opposite which is need to do things nice and slowly - not in an erratic manner.

The hard large mouth = the need to soften words or to use fewer words.

In short, while I am identifying with the persona and carrying her/my clutter, I do things too quickly and absorb too many words, as well as use too many words myself which is the meaning of the large mouth and the big appetite of this snail. Normally the snail is a great example of slow motion but it is always attached to the plant by the moisture it excretes = attachment.

Message from Homage the Dog

Here I am a room like a classroom. Two women in the back and three children in front. I get up, but I'm not really myself.

Here is me with a little container of chocolates. They are stuck together.

I take the container over to where the children are sitting.

I tell them they are from the women who will be looking after Homage, their dog.

Yup, Homage is their dog's name.

One of the children casually quips, "Yeah, he's had his balls cut off" - End of dream!



I had this dream a couple of years ago before Moriya had begun introducing me to alternative interpretations of symbols. Here is what she said:

"Dreams about children and babies mean your inner self starts to awaken.

The classroom symbolises learning your lessons and the children are aspects of your spiritual High Self being unveiled in the material world.

Homage, the dog's name = homage i.e. you pay homage to your Soul.

The dog symbolizes faith, loyalty and protection.

Chocolate was considered by the Aztec Kings as gods' nectar.

The desexing of the dog denotes the need to control desires like anger, fear, doubt etc., i.e. to remove these desires from your mechanical system.

Neutering is parallel to sterilization, like a desert without any plants which, in your dream, is about the need to be empty in order to let the soul expose herself.

C.C., keep in mind the meaning of your dreams. They like sign posts. Allow them to reassure you that you are on the right track and that you are very protected, as your Soul keeps her eyes on you. "

Nice message, huh? :-))

Food For Thought

Back in 2009, in another of her teaching emails, Moriya shared a dream of her own.

"Last night I dreamed about you. I was telling you to order a big quantity of carob pods that would be sufficient for many years to come and I urged you to eat some every day.

Though I never visited you in Australia, I knew we were standing in your house and I was telling you to store the pods in a warehouse.

The decipherment of this dream," she explained, "relates to the physical world, as it is healthy to eat carobs and also to the spiritual world, as the carob symbolize spiritual food.

CC, you are going to collect a lot of that spiritual food over many years. You will store it all in the warehouse that is within you."



Dig Deep b4 You Flow!

Another one of my dreams deconstructed by Moriya.

Scene #1: I am with someone with whom I sense I have a sexual connection. We are in a dinghy aiming for the shore. We hit ground fairly gently.

***A *lover* in your dreams always denote your soul.

Scene #2: On the bed with this *lover* are another 2 women.

***The 2 women symbolize the body and the Astral, i.e. gross matter.

My *lover* has a sexual connection also with one of them. On the bed, she finds a tool like pliers but they are curled at the tip. There's also a strange screw driver. She gives them to me to keep.

***The tools denote the need to work on your ego aspects. The screwdriver is to penetrate through a hard surface = you have to dig inside yourself.

This 'lover' of mine says she wants to go back to sea in the morning, so I ask her to wait for me so I can watch over her in case of trouble.

*****Sea** = life.

She said she'll be fine without me. I ask her to leave me a note, should she go early, to tell me that she is at the sea. This request upsets her. "I want to be free to go there," she says. "doing that, leaving your a note would spoil my pleasure."

*** *In order to arrive at your real self, you have to work on yourself and use many tools. Only then will you be able to go to sea (= life) and be free. Now, about you being left behind in that dream: where's the pleasure in *sailing* with a mechanical ego alongside? Would you enjoy that yourself, if you were soul?*



Flowing or Flooding – another dream

From a bucket that i was holding, a lot of water spilled on the floor. it was like a flood that i tried to contain but couldn't.

Ceiling fans whirled far too fast. i and two women who seemed to be my friends fiddled with all the switches, but there was no way to slow down these fans.

I filled a bath tub. The bathroom was very steamy. I didn't go into the tub. A woman whom I took to be my mother appeared out of nowhere. She was beautiful and tall whilst my mother is quite short. She wore a majestic robe in black and white. She was wise and grand - but welcoming.

“CC, Water denotes to need to flow. The dream is about the need to slow down, and take things easy. Otherwise, you'll be flooding yourself with emotions and mental confusion.

The women are your spiritual aspects. The majestic robe of black and white denotes your spiritual self in white and your ego-persona in black.

When you're well developed spiritually, this black and white balance each other.

The mother figure that you saw is not your biological mother but she is your Soul.

Truly, as for each one of us, your soul is your real mother.

CC, your dream reveals to you your possibilities, your potential for spiritual evolution.



When White is Transparent

I am not in India but for some reason I am in hotel ran by a Hindu woman and her daughter. Very traditional, very intense. The hotel is large and spacious but dark and full of strange things. I'm wearing a white shirt that has little bits of gold leaf in the vertical seam where the buttons are. The seam is transparent and the gold leaf clearly shows through.

I know that I can buy more gold leaf to add should I wish to.

I am very intrigued by the traditions and the visuals and the clutter all around, so I

ask what I need to know to the woman's daughter, not the woman herself because her persona scares me a little.

I want to buy some of the beautiful shirts remembering - in the dream - that when I was in Shanghai, I showed good restraint and only bought a couple of objects and only a few shirts.

If I bought some of the lovely white Hindu shirts, I reasoned that I would give some to my mother. So I ask the Hindu daughter the way to the old part of town. She replies that going there is complicated and that she doesn't take anyone there herself. There are a lot of people milling around in this hotel and in its garden, but I can't remember what anyone was doing there. Such a shame, as it was a dream that was pleasantly intense.

“India is the land of the yogis, CC, and also the land of ancient spiritual wisdom. The hotel is transient place where people stop for the night and continue on their way, which means change in progress. The hotel is the symbol of the ego/thought with its constant change, and India represents the spiritual self.

This dream is about your true self and also about your false one. The white shirt is a symbol of light and the gold seam equals enlightenment. The two women symbolize the two faces: the true face, which is the daughter and that's about you exposing your new face.

The scary mother symbolizes the old ego that always uses fear in order to control. Your mother in the dream is a symbol of your soul, of your true self. The new shirts are for her, i.e. you need to develop different/new consciousness,” concluded Moriya.



There is a time when nothing can be done; a time when something can be done; and a time when everything is possible. Keep this in mind, so as to be alert to discern each different quality of time – Idries Shah, H.B.M. Dervish (1982) Journeys with a Sufi Master

Finding Meaning

Spoiler: There is no shortcut worth taking for the one truly on The Path.

As an introduction to the appendix of Dream symbols, I asked Moriya to deconstruct for us a song by Nick Cave, "I Had A Dream".

I had a dream, Joe = dream is our true state of being - longing for an inner connection

You were standing in the middle of an open road = the spiritual Path

Your hands were raised up to the sky = points towards spiritual evolution

And your mouth was covered in foam = hiding the secret teaching

I had a dream, Joe

A shadowy Jesus flitted from tree to tree = parts inseparable from the whole.



I had a dream, Joe

And a society of whores stuck needles in an image of me = persona and her aspects. A prostitute sells her *love* for money, as she cannot give genuine love from the heart, therefore she symbolizes the ego-persona betraying her true self by leading a material life.

An image of me = the false persona, only a reflection of the true self.

The needles = it is painful to admit the truth -a means to make the person awake to see truth.



I had a dream, Joe

It was Autumn time and thickly fell the leaves = unveiling of the true self.

Autumn = period between Summer and Winter, i.e. light and darkness/soul and body - period of late maturity followed by a decline - a possibility to evolve by shedding our old clothes like falling leaves.

And in that dream, Joe

A pimp in seersucker suit sucked a toothpick = the ego wears spiritual colors - white and blue. Seersucker=puckered - Karma and the many deeds that need amending

Toothpick = used to extract bits of food in between teeth - cleansing, purifying the mind

And pointed his finger at me = be awake!



I had a dream, Joe

I opened my eyes, Joe = awakening

The night had been a giant, dribbling and pacing the boards = remaining in a state of ignorance and blindness for too long

I opened my eyes, Joe = being awake, be aware

All your letters and cards stacked up against the door = attachment, emotional crutches

I opened my eyes, Joe = awakening

The morning light came slowly tumbling through the crack

In the window, Joe = inner light shines through the opening consciousness

And I thought of you and I felt like I was lugging

A body on my back = being aware of the higher self and feeling the weight of the difficult task ahead on the Path

Where did you go, Joe? = though blind to it, our soul never walks away from us. She is our true self, but he is unable to *see* her.

On that endless, senseless, demented drift

Where did you go, Joe? = seeking his soul outside of himself. Impossibility to see it through the barrage of thoughts, emotions, desires, emotional crutches etc.

Into the woods, into the trees, where you move and shift

Where did you go, Joe? = the soul is, indeed, everywhere and inseparable from who we are in the material world

All dressed up in your ridiculous seersucker suit = as a poser, the false persona wears spiritual clothes

Where did you go, Joe?

With that strew of wreckage

Forever at the heel of your boot = false ego in its many clinging aspects



Moriya, who is no more familiar with modern Rock as she is with Nick Cave, added, “C.C., I’m not sure whether the singer himself was aware of the hidden meaning of this song, but his Joe represents the potential of the ego-persona to awaken and gain self-realisation.”



For those of you interested in analyzing your dreams, I would suggest keeping a notepad and a soft-lead pencil, rather than a pen, by your pillow.

It is crucial to jot down if only a sentence, a phrase or a mere impression when awaking from a dream in the middle of the night. Though dreams tend to fade the moment we open our eyes, it sometimes helps to turn on our right side, eyes closed.

It also helps to move from one side or position to another as the dream is likely to return to our consciousness once our body finds itself in the position it was in during the dream phase.

It also helps if, just before dozing off, we tell ourselves, "I'll remember my dreams when I awake", as this can act as a brain trigger.

Beyond that, the best thing when awake is to just float like the dandelion on a breeze and observe what presents itself to our consciousness.



Once we manage to not just decode, but also link all the various symbols together to give shape to the message, we suddenly feel more aware of the spiritual world as it impacts on us, at point blank range.



For now, though I rely on Moriya for the deconstruction of the symbols that come to me, both when asleep and awake, she is actively trying to get me to the stage where I do that on my own and "stand on my own two feet."

As I have already told her, "By the time I am able to decipher all that I perceive, I'll be flying, not walking and certainly not merely standing."



For now, the best I can do is nod at the connections Moriya makes between my dreams and the myriad of symbols that pop up in my day-to-day because they make perfect sense. I see how their interpretation is relevant to the physical reality of my life.



Reality check: It does not matter that we don't initially interpret our dreams accurately. What does matter is to notice the recurring symbols. What is important is to accept that our moments and our dreams have meaning and that these moments of *awareness* are triggered by a higher entity trying to establish contact with us.



At this beginning stage of the process, what we need is time and patience - *savlanut* in Hebrew. We need a lot of *savlanut* at every step we take on The Path. And, as always, we need to observe ourselves from within.



What makes things more complicated than they should be is that, as a civilization, we have forgotten altogether that we live only in a symbolic world of pictures, impressions and symbols, perhaps because we deal with them daily in a mechanical way. You can but agree that a credit card and the \$ sign, the face of David Beckham or Madonna, along with the logos of BMW, Prada and Gucci and a plethora of generally more accessible demi-gods and lesser icons, all spell out '**D.e.s.i.r.a.b.l.e P.r.e.s.t.i.g.e S.y.m.b.o.l.s**' for the average person, yet the objects coveted are as invisible to their eyes as they are to ours.



Instead of choosing to deal directly with the symbols and the messages, as they stream directly at us - or should I say *past us* - we chose to merely experience their interpretations in physical, material terms, totally oblivious to the fact that these signs and messages are intended to guide us through our karma.



Blind and uncomprehending as we are, it is no wonder that the Western world is populated by millions and millions of people who are addicted to medication – chemical drugs by any other name – and who walk around in a permanent sleep – only aware and sensitive to what impacts directly and physically on our persons, no differently than the children we help 'grow up'.



Millions and millions of us, hypnotized by the glitter of so-called status symbols, are equally hypnotised by images of TV series to the point where we confuse the fabricated lives of the characters with our real lives, which then reinforces our own propensity towards the free-wheeling indulgence of our lower desires. The overwhelming success of such series as *Desperate Housewives*, *Gray's Anatomy*, *The Sopranos* and the runaway box-office hit of *Sex In The City*, are cases in point.



What we need to do is accept that we have not been incarnated from the dawn of time just to manipulate our days so as to eventually accumulate the most symbols we can grab, while forever pining for the ones that will forever remain out of our reach. Our soul has not reincarnated again and again over the millennia just so we can have fun here and now. As Moriya often reminds me, “*Life is school, not a theme park.*”



As a way to illustrate the need for spiritual development , as a way to free ourselves from the basic, staple desires that are simply about indulging the senses, Greek mythology gives us Tantalus. There he is, kneeling at the edge of a stream. Very thirsty, he cups his hands to bring water to his lips, but his hands cannot reach his mouth, which illustrates the unending pain and frustration we suffer from our inability to satisfy our primary desire to feel and own, be it our car, our children, our tastebud sensations, our lovers, our house or a holiday and, of course – more, more and more of each, as our appetite to possess is as gargantuan as our penchant for all that blurs our reality – *drugs, sex and rock and roll.*



All and any of the symbols we lust to possess, be they a form of personal, tokenistic power over our dog or our child, added to money, sex and relative fame – all anchor us to earth as ballast, while our true destiny is to live out our karma lucidly and soar wherever our soul is awaiting to take us. And purely from a practice level, setting our soul up for yet another same old-same old incarnation, just because we are greedy, does not make for good, spiritual sense.

All that has ever been invented is a symbolic imitation of the ego-persona and her soul: computers imitate our brain's activity; cameras imitate the eyes; acoustic tools imitate our ears; airplanes take us almost as high as our soul longs to be. Therefore, in order to decipher symbols we need only look at ourselves and *“Dai with the kish-kusim. Kadima!”* as Moriya would say, “Enough already! No more excuses. Forward!”



It is quite *strange* for lack of a better word to accept that human *bodies*, bags of skin and bones and water have - once in full mechanical mode - at a time B.C, forgotten their place and their sole function which was to serve the soul. Too clever for their own good, they have turned tables to assume top-dog status. In doing so, they enslaved our soul by trapping her in such a way that she can neither save herself nor the body that traps her. It is because of this turn around that Karma was born. And most of us – incarnated since - have never looked back.



An extract from the ancient texts of Upanishads [translated and selected by Juan Mascaro] give us a succinct but potent summary of the relationship between the ego-persona and the soul.

“Know that when the eye looks into space it is the Spirit of man that sees: the eye is only the organ of the sight.

When one says, "I feel this perfume", it is the Spirit that feels; he uses the organ of smell.

When one says, "I am speaking", it is the Spirit that speaks: the voice is the organ of speech.

When one says, "I am hearing", it is the Spirit that hears: the ear is the organ of hearing.

And when one says, "I think", it is the Spirit that thinks: the mind is the organ of thought.

It is because of the light of the Spirit that the human mind can see, and can think, and enjoy this world.... and the man who on this earth finds and knows

Atman, his own Self, has all his holy desires and all the worlds and all joy.”



Martin Luther King’s best known sound bite is, “*I had a dream.*” Luckily for the Human Rights movement, his dream did not fade away the moment he opened his eyes, not like mine did this morning, around 5.15 A.M.



The moment I became aware I had been dreaming a dream that was more action packed than *Blade Runner*, the images receded into oblivion faster than the tide at the base of Mont Saint-Michel. My dream was blown apart as

quietly as the multi-celled soap bubbles I used to blow through a straw when I was a child.

Huge, interconnected and shimmery, these honeycomb bubbles would dance above my head until, for no reason that I could understand, they would just burst and no longer be – just like the dream I had been dreaming until the mere movement of my eyelids *popped* the myriad of images that had been flooding my brain into total oblivion.



I don’t think Martin Luther King consulted books on dream interpretation to understand the symbolic meaning of his dream. Instead, he took his dream as a message as straightforward as if it had been hand-delivered from above. Sometimes this is what we do.



The more we search meaning, the more we want our dreams to bring us clues to this meaning. I will add that, from where I stand at the moment, understanding symbols from a spiritual perspective – once we ‘perceive’ them as such - requires the same focus, the same dedication than that needed to deconstruct and interpret the

hundreds of characters - and their components - that form a language such as Mandarin or Hebrew. It really is not a skill that can be snatched and developed on the hop.



Either we choose to see to interpret a particular dream as an intuitive call for action, not unlike Joan of Arc who obeyed the whispers in her head, or we scratch around in books that look at individual symbols. We then try to make sense of each object, as one trying to piece together a conversation in a foreign language relying solely on a series of dictionary entries.



Either method is based on the application of the dream to our physical circumstances.

The content of the glossary of symbols, as interpreted by Moriya, is different from all other glossaries of Dream symbols.



What follows is the suggestion that our dreams, and our wakeful moments, are loaded with spiritual symbolism that comes from none other than our soul.



What follows is about the deconstruction of dreams, real ones – mine and Moriya's – but perhaps more importantly what follows is about the constant bombardment of symbols that succeed each other while we are awake.



What follows is about all the signs and symbols that we perceive even less than stars in our afternoon skies, though they are there, constant, waiting to be revealed by the darkening of the evening sky.



What follows is the edited and condensed version of dream-talks scattered throughout the 501 emails exchanged so far with Moriya and her deconstruction of the hundreds of symbols she encourages me to recognise in my own day-to-day.



Since I have already mentioned that trips and journeys are really all about our yearning for a connection greater than we can imagine, the time has now come say, “And now, Ladies and Gentle Men, buckle your seatbelts for a journey into the very real world of symbols.”

1 The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem:

2 “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher.
“Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”

3 What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun?

4 Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever.
5 The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises.

6 The wind blows to the south and turns to the north;
round and round it goes, ever returning on its course.

7 All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full.
To the place the streams come from, there they return again.

8 All things are wearisome, more than one can say.
The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing.

9 What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again;
there is nothing new under the sun.

10 Is there anything of which one can say, “Look! This is something new”?
It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time.

11 No one remembers the former generations, and even those yet to come
will not be remembered by those who follow them - **Ecclesiastic (1:1-11)**

Glossary Of Dream Symbols, as interpreted by Moriya

A

Airplane = soul

Adviser = inner communication

Alarm [going off] = our soul's warnings to awaken

✚ **Keypad code [punching numbers]** = the real code we need to be in touch with our soul – the ability to truly love unconditionally

Animals = our lower desires – animalistic instinct

Animals

Bats = the only mammals that can really fly - ability to evolve.

blind as a bat = the ignorant blindness of the ego.

Cat = erratic ego-persona

Cow = ruminating - mind – thoughts - mechanical repetitiveness

Crocodile = destructive lower desires because of its habit to attack out from below dark waters

Deer = awakening

Dog = unconditional love –faith - faithful, watcher

Donkey = the need to tame/control the ego

Elephant = wisdom, memory strength - personal power

Giraffe = because of her long neck: the need to evolve

Gorilla = imitation, false self

Horse = the ego that needs to be reined in, otherwise it will topple over the cart and bolt

Lion animals [of prey] = our animalistic [base] desires – lions in the wild are not any nobler than any other animal. They do whatever they must do to survive and can but react instinctively – pre-programmed by Nature.

Snake = kundalini – force of life

✚ **Snake [black]** = energy that absorbs all emotions, thoughts, desires, hopes, ideas - the energy that sucks in everything and give nothing back.

Zebra = black & white stripped animal symbolizes balance - the herd mentality. Afraid to let go, we rely on a shared and mutuality reinforced acceptance of crutches.

A cont'd

Amphitheatre = the real world - a place where life is played out.

Arrow = the arrival of a message

✚ **pointing up** = follow our higher self

✚ **pointing down** = a warning that we are too attached to what we have and to what we see.

B

Baby = spiritual awakening

Bag = contains all the clutters locked in our thoughts.

Barbed wire = blockages.

Barefoot = unprotected.

Bathroom = cleansing, purification.

Battery = Kundalini – force of life, energy

Beach = from where we observe the ocean/life. When balanced, the beach is safe and relaxing, but when we are in our mechanical, unaware mode, the beach is full of hazards - little rocks on which to stub our toe; glass and shells that cut our feet;

creatures that sting and bite and stormy waves that flood and destroy. In this sense, the beach symbolizes the hazards that lay in wait for us from deep within our own mind.

Bed = the sleeping persona – spiritual sleep - ignorance

Bee = two sided: the bee makes the honey that sweetens our live, symbol of spirituality. The bee stings = malicious sting of the resentful ego-personas.

Bending = only by letting go and surrendering to soul can we gain entrance to our inner garden.

Bicycle = balance

Birth = awakening

Blanket = layer of deceit

Blind = ignorance

Blood = essence of life - soul

Boat = higher self

Book = wisdom

Booth = protection

Boy + girl = duality – everything has a 'flipside'.

Bread = spiritual food

Breasts = love - exposing one's hunger for spiritual love. Dream of a sexual nature are symbolic of our yearning for spiritual love.

Bridge = connection to heart

Broom = cleansing

Bus = higher self, expansion

Butterfly = soul - a butterfly attracts another butterfly: like attracts like; souls recognize each other.

Birds

Birds = symbols of souls delivering messages from our inner self

Bird picking at lice = the reminder to keep our own wings free of clutter if we hope to fly higher than a farmyard chicken

✚ **beak** [yellow] = light through the mouth - the ability to deliver spiritual teachings

Eagle = king of birds

Swan [white] = enlightenment

Dove = peacefulness - higher self

Owl = two sided: a bird of prey active at night = wisdom/ selfish desires

Phoenix = awakening like the legendary bird that renewed herself from ashes

Raven = ancient holy bird = wisdom.



The pelican is the bird that best symbolizes what I am currently aiming for.

Pelican = three worlds: earth, water and air plus the ability to maintain total balance in all three

✚ **Beak** [long + sack] = a head full of words - one aspect of the clutter I need to let go

✚ **Black/white** = balance.

Webbed feet = amphibious balance

C

Cabinet = obscure = hidden = our mind

Cables/cords/wires = *transfer the energy through the inner channel*

✚ **Electric** cables = inner communication through kundalini, with our soul
- the channel through which to contact soul

Camera = Inner sight

✚ **Camera** lens = the ability to see our real self

Camp = temporary living - our incarnation in this lifetime

Candles = inner light – lights on the X'Mas tree or on a birthday cake are reminders of the inner light we need to tend to.

Cards = gamble - delusional world - life on earth = life as a game, a play – all cards contain symbols, as do each of the moments of our days

✚ **blank** cards = credit towards actualizing our Karma

Cars

Accelerator = increase speed – the warning to go *shvo-ye shvo-ye*, nice and slow.

Car = higher self – our Self

Clutch = to grasp or hold firmly – attachment

✚ **clutch** cable snapped = warning to let go [*see related story]

Brakes = blockage

Tires [radial] - spreading out from a common central point - everything spread out from our true self

4 tires = balance

Cave = a void inside a hole - buried deep in the rock - a mouth that is as open but as empty as the entrance to a cave. Words, particularly those that make up our incessant *social chatter* are a part of the clutter we need to shed.

Cellar/basement = the lower levels of our physical sphere – basic desires

Circus = the illusional world we call *real* within the real world of the spirit

Classroom = learning from what our Karma what it is intending to teach us

Claw = clinging, attachment, crutches

Cleaning [house] = removing clutter a.k.a. *kish-kushim* in Hebrew

Clock = time

Closet = our mind - where we hide what we don not want to expose

Clothes = our disguise - our ego-persona.

Chariot = our body linked to horses over which we need to exert control

Children = children and parents are mirrors for each other. Each has a lifetime of opportunities to evolve. Because of their situation, they have the potential to give love to each other, unconditionally, over a period of many years.

Church/ mosque/temple/synagogue = our inner temple

Collector [objects] – stuck in the past – hoarder/clutterer

colors = highly symbolic of greater forces that operate beyond our comprehension, and we should understand the symbolism of the ones to which we are most attracted.

The colors of flowers are the colors of our chakras, our spiritual garden. The only colors not commonly found in flowers are brown and black.

The colors we wear, often without much thought, vary according to the dominant color of our aura – our energy field.

colors = just to break the monotony of this long glossary, here is a funky little poem entitled **Black & White** by Oglala Lakota

Dear white friend!

There are a few things you really have to know:

When I am born, I am black

When I grow up, I am black

When I walk in the sun, I am black

When I am cold, I am black

When I am scared, I am black

When I am sick, I am black

When I am dead, I am still black.

And you, my white friend

When you are born, you are **pink**

When you grow up, you are **white**

When you walk in the sun, you are **red**

When you are cold, you are **blue**

When you are scared, you are **yellow**

When you are sick [or jealous], you are **green**

When you are dead, you are **grey**

And you have the impudence to call me 'Colored?'

Warm colors = Yang - masculine. They stir us into action.

Cold colors = Yin - feminine, soothing



RED

Red is the color associated with the Root chakra and as such, it is linked to our basic earthly desires.

Red is Yang, the color of luck, which belongs to the Fire element.

Red = power, explosive energy – blood-red life energy – aggression/a wish to destroy - desire and love.

Red affects the body's functions. It accelerates our heartbeats, deepens our intake of air and raises our blood pressure.

At home, **Red** is best used in small touches – in cushions, table-cloths, paintings and rugs – definitely not on an entire wall feature wall.

People who wear **Red** proclaim their desire to control their surroundings. Either that or they lack the energy they absorb through this color.

So, who'd know why Pope Benedict has chosen this particular Ferrari-red, or should I say this *Prada* shade of red, for his Papal slippers? :-)

It's perhaps comforting to read that Pope Francis says *No-no* to the red shoes.



ORANGE

Orange is the combination of red and yellow.

Orange is convivial color. It lifts the conversation around the dinner table and is a great color to have around the living-room.

Orange stimulates creativity, imagination, joy and optimism.

Like red, **orange** is a 'fire color and should only be used in moderation.



BROWN

Brown is a mixture of red, blue and yellow.

Brown is the color of stability, of centeredness.

Brown is the color of security and perseverance, of endurance and earthliness.

Brown is the color of the earth and is associated with the material side of life.

People who prefer **brown** tend to be conventional and orderly.

Too much **brown** causes a sense of being 'stuck' a need for extreme materialism, and a one-dimensional thinking that can become the cause of many frustrations.



YELLOW

Yellow belongs to Earth element and represents the combination of the earthiness, perseverance, wisdom and tolerance.

Yellow represents the palette of emotional energies: from joy and happiness to jealousy and fear, which might explain why the market is not flooded with **yellow** garment.

Yellow is also the color of the sun that lights up our world while the moon only reflects its light.

Yellow is related to our digestive system and is good to have around the kitchen, but again, only in moderation, as too much **yellow** can cause heaviness and sluggishness.

GREEN

Green is a Yin color related to the Wood element.

Green represents vitality, nature - therefore growth, change and a desire for a new beginning along with motivation and courage.

Green is the color of health and balance. It encourages healing and positive thinking.

If you are unsure what color to have around your house or feature in your wardrobe, the many shades of **green** are a safe bet.

But again as no color should be taken for granted, too much green can trigger bouts of anger. It is for good reason that it has become the color symbol of jealousy.



BLUE

Blue belongs to the Water element.

Blue is the coolest of colors.

Blue is situated at the level of the kidneys and is associated with tranquility and harmony.

Blue can help reduce body temperature and high blood pressure

Blue represents thinking, understanding but also mystery, anxiety and melancholy, as anyone who has ever had **'the blues'** can attest.



INDIGO

Indigo is the color of purification, healing, intuition and spiritual wisdom.

Indigo is a clean color that helps stabilize and clear the mind.

Indigo, the color of lapis lazuli is used to develop the sixth sense and higher consciousness.



PINK

Pink is the combination of white and red.

Pink helps foster a feeling of love and wellbeing for ourselves and for others.

Pink is the color of softness. It is the color of healing, but it also the symbolic color of ideas, love, tenderness, caring, femininity, unconditional love, self-forgiveness and self-acceptance, as well as that of the Heart chakra for where we generate pure and honest love - A.K.A. unconditional love.

Too much **pink**, however, will cause emotional cowardice, exaggerated vulnerability, inability to mature [*the Barbie syndrome*], constant defensiveness and inability to experience love for love sake.



VIOLET

Violet is another color that belongs to the Fire element, although it sits on the Yin side of the palette.

Violet is the color of the Crown chakra

Violet has a spiritual aspect. It soothes fears and emotional storms.

Violet generates a sense of peace and emotional stillness.

Violet is also associated with imagination and inspiration.



WHITE

White is Yang color which belongs to Metal element.

White contains all of the colors and reflects all of the frequencies.

White is the color of cleanliness and purity, of freshness and renewal, of holiness, order and discipline.

Too much white can cause restlessness, an exaggerated need for self-discipline and breathing problems.

White can lead to an abnegation of one's personality, the outcome being similar to a blank page waiting to be filled-out by others.

Now, I know why I have been trying my darndest, with success, to stay away from hospitals and *Men in White* :-((



BLACK = a color to use in moderation and with awareness

Black absorbs all other colors and thus it creates a distance between self and others and fosters non-emotional involvement.

Black slows down the developmental process, causes emotional, mental and physiological imbalance and weakens the immune system.

Too much **black** brings bleakness into one's life.

Black is the color of addiction, just as it is the color of coffee.

Black can generate negative effects on dyed hair with it or when black covers the Crown chakra for extended periods of time.

Once upon a time, black was the color of grief and sorrow – the color of death at funerals. It was the color of witches' cloaks and tuxedos. It is the emblematic color of BDSM. It is also the default color of the hood slipped over the face of the condemned ones.

It is not a coincidence that black cloth, being a true absorber of stains, has been in many countries the symbolic color for mourners and religious orthodox since time immemorial.

I am going to stick my neck out and add that ultra orthodoxism, an aspect of extremism, is not, in this conversation, regarded as spiritualism, but merely as an absorption of the self in a religious practice of the kind that is usually

narrow-minded in scope and that relies mostly on ego-centred interpretations of sacred texts and numerous obscure rituals.

Though the Black Widows are neither black nor wear black, the label has attached itself to a group of women, suicide bombers, involved in great acts of terror attacks throughout Russia to avenge the killing of their men by the government.

All such groups are locked up in their emotional/religious/spiritual mindsets, such as they are, no differently than the Goths and young 'emos' who lock themselves up in their pain and flock together, reinforcing each other's dark view of the world.

For reasons beyond our acceptance of the 'timeless', classic appeal of black, we need to consider that the current cultural penchant for all that is black reflects a penchant for self-absorption in one's own problems to the energetic detriment of others nearest to us.



Black leather sofas, perhaps extensions of the once sexy black leather pants, are considered classy. They signal deep-set insecurity. They aim to project a degree of self-importance.

Black/dark is the color of choice when it comes to the representation of dark, evil forces.

Big black baby prams covered by black veils, as protection against the sun were all the rage a couple of years ago = Black Maria's for babies. How strange! Thank goodness that baby fashion phase seems over.

Black has become the default corporate color worn by women of all ages. *Wear black and you will ooze creditibility* seems to be enduring thinking when it comes to dress codes.

When it comes to business people and politicians, as well as other black-clad women, it might be worth asking 'WHAT is actually **driving** them?'

What, indeed, if not whichever aspect of their Ego-persona that wants to project or hide something that lurks within?

Black is also the color of choice for many musicians, from jazz to rock. They, too, are usually immersed in their own intensity and purpose.



GREY

Grey is a blend of black and white.

Grey is the color of sorrow.

When **grey** edges the dark side of the palette, it can cause a feeling of oppression, of emotional and mental deficiency, of restlessness with a tendency towards hysteria and depression.

Grey allows others to create our life – in shades of grey.

Silver = inner light - the deception created by the beautiful silver moon. Though it has no light of its own it reflects that of the sun as if it were her own - we see our own reflection in the mirror and believe it to be our true self.

White + silver = spiritual garment

✚ **White & silver tablecloth** = what covers our being, our clothes

Comb = warning not to flatter the ego-persona by trying to make her beautiful - the need to smooth out thoughts, to soften them and make them appealing – our inborn ability to control our thoughts.

✚ **broken comb** = inability to control our thoughts

Competition = rushing and pushing for self- gain/selfish desire

***Computer** = see frame below

Computer programmer = our mind programs the Self

Corridor = change that connects events – transition – progression

* **Country** = *see frame below

Credit card = Karma because by dealing correctly – or not - with our daily activities, we get a balance according to our reactions.

Crowd = various aspects of ourselves .

Computer Bits & Pieces

Anti-virus = protection

CD [original] = the real thing in terms of content

✚ **[burnt]** = copy/fake - false ego-persona

Computer = our mind, persona - brain

Digital camera = our inner sight

DVD = mechanical persona going around in circles – reflection of what is imprinted on our brain - the show of life

Hard drive = a new and expanded consciousness - opening inner vision

ID = ego-persona

ISP provider = higher self

Keyboard = our impulses - what makes us jump at every click

Mailbox = messages = in fact, your mind, where you get all the impressions

Message = the prompt to act spiritually

✚ **[lost file/mail]** = blockage - inner communication not flowing

Laptop = portable self –flowing. That's in contrast to the desktop that is a fixed item

Password = old habits - what starts the process of patterned behaviours

Post = our higher self sending us a message

Screen = eyes - ability to SEE - or not - depending on the state of our inner screen

✚ **screen malfunction** = our ego-persona is blind - the need to look with our soul's eyes

Technician = the ability to fix things

Vista = big picture – panorama – open channel to inner vision

Word = obsolete thought - stuck in what was/what has been - the mechanical patterns of our material brain

Countries

America = land of unlimited opportunities = spiritual sphere

Australia = Astral realm, the abode of thoughts

China = wisdom - land of Tao and old Wisdom

England = kingdom with a Queen who in turn symbolizes our personal Queen, our soul.

England symbolizes the spiritual sphere.

Once an empire that included **Australia** = Astral realm and **Canada** = America (continent) - both lands symbolize unlimited potential.

France – Paris - City of Lights - enlightenment, self-realization

India = old wisdom and enlightenment.

Israel = the Holy Land, spiritual realm. Jerusalem = the Holy City - attaining self-realization, enlightenment

Italy = renaissance, awakening

Palestine = once under England's dominion for 40 years, is the symbol of Holy Land, i.e. spiritual realm.

South Africa = hidden continent or hidden world

D

Death = change, removing the old self with old habits, old thoughts, old wishes. Death signify new birth

Dentist = the need to tend to the spiritual 'hygiene' of our thoughts, to be aware

Deputy = persona, substitute of the real Self

Desert = sterile area, i.e. purification, no thoughts

Diamond = the third eye, symbol of our inner sight - enlightenment

Dining room = absorbing food, be it spiritual or physical

Dirty = negative emotions - need cleansing.

Divorce = separation from attachment

Doll = substitute for the real, crutches

Door [closed] = negative attitude that close out people and help.

✚ **Front door [opening]** = our 3rd eye. We enter through the front door before reaching the hallway.

✚ **Door [locked]** = locking out unpleasant truths.

Driver = our higher self

Drowning = too much emotions that clouded the clear vision

Drunk = being hypnotized and blinded by our thoughts and material priorities

E

Earphones = listening to inner voice/message

Egg = *"to come out of one's shell"* – to awaken

Elevator = elevator goes up and down – spiritual evolutions according to the person's needs

Eyes = *"The windows of the soul"*

Eyeglasses = good perception, expanded vision

✚ **glasses case** = protection for our insight

✚ **sun glasses** = shaded - poor perception

✚ **lost** = we have lost our way

✚ **smudged** = the need to cleanse, to open our eyes, to see life from a spiritual perspective

F

Fairy Tale = Sleeping beauty deconstructed - see special section at the end of this file.

Fake [anything] = ego-persona - imitation of the real Self - non genuine unlike like diamonds and silver - the true inner self

Father = our yang - our masculine side

Feather = ability to fly beyond the mechanicalness. [* **See related story**]

Film = the illusory play of our life - the physical/material world -Maya, illusion.

Finger [index] = used to point the direction which, spiritually, show the right way, the way of The Path. It also gives warnings about the need to change attitudes.

✚ **cut** = If the message is not understood, the next *cut* could be figuratively deeper. In Hebrew this finger is called *e-tz-ba ha-mora*.
Mora = teacher, guide - to point out and show.

Fire = kundalini

Fireworks = opening of the inner sight

Fish = flowing freely –

✚ **dead in plate** = reminder to remove all the bones/kish-kushim from our life

Flies = irritations - lower desires

Flood = uncontrolled emotions/desires

Flower = inner blooming - chakra

Food = spiritual food prepared with love

Fork = its 3 teeth denote a need for balance. The fork can only catch solids symbolic of an attachment to desires of the flesh

✚ **Fork [in the road]** = a choice between right and wrong

Friend = protection - support

Frog = jumpy, unpredictable ego

G

Gap = not connected

Glass = separation between the real world and the physical one

Garage = need to amend and repair

Garden = inner blooming – spiritual garden

Gate = door open

✚ **gate** = opening of the seven chakras

Guards = protection

Gloves = protection

H

Hamburger = meat/flesh – physical anchor into the lower self

Hammer = the need to fix things

Handle = used to open or close door - the need to handle/finish some unresolved problem – need to grasp and tackle an issue

✚ **frying-pan** = attachment, to break the hold, not to touch.

Hair = thoughts

Hands = to give and to serve

Hall way = leads to our inner temple - the bigger the hall, the more spiritual the self

Hat = the way we think – a hat covers our head - sometimes we keep surprises
"under our hat" - protection against the sun - balance

Heat = kundalini

Heart transplant = new heart connection

Herd = mechanical ego-personas that only know to play follow the leader **Honey** =
sweetness

Hospital = need for amendment - change of attitude

Hotel = the ego/thought with its constant change - temporary house - our persona

House = higher self [see related story] our real self



I

Ice = frozen, unyielding, fossilized attitude to life

Inner-tube = the need to release all pent-up rubbish and let the energy flow

Ignored [being] = nothing more can happen until we upgrade – holding pattern.

J

Joke = take things easy - like in a game

Judge = need for balance

Jungle = our lower level – animalistic behavior

K

Key = open your heart and give love

King = higher self

Kitchen = preparation of spiritual food

Knife = cut/slice – decide

L

Ladder = evolve

Lamp = inner light

Lawyer = balance

Library = wisdom

Light bulb = inner light

 **broken bulb** = the need to change into higher spiritual 'voltage' -

to aspired for greater outcomes.

Lips = speech

Litter = discarded ideas that still hang around

Living room = daily activities

Lobby = the entrance to the inner temple

Window [Looking out] = inner expansion - greater awareness

Lost = the need to observe (the replay of our day) and then to let go and let it fade away – the need for detachment – a warning to not lose our way

Lotus = crown chakra

Lover = higher self

M

Manuals = path to reach a goal

Making love = spiritual union with soul

Market = life – activities - physical world

Marriage = spiritual marriage, union with soul

Mask = false persona

Meat = lower desires

Merry-go-around/carousel = evolution above the illusion which lies beneath

Milk = white, spirituality.

Mirror = reflected our image, show the opposite

Money = our inner treasures, high attributes

Moon = persona reflecting sunlight

Mouse = lower desires - the mouse hides in small holes so do our desires

Mouth = “big mouth” - talking too much - using too many words

Mosquitoes = any physical insect coming into our awareness means we are unseeing and, if left unchecked. This blindness invites in bigger, more unpleasant messengers.

Movie = illusionary life

Mp3 player = flowing with balance

Mud = attached too much - clinging

Music = harmony


Mother = soul -our feminine side

Music = harmony.

Mountain = evolution - crown chakra

N

Nails = attachment – clinging

 **broken nail** = a very good message to let go

Neighbors

✚ pleasant = protection, as they watch over you

✚ unpleasant = our heart still closed

Newspaper = messages

Noise = warning to be awake and aware - conflicting thoughts - chattering inside the mind

Naked = need to get rid of all our emotional rubbish in order to be purified.

Numbers

1 = wholeness from which everything arises

2 = in need of balance like bicycle

3 = triangle need balance.

4 = perfect balance = activity

5 = $4+1$ = is a perfect number as it denote perfect balance that is tied to the wholeness. Combination of $2+2+1$ = need of balance in order to reach the wholeness, or $3+2$ = need of balance on the physical level

6 = symmetrical perfect number, denote harmony

7 = spiritual number: 7 days of the week - 7 holes in our head 😊 Neat, huh?

7 chakras – 7 main planets in our solar system

8 = double 4 = if the person walk the Path it's strength, If on the physical level alone = double weakness - the beginning of new cycle in life.

9 = the highest number in terms of spirituality. Every 9 years we experience a new cycle in our life, like rebirth/upgrade, separating from some relationship (work, family, personal)

O

Ocean = life

Oil = to be soft – what smoothes things out

Old-fashioned [objects] = old mechanical way of thinking, behaving

P

Paralysis = inability to flow

Paul = Saul - Soul

Palace = the abode of soul

Password = the trigger to old habits

Pen/ pencils + paper = words, i.e. interpretation of thoughts.

Phone = inner communication phone = communication with your higher self

and consequently being in tune with your surrounding.

Photocopier = mind, thoughts that reflects like a photo

Police = protection

Pool = flow

President/Prime Minister = higher self

Prince/Princess = soul

Prison = our body

Professor/teacher = wisdom

Q

Queen = soul

Quilt = the layers of deceit we wear instead of unveiling our true face

R

Radio = inner communication with our higher self and consequently with our surroundings.

Railroad = the channel in which the kundalini train flows.

Rain = cleansing - purification

Raincoat = protection

Reaching [for object] = the impulse to touch and control

Red = kundalini

Repair man/technician = the tools to amend karma are within us. At the birth of a problem, the solution is also born. Problem and solution are each other's twin - inseparable.

Restaurant = what you feed on - where a food is prepared and then sold to the public - fed with other people's [food], i.e. ideas, opinions, desires, dreams, concepts, thoughts = emotional crutches that keep the persona slave to her urges and attached to superseded responses to What-IS, to her life's reality - her true testing ground in THIS lifetime.

Retirement = no one can *retire* from Karma until it has all been amended **River** = flowing

Road = spiritual Path

Roof = the house's hat - protection against rain, snow and sun - the crown chakra. When the roof is removed, it exposes a clutter of beams and wires = all manner of thoughts, emotions, knots and emotional entanglements -

General level of our third eye and the Crown chakra

Rope = imprisoned by/obsessed with a problem – on the verge of resolving a problem, depending on the context i.e. hanging rope or **life-saving** rope

Rose = charkas

✚ **Russian dolls [nesting]** = spiritual union of mind and body which is the real meaning of yoga

Robe [black and white] = our spiritual self

Rodent = lower desires, like mouse hide in holes so these desires.

“Who is this nasty rodent,” asked Moriya, “that is gnawing and nibbling inside your mind?”

S

Sailor = incarnated soul on spiritual journey

Salt = salt added flavor to the food - enjoyment of life. Too much salt renders food inedible.

School = Life is school we are here to learn and pass an incessant number of tests. Once we demonstrate skill in one area, we won't be retested.

Scissors = cut – decide – incise

Scorpion = stinging attitude

Sea = life. Spreading salt on the wind means absorbing the spiritual experience, indeed being absorbed in it

Sea shell = experiences in life mirrored in the condition of the shell

Sexual dream = spiritual union with soul - longing for true love. Lust is an imitation of the inner longing left unaddressed.

✚ **violent sex – rape** = having forced to deal with – or face - what we are running away from

Sidewalk = the stage on which our life-play is acted out

Silence = inner voice

Shampoo = cleaning, purifying thoughts

Shark = symbolize on one hand flowing and on the other our ego-persona – the predator in all of us

Shave = get rid of clutters, crutches

Shoes = protection on the spiritual Path

✚ **removing** = not being afraid to have faith in soul

Shore/beach/harbor = protection, like “safe harbor”. After a soul reaches the end of her karma [nirvana] on the sea of life, she can rest peacefully on shore

Skin = disguise that covers our true self – literally the *body bag* that holds us together

Snow = frozen attitude to life but also purification, depending on degree of personal evolution

Serpent = the power within us that enlightens our inner being into realization.

Shell = persona – void inside the shell

✚ **Open shell** = free from emotional clutter

Shoe = protection in the physical world

Shop/store = unhealthy energy. Where everything is stored = our mind.

✚ **Shutter [blinds]** = eyelids closed to reality = time to open our eyes to observe our automated responses to life.

Sister [older] - the higher self. Our body and soul are like two sisters **Spectator** = the need to observe.

Songs = music is harmony, balance

✚ **Staffroom** = teachers, spiritual teaching, but not from your little teachers but higher.

Stairs = evolution

Statutory declaration = the need to have faith and trust in our true self

Stiletto heels = yearning to rise and evolve

✚ **Strangers [non-threatening]** = new aspects and new approaches,
new methods, new you

Subscription = an obligation to follow the spiritual path

Sun = inner sunshine = enlightenment = kundalini

Special unit = specialist help = special teachings

T

Table = being open - "Let's put everything out on the table."

Tattoo = something that exists deep down inside ourselves, deep enough to leave a scar

✚ **Teacher [substitute/replacement]** = the substitute false ego - the
need to use a *new head* to help ourselves - our soul

Tea pot = refill inner self

Theatre = the illusionary nature of the material world

Technician = the ability to amend Karma - to fix things

Teeth = thoughts

Telephone wires = inner communications

Theme park rides = exciting rushes of adrenaline that replace the buzz of alcohol and drugs – imitation of spiritual elevation

✚ **Thief** = the ego steals our attention from us and keep us from
observing and being aware

Tiger = lower desire

Toilet = cleansing, purification

Toothbrush = cleaning thoughts

Tower = higher self

Train = Kundalini

Tunnel = inner channel for Kundalini

U

Umbrella = 'aerial protection'

Uniform = repetitive, programmed responses to life

V

Valley = low, open area

Vehicle [any] = higher self

Void [hollow] = the void within is the real condition of no form and it can be experienced only by being enlightened, knowing that our ego-persona only exists in the phenomenal world a.k.a. the material world

W

Water = purification, cleansing

standing in water = not flowing, stuck, blocked

Wallet = we pay the price when we fail to be in the moment – false ID, as it is only that of our ego-persona

Walking = your daily activities

✚ **Walking on a path** = Path of life

Wine [red] = Desire

🌈 **White** = euphoria similar to a connection to our soul - enlightenment,
a state of self-realization [in moderation 😊]

Waves [over face] = overcome by misery, grief, problems etc.

Wig = false thought, emotions, persona

Window = eyes - inner sight

Worm = that which eats us from the inside even before we are dead.

Y

Yoga = union with soul

Yo-Yo = ego, jumping repeatedly from one position to another in search of pleasure

Z zz ... zzz ... zz ... z

Zebra = this is black & white striped animal symbolize balance – symbol of the herd mentality, i.e. crutches, afraid to let go.

Zigzag = zigzag manner, imbalance.

Zoo = animalism, our lower negative desires.



Asleep yet, dear reader? :-)

No? Not yet? Well, then, how about a hands-on deconstruction of symbols embedded in a fairy tale?



Sleeping Beauty by Charles Perrault, as interpreted by Moriya

At the christening of a long-wished-for princess = the princess is the symbol of our soul, reincarnated. She also symbolizes Yin - feminine aspect of energy.

Fairies invited as godmothers offered gifts, such as beauty, wit, and musical talent = Our Karma which contains all our possibilities and all our capabilities.

However, a wicked fairy who had been overlooked placed the princess under an enchantment as her gift ... = The persona hypnotizes us/herself. Our soul is slumbering under the spell of mechanical enchantment – the power of our ego-persona who struggles against enlightenment.

... saying that, on reaching adulthood, she would prick her finger on a spindle and die.

the spindle - symbolizes the circle of life = Reaching adulthood - ready for The Path as she has died as persona - the spindle symbolizes the circle of life - We weave our personal Karma while we live out each of our moments.

Pricking the finger = *touching*/interfering energetically which, consequently, causes death.



A good fairy, though unable to completely reverse the spell, said that the princess would instead sleep for a hundred years, until awakened by the kiss of a prince's son = only when the ego-persona finally dies away, can we be born as our soul.

The Prince's son = The Prince's son here symbolizes Yang, the male aspect of energy.

Inability to completely reverse the spell = our inability to alter Karma. Such a deep sleep symbolizes the illusion we have that life prevents us to see the real world and that we are sleepwalking through life.

Awakened by the kiss = touch, love of our soul/prince - the spiritual union with our soul.



The king forbade spinning on distaff or spindle, or the possession of one, upon pain of death, throughout the kingdom, but all in vain = Nothing can prevent Karma from enfolding.

When the princess was fifteen or sixteen she chanced to come upon an old woman in a tower of *the castle* = our higher self - our spiritual evolution

The old woman = our out-dated ego-persona who busily spins our Karma.

The Princess asked to try the unfamiliar task and the inevitable happened = Touching - trying to force a change whereas we are not allowed to *touch*, to alter anything. We are meant to accept What Is and deal with it by being in the moment.



The wicked fairy's curse was fulfilled. The good fairy returned and put everyone in the castle to sleep = being asleep, unaware, hypnotized.

A forest of briars sprang up around the castle, shielding it from the outside world: no one could try penetrate it without facing certain death in the thorns = An excellent description of the veil that settles over our eyes to prevent us from seeing our real self; no one can see through it without facing certain death.

❖ **The thorns** = the difficulties inherent to being on the spiritual Path – death of the ego-persona awaits at the other end.

After a hundred years had passed, a prince who had heard the story of the enchantment braved the wood, which parted at his approach, and entered the castle = Symbols of our awakening and the courage to dare walk on The Path. Put simply, in order to enter the castle the prince had to overcome all his inner desires.



He trembled upon seeing the princess' beauty and fell on his knees before her
= He glimpsed the beauty of Soul. He is looking in the mirror and see their reflected image - the yin and the yang.

He kissed her, then she woke up = Union with our soul = awakening – enlightenment - remembering our true self.



Then everyone in *the castle* woke to continue where they had left off = our higher self. When the persona is enlightened, our soul is able to control all other aspects of the ego that obey her completely. No duality.

Being asleep for 100 years = soul control higher and lower dimensions as well and time does not affect her because she's eternal. As incarnated souls, our soul's incarnations always return to continue from the point where we have left off.

Secretly wed by the re-awakened Royal almoner = Spiritual marriage -union with soul - yin/yang



The Prince continued to visit the Princess = in constant contact with his higher self. He now has no other alternative but to follows the Path. They are inseparable. He is in the present-moment.

... who bore him two children- L'Aurore (Dawn) and Le Jour (Day) = They symbolize the duality of the physical world, a.k.a. the phenomenal world.

Dawn = the creative, spiritual aspect of our ego-persona

Day = our mechanical physical side

... which he kept secret from the Queen, who was of an Ogre lineage = A symbol of automated, mechanical responses to life.

Ogre = persona that absorbs everything selfishly, like centripetal force.



Once he had acceded to the throne = His spiritual evolution. Crown Chakra, enlightenment.

He brought the Princess and the children to his capital, which he then left in the regency of the Queen Mother = There are many aspects of the ego in many disguises. We have to be careful to see through them.

The Queen mother = a disguised ego-persona.

The children = symbols of duality.

The Princess = awakening to her own higher self, to her soul.

... while he went to make war on his neighbor the Emperor Contalabutte, ("Count of The Mount") = He has to struggle against the dragon to conquer the mountain.



The Ogre Queen sent the Princess Queen and the children to a house secluded in the woods = the secret, hidden world.

... and direct her to cook there and to prepare the boy for her dinner, with a sauce Robert = getting rid of our automated response to life. To eat is to absorb impressions, to swallow what we experience, to be hypnotized by our ego-persona as much as that of others. She is about to swallow the children who are aspects of her own robot-like responses – freeing herself from base desires.

The humane cook substituted a lamb, which satisfied the Ogre Queen = The Queen is deluded but satisfied with the lamb substitute, which symbolizes the herd mentality, our staple reactions to actions and the inability to stand on our own two feet. It also symbolized the emotional crutches on which we tend to depend heavily.

who demanded the girl, but was satisfied with a young goat prepared in the same excellent sauce = Same symbolic meaning as lamb.



When the Ogre Queen demanded that he serve up the Princess Queen, she offered her throat to be slit, so that she might join the children she imagined were dead = This is an attempt of the mechanical persona to control the real self - an attempt of the limited persona to control the unlimited power.

Throat = words, thoughts, mechanical aspect.

To slit the throat = unveil yourself to awaken to one's true self. Beyond words there is the inner voice of the silence.

The cook = the kundalini power that *cooks* and shifts what energies need to be shifted – purifying and cleansing the channel.



There was a tearful secret reunion in the cook's little house = Union with soul. The channel is being slowly cleansed.

... while the Ogre Queen was satisfied with a hind prepared with sauce Robert.

= Although the persona wanted to *eat* the children and the princess, which symbolize higher aspects of ourselves, she was forced to eat her own attributes such as adhering to the herd mentality, mechanicalness, selfishness, the desires of the flesh and so on.



Soon she discovered the trick and prepared a tub in the courtyard filled with vipers and other noxious creatures = all the kish-kushim/rubbish, the nasty clutter we carry preciously within ourselves. This is a link back to the Gorgon and her head of venomous writhing snakes.

The King returned in the nick of time and the Ogress, being discovered, threw herself into the pit she had prepared and was consumed, and everyone else lived happily ever after = The soul is in charge. The inner light, Kundalini, has consumed the ego-persona, and, should **we** be so lucky, we shall live happily ever after – all in the fullness of time, and not a moment sooner.

Sweet dreams to you, dear Reader :-))

Time to Rethink Thinking

Circa 1143, Bernard of Clairvaux, a French abbot, stated that *L'enfer est plein de bonnes volontés et désirs* which, in English, is remembered in its paraphrased form: *the road to hell is paved with good intentions*.

When it comes to editing our own karma, good intentions do matter, but intentions are nothing more than the awareness that something in our habitual patterns needs to change for our greater good, and sooner rather than later.

In as much as a good intention is to personal upgrade what a larva is to the butterfly, too often, inaction, procrastination and a lack of true grit, leave the intention to suffocate inside its cocoon, meaning that no personal shift is forthcoming. Some of us, then, rely on mantras, holy water, joss sticks, crystals, offerings, flagellation, visualisation, prostrations, offerings and reading texts of a spiritual nature to push along the good intention.

However heartfelt, and in spite of the sense of spiritual righteousness such behaviors trigger, these are mechanical behaviors exterior to our selves.

They do not require us to rethink our way of thinking.

They do not require us to adjust our re-actions to our own actions anymore than they require us to adjust our reactions to the actions of others, and again the larva suffocates in its cocoon.

It's a shame, really, that managing our life is not so simple, but how could attempting to lighten our karmic load in this lifetime be achieved through a process akin to wishful thinking and arranging or re-arranging things around us instead of *within* us?

I do believe we can amend some of our karma in *this* lifetime, but the process is not for the faint-*hearted* - pun intended.

○

Karmically-speaking, each one of our decisions matters. Even the so-called unimportant ones made under the influence of our 'instinct' or while asleep at the wheel do matter. All our decisions, big and small, weave us more tightly into the tapestry that has become our life, in this lifetime.

The crux of the matter boils down to *somehow* accepting that there is no such thing as good or bad karma; that karma is absolutely as neutral as rain. Depending where rain falls and depending on its intensity and on how quickly it is absorbed or drains away, it equally nourishes plains or floods them. It can become stale and attract diseases. Just as commonly, it sustains life. Depending how welcome it is or not, a rain fall will produce different outcomes on the land as in our mood - but the rain, itself, is neutral. The only difference between a *good rain* and a *bad rain* lies in our perception of that particular rain fall.

Thus, it is only when a moment is interpreted through the perception of our ego-persona, the dipping end of our ego, the non-altruistic end, that each moment takes on a *taint* - be it a happy pink hue or a darker shade of grey. Having said that, it is important to clarify that, like the rain fall, our ego itself is NEUTRAL. There is nothing *good* nor *bad* about our ego. No part of it needs to be shut down or excised.

Our ego is merely a built-in mirror which reflects our thoughts and our emotions according to the level of our personal development. Our ego only projects what is within or, as I prefer to say, what *lurks* within, which is the end product of undisciplined thinking.

As long as the channel that connects ego to soul(*) remains constricted, let alone blocked by negativity, pride and selfishness, the messages that come to us, in whichever form, will be blurred and misunderstood. Instead of understanding difficult situations as our cues to react humbly, altruistically, our undisciplined ego interprets

(*) Dear reader, if you are more attuned to the word God, Cosmic Energy, Celestial Force or any other than to the word Soul, as you read on, feel free to transpose the word you are more comfortable with. Names are words and words can never label anything correctly, certainly not anything that is profound and in the realm of personal belief.

them as calls for action. True to form, our staple array of actions/re-actions shuts down our empathy, as it does our better judgment. Our programmed set of responses prop us up in a defensive fight stance.

We don't even *know* that instead of moaning, wailing or jumping with joy [instead of sharing our joy from the heart, not through a bottle of Champagne], which goes on to add a bit more to our karmic debt, we are expected to interpret these occurrences from a spiritual perspective. In time, time after time, this more soulful approach to our life would lead up to a personal upgrade.



Who's in charge of this mess?

One of the most misleading universal misconceptions of the past millennia is the cultural belief that we, humans, are the masters of our destiny; that up to the moment that immediately precedes death, it is up to us alone to orchestrate the outcomes we want through relentless determination and also by following our dream. Yet, well before Death knocks on our door, many of us believe that our life, even when pleasant enough, is devoid of real *contentment*. This appraisal seems to be made regardless of the number of children and friends we have, regardless of the integrity of our partner, regardless of the state of our health and regardless of the status of our bank account.

Serious questions: how do we explain that, in spite of weathering bravely the unavoidable side-effects of stress and anxiety caused by the control we exert over our own life, and ultimately our destiny, *contentment* is still thumbing its nose at us?

How do we explain that in spite of a lifetime of 'choices', we keep making most of them under some sort of duress and that we are nowhere nearer our *ideal life* than we were in our teens?

Once it is agreed that it is *contentment* that ultimately gives a satisfying meaning to our life - not the flashier house, not the flashier lover, not the flashier resume and not the flashier lifestyle we are still trying to garner - wouldn't it then make sense to fire

ourselves as sole managers of our lives to work in cooperation with the 'Higher Law'
- while we still can?

Our systemic failure to create more of the satisfying lives we all dreamt up so many years ago should be a clear indictment of the mismanagement of our options.

The obvious reason for this stuck state of affairs is that, though we always have a choice between two or three types of responses regardless of the stimulus in the 'now', too often, our staple responses are a series of pre-programmed knee-jerks triggered by our undisciplined ego.

○

Reality check: why assume that our ego can be anything other than undisciplined? When was the last time we tried to control ourselves from the inside/out to solve an unpleasant situation, as opposed to making do and getting over it?

○

Serious question: since acquiring money has been an ongoing major cultural focus and constant preoccupation through the millenia, how is that, though we have manipulated all we can manipulate to shore up our savings, many of us are still chronically unhappy with what we have squirreled away?

One reason is that regardless of our social status and in spite of the fact that most of us have enough money 'now', and cultural stimuli push us to constantly top up the money in our bank account... for later. If we are unable to top up this reserve, then, social ethos push us to fret until we make ourselves sick over this perceived inadequacy which amounts to a character flaw.

Over hundreds of centuries, we, as a race, have lost sight of the real meaning behind our existence. We work in ways and places we don't enjoy 'now', not because we understand that each irritation, each little struggle has manifested for a reason and that reason is to force us to accept open-heartedly what, through our knee-jerks, we refuse to accept peacefully.

We stay in these jobs because they pay our bills. Besides what would happen if we quit on a whim? Indeed, quitting on a whim would surely aggravate one's personal circumstances. Acting on a whim simply signals our failure to act any other way than through a common set of programmed re-actions to whatever is perceived to be unpleasant or intolerable.

○

However, if our understanding of karma were to match our faith in Soul, surely we would apprehend the situation differently.

- We would face the situation, big or small, as an earnest warrior on a quest.
- We would take it upon ourselves to not re-act.
- We would take it upon ourselves to actively accept What-Is.
- We would practice remaining emotionally neutral.
- We would practice feeling fondly of the other.

○

When we failed to achieve the desired actions/re-actions/heart-thoughts, when our undisciplined ego perked up to once again take charge, we would keep it quiet. We would maintain our practice as diligently and as happily as today we practice anything we truly want to get better at.

○

Just as millions of us spend hours each week researching our genealogy or scrapbooking all that can be scrapbooked or shaping our body one way or another, or reading, listening to music, playing bridge and golf or trying out new recipes or watching videos, we could also practice acting more soulfully and much less re-actionarily. The long-lost knowledge that we are so much more than the body reflected in the mirror would then begin filtering through our consciousness.

Like the patient who suffers from retrograde amnesia slowly regains memories of times gone by, we would remember that, because of our body-suits of bones and fluids, we ARE souls in disguise - all of us, no exceptions.

We would remember that there was nothing haphazard about the time, place and the circumstances of our birth; that there was nothing random in regards to the karmic design of the appointment of our parents, our specific and enduring foci in *this* lifetime; that the *outline* of our personal circumstances, the enjoyable ones as well as the problematic ones, has been pre-planned to give us opportunities to evolve and balance our karma by exercising Free Will.

○

Free Will, independence of mind, has, indeed, been given to each one of us, but Free Will does not imply the freedom to act as we please 'willy-nilly'.

Free Will implies that we have the will to make decisions for our *selves*, that we have the will to not be led. If *Carpe Diem* is the call to make the most out of 'now' because, once the moment fades, it will never return, Free Will allows us to decide how to react to the moment, in the moment and from the inside/out - for the greater good of self *and of others*.

○

It is only by applying our Free Will to the task of training our ego as diligently, and patiently as a loving parent trains a toddler that we can, one day, hope to reveal our inner self a.k.a. our true self to our consciousness.

Until that moment of understanding and recognition dawns on us, all there is to respond to in ourselves as in others is the degree of status [or lack of] and the airs, graces and adornments that clothe our bodies of bones and fluids from head to toes.

In reality, it is not only beauty that is skin deep. *Persona*-lity is also skin-deep in as much as it fluctuates according to our moods which fluctuate according to the various sequences of tap-tap-click-tap as 'the world' presses our buttons.

If it is true that 'practice makes perfect', I would like to suggest that practice is even more effective when we practise the right thing in the right way in the right frame of mind.



Here is a suggestion as to what the right combination of 'things' worth practising might look like and sound like: **Listen - Be quiet - Accept - Love - Be Grateful.**

To keep the edge on our motivation, our diligent practice would undoubtedly bring on an altered set of action/re-actions time and time again because in our core, we would KNOW that each situation, *pleasant, indifferent or unpleasant*, has come into our 'now' moment for a reason. The reason being yet another opportunity, a *different* opportunity to tune down our automatic programmed responses and amp up our kind, calm, accepting, non-judgmental, grateful self.

- We would KNOW that the reason would be a blend of inherited karma compounded by karma earned in this lifetime by both our altruistic self and our undisciplined self.
- We would KNOW that a breakthrough is something akin a karmic smiley and that a setback a karmic frown.
- Just as we KNOW that the sea is transparent and that it is only depth and light that color it, we would KNOW that smiley or frown, it is only our ego that gives it a particular taint.
- Smiley or frown, we would KNOW that we have no idea of how either will transform itself and our life further up the track.
- We would know that every karmic smiley must not be hoarded, must not be frittered; that we must share it from the heart, meaningfully - not merely celebrate it with a few bottles of Champagne and a party.
- We would know that as long as we accepted this understanding at an innermost level, and that we did our best to soften our energy from the inside-out, the test would be over in the fullness of time -sooner rather than later - with less risk of recurrence, and that the best we could do in the meantime is make our thoughts as neutral as possible from the inside/down. Soul will roll back the test once we have passed it.

Life is not different from school. What tests we fail are presented to us again and again. Having said that, *the one crucial difference between karmic life and school life is that, in our school systems students cannot be held back forever.*



The sustained practice of genuine spirituality is the means by which, eventually, slowly, slowly an active, 'live' connection gets established between the Ego-persona and her/his very ancient Soul – **C.C. Saint-Clair**

Inner child: *concept used in popular psychology (...) to denote the childlike aspect of a person's psyche, especially when viewed as an independent entity. Frequently, the term is used to address subjective childhood experiences and the remaining effects of one's childhood.* [39]

Our Inner Child Is Alive And Well - too much so!

Regardless of the sort of upbringing we have had, from miserable to difficult, to indifferent, to one that was warm and fuzzy, this upbringing, compounded by the various events that have shaped our teen years, has conditioned us to respond to adult life according to a particular set of cognitive responses. In early childhood we learnt to accept that the little child caught in the eye of a camera, the one we were told, 'is you,' was us. As we grew up, we watched this child grow up, year after year, as our reflected self in the mirror for we have no other way to see either our face or our entire body as others see them. Throughout this process, we have had no other option than to accept that this being who generates a series of pre-programmed responses to 'life' is us.

Wrong!

A search for the self through a genuine form of spirituality, one that I like to call Naked Spirituality because it does not rely on the charisma of any teacher, nor does it rely on any rituals, particular words, 'sacred' objects or tricks of the mind, is about trying to reveal our true self to *our self*.

By true self, I mean how we, as unique individuals, truly feel about anything. By true self, I mean the understanding of our self that *remains* once we gain a sense of the 'one' who gets revealed once we begin peeling off the many layers of conditioning and experiences that our parents, our friends and 'life' have laid upon us.

As long as we hold on protectively, or should I say at times defensively, to our way of responding to 'life' like a mother clings to her toddler under criticism, we cannot aspire to more than doing 'life' according to the 'program' that was already implanted our psyche long before we reached our eighteenth birthday. For some of us, no doubt, that was a long, long time ago. Long enough ago to truly think about upgrading the person we once were. It is probably time to agree that, by any

objective standard, our ingrained patterns of actions/re-actions have probably become obsolete.

If working out what it means to truly upgrade our 'program' from the inside/out is too much of a bother, then we need to accept that what we give our self, our loved ones and our colleagues is a person who, over time, has gained a degree of control over certain impulses, but only up to a point. A person, too, who may have mastered a number of skills of relative perceived importance and who, through these skills, is represented by a specific status and the airs and graces that correspond. But beyond that, however well intentioned, to the ones closest to us, we can only present as someone who has changed, *but not matured* since that eighteenth birthday - someone who has simply gotten older inside and out.



Spoiler: Dear Reader, though you might be interested in reading more on karma, reincarnation, matters of the soul and how we can help ourselves grow into better individuals - instead of merely growing older - it's quite possible that the content of my articles might alienate you, most particularly if you happen to feel that, within the cultural and societal framework, as it exists today, your life is a satisfying one, fuller of genuine contentment than of stress, anxiety and upsets.

In truth, my writing is aimed at those of us who feel that, no matter how 'normal and reasonable' is our response to life's challenges, big and small, and regardless of how 'normal and reasonable' we appear to others, there has to be another way to DO life.

Basically, it could be said that my approach to genuine spirituality is one that accepts the status quo dictated by societal mores but also encourages us to do more to do than complain about our lot, more than read about how to improve our lot, more than pray, chant and dance, more than meditate, too, as all of these activities can only alleviate the symptoms, not the root causes.



Interwoven with years of dialoguing on a daily basis with my mentor, Moriya, I gained familiarity with the philosophy of J.D. Krishnamurti, Paul Brunton, Alan Watts and

Idries Shah. I explored the writings of Maurice Nicoll, John Blofeld, Reshad Field and Alan Keightley. I have also read a number of texts on Zen Buddhism, too many to name individually, but including some by D.T. Suzuki, and I have acquainted myself with books published more recently by Eckhart Tolle, Gregg Braden, Daniel Goleman and Alain de Botton.

I quoted and referenced most of these writers in my early articles as, in those days of budding understanding, I was writing mostly a sort of analysis of their thinking against the backdrop of Moriya's teachings. The overlapping discourses of all these wise thinkers now digested, I have come to form my own blended philosophy on matters of Karma and its integral, cosmic, relevance to our heart and soul. The bottom line being that very little, if anything, we propose to do that stops short of digging deep within the nucleus of our emotions, will yield any long standing personal growth.

Though such activities as taking a walk and enjoying the sunset, solving a crossword puzzle, cooking a meal and enjoying the process are healthy distractions and sharing loving moments with our partner, playing with our child and helping an elderly neighbor with the groceries may provide us with lovely, feel-good moments in which we think *la vie est belle*, life is great, I honestly do not believe anymore that such moments go any distance in helping us rethink our staple set of responses any time one of our many buttons is pushed 'far enough'.



I honestly believe that nothing outside of a genuine appraisal of our automated response patterns, followed by a diligent awareness compounded by the hard slog of committed practice will - in the fullness of time - generate a tangible and stable difference in the way we feel about our lives.



It is only when we attempt to distance ourselves from our patterned response to dissatisfaction, our inability to truly forgive and to truly love unconditionally that we can begin to render obsolete some of the 'natural' but highly impractical actions and

re-actions that trigger hotspots and flare ups with strangers, in our home, at work, and, more importantly, within our psyche.

And so, dear Reader, unless the words above resonated in you - or at the very least prick your curiosity - rather than read on, I would whole-heartedly suggest you take a walk and enjoy the sunset, solve a crossword puzzle, cook a meal and enjoy the process, share loving moments with your partner, play with your child and help your elderly neighbor with the groceries for, in truth, even a momentary feel-good moment a day is better than nothing, if it lowers our stress level and generates an opportunity for little doses of selfless kindness to sneak in.



Who Are These People?

When it comes to our reading preferences in the 21st century, clearly it is neither books about the triumph of the human spirit nor biographies nor books of poems that keep the print industry printing and beef up online publishing. A glance at the list of fiction best-sellers suggests that reading 'thrillers', crime a.k.a. murder, imagined, committed or solved, has become an international fascination. It seems to be on par with Romance, as a best-selling genre of fiction.

Another glance at the endless roll-out of block-buster films and series on the same topics suggests that viewing the process of dying brutally, often slowly, usually gripped by fear and horror holds an equal fascination. A quick search online search using general keywords like Horrifying Death will produce a trove of real deaths, very horrifying deaths in our streets and homes uploaded, no doubt, for our viewing pleasure.

In our culture, death is feared. It is said to be horrifying and oppressive. It is a topic of conversation to be avoided at all cost, even in hospitals, except in wards of palliative care. There it is mentioned in hushed tones. Yet, from cold cases to murders in real time, to autopsied chests and cranial cavities split open on morgue slabs and to the deconstruction/reconstruction of murders, each copyright scene is carefully crafted for impact. This suggests that the very graphic rendition of fear, death and suffering somehow provides us with endless hours of popular entertainment. That these murders may be committed out of love, revenge, profit or stupidity makes no difference either to the reader or to the viewer.

Our collective attraction to criminal and murderous energy as a form of 'escape' means that we ingest extreme doses of that dark energy, as we watch 'fear, death and violent suffering' made graphic, evening after evening on TV, DVD's and on the big screen - not to mention the 'real' human fear, suffering and death delivered to our living rooms and computer screens by our favorite news programs. The sum total of global interest in this genre of entertainment and escape spells out clearly that, collectively, we must have become immune to the emotional terror felt by others and to the manner of their death. We must be suffering from empathy and/or compassion fatigue - as do our teenagers and our twenty/thirty something. On the whole they,

too, seem to have an interest in scenes that depict violent and often 'sick' death scenes as are those in 'shooter' and horror films.

To top it all, some of us also take the dark energy of crime fiction to bed with us inside our Kindle and the pages of our paperbacks. Some of us prefer to take to bed biographies and autobiographies of real murderers. Either way - sweet dreams! or sweet pill-induced sleep!

Absolutely everything in the universe is made up of atoms and molecules, therefore matter and energy, the human body included. It is an accepted scientific fact that it is energy that enables us to move and to think. Beyond that, as thoughts carry intent, they generate energy. Words carry intent and they, too, generate energy. The mind is matter and matter yields energy. It is another accepted fact that any compressed energy will eventually explode.

In terms of mental health, when one's energy is optimistic, it helps comfort others. The same applies to the pure energy that emanates from an open connection to Soul - it heals others. If one's energy is laden, among others, with macabre thoughts and graphic images of sadistic torture picked up from regular doses of crime fiction and murder scenes, it seems evident that this energy is not likely to create any uplifting of the mind - not for the self, not for others.

Although having a collection of morbid snippets and violent images accompanied by the crying, the gagging and the rasping sounds made by the dying whose mind is filled with terror playing back in our thoughts, is not the only reason why there is so much angst and violence in our society, it goes some way to contributing to it.

The Law of Attraction works on the human psyche. Thoughts allowed to settle in the mind, and cultivated over a period of time, nourish a nucleus that, if left to grow, attracts to itself conditions that will spawn concrete outcomes of its own making.

Birds of the same feather flock together. Tarr'd with the same brush. Like attracts like and a number of similar sayings acknowledge something similar, that dark energy attracts dark energy and nowhere is that more obvious than in clans and groups that wreak gratuitous violence. The perpetrators run in packs. The idea that dark energy attracts dark energy is also evident among other groups who cluster in

packs. Black may be their color of choice, zombie worship in one form or another might be their thing. Secret religious societies also 'pack together', bound by rituals, smoke and mirrors and incantations. Could it be that, although it is unsettling, even frightening, dark energy needs clusters of individuals to gain and maintain momentum?

Secret societies, even those not preoccupied by the after- world, guard their darkness with secret handshakes, but it is not uncommon for members of elitist societies to indulge illicit urges. The Code of Silence bundled in the oath of the initiation ceremony binds these individuals together and keeps debauchery, when it happens, hidden from outsiders. Members share in each other's dark secrets. They feed that energy as much as they feed on it - and bring it home to 'the wife and kids'.

Light energy, the energy of Soul, the energy that results from genuine and unritualized spirituality and religion might well be stronger than the energy of violence, angst and morbidity, for truly spiritual persons prefer to remove themselves from groups to exist alone with Soul as sole support, even as they live a productive life amongst us. Such people are humble. They favor wearing colors that are pale. Black is not on their palette. They don't need to walk with a sign on their forehead that proclaims I am a spiritually evolved being. Such folk seek light and fresh air. They breathe in prana. These, along with a strong connection to their soul, replenish their energy. Such folk tread softly and they quietly heal as they go - always free of charge, for how could they barter coins in exchange for the gift Soul gives them freely? Escaping to an ashram, escaping into hour-long trances or escaping into a cave protected by the fearful respect of superstitious villagers and depending on them for food is not necessarily the sign of utmost spirituality.



Starved Hearts

If it is at least partly accepted that mediatized violence on the sport field and violence in video games can set off a heightened emotional arousal that is counter-balanced by a corresponding decrease in self-control and inhibition leading to intermittent

explosive disorder among other psychiatric disorders, then, why not linger on the thought that the explosion of dark energy linked to a quasi-constant exposure to horror and grimness *can* contribute to the inner-violence and exterior violence that often surface within the family and between friends/colleagues and neighbors.



Reality check: too much stress on the physical self created by the undisciplined ego creates an imbalance easily exacerbated by our pathological hunger for acceptance, for love, which lies at the core of most of our thoughts, our actions and re- actions.

As we grow up, we are trained to aspire to becoming bigger and better to produce greater feats. Yet the 'bigger' we get in terms of fame, power and wealth, the more difficult it is to walk the tightrope between the addictive compulsion to achieve even more and emotional/mental health. To maintain a working degree of stability, some of us rely more and more on an array of chemical crutches just to get to the end of each day, reasonably sanely - just to sleep.

As an aside, though doctors differentiate between the symptoms of Dementia, the symptoms of Alzheimer's, the symptoms of depression and those of heart ailments, differently from the symptoms, the *natural* root-cause of each of these states of unwellness might be the same.



Serious question: can it not be imagined that each might be triggered deep within our psyche, often years before it is diagnosed, as the result of the same unquenchable thirst and hunger for genuine love that characterizes our species?

The one redeeming quality of explorations into the criminal mind that fit within the vast category of crime as a literary genre is that, ironically, the plots confirm, for the most part, that murderers are not deranged aliens that descend upon us from *Planet X*.

They are the 'law-abiding mother of two' or 'the devoted father and hard-working husband'. They are our colleagues. They are us. They are our brothers and sisters. They are our parents, sometimes even our grandparents. Sometime they are our

child. They are the nice neighbor to whom we wave as we pick up the newspaper from the front lawn. In fact, as news too often confirm, any age is the right age to become a first time murderer.



The karmic energy that grips murderers has its spark, tiny and in control, for now, inside each one of us. Interestingly, murder in the workplace is currently the fastest growing type of murder across America.



Karma - addictive game

When Soul eventually loses all hope of our redeeming ourselves, she pushes us out of our rut, sometimes in a life-changing way. Sometimes she wipes us out. Indeed, redemption is not likely to happen as a miracle from anywhere outside of ourselves. The oft-referenced religious belief that it is so is quite disempowering. On the upside, such a belief precludes us from having to do anything -from within - more than we already do. Similarly to the belief in good luck/ bad luck and divine decree which absolves us from thinking that what we feel and what we do create patterns that might bring on outcomes that are to some extent of our own doing.

Between birth and death, Karma, not unlike the most addictive video games, from Evony to Halo, provides us with a number of stepped setbacks, rewards and challenges. The most absorbing video games offer the player a fine balance between the fun of building relationships with other players, the thrill of discovery of the most improbable places, personality escapes in role-playing and finally the suggestion of 'beating the game' against stacked odds. Though cheat-sheets abound, the purist chooses to access the challenges and rewards of each new level, unassisted. It is through the sheer frustrations of being stuck that the real players hone their skills and eventually move upward to the next level.

The karmic formula, too, is centered around relationships, as most of the eighteen hours of our wakeful state is spent surrounded by at least one other person, if not

more. Furthermore we do aspire to creating a sort of insulating bonding 'community' around ourselves. We form alliances with friends and relatives. The karmic formula also includes a strong discovery phase, the potential discovery of a different response, different options leading to different outcomes once we chip away at the ego and get closer to our inner self - closer to who we truly are once we divest ourselves of our culture's 24/7 invitation to notions of fun, freedom and success.

Any karmic event encourages us to role-play. By attempting to step away from under the shadow of the nasty Witch of the West, we come that much closer to emulating Snow White or simply slowly morphing into a kinder, better, more rounded person.

When it comes to beating the odds, well, there are plenty of them against which to pit our level of acceptance, our potential for forgiveness and the depth of our love, as we step up, 'level up,' and make the most of the next hidden clue. And, as in the best-conceived video games, the player cannot proceed to the next level until a series of pre-established skills have been mastered - and the player only get to deal with whatever challenges s/he is deemed able to handle correctly, in the fullness of time.

Once one level has been mastered, there are many more lined up to further test our emotional resilience and our spiritual mettle.

Horrifying events, as so many are, as well as any other event, land on us screaming, "Deal with me from the heart. You don't have to embrace me. *You don't have to thank the lord for saddling you with such hardship*, but you have to accept me actively, not under duress. Once you have worked at that long enough to overcome the challenge, I will be on my way. For now, however long it takes you to accept your challenge holistically is however long I will hang around."



Fatalism or Karma

When someone discovers that they have been made the butt of a 'friendly' joke, the common rejoinder to the jokester or prankster who set them up is, "Wait till I get my hands on you! I'll kill ya." There is, of course, no intended malice in that remark but,

even so, friends do kill friends, parents do kill their children, children do kill their parents or grandparents, husbands and wives do kill each other, brothers and sisters do kill each other and lovers kill their lovers with, apparently, much greater frequency than the random 'strangers' killing 'strangers'.

Having said that, serial killers notwithstanding, it would be a mistake to think that the majority of murderers premeditate their deeds for days on end for, on average, they do not. Yet, it would be only half a mistake to think that the murderers in our midst did lose their mind, as their unhappiness amped up from resentment or anger mode to 'killer-mode'.

To truly grasp the web that links loaded words such as 'murderer', 'guilty as charged' and 'victims', one has to first understand karma and the connection of Soul to our ego and therefore to our actions. It is Soul that gives us our humanity, our conscience, and it is from her that come impulses to be caring, forgiving and generous. Occasionally, too, from Soul comes the impulse to be altruistic. Within the context of the belief system discussed in these pages, it is understood that Soul is pure energy. Thus, it is understood that no one is able to harm, let alone kill, anyone else and anything else greater than an insect, while Soul's energy is reflected in our consciousness, in the mirror of our ego.

When resentment and anger run so deep as to cloud the mirror surface of our ego, not unlike clouds blocking the sun's light, our Soul's energy is no longer perceived. It no longer pings on our consciousness. It no longer whispers to us. It is whilst in the grip of a Soul blackout-silence that the human mind becomes purely mechanical - criminal and murderous.

Though a serial killer may seem to pop out of nowhere to kill suddenly, often viciously and repeatedly, let's not forget that this person has usually lived many years behaving, not as a crazed monster, but as normally as most of us - and that in spite of a psychopathic brain and its recognized lesser amount of gray matter, which is currently linked to the characteristic lack of empathy, guilt and remorse.

Some psychopaths are said to be born evil because, as children, they carried on illegal activities such as starting fires. Some performed immoral acts, such as hurting animals and even hurting their siblings or friends. However, any survivor of child

abuse, incest, paedophilia or extreme bullying will attest that convicted psychopaths are not the only ones who display extreme anti-social behaviours.

Most of us pay lip service to two sayings considered trite: Everything happens for a reason. There are no such things as coincidences. However, anyone interested in plumbing further the direct link of karma and murder [or karma and any debilitating trauma] could do worse than apprehend the following theory: the years-long 'wait' before a killer becomes active tends to confirm that Karma gives the unknown, unwitting, but nonetheless intended victim years of opportunities to react differently from their usual M.O. to alter their thoughts, repair their feelings in general and make an honest peace within a several of their more meaningful relationships.

Seen through the lens of our culture, it may seem *absolutely* unfair, cruel even, to suggest it, but what if we could consider that victims [potentially each and every one of us] unwittingly 'invited' their trauma? The particularities of the circumstances notwithstanding, what if the resulting trauma was best viewed as the *blow*, the wake-up call, that something consequential needed to be amended - but had not been - and that 'now', through that trauma was the time to work their way back to their true self and finally adjust their M.O. from the inside-out?

It is understood that most of us exert free choice in regards to the main and the mundane moments of our lives. Even as we run away from an arranged marriage, a violent partner, a supervisor we 'hate' or simply the tedium of our life, we do so out of free choice. Whether we go out at night for a jog or simply walk to the corner store to buy a magazine and a lottery ticket while we're at it, go downstairs to raid the fridge or to the garage to tinker with the car, regardless of our mood, we do so out of free choice. Whatever shall befall us as a result of this freely made choice can but be reaped from a decision made freely - and thus, no one but ourselves is ever truly, karmically, responsible for what befalls us - not a pleasant thought by far.

Whether we chose to harbor a grudge and freeze someone out or heed our 'better judgement' to make a quiet peace within our heart, we do so out of free choice in the same way as we choose what to study, which job to apply for and how close, what to have for dinner and where. Similarly, we also decide how far to live from our parents,

siblings - and work. Even a seeming non-choice, an in-action, is a choice - the choice not to act. Every choice creates a karmic 'flash', for lack of a better word.

To demystify the process further, such 'flashes' can be compared to entries in our bank balance sheets; a series of debits on one side, a series of credits on the other. The balance at the bottom is adjusted accurately by the close of any given day. The sobering reality is that, unlike the programs and the human fingertips that produce the data on our balance sheets, karma never errs.

Invariably, there comes a time when our emotional and spiritual balance is owed. No more credit. Depending how much 'in the red' we are determines our fate - the time and manner of our death or the time and type of a devastating setback - for some, living with a debilitating disease, a crippling handicap, a high degree of guilt or remorse or living with the feeling of utter loneliness or that of a wasted life, is far worse than a swift death by heart attack. But, culturally, it would benefit us to consider them all as karmic 'setbacks' of one form or another. There is no point in wailing, *'What have I done to deserve this!'* or *'What has ever s/he done to be put through all this?'* There is however a point to understanding the karmic notion of cause and effect.

Having said that, the matter becomes even more daunting when we are willing to consider that our karmic balance sheet actually tabulates, not only the causes and effects we have generated in our life thus far, but also 'some' of the causes and effects generated by the previous incarnations of our soul.

Now seems to be an appropriate time to dissociate the concept of unamended Karma and the afflictions it triggers in all of our lives from the Christian belief that states that any illness and setback is caused by the sinful nature of our *soul* that needs to be healed.

Within the context of this discussion, one of a secular nature, it needs to be accepted that Soul is pure - always. Soul is light - always, and our Ego is neutral, as neutral as the sun rays without which there can be no life at all on our planet. On the one hand, the sun's rays are the healing rays that give us essential vitamin D. They are the same rays that can give us skin cancer. In fact, it is neither the body, nor the soul that need to be healed. It is our ego that must be balanced enough to allow us to

hear Soul's whispers, the voice of reason - our conscience. We need to train our Ego to allow a lot more air time to our 'better half' - not our physical partner - but our Soul.

Karma cannot possibly make any *intellectual* sense, as a belief system, in the absence of a genuine understanding of the cycle of reincarnation of our soul - not of ourselves, as such - through the karmically planned conception of a new 'vehicle to amendment' - a baby, which spins in a new light the concept of... Family Planning.

The belief that, through confession and a series of prayers and/or through a degree of intense physical pain inflicted upon our body as punishment, a divine power may wipe our slate clean absolves us from digging deep inside of ourselves to right the wrongs we have created by responding to the stressor through a series of knee-jerk reactions

It removes the motivation to earnestly attempt less reactionary spikes and curtail the endless string of disenchantments, upsets, resentments and petty annoyances we deal with daily, compliment of the undisciplined side of our ego. This belief misleads us in thinking that as long as we pray, ask for forgiveness, occasionally do penance, give to charity (how much and with what intent remains unspecified) a deadly sin can be absolved, even a deadly sin such as wilfully killing another. The irony is that even if we prostrate ourselves and flagellate ourselves and stay awake till dawn praying - begging and bargaining, we never get confirmation that any of this has reinstated us into the Good Book.

Of course, the same applies to the belief in digging deep to rethink our thinking but at least, in attempting to take matters in our own hands, so to speak, we have a better grip on the *why* and the *how* anything is happening to us. Perhaps, the most important consequence of amending the tenor of our most reactionary moments, is that over time it softens our days.

Eventually our days contain fewer hot spots, and fewer flare ups. From such tangible but often subtle outcomes, it is fair to derive a definite sense of 'humble' satisfaction, as we thank our soul for giving us the moral strength, and the kindness of heart, to chip away at what, all along, deep down, we knew needed to be addressed and redressed.

Karmic Tools by Any Other Names

It may not be greatly satisfying to know how being karmically 'in the red' may decide on the circumstances of our demise and the effect it might have on our loved ones. The death of a much loved one like a child, a parent, a sibling or a partner is not indicative, either, of their karmic debt and yet, if one wishes to do life differently, here and now, the tragedy of death is best be understood - if only to yield a shred of objectivity.

Yes, it's been said many a time that every loss, every hardship, every happiness and even breakthrough comes our way to further test our spiritual mettle. As Moriya, my mentor reminded me only yesterday, "Most often, what people want is not what they need and, therefore, what they get is really what they should WANT."

Death, grief, loss, illness, inner-dislocation, depression and addiction are karmic tools. Our response to them often fractures and alienates one person from others, within families and within friendship groups. We become difficult. We become impatient. We process our sorrow, our emotional pain, our physical ailments at a pace that is different and in ways that are often different from that of the others nearest us. We also process them differently, usually making use of emotional crutches which our loved ones fail to understand.

As we grieve for the physical loss of a loved one, for our lost health, for our financial losses and for our love life, we grieve for life as we knew it, for life as we want it, for life as we expected it to continue with us woven into its tapestry. In that state, we become unable to give sustained attention, let alone sustaining love to the ones who are emotionally dependent on us. Equally, when they grieve the same passing, they may be unable to support us, even though physically present. They don't get their needs met anymore than do we.

Resentment sets in and, in the fullness of time, instead of getting knitted together in a supportive, insulating, healing cocoon, instead of giving genuine emotional support to each other, we may settle for keeping a semblance of normalcy, for giving each other hugs which can soon become automatic. We fracture and splinter away. We become remote, inaccessible to our self and to them as they are to us. We are no

more able to make sense of the new person we have become than of the indifferent others they seem to have become. Often, it's just that much easier to unburden ourselves to a total stranger.

Sadly, in such common scenarios, all parties, albeit differently, have failed to learn the karmic lesson, let alone pass, the karmic test sent, here and now - for a reason - the reason being to prod us out of our emotional complacency and force us *to listen, be quiet, actively accept, love in earnest* through 'thick and thin' or 'warts and all' or 'for better or for worse' - and be grateful for all that is pleasant and good in our life. Such a positively emotional connection with the suffering loved one is the stuff that karmic amendment is about. And knowing *that* is empowering.

Knowing that there is a **purpose** for the madness that stemmed from the crisis and knowing that there is a guiding framework to help us reach the end of the tunnel, is empowering. It is, isn't it?

Serious question: shouldn't knowing that perhaps, just perhaps, we are able to influence some of our karma be *more* empowering than knowing that we can healthily lose a kilo a fortnight by exercising free choice and abstaining from alcohol, sugars and starches while drinking plenty of water and by exercising our body with vigor through a willed, steady, newfound self-discipline?

When we stop long enough to ponder the mysteries of the universe, it is clear that Earth obeys the rules of the Cosmos. Flora, fauna and the weather patterns, all, as surely as do the sun and the moon, submit to the great energy that keeps the universe alive - and us within it. From El Gordo, the most massive galaxy cluster yet found, to the humble little ant, each of us grows, collides and dies according to the unbending rules of the universe. There are no exceptions.

At times, it seems that, we, humans, are the most vulnerable creatures in the cosmos, after the caterpillar. The moment a shoe rubs a sore spot on our heel, the moment we find ourselves alone and stranded, the moment we think we are going to die, the moment realization dawns that we cannot grasp the object of our desire, the moment we can no longer control our thoughts, we become despondent. We cry, we wail, we threaten. We try deadening our pain in a variety of ways - with limited success.

After more than tens of thousands of years of 'intelligent' existence, we remain painfully unaware that we are interconnected to all. In fact, our survival as a species is dependent on that of the buzzing bees. Surprisingly, when it comes to survival, we are not at all dependent on anything man-made. Though some might beg to differ, our life force does not rely on the wheel any more than on vaccines nor does it need on our smart phones to keep us alive. It is only once we fully internalize that we, mighty brain-driven humans, are subjected to whichever cosmic rules that pertain to us (as does every other speck of life form in the universe) that we can begin to perceive the impossibility of escaping our karmic dues - be they great or grim.

Though we have failed in our karmic duty in this, as in previous lifetimes, to amend and repair, all that is ours to repair, by activating our free choice and using Free Will to listen, be quiet, actively accept, love in earnest through 'thick and thin' or 'warts and all' or 'for better or for worse' - the moment under our feet is the moment to be grateful for all that is pleasant and good in our life.

When *again* we fail in this endeavour, it is then that Soul turns her back on us and brings the blue-print of the life that was predestined to be ours to closure, by activating yet another 'terminator'. Whether the terminator is a person, a disease or an 'accident', the intention and the results are the same.



Genuine Love Is Mostly Not About What We DO



In his novel, **Ashes and Snow**, published in 1992, Gregory Colbert wrote:

As I lay dreaming, Montezuma waded with me into the Limpopo River.
We crossed through the swirling eddies and shared a sun-baked stone in the middle
of the river.

Montezuma said, "You are disoriented. Your journey is in danger of becoming an elaborate flight away from yourself. You are paying too much attention to numbers, compass points, altitudes, tides, temperatures. You are looking for patterns or logic in coincidences. Your movements are mathematical when they ought to be musical. You're doing steps. You still haven't learned how to become the dance.

Remember, a compass and a pen can give you a reading on the lay of the river, but no mechanical instrument can measure the motion of the heart.

Some maps are drawn in melting snow.

By living in your mind, you are draining all the meaning from your miles and rivers.

Your heart is a flute, but you are playing it like a drum. A camera is a musical instrument. There is a whole range of octaves you are leaving totally unexplored". He paused for a long time. I said nothing.

"You are writing and photographing the miles. Are you really living them?"

Still I said nothing.

"Put away your pen and camera for a while. Prove that you are worthy of the gifts you have been given.

Look at the world through the lens of your own eyes.

Then you will be ready to navigate in the spirit of birds.

And know that one day, when you have crossed your last river, you will stand before an elephant who will measure the value of your life not by how many miles you have traveled and how much you have seen, but rather by how much you have loved."



Real Love = what love is not

According to Wikipedia, unconditional love is *'a term that means to love someone regardless of one's actions or beliefs [...]*

Unconditional love is frequently used to describe love between family members, comrades in arms and between others in highly committed relationships.'

- ❖ At the moment, what I'd like to do is go on thinking about elusive unconditional love and heart-chakra energy.

My personal realization is that we, as a species, have been struggling with a massive Achilles' heel but, perhaps oddly, seeing as we are all endowed with a soul and created in the 'image of god', our weakness is located in our heart - and I'm not

talking here about heart murmurs and atrial fibrillation.

The questions I need to ask myself are these:

Are you able to *give* love and affection, unconditionally, if only to a chosen few?

Do we ever really *get* unconditional love and affection from the ones closest to us?

Are we truly capable of *making* love - of creating love?



What Love Is Not

Spoiler: groups hugs aren't it!

There is a consensus of that suggests that, generally speaking, as a species, we don't really *know* what unconditional love looks like and feels like. Even J. Krishnamurti, in *Freedom From The Known*, published in 1983, seemed to find it easier to explain what love is NOT.

"When you ask what love is," he wrote, "you may be too frightened to see the [...] But if you still want to find out, you will see that fear is not love, dependence is not love, jealousy is not love, responsibility is not love, possessiveness and domination are not love, responsibility and duty are not love, self-pity is not love, the agony of not being loved is not love, love is not the opposite of hate anymore than humility is the opposite of vanity.

So if you can eliminate all these, not by forcing them, but by washing them away as rain washes the dust of many days from a leaf, then maybe you will come upon this strange flower which man always hungers for."

This is all absolutely brilliant thinking but, as an aside, the feminist part of me can't help interjecting that I really wish people such as K. and other great, modern thinkers, even Alan Watts, had thought, back in the 80's, to write "humankind" instead of, just, "man".

Where Love Is Not: won't find it in the evening news

Interestingly, from a few thousand years ago, the Book of Isaiah gives another glimpse into what is really needed from us. Instead of assuming that gifts, offerings and prayers will amend our deeds, it is our heart-energy that we have to action - both actively and willingly.

"What care I for the number of your sacrifices? says the LORD. I have had enough of whole-burnt rams and fat of fatlings; In the blood of calves, lambs and goats I find no pleasure. When you come in to visit me, who asks these things of you?

Trample my courts no more! Bring no more worthless offerings; your incense is loathsome to me. New moon and shabbath, calling of assemblies, octaves with wickedness: these I cannot bear.

Your new moons and festivals I detest; they weigh me down, I tire of the load. When you spread out your hands, I close my eyes to you; Though you pray the more, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood! Wash yourselves clean!

Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes; cease doing evil; learn to do good. Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow. Come now, let us set things right, says the LORD: Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow; Though they be crimson red, they may become white as wool. If you are willing, and obey, you shall eat the good things of the land." [40]

A series of What If clues have been playing on my mind in regards to how dry the river-bed of genuine, non-profit, non-bartered love might really be.

If we did get lashings of unconditional, real love, from the ones in our inner circle why, then, are so many of us disconsolate from the loss of our dog, should it be taken from us by the ex as s/he moves out, or should it be lost to a disease or to old age?

If we did get lashings of unconditional, real love, from those who have been earmarked to give it to us in this lifetime, I assume we would know contentment - inner peace.

But, if we drink to cheer ourselves up when we are sad, tired or disconnected from the moment, why then do we also drink, even if only sociably, when we are happy and have something a-MA-zing to celebrate?

Might it be because we never feel truly contented, truly at peace with ourselves and truly at peace within our circumstances that we rely on the lovely bubbles in a glass of champagne, the sweetness of a Cruiser or the amber hue of a Jack Daniels to successfully dispel, if only for a moment, the edge of angst that gnaws at our insides?

Do we ever truly feel cocooned and safe, not merely in a moment of physical togetherness but in our day-to-day?

If we feel loved, truly, by our long term partner, why do we want/expect or demand tangible proofs of love? From whence comes the cyclic impulse to ask, "Do you love me?"

If our teens felt loved, truly, deep down loved, would they be as [often] dramatically susceptible as they are to their peers' thoughtless remarks?



What's Not That Transparent - who has ever felt *truly* loved upon getting a box of chocolates or a diamond?

Why is it necessary to buy, receive or give a bouquet of roses, a heart-shaped box of chocolate, a diamond pendant or a funky sports car or a yacht as a measure of our lover or partner's love - if we already felt genuinely loved - just as we are?

If most of us were giving/receiving heartfelt doses of heart-chakra energy, why has our culture been thriving on love songs, romantic comedies and smaltzy paperbacks

from one turn of the century to the next?

When we do read bedtime stories to our children why, in this day and age, are they often of princes and princesses who will, by the last page, live to love each other forever and ever?

Could it be because these texts resonate from our yearning for true love and the calm, contentment that keeps eluding us - as a species?



Why do so many children plead for a bedtime story and another and another? Is it about the stories themselves or is it about a subconscious yearning for a heartfelt connection that this shared moment of bonding is intended to generate? When we do read our bedtime stories, yes, we might do the ogre's voice and the rabbit's voice very convincingly but, hand-on-heart, how active is our heart chakra during the reading? How heart-tuned are we to the child?



If, we, as parents did give true, energetic, love to our little ones why, then, would a piece of blanket or a mangy teddy bear generate such a strong connection with so many children in the early years of their lives? Even if most of us do humor the child's need for the Blanky or Teddy, sometimes on the advice of psychologists, isn't the very need for the thing a sign that the child is yearning for more of something s/he is not getting?



Why, on the whole, are we awed by the stranger who has risked her/his life to save another's? Why are we so jollied by on-screen good endings such as the one generated by the character Jackson Curtis in the Sci-fi film 2012?



It is only by digging very deep into selflessness and risking his life many times that the unassuming *little guy* almost single-handedly thwarted the powerful elite's cold-

hearted and callous bid for survival to force them to *share* their humongous lifeboats with the thousands of everyday people like ourselves who would have perished in the wake of the disappearing mighty ships.

Fiction it is, but why do we find such fiction heart-warming? Could it be because subconsciously we *know* that this is heart-chakra stuff as clearly as we know that such demonstrations are not a part of our every-day lives?

A few lines of the still immensely popular iconic song, I Want To Know What Love Is, written by Mick Jones in 1984, provide us with yet another glimpse of our species' yearning for that elusive heart-connection:

I gotta take a little time
A little time to think things over
I better read between the lines
In case I need it when I'm colder
In my life there's been heartache and pain
I don't know if I can face it again
Can't stop now, I've traveled so far
To change this lonely life
I wanna know what love is
I want you to show me
I wanna feel what love is
We do want to know - we do want to feel what love is. We do, don't we?



Why Acceptance Rules!

It is while on the topic of genuine love for those dearest to us - and our general [in]ability to give the real thing - that we need to look at what true spirituality is about.

If we opt to avoid that path, I just don't see how we can improve our current *personal best*, such as it is, without thinking outside of the square within which we

have so far built our emotional life.

I'm into the belief that Spirit is Soul. That works for me for, surely, our bodies must be powered by soul.

A quick peep behind the doors of any ER will confirm that we, humans, brain cells and enzymes notwithstanding, are but bones, flesh and fluids. Of course, we are animated by our soul! It is from her that comes our humanity.

The nice thing about souls is that they are neither vengeful nor benevolent - these are the alleged attributes of gods. And gods don't cut it for me because, from a distance, they appear far too human with their demands, moods and foibles.



Bottom Line: acceptance is ...

Though through birth and circumstances, I could claim Catholicism as well as Judaism as my religious heritage, I have never practised any form of religion, not even an alternative one and so I can honestly say that, unlike some, I have never been *hurt* while practising my faith.

Basically, my spiritual belief is centered around our soul being an intrinsic part of us - an active energy - that resides in the middle of our chest. And of course, I believe in the inexplicable and overarching power of the Cosmos.

It is only through a connection to Soul - constant pure energy - that, I believe, we can attempt to edit some of the karma that is ours to amend in this lifetime as well as soften the rub of our ordinary, daily life.

Having said that, seeing as our karma is partly inherited from our soul's prior incarnations and partly constructed by ourselves - same as our ego - it will take many more lifetimes before our subsequent incarnations can rectify the deficit - or help the balance tilt the other way.

In the meantime, no effort is too little. Rethinking thinking and understanding better - within a philosophical framework - the meaning of what is happening to us and to those with whom we share moments should be our foremost personal goal.

That, as well as - though it comes uninvited - *actively* accepting all c.r.a.p. with an open heart, just as readily as we usually accept our moments of joy and pleasure without questioning *why me?*



For me, the litmus test of genuine spirituality is simply whether, in the moment that is under our feet, we are able to *actively* accept our stressors, our illnesses, our disappointments and our emotional pain with a heart that is truly open - a heart that dictates *acceptance* to the mind - or not. When we master the art of Actively Accepting the one we want to love better, we master the love of loving better - if you know what I mean.

If the answer is, "OMG! I'm not a saint! I'm nowhere near!" that's OK because practice makes *puuurfect* and no genuine effort at altering our heart energy is ever too little.

Baby steps do rock big time!



How Much LUV Are We *Really* Getting?

Teddy Luv, rocks but ... why do our children still need 'Teddy Luv', as much as we did?

Why is a doll, a bear, a clown or a truck the most important constant companion of the child who is otherwise much loved and lacks for nothing?



Happy Bubbles

We drink to cheers ourselves up - Okay, but why do we drink when we're happy and have something good to celebrate?



How Much Do We Not Know?

Most of us don't know where the wind goes when it stops blowing.

Most of us don't *really* know what keeps a plane flying.

Most of us don't know that it is the light of the sun that is reflected on the surface of the moon - that, she, herself, neither glows nor shines.

Most of us don't *really* know much about electricity beyond that it comes out of two little holes in the wall and that if you come across it anywhere else, it can make your stand on end.

So, if we know so little about what we can see or feel or taste and about what has been around us 24/7 ... what do we really know ... what can we possibly understand about the soul?



What Does a Dummy Know that Mommy doesn't?

What does a toddler's dummy/pacifier know that a dotting mother doesn't know?



What's In These Words?

"So long, I've been looking too hard, I've been waiting too long

Sometimes I don't know what I will find, I only know it's a matter of time

When you love someone, when you love someone

It feels so right, so warm and true, I need to know if you feel it too

I've been waiting for a girl like you to come into my life

I've been waiting for a girl like you, your loving will survive
I've been waiting for someone new to make me feel alive
Yeah, waiting for a girl like you to come into my life" - A Girl Like You by Foreigner

What is it about such vapid lyrics that makes us melt even when we are in a stable and loving relationship?

Why do such silly *nonsense* resonate so deeply?



When We Give ... what exactly are we giving?

When we give, where exactly do we give from:

- the heart?
- the wallet?
- the head?
- out of love

When we give, why exactly do we give?

- to make peace
- to maintain peace?
- to buy peace
- out of guilt?

Serious question: are roses, gold and diamonds needed to convince anyone that our love and our acceptance are 'unconditional'?

If the answer is, "Uh .. mmm ... no, not really," then the question begging is What 'love' are we actually giving our 'loved' ones when we give them presents?



How DOES It Work?

The internet is full of spiritual quotes such as:

"Bodies are as innocent as trees or flowers or breath."

And "We are all meant to shine as children do."

And "If we only knew the power we hold within, we could move so many mountains and absolve so many sins."

And "True Happiness to me means I don't need happiness to be happy."

And "Poverty is internal. Every time you think you know something, you're experiencing poverty."

And "Where there is great love, there are always miracles."

OK, you get my drift.

Honest question: how will posting or reading such quotes help ME – or you - deliver 'the goods'?

Beyond thinking, Oh, gee that's a cool thought, how do such quotes help anyone BE in the moment?

How do they help anyone Actively Accept their current circumstances?

How do they help anyone connect with their Soul?

How do they help anyone practice the awareness that we ARE all souls in disguise - inside the body suits?

How do they help anyone actively remember that souls, being divine sparks, are NEVER, bad, never dark, never *lost*, never sad and little? Like, how can any divine energy be anything but ... divine = pure and loving?

How do they help anyone DO - from the heart - whatever it is they are supposed to be doing in the moment?



Big Puppy Luv

Why are so many of us disconsolate because of the loss of a puppy or an aging dog, be they lost to 'the X' or lost to a disease?

Why do some of us NEED to cremate our 'best friend' and keep the ash urn nearby on a bookshelf?



Who R We Talking To?

❖ Many of us have at one time or another pleaded earnestly, "Please, believe in me!"

Or when overcome by a sentimental yearning, we have exclaimed, "Oh, I LOVE you!" and/or "I will NEVER leave you."



Knowing that about 70% of the human body is made up of liquids and knowing, as we do, that what beauty there is in the eye of the beholder is only paper thin and skin deep, exactly WHAT are we really addressing so beseechingly?

Similarly, which part of us is the one that moves us so?

If after a little bit of thinking we agree that we are not *really* addressing the physical body, that bag of bones, flesh and organs held tight in an embrace, and surely we are not appealing to their heart, a mere muscle, and not to their brain because the brain is a big processor, and surely not to their ego-persona then, to whom are we really, subconsciously, addressing our pleas for a never-ending love and never-failing trust and guidance?

From where ...within us ... has come this sudden exaltation?



Share & Share Alike

When is it ... why is it ... that our children grow out of sharing with whomever happens to be their friend - regardless of the color of their eyes or of their fur?

1 for you. 1 for me. 1 for you. 1 for me. 1 for you. 1 for me. 1 for you. 1 for me. 1 for yo--



Not Like An Ice Cream Cone - more like a coin

If we love only aspects of a person that please us and dislike, sometimes even hate, other aspects that challenge our comfort zones - then who is this person we love and who is this person we dislike when their unpleasant behavior is merely the flip side of the same coin?



Why Acceptance Rules - Where ego rox, luv don't grow

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been 'hurt' while practising my faith.

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For me, the litmus test of genuine spirituality is simply whether, in the moment that is under our feet, we are able to **actively** accept our stressors, our illnesses, our disappointments and our emotional pain with a heart that is truly open - a heart that dictates **acceptance** to the mind - or not.

If the answer is, "OMG! Not yet!" that's all OK, cos practice makes puurfect and no genuine effort @ altering our heart energy is ever too little. Baby steps rock.



So, Is This What Luv Is About?

Another question is, if, on the whole, we find it challenging to give love and affection un-conditionally to the ones we love the most, how can we possibly stretch that love to the proverbial *neighbor* or to strangers.

Anyone who annoys us, who angers us the most is the token *neighbor* at the moment that is under our feet. They are the one we have been admonished to love as we love ourselves and our own - no separation.

Non-separating is a way of being that not many of us can deliver well at all and yet we don't want to be separated - we yearn to be loved fully for being the way we are, which results in us being in a constant state of hunger for more than we can give.

It is the craving for love of un-conditional magnitude that drives us to excel at what we do.

From parents, to sales personnel, to toddlers, to soccer players, to gurus, to doctors, to artists, to executives, to athletes, to managers, to mechanics, to farmers, to students, to presidents of corporations and presidents of countries and to freedom fighters - except for genuine psychopaths, we are all programmed to want to do our best with the sole purpose of being a hero in someone's eyes - in the more eyes, the better.

Personally, I can't begin to imagine how having hordes of adoring fans or devotees can truly warm the cockles of anyone's heart but, clearly, millions of people around the globe must feel the outpour of 'love' when thousands upon thousands chant their names and wring their hands in desperate admiration at the sheer glimpse of them, be they rock stars, politicians, religious leaders or athletes.

And then, of course, are the legions of self-promoting wannabes who hope to one day access, if only, a tiny bit of that *love* and associated kudos :-~



Cookies 'R' Us

Since this chapter has mostly been about questioning how much love we might be getting as toddlers, as teenagers, as 'grown-ups', it's time to look at how **wholistically** we *love* - with our grown up heart.

Isn't it true that, even on a good day, most of what we do and think is about *Me and Mine vs Them and Theirs?*

Though we are but souls disguised as humans, the notion of our separateness from others permeates most of what we do and think. It is visceral.



Not only do we separate ourselves from the other, a stranger, but we often separate ourselves from our 'loved*' ones, too, when they go on pushing the wrong buttons for too long.

It's not our fault - really it's not.

This way of thinking has been passed on to us through the millennia and, tragically, it would appear that this patterned thinking is perpetual.

To make matters worse, current culture keeps reminding us, regardless of our age, that we are *special* and that we are *unique *and that self-indulgence is a just reward.

Clearly, we, as individuals, are about as unique as are cookies on a baking tray.



River Deep – Mountain High - How DEEP is our love?

My bottom line, here, is that being nice when we want to be nice, when it's convenience for us to be nice is never too much trouble because, in such instances, we FEEL like being nice, caring, charitable, thoughtful and loving.

Generally speaking, though, it seems that a totally honest look @ how we love our

friends, our neighbors, our colleagues, our partner/spouse or our children reveals that we DO a lot more than we FEEL.

In my mind, genuine love and genuine affection is what we manage to FEEL - from the bottom of our heart - when our comfort zones are taxed to the max because 'that person' has pushed our button too far.

It is then, and only then, that the depth of our 'love', as much as our emotional mettle, get seriously tested.

But, hey, dear Reader out there, feel free to disagree with me ;-)



Our Blueprint to Spiritual Evolution

Rethink Thinking and Rethink 'Being Yourself'

Heads up: There are a few people on the net going me of Moriya but, PLEASE, do not assume that any one of them is the Moriya occasionally mentioned in my writings, my spiritual teacher - for they are not.

Though we communicate via email daily and though Moriya is absolutely conversant with all aspects of the internet, she does not have a website. I'm chuckling



at the mere thought :-))

Moriya is not at all interested in accepting/making for any 'service' that is of a spiritual nature - not even donations.

Her spiritual guidance is free and so are her healings.

For all that is of a material nature, Moriya had elected many years ago to make do, solely with the earnings of a dayshe intentionally keeps modest. She types and edits manuscripts for older local ersity professors who are keyboard shy.

Although her clients have been begging her to do so, she has deliberately refused to increase her fee per page. She still charges today what she charged 20 years ago.

Moriya, a widow for 28 years, lives alone in a comfortable apartment in an inner suburb of Jerusalem. Because she has her ego-persona totally 'in check', her faith in her soul as her ultimate Provider is absolute.

Being privy to how Moriya leads her private life has taught me that a genuinely spiritual person has no use for any of the material 'pleasures' of the flesh. Hence, such a person can afford to eat very healthily, live happily in a safe environment, as well as own a fax machine, a digital camera and enjoy the typing comfort of an ergonomic keyboard, a 28" computer monitor and a high speed internet connection on, what most of us, would call 'a shoe string budget.'

Imagine the many dollars we would no longer need to earn or save if we ever, intentionally, did away with our interest in cuisine, fashion, holiday and various modes of escape, as well as our symbols!

As some of you already know, though my teacher welcomes genuine seekers open-heartedly, she is not in the least interested in having her own audience - no followers, no disciples, no devotees - and no experiential tourists.

She is not at all interested in marketing any aspect of her knowledge, not even through me - the custodian of what, of her vast philosophic knowledge and deep wisdom, I am able to accept and internalize well enough to share with you.

Besides references made to Moriya in the body of this book, there are only two

essays that might pop up online under her name. She wrote them both in 2009, dare I say at my behest, translating them from Hebrew, her native tongue, to English so that I could publish them alongside my articles. They required only a light edit to allow the texts to retain her distinctive 'voice'.

As I've already said many times on forums, don't waste time Googling Moriya – apart from the two articles just mentioned, she simply is not there.



A Short Lesson In Understanding by Moriya

Let's begin with a Sufi story:

Once upon a time there was a king who enjoyed the company of his trusted friend, a Sufi.

One day the king said: "Look, I love and trust you as much as I love and trust my soul. Please," he said, looking into the man's eyes, "I would like to give you a present, so ask whatever you wish, even to the half of my kingdom."

The Sufi replied, "My king, I do not wish for anything."

"Please, ask whatever you want and it'll be granted."

The Sufi said softly, "I thank you, but I honestly do not wish for more than I already have."

Both men stood their ground until finally the wise man turned and said: "There is a question I would like to ask?"

"But of course," replied the king.

"Imagine that you have become separated from your men and that you are lost in the desert. There is not one living soul around. High in the sky, the sun is hot on your head. There are no bushes under which to find shelter.

Your tongue feels as dry and dusty as the on your camel's tail.

Then, an apparition appears in front of you proffers a tumbler of cool water towards you. You reach for it but before releasing the tumbler, the apparition proposes a deal.

A tumbler of cool water for half of your kingdom. My King, would you agree to the deal?"

"Of course, I would!" exclaimed the King.

"So," continued the wise man, "why would I need something that is valued as much as a tumbler of water?"

So, what is the message of this story?

The message is that according to how much, at any given moment, we value any one aspect of anything over another, we attach an arbitrary emotional value to this aspect while failing to accept the whole.

Look at it this way: if we were in dire straits in a desert, lost and left for dead, most of us would, indeed, be willing to make a deal - any deal - with anyone holding a symbolic cool glass of water to us.

Interestingly, if lost in an arctic blizzard and about to die from hypothermia, what we would most greedily accept from a rescuer would not be a tumbler of cool water but a tumbler of brandy though, clearly, whilst in the dry desert the tumbler of brandy would fail to quench our thirst and might hasten our departure from this earth.

However, we are talking about the same tumbler of cool water - unchanged in its properties - whether it is offered in the context of the desert or the context of a frozen landscape.

on our need - be it real or imagined - the worth we attach to that tumbler totally arbitrary and entirely of our choosing.

Equally, when we donate to charity clothes that we no longer want, the persons accepting these clothes will attach a value to them where, for us, there was no longer any.

Why, these men and women might even wear this shirt, that skirt, that tie, proudly on Shabbath, at the next Bar Mitzvah they attend, to their next job interview or to their next birthday party.

It can be said that one person's trash is another one's treasure.

When we value one item over another, be it an object or a human being, we create separation - in doing so, we create disagreement and conflict because things are inseparable in their essence.

Any attempt to attach greater value to one item over another causes an inner friction that expresses itself through an outer conflict, i.e. in violent behavior, be it against others or against the self. This conflict can also express itself in the form of illness or result in an *accident*.



Understanding #1: Spiritual evolution is made of this

Every single conflict recorded in history has sprung from a value attached to worldly material goods as well as to ideas, notions, emotions and desires. In doing so, we separate them from the whole.

The action/reaction of inner conflict/outer conflict always repeats itself simply because there can never be a firm agreement between people about the worth of any specific thing or that of any specific individual they value, and the prize they are willing to pay for them.

Some will spend a fortune on a car. Others will spend a fortune on a painting, on a diamond, on a stamp collection, on a rug or even on another human being. Some prefer not to pay anything for these objects that they, too, value. They prefer to *steal* them while others would not give a thousand shekels to possess any such thing because, for whatever reason, they do not value such objects.

For example, when mere objects, locations and people gain religious significance, they also gain an added value - that of holiness.

Attachment to symbolic holiness leads to conflicts between individuals, wars of religions and war between nations.

The real essence of life - the physicality, unity of everything - is inseparable from the whole. No single aspect of it can be altered in any way. The value we attach to anything that has ever been created - from objects to selected individuals, dead or alive - is only as arbitrary as the value attached to the tumbler of water in the opening fable.

Any conflict is the proof that we, humans, are attempting to separate what is whole and inseparable into parts, while it is the natural state of all - conceived as whole - to realign itself back into a preordained wholeness.

The stronger the attachment to any element separated from its whole - be it in the name of a god, idealism, patriotism, authoritarianism or liberty - the stronger the eventual counter-reaction will be.

It needs to be understood that all-out battles on any level are always born out of a single-minded personal inner conflict.

All events, all objects are naturally neutral - they just are.

They do not carry any intrinsic values. They are neither good nor bad. They merely exist but we, ego-personas, arbitrarily decide what is to be valued or rejected, what is good and what is bad, according to societal trends, our collective emotional insecurities and the use we make of objects, thoughts and doctrines - personal and public ones alike.



Understanding #2: Karma amending

Every act intended to 'push', to manipulate, in a direction predetermined by the self, always causes a blow-out at the other end before it settles back into its original wholeness.

Love, on the other hand, is a pure and beautiful emotion - but only as long as we accept our loved ones as they are without trying to mold them to suit our desires and our insecurities.

When we peacefully accept our circumstances such as they are, the spontaneous flow of cosmic love energy remains constant, for it replenishes itself spontaneously. The more we share love with others, the more this cosmic energy widens and spreads.

Needless to say, we are not talking here about the simplistic, feel good Hippie flower-power and the New Age propensity for hugging and verbally stating acceptance and love. Neither are we talking about convincing ourselves that we are "doing" love through the simplistic repetition of mantras.

When we demand that love, such a frail and beautiful emotion, should be expressed in any particular way in order to satisfy our ego - selfish and insecure by nature - the counter reaction from the loved one is an annoyance that over time often turns into downright hatred, which often leads to the cessation of the spontaneous flow of love, if not to physical separation.

It is this negative charge that is transmuted into a karmic 'blow to the head' of the perpetrator via yet another inner/outer conflict.

What is a loss, an 'accident', bad luck, an act of violence or an illness, if not the materialization of the negative charge?

Take for example the case of an extreme fundamentalist who turned to epicurianism. That sort of erratic imbalanced behavior would create such an energetic kink that the flow of cosmic energy would be severely constricted. This would set the stage for yet another inner/outer conflict.

The first reality is that we are souls - souls disguised in our incarnated bodies.

The second reality is that all souls are love and, as such, our true purpose in this lifetime is to love one another unconditionally.

A third reality is that the source of all conflict and enmity is always rooted in our starvation for love and in our inability to satiate it.

We, human beings, are a combination of a body and a soul. When only the body

needs are sated, the lonely starvation of our soul deepens accordingly and this is where, as a civilization, we err in thinking that satisfying the body, the persona, with more money at the bank, a promotion, more frequent and better sex, more entertainment, a more stimulating life, more exotic food - more and more of what is within material and within our reach - would solve the problem.

Instead of eventually feeling satisfied with what we have, we indulge a constant craving for more - as there is always more 'out there' that the media are trying to sell us. The more we indulge our base needs, the more our soul's loneliness and starvation deepen. In time, the persona becomes miserable, emotionally unhealthy and ultimately physically sick.



Understanding #3: Messages from Soul

Again, we are souls in disguise and the 'phenomenal' world in which we live has set us up with all the opportunities we need to reveal our true selves to ourselves by unveiling the mask of the persona - which is the only way to experience inseparability and our personal merging with the infinite wholeness.

Let's take the case of a rabbit. A rabbit cannot speak. The best she can do is growl a little because of an inborn inability to shape sounds into words. If we tried to teach a rabbit to speak, even after many years of perseverance, the rabbit's throat would still not allow her to do more than growl. The rabbit is a complete creature that is finite.

Let's now return to human beings. When we tell ourselves that we have learned 'something new', reality is that we have not truly learnt anything new at all. What we have succeeded in doing is remembering some of what we already knew.

As human beings, we are not complete, fixed creatures like the rabbit. We are able to 'learn' by internalizing something that, a minute ago, was totally unknown to us. When we "remember", we are accessing prior knowledge. The ability to learn and to understand means that it is inborn within us and that it is unlimited.

Soul speaks to us through symbols. Understanding these symbols is a must. When we see the world through our eyes, we see pictures formed by a myriad of symbols which our brain analyzes through words.

As long as we stay within the picture's framework, we experience living in peaceful harmony with our selves and with each other. However, the moment we interpret what we see with words, always attributing a higher or a lesser value to one aspect or another, we create separation. Separation fosters friction and friction leads to another conflict.



Understanding #4: Soul Is You - Soul IS Love

Soul is Love, Truth and Faith. It is therefore in her nature to desire a merging with infinite and eternal wholeness. The ego-persona, a mere tool, is a mechanical system intended to serve the soul by being a channel between her and the body, so that our soul can look at the world through eyes that see union and unconditional Love.

Each one of us is always dealt the cards we need in order to succeed in this difficult mission but all our difficulties in life spring from our refusal to accept our soul as our master and from our resistance to amend what needs to be amended. They are compounded by our doggedness to flow in a direction that is opposite to that of Life's flow - the unilateral direction of separation.

When a soul is reincarnated as a newborn within a specific family, it is the signal for the parents that the time has come for them to overcome all petty personal conflicts to clear the channel between their persona and their inner self - not to be hypnotized by their own persona's needs and fears - not react mechanically to every one of life's prickly moments.

The arrival of a newborn soul in their lives is the signal that the time has come for

these adults to learn about their true selves by observing their own reactions while refraining from interfering.

The arrival of a newborn is the signal to surrender to what-is, to accept holistically and to give unconditionally. The more the parents will be able to give, particularly when things become messy and difficult, the more their acceptance will grow, the more their energy will be renewed and the more they will evolve and rise up the ladder of spirituality.

The world is the stage on which actors perform our play - the play we have written - the play we are directing - the play in which we are the main as well as the supporting actors. We reflect our lack of awareness by projecting the roles we play onto others and blaming them for it.

When we give someone a major role in our play, we complain that s/he is taking over our life; and when we give a minor role to someone, we complain that s/he has no interest in our life or that s/he has little time for us. Yet, all the time the problem is ours.

By separating, accepting/rejecting people according to our perception of the role they play, we are so absorbed by our selves, so controlled by the past, that we block them. We exclude them from sharing our personal experiences. We, then, complain that no one loves us; that no one cares about us, while in reality we are the ones who have separated ourselves from the whole.

Every time we struggle with any of our past experiences, we are not 'here' - we are not present in 'this' moment. However, it is only in the moment that there exists the possibility to participate fully, harmoniously, in our own play, because that moment contains every other moment that ever was and all those that will ever be - it is eternity.



Understanding #5: RETHINK thinking

The spiritual Path is not a way of seclusion or disconnection from the outward world. It is the Path of harmony within daily life. Within this context, harmony means being passive. It means not 'Doing,' but doing only what needs to be done at any given moment and nothing more. It means neither falling back on the past nor leaning heavily on the anticipation of a rose-tinted future that will never come.

Everything that distracts our mind from the present moment reels us back again to the past or to an imagined future. Either way, we are not living at all the moment. In actual fact, Life is reduced to the present moment alone - it is not linked to the moment that preceded it, and it is not linked to the moment that is yet to come.

To be in the moment is an almost unbearable, a Sisyphean task, but it is a task that yields its own rewards. Flowing means being an inseparable part of the cosmic energy that surrounds us. This energy is that of unconditional, infinite LOVE.

This energy ebbs and flows with each harmonious act of giving and accepting. In this manner, things are accomplished as if on their own volition. They happen at the right time and in the right way. They fall into place within the best possible circumstances that can possibly exist in any given moment.

The sea that leads its waves to the shore again and again without stopping even for a moment, symbolizes the ego within our daily activities. The incessant roar, the spray, the sparkle that glints on the water - all of them create the illusion of an infinite, hectic movement, while in reality all this activity only serves to hide the real essence at the bottom of the sea where life exists away from the seeing eye. For us, as for the sea, all our activities are visible on the surface.

Daily activities done mechanically blind our inner sight, and lead to the delusion that the real world is the material one we observe through the eyes of our persona.

Our insatiable hunger for love remains intact and no achievement, however great - no victory, however hard-fought - no object, regardless of its value - will ever fill the formidable void created within us.

Understanding #6: Hunger for union with our infinite limitless Self

Dependence on the many crutches we lean on, such as our work, our money, our social status, our fame, our achievements, as well as alcohol, entertainment, sex, shopping etc., cannot lift the person beyond the boundaries of the limited ego.

Our hunger for a union with our infinite, limitless Self only make us more reliant on these crutches, thus foregoing all hope of ever being liberated and standing freely.

The more we attempt to control moments and events, the more they enslave us - the more they hang around our neck like an iron weight.

It is for a good reason that in the Talmud it is written "win a slave, win a master."

Our insatiable hunger causes us to mistake its source and we place the stress on the physical side: the expansion of personal property distorts reality and, instead of letting our soul guide us, the reins are held by the persona who can never be satisfied because, as a limited tool, for her own survival she is dependent on energies exterior to her self. The persona sucks in this energy from all around and positions herself by using willpower or desire - the persona's most powerful tools.

The more materialistic the persona, the greater need she will have to absorb more of this energy in order to stay alive until, finally, desires out of control will lead her to self-destruct.

Gross matter tends to behave according to the Law of Attraction of Earth, and it weighs down whoever is inclined toward gross lower physical desires while forgetting their divine origin, as in an ancient story about the Sons of God who descended into Earth. It is said that they fell in love with the daughters of Men.

They became so absorbed with lustful desires and lower energies that they had become unable to use their wings.

The moral of this story is that we, pure souls, are imprisoned within a body that exists only to satiate its base desires. The 'desired body' - our willpower - is no

different than 'a loose canon' and, systematically, it leads us to fail our soul as we fail others.

Our soul is an inseparable part of God. As such, our soul is attached to all other souls in an eternal tie. All souls belong to a higher dimension - one in which energies are much more delicate and mightier than that of earth-bound personas - thus souls are stronger and mightier than anything imaginable.

The term 'higher dimension' does not mean that worlds exist one above the other, the higher one stacked on top of the lower one. In reality, worlds exist one within the other like Russian nesting dolls, and the highest worlds are the most inner ones. They are the ones who give the essence, the content and the energy to the lower, grosser worlds.

This works exactly like an engine that sets in motion the entire vehicle, although it is hidden from the observer's eyes. The higher is one's personal spiritual elevation, the stronger is one's energetic power and, therefore, the greater is one's ability to control the lower levels of one's persona.



Understanding #7: Life is an incessant flow within the infinite

Faith means security. To have faith in our soul means we rely on energies that break through all levels and, consequently, events manifest themselves with the speed of light.

The person needs only to ask - and the request is granted immediately. When all the blockages are removed, all is delivered to us on time, and there is no need to exert pressure on any aspect of our lives. All flows around us exactly like the breeze.

Wind is the symbol of life of Earth. Without it there would be no life on our planet. When the wind blows gently, it inspires softness, tenderness and evokes the feeling of a loving, comforting caress.

Even the leaf won't fall off its tree. But when the wind blows hard, it uproots trees and destroys homes. It brings along dark clouds that release heavy rains that flood the

ground, as if all of Nature's forces were united into one entity aiming to cleanse earth from some of the filth that has stuck to her from time immemorial.

Walking the spiritual Path is difficult because the persona needs to change her mechanical behavior by letting go and by surrendering to Soul.

From childhood onwards, modern society teaches us that being competitive, a high achiever, one who controls her own destiny by intervening in all its aspects, is good practice. However, these behaviors lead to violence against the self and violence against others - in one form or another.

There is no competition on The Path. If you won't give your brother a helping hand, in the fullness of time he will drag you backwards. The spiritual Path is a path of sacrifice, of infinite giving, of being always available to others. It is the path of the open heart.

Our constant desire to 'achieve' and 'win' over others is merely symptomatic of our infinite hunger for love. This modern-day form of beggary will never be the key to opening our heart - not even after we have achieved all that is achievable. Not even if all the medals that can be won have been won.

All that is alive on Earth - plants, animals and human beings - is reacting to the voice of the heart. Soul will never be content with a love that is conditional.

In our culture, the wealthy are as much beggars as the poor. Their compulsion to hoard objects, property and money has its roots in the same inner hunger for love.

It can be said that every single masterpiece is but an imitation of Life and Nature. The fact that, today, works of art are praised mostly according to their financial value, says it all.

Thousands of charitable organizations collect donations to deliver money that is not theirs. Their line of business brings them accolades, appreciation and love. Be that as it may, confusion between the aim and the means is the reason why such

organizations are failing in their mission to lift the poor out of starvation and institutionalized dependence.

These organizations only create a disablement on both sides - a mutual dependence on emotional crutches. Money is a neutral matter like every other matter. In itself, money is neither good nor bad, but the energy around money, which is used only as a commodity instead of being a channel for love between welfare organizations and their beneficiaries, gets soiled.



Understanding #8: Spiritual enlightenment means we understand

Because the persona is a limited system, she needs a constant renewal of energy from outside of herself and she sucks from others, mostly by controlling them. Soul, on the other hand, is an inseparable part of the cosmic energy and as such she replenishes herself - the more she gives, the fuller she becomes. Such is the magic of the soul and such is the secret of the soul.

Life is an incessant flow within the infinite, and Nature is its reflection. Within this infinite flow, human beings have created a cocoon within which they have established governments, culture, religions, malls and also all kinds of rules.

From generation to generation, they have taught their children to find happiness within the artificial construct of this society - a pursuit equal to that of swimming against the tide. It's enough to see what happens in America when a cyclone sweeps through, removing every blockage on its way - be it a building, a tree, a car or a train.

The accusing finger always pointed at Nature's forces unleashed reflects our inability to understand that creating artificial blocks where the flow will not be restrained will naturally lead to various explosive behaviors.

Therefore people use unnecessary power and energy just to survive inside this artificial cocoon. That barely repressed power expresses itself through inward and

outward violence. It also expresses itself in the compulsion to build greater buildings and giant malls, as if building bigger blockages could ever stop the flow of life.

Even the greatest dam of the world will not withstand the pressure of flowing water that floods whatever stands in its way. Our mighty armies, equipped with weapons of mass destruction, attest to our ignorance and to our blindness.

The most repressive police system in the world only fosters more criminals and more gratuitous violence. Cause and effect are interconnected and inseparable. The mere existence of massive armies creates political tensions and international conflicts because the inner drive imprinted within them eventually bursts into outward expression.

Huge buildings cause imbalance by distorting the flow of energy around and through them. The higher up and away from vegetation and the ground's energy we live, the thinner the oxygen we breathe.

The Law of Attraction is not strong enough to prevent neurological and physical symptoms such as loss of balance, dizziness, headaches and other symptoms of unease.

Mother Nature has provided us with all that we need to live healthily: air, water and food; material for clothing and shelter as well as life-sustaining energy. The closer we can get back to her - the better our communities will fare.

When, for example, we look at a tree, what do we see?

What do we feel?

Are we grateful to the tree for granting us shade under the hot sun?

For the paper we use daily? For the furniture that furnishes our houses?

For the house in which we live?

For the beauty that it emits all around, and without which the world would be a scorched desert?



Understanding #9: Bartering is NOT giving

When we consider all of Nature's treasures - including the fauna and flora within it - purely from a selfish utilitarianist perspective, our lack of insight shrinks the world around us to the dimension of our needs. What ensues are needs ever more restrictive, designed to serve the persona's immediate desires which, if not satiated, will again erupt in one form of violence or another.

Attempting to see the world through the eyes of the limited persona reduces and trivializes all that we do, because the whole is again separated into tiny parts that are unable to absorb and reflect back the whole picture.

When soul sends a message such as "Know unconditional love,' the persona understands it as 'Have sex now.' This blind ignorance is what leads men to a prostitute from whom they can 'buy love.' Both the prostitute and her clients are struck by an illness that has, as its source, the same insatiable hunger for love.

Once again, the money exchanged is the commodity that connects them. But when the heart is blocked, money is valueless and it loses its true purpose as a channel that connects people.

Symbolically, money represents the high values of love, compassion, acceptance and giving. As money passes from hand to hand, it provides us with the golden opportunity to open our heart and to deliver these high values through its channel.

The best investment of money is done by keeping it in a state of constant flow. Otherwise, it become moldy and rancid like food stored too long. The more we give from an open heart, the more the value of money grows - both spiritually and physically.

Let's say that a person asks for help and, after having obtained that help, s/he offers to pay in lieu of a *thank you*. Should the person accept the money, the exchange of "give and get" will cancel out the original intention.

The exchange that began as a gesture of goodwill is then reduced to a mere business transaction and no real change can occur for anyone. The circle of love cannot spread outwards.

However, if the helper says, "No, I don't want money. If you want to pay me back in any way, be nice to someone else for free, without any strings attached, without even expecting a thankyou. And maybe this person will also do a favor to someone else for free, etc." Then and only then will the world become a better place.

Only then will energy begin to flow from one person to another - without being blocked at every turn. When someone barter their kindness for money, their action becomes afflicted with the disease of covetousness which defeats the original purpose.

The spiritual powers imprinted within us are intended to lift us back to the rank of the angels we were at the time of our creation. The beauty we experience around us reflects the inner beauty of our infinite soul. When the heart is open, the eyes see union, love, faith and truth; for under the various colors of our skin, our ideas and emotions, we are all identical.

The blood that flows in our veins is red; our lungs breathe oxygen and our body consumes food in which we have all shared from production to consumption.

Spiritual enlightenment means that we understand that - while within the artificial environment people have created and from which they fight each other for a piece of bread, of land, a sum of money, a better position, a new mode of controlling each other this way or that way - in the real dimension things remained unchanged, exactly like the tumbler of water. They are as harmonious and perfect as ever.



Happy Birth Day, Moriya - November 24, 2009

A couple of days ago, in her Jerusalem mailbox, Moriya found a 'little something' I had ordered online that I thought she would appreciate and maybe even keep – all the while knowing very well she wanted NOTHING – nothing at all from anyone – not even from me, and usually passed anyone's token gifts off to her neighbors.

But my little present was very special. It was an artefact from the Gregory Colbert collection, an off-shoot of hiovel-diary, Ashes and Snow. I just knew Moriya would find the juxtaposition of *fire* and *snow* spiritually relevant and I knew she would appreciate the unique peace and beauty of the series of cloth-bound images I had sent her.

"*Toda raba* for the beautiful gift," she immediately replied. "It was a real surprise. It is also very symbolic at this time in my life, as ashes are what is left behind after we reveal the snow - the light within us. By the way," she added, "don't you know already that it's the person of the birthday who needs to be the giver?"

Though I was quick to remind Moriya that she had been giving me something absolutely unique, on a daily basis, for so many years already [not to mention some 150 of her favorite books from her personal library sent to me at regular intervals and at her own expense in little packages of 6kilos], I knew she was referring to the custom she has urged me to set up on my last birthday.

It's simply about inviting friends over - not for a party, not to have fun - but simply to prepare a simple but lovely meal for them.

It is about organizing ALL aspects of this do FROM THE HEART - in the moment - even if it should fall on the most inconvenient day of the week or month - even after a long day at work.

"Focus on your heart, CC, and give of your Self," was Moriya's advice. "Why be tended to like Queen for a day?"

Why eat food cooked by others which symbolizes *swallowing* others' energies and thoughts?

Besides having to pay for food in a restaurant is in itself symbolic of having to pay close attention to all the messages around us - otherwise, a price will have to be paid for ignoring them.

"Why eat meat?" she added. "Eating flesh is the symbol of our animalistic tendencies and blood and toxins of dead animals is not good for anyone, especially not for one on the Path.

Cook a lovely clean fish. Instead of thinking of having fun and partying, add to that fish a lovely flow of genuine heart energy for your guests. They will taste the difference, you know, and you will all have a lovely time for your birth day."



And today, her birth day, when I wished her *Yom huledet sa-me-ach*, happy birthday, in Hebrew, she replied in her usual no-nonsense email tone, "*You know that you make a lot of fuss about my birthday? Do you know something that I don't know? It's not really the birthday itself that matters, ahoti, but the closing of a circle.*"

A couple of years later, on the day of her birthday, Moriya had attached this picture to her daily teaching email - a birthday balloon that had freed itself presumably from another birthday gathering distances away. It had travelled all the way to her.

She had found the balloon cradled by tree branches and within easy reach of her little veranda on the third floor. Though it had begun to lose air, the balloon stayed

there for quite some time, swaying in the breeze. Then, one morning, as had become Moriya's habit, when she went to the veranda to smile at her balloon and to tell it, '*Toda raba*. Thank you for having come to me carrying best wishes,' it had simply vanished without leaving a trace.



When you feel you *should* do something humbling, something selfless, something personal ...yes ... do it because you really *should*.

It's not for you to reason why you should.

Just do it.

But do it with care.

Do it from the inside-out –**C.C. Saint-Clair**

Angry Planet – Global WarNing – February, 2014

Author's Note

Of course, we are in charge of our lives and of our plans, but only as long as nature snoozes on impassively as we collectively, haphazardly and blindly, stack on karma.

We need to understand why any mayhem caused by Nature has nothing to do with either bad luck or divine punishment, just as we need to understand that it is simply the only way Nature can stop us in our tracks in such a way that we are pushed to rethink our own, and therefore our collective, cultural way of 'doing life'.

In the words of Catherine Crowe, “ ... action, once begun, never ceases – an impulse given is transmitted forever; a sound breathed reverberates in eternity; and thus the past is always present ...” [41]

Thus, Nature, it would appear, suffers from more than the physical pollution of her air and of her seas and of her earth. Like Soul, Nature suffers from the energetic pollution we, separately and collectively, project outwardly through verbal and physical aggression, through negativity of thoughts, through the re-actionary nature of our energy, of our emotions and of our actions.

Though we are no longer children unaware that our shouts, our tantrums, our childish pettiness and selfish priorities go a long way in creating our own karma, we do, on the whole often behave as children hell-bent on getting their own way.

We do it with our loved ones when they fail to comply with our expectations.

We do it in the workplace and in the streets when, self-righteously, we feel overlooked and disrespected.

We do it in the political arena, seldom thinking of the greater good of the people, of the country, but mostly thinking about personal posturing within our party of choice.

And, of course, we do it to nature as, by hook or by crook, we do our bests to go deeper and further into her core to suck out of her most remote caches of oil, of

gasses, and of the minerals we need to maintain – and enhance – our personal economic status and that of our country.

We do that regardless of the destruction and violence our relentless pursuits for comfort and wealth generate - mostly in other parts of the globe, rarely in our own.

When Nature feels that enough is enough, like a concerned mother caring for her progeny, she does her best to stop us in our tracks and give us opportunity to rethink our thinking.

Nothing is random and erratic when it comes to the order of the cosmos and the order of Nature. Science is constantly reminding us of this. Random and erratic responses are strictly human.

Though Nature is endlessly creative in all that she produces and generates, it seems she responds to our overly-indulgent economic and moral cultural patterns with varying degrees of severity.



Relatively benignly, at times, Nature shoves us around, maximising lack of comfort and disturbance to our carefully eschewed planned and utmost priorities.

This first-level intervention was once again illustrated a few days before Christmas 2013, when hundreds of cancelled flights at Britain's Heathrow and Gatwick airports were grounded by a thick blanket of fog.

Thousands of travellers from all walks of life and with varying thresholds for patience, respect, compassion and tolerance found themselves desperately scrambling to board planes and get to their destinations in time for the festive season. Most remained penned in transit lounges in the midst of utter chaos and what are now remembered as 'hellish, sub-human conditions.'

A few days ago, in the first week of 2014, in one single day some 2000 flights were cancelled at New York's LaGuardia Airport because of the snow storm that had slammed over the city. There, thousands of travellers described their experience as

'horrifying'. Similarly, in the States and in Europe, rail passengers have had their own plans and priorities disrupted.

Airports and train stations are akin to our digestive system: in at one end and out at the other. When transit inside these places does not operate efficiently, the system gets clogged up, complications happen and spill over.

Our energy field gets similarly clogged up when the *Me/Mine First* knee-jerk reaction is our principal method of interaction with the world. This modus operandi affects the ones closest to us, whether the closeness is through a sentimental bond, a blood bond or the bond created by the semi-permanent proximity generated by our work environment. Impatience, intolerance, self-righteousness also affect us throughout the even more temporary situations experienced, for example, in transit lounges and daily commuting.

Interestingly, the 'hellish sub-human conditions' experienced by many in the U.K. airports might trigger an inquiry. Indeed, a deep soul-searching inquiry is needed, but not one carried out by aviation authorities.

We, aware beings, are the ones who must conduct an inquiry into our needs and response patterns: what lurks deep within our persona once our buttons are pushed 'far enough'.

We need to know.



Another illustration of that first-level way in which Nature at times interferes and spoils our plans of escape, discovery, relaxation and even research is that of the Russian ship that found itself trapped on Christmas Eve in some 3 meters thick. Though the passengers, not in any imminent danger, overall seemed to have a good time, they nevertheless remained 'prisoners' of the ice for a week - just beyond the reach of rescuers.

During that time, whatever plans and priorities crew and passengers may have had were put on hold – perhaps long enough for some of them, if not all, to ponder, rethink and redress.

Whether we are put under testing ‘lock up’ conditions that are frustrating at times, degrading at other times or whether we are on an *ice-strengthened* Antarctic ship trapped as effectively as a flower in an ice-pond, or stuck in peak hour gridlock, Nature’s intention is always the same. She is extremely single-minded about waking us up from our somnolence, as she yields Karma made-to-measure.

Symbolically, the unyielding meringue-like peaks of static frozen sea that held the 74 ship passengers in a place of desolate, but pristine, amazing beauty represent the mounting need to warm up our heart, to chip away at its own *ice-strengthened* conditioned nature, as well as melt that of the ‘companions’ with whom we are journeying in this lifetime. Nature’s intention goes a lot deeper than having us merely make the most of a bad moment by attempting to have a whale of a time.



Perhaps less spectacular but certainly deadlier, as each carries its own death toll, therefore a definite step-up in severity, are the snow and ice storms that have been blanketing Europe, Canada and the north-eastern states of America on a regular basis - and most recently, in the early days of January this year, by the extreme Arctic conditions unleashed either by the Polar vortex – or by a slow jet stream.

These storms are quite damaging under their deceptive, fairy-land whiteness. They cause wide-spread misery, affect millions of commuters and burden local economies.

21 deaths have been reported across the Central states, South and Northeast states of America in the past 3 days alone. In varying degrees, these critical seasonal changes affect the local economy in a number of ways.

While Nature covers our world with ice and snow, while she blinds us with sleet, she proclaims her reign over us. We scurry back to our homes, desperate for shelter and warmth. Once there, power cuts keep us away from our usual separate, often

mindless distractions. No warm and comforting drinks. Our favorite edibles languish in a deep freeze of their own.

Seated around makeshift lighting, spouses/ partners, girlfriends/boyfriends, parents and children, siblings – we all find ourselves together in the evenings, as in bygone days, but with much less to share.

Reality bites: in this century, within the home, we have developed the art of limited conversations and limited communication with each other.

We have limited ways to truly understand the other.

We have limited acceptance and limited patience with each other.

The thought of disclosing or of giving more of ourselves than we are prepared to give - or even 'sacrifice'- has become intolerable.

We also have limited trust in each other and, therefore, we feel limited, conditional love for each other, as well.

Indeed, power cuts create havoc – a most purposeful sort of havoc, if we take the opportunity to reflect, rethink and reconnect.



Intended to work on our psyche along the same principle, though at the other end of the temperature spectrum, are the hordes of leaping bushfires that increasingly become mega-fires billed to become the 'next' global danger. They occur like clockwork in the American west and, recently again, in rural New South Wales, in Australia. Many of these are started by arson, at times very young ones.

It's a convenient fallacy to assume that wrong-doers, such as arsonists, are the product of a dysfunctional home life. They, as any wrong-doers regardless of their age, are part and parcel of our culture. They have not beamed down from Planet X just to set alight our bushland and forests.

Wild fires do not usually take lives but they affect our property, our economy and 'destroy our soul', as some would say.

By plunging us through fire and ice, Nature's intention is to strengthen us from the inside out - not to toughen us – as we see and sometimes feel in real time the destructive effects of separate, frosty, icy ways of being, and the careless, hot-headedness that wrecks lives. They either leave us cold and stiff or charred and gutted from the inside-out – barren.

And so, in terms of personal emotional/spiritual growth, it is our individual and collective karma that, in fact, brings us together – not against each other - in what often appears dire but always shared or *share-able* circumstances.

Because of our faith in science and materialism we are morally and culturally unlikely to respond as expected, certainly not in the foreseeable future. However, it can be argued that Nature's global objective is to enable us to learn to accept What-Is and to accept 'the other' with an open heart.

This goes some way to explain why Nature is going to go on hammering us, for the greater good of us all until ... something changes deep within our self-interested, self-focused lifestyles.

Global warming – or not – for those of us who survive them, natural disasters are dire warnings.



Nature ratchets it up yet another notch in severity when she tries to rein us back into thoughtfulness by creating events, acts of gods, as some call them for lack of a better explanation, that temporarily strip us of our livelihood and our home, and set back the regional and/or national economy.

These are the heart-breaking opportunities designed to rewire our hearts by forcing us to rethink our priorities and our thinking, just as we rewire and reroof our homes and businesses after a super-cell storm or after a cordon of raging fires have finished their dance across our land.

During such interventions by Nature, property is often destroyed on a large scale, animals die in massive numbers and horrible circumstances, but comparatively few human lives are lost.

Again, Nature's objective, like that of a caring mother, is not to hurt for hurt's-sake, let alone to kill us, but to make us sit up, bond in our shared sorrow and hardship to come out of it stronger, better, *different* - from the inside-out.

Nature is powerful and all knowing, but there are times when she assumes that extreme catastrophes such as that wrought by the combined effort of the earthquake that shook the Japanese Pacific coast of Tōhoku, in 2011, accompanied by a tsunami will be the periodic heads-up we need to finally take her - and our personal response system - a lot more seriously.

It only took a couple of hours for that disaster of biblical proportions to claim more than 16000 lives and cost the Japanese economy US\$235 billion.

Time Magazine writer, Margaret Gibbs, reminded us of the obvious: "*No amount of planning, no skills or specs or spreadsheets, can stop a force that moves the planet.*" [42]

Indeed.

Similar in scope and degree of severity was Typhoon Haiyan which took 6,183 lives, and affected a further 11 million people when it struck the Philippines in late 2013 – all while looters spread their rampage far and wide.

Sadly, looters, like arsonists, are an integral part of every local culture. They are our neighbours, our fathers and mothers, our brothers and uncles. They illustrate the nastiness of the *Me/Mine First* modus operandi.

As we have become at times desensitised to violence and poverty, we risk becoming desensitised to the regular newsflashes alerting us to more Nature-made heartbreaks. Beyond ranking and comparing setbacks and catastrophes and their impact on us, it is important to understand that, while much of this may be due to global warming, we should understand how collectively we have been contributing to the so-called unpredictable vagaries of life and weather. We, aware people, should now interpret it as a global warning – karma awaits.

Its mission: to push us well-beyond our comfort zones – to break us down so we can rebuild ourselves.

Until we do understand that nothing 'just happens', and until we implement many, many intentions and plans to earnestly address what needs to be redressed from the inside-out, the deadly and costly roll-out of catastrophes and disasters will keep rolling us over.

Prompted by the **2010** eruption of the Icelandic volcano, **Eyjafjallajökul**, I began tracking the acts of nature during that year and what follows is a deconstruction of various disaster benchmarks, as I became aware of them during the course of that year.



Lid Blown On What's Brewing Below

December 1, 2010 – but still extremely current.

Not many of us will ever forget how, back in May, from a cold parcel of land that has seldom generated news of apparent international interest, came chaos of such magnitude that it revealed how truly un-omnipotent we are, as a civilization. Sleeping Giant or Menacing Mammoth, Eyjafjallajökul, the volcano got our attention.

What with our military might, our control of air and sea, our ease with the virtual realities accessed through digital technologies, the power to dig deep into the earth and reach beyond the clouds, it has been easy to delude ourselves into thinking that we, in the western world, were in charge of the planet, if not of our destiny.

In the absence of grand acts of terrorism, international movers and shakers with our presidents and prime ministers slashing paths through one financial crisis to another and strings of wars cloned from the one to the next, from pro-Human Rights activism in one area to a blind disregard of Human Rights in another – often but not always in another land – we did have reasons for thinking that collectively, we had executive control over our work and holiday plans and, by proxy, a degree of control over the economy of our respective countries.

Of course, we are in charge of our lives and of our plans, but only as long as our individual karma does not present us with a personal event such as the 'freakish' mishap that happened an hour away, today, on the nearby Gold Coast as, *"spectators ran for their lives when two cars collided and flipped into the crowd during a support race at the V8 Supercars in Queensland today."*

Already back in 2006, in the early days of our correspondence, Moriya, my spiritual teacher, was explaining how all aspects of Nature are not only essential to our survival as a species, but also always neutral.

Fire is neutral, she explained. We cannot live without fire in the 21st century any more than cave dwellers could. Fire stimulates growth and maintains various ecosystems. Fire cooks our food, keeps us warm and stokes many an engine.

Yes, fire does have a flip side, but it is one that we individually slap on its back by misusing it daily and by building residential areas where none should ever be built.

Fire is neither good nor bad, it just is. Same with sunlight. We cannot live without it. Our body need its vitamin D just as our mind needs its cheerful warmth. When we abuse sun light, our body reacts to it by creating melanomas, but sunlight is neutral, it just is. It is the same sunlight that is as inherent to droughts as to crops maturing.

We curse rain one day and we pray for rain the next. Rain is neutral. It just is, even when it becomes torrential and forces rivers to break their banks - even when it floods towns. If town-planners go about their planning with conflicting priorities, that is not rain's fault.

Anyone who has lived more than a week in a drought-stricken area will testify how absolutely essential rain is to all that is alive, not only to sentient beings.

One day, Moriya explained Nature to me just as she explained Love.

Love is love but when we mishandle this love by turning it into a possession/obsession, we alter its very nature and like the mad alchemist, we turn it into bitterness, even bitter hatred.

Similarly, the mishandled love of a god can turn to a fanaticism that excludes all reasonable thinking.

We forget about the duality of the physical world, and when we try to separate one attribute from the rest, its evil twin perks up.

Moriya also explained how every action triggers a counter action - a reaction. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Put simply:

- If we pull back a branch to get through a forest trail, we should be mindful of how that branch will snap back into its original shape.
- If we prune a branch, it will grow back producing many new branches.
- If we do not water a plant, it will die.
- If we merely tap the surface of a pond with our hand, we will create ripples.

- If we throw a rock into a pond, we will create a splash.
- If we let anxiety, anger or bitterness rule our emotions, we invite the possibility of cancer or other maladies into our cells.
- If we chose to reduce the natural side effects of menopause by taking HRT, or if we try limiting the risks of cervical cancer or of catching the latest strain of the Influenza virus by taking a vaccine, we invite in much worse, chemically induced side effects.

And the list goes on and on. This list is as endless as all our combined efforts to manipulate our moods, our lives, each other, our society, and the world beyond.

There is no such thing as an action that does not trigger a reaction.

The duality we experience within the physical world is as inescapable as the duality that reverberates to and fro from the physical to the spiritual.

Psychological fears are unhelpful as they play with our imagination and taint the context – the present moment.

Fear is good when we fear Nature's eruptions or a wild sea or when trekking solo in the wilderness – or when flying through the plume of Eyjafjallajökul or, I suspect, when our lives have us anchored anywhere on the glacier.

“Wind is the symbol of life on Earth. Without it there would be no life on our planet,” Moriya wrote her essay entitled A Short Lesson in Understanding [p. 331 in this book]

“When the wind blows gently, it inspires softness, tenderness and evokes the feeling of a loving, comforting caress. Even the leaf won’t fall off its tree. But when the wind blows hard, it uproots trees and destroys homes. It brings along dark clouds that release heavy rains that flood the ground, as if all of Nature's forces were united into one entity aiming to cleanse earth from some of the filth that has stuck to her from time immemorial. Walking the spiritual Path is difficult because the persona needs to change her mechanical behavior by letting go and by surrendering to Soul.”

In previous articles, I already covered the constant stream of symbolic messages that each one of us gets from our soul during our wakeful moments, taking pains to explain how each one of us, members of the human species, is connected to nature

and to the spiritual realm whether we know it or not – whether we choose to plead ignorant.

So, whether we see Eyjafjallajökul, the Icelandic volcano, as a ‘Sleeping Giant’, a **‘Menacing Mammoth’ or simply the Island’s Mountain, all terms attributed to it,** it is important to open our mind – and our hearts – to an alternative explanation as to why the sleeping giant beneath glacial ice became a menacing mammoth waving a massive, glass-rich plume some eight kilometres high that pierced the sky.

Scientists, by now, have a neat explanation as to why the fissures happened as they did and when they did, but like most observers, scientists can only deal with effects they can see, test, weigh, measure and record, which leaves out the cause, the real cause that set the first event into motion – the first domino.

The alternative explanation put attempted here as to why an explosion of such magnitude seems to have come out of the blue yonder has nothing to do with an ominous warning about the eminent end of the world in 2012 or at any time.

What it does usher in is the urgent need for each one of us who makes up the greatest herd on earth, over six billion strong, adepts of the mass culture such as we know it, to rethink thinking – and to rethink it sooner rather than later.



May 4 2010 - Freak waves batter *La Promenade des Anglais*, in Nice, France – my hometown

This sea storm is even more dramatic when we know that on the littoral, the Mediterranean sea, unlike the Atlantic, is normally quite still.

Only days before the official opening of the tourist season, this natural disaster could spell economic doom for the French Riviera. The cost of repair, mostly of the sea front restaurants between Nice and Cannes, is for now estimated to be between 3 and 8 millions of Euros.

Most of us do not in agreement that everything happens for a reason, but we usually fail to search for the *reason*. Contextualizing natural events, these so-called Acts of God, helps make meaning out of events that are occurring more frequently and with more intensity than in the past.

Saying that these disasters are due to global warming or to the El Niño effect only addresses the symptoms not the primary cause. It's no different than saying that cancer is caused by the genetic mutation of cells while the real question is the one that precedes *why* have cells mutated in any one particular human being?

Although dust clouds are not uncommon, the one that mushroomed out of Eyjafjallajökull was the greatest of them all. Across the globe, it would appear that our planet is reacting more forcefully than never before with her killer hurricanes and her killer fires and her killer earthquakes and killer mud slides which, like Gargantua's alter egos, regularly swallow thousands upon thousands of people world-wide, often it seems with greater appetite and unbridled aggressive strength than many of their predecessors. This increase in ferocity has led to the catchy term: Angry Planet.

More accurate than the attention grabbing personification that is intended, it is wise to pay attention to the term – but only in a way. Our planet is not angry. Anger, as a retaliative response to needs not met, is a human trait that doesn't have an equivalence in nature.

Incredibly, at least in our mind, what the planet does is mirror our species' cumulated excesses and erratic behaviors. Nature with powers that exceed ours manifold, duplicates and magnifies our actions before hurling them back at us through the elements - her emissaries - and their Cyclopic strength.

Nature's intention, it would appear, is to show us how ugly, violent and destructive is our Modus Operandi. On the one hand, we operate our lives, private, public and professional, as crudely as was the norm hundreds of centuries ago. On the other there appears a degree 'civilized' behavior, a veneer of politeness, that is squeezed out of us by laws and legislations and deterrents and punishments and to some degree, for the nicer ones of us, by the fear of losing face and blowing the lid on

what stirs within the moment our sensors detect an 'obstacle' on the path to *any* of our objectives – be they lofty or far from lofty.



Live' from Nature, dust clouds are real time reflections of our communal blindness to *What Is* and to what is truly essential in life. We are so blinded by the bling, our personal needs and by each other's personas that we see little else. Floods and the greater the flood, the greater the need for us, as separate entities to wash from ourselves all negativity of thought, all dark emotions and actions or risk being flooded by them, swept away and left to drown in them – literally as well as figuratively.

When it comes to fire, be it a house fire or an entire district that goes up in flames, *fires are calls to all of us* – all of us who watch the devastation on the news.

Disasters are never merely intended as messages for the ones personally affected - that would be a terrible overkill and Nature does not waste her energy in meaningless acts just to appear sensational and make it big on CNN.

Over-acting and over-reacting are other traits that are strictly human. Wild fires confront us with the *natural* hot temper and often uncontrolled fierceness and ferocity that we are known to unleash as a species, as groups and, often, too, as individuals in the shape of arguments, quarrels and wars. Interestingly, fires such as the one that ravaged Marysville, Kinglake and neighboring areas near Melbourne, Australia, in 2009, were said to be of a new strain of killer fires – fires of unprecedented ferocity and agility.

That particular string of fires raged on uninterrupted for three weeks, killing 173 people, injuring 413 physically [and countless more scarred for life] reducing an entire town to rubble, devastating 450,000 hectares of prime bushland and killing however many thousands of farm and wild animals.

It is this new type of killer fires that also devastated a part of the Angeles National forest near L.A., a few months later.



Fires are Nature's calls to burn away the past, to leave it behind, to not try to hold on to it and to not try to resurrect it.

The past is not. It is not more than the future is. Only the present moment **is** which is why it is imperative for us, separately and collectively to be Awake and Aware within the moments that present themselves under our feet.

Drought symbolizes the aridity of the heart. It reflects back at us our private and collective inability to give of self unconditionally and, in our homes, to keep our love flowing to those we claimed to love.

Drought as seen on the news, even when happening to unfortunate ones in another land, has a message for each one of us who are witnesses – as do all of Nature's events. Drought is Nature's urgent plea to swing away from using *love* as a performance-based incentive, as pats on the back, raises, promotion and bonuses are used in the workplace.

Snow and ice storms are about the frozen state of petrified emotions, the ones we choose to hold on to – the ones we help fossilize with thoughts along the lines of:
This is who I am.

I can't react any differently.

If you have a problem with who I am, then we have nothing to say to each other.

You're the one with a problem.

Sandstorms are more wake-up calls that the time has come to open our eyes to *What Is*, to our personal and collective Modus Operandi and to clear the *grit* out of our eyes.

In mid April this year, more than 1000 people died in Jiegu, China, as a strong quake rocked a remote Tibetan region. Before that, the death toll of the January earthquake in Haiti escalated to 212,000.

Personal and professional relationships and alliances of all sorts are quickly made and quickly unmade everywhere on planet Earth, often with devastating results.

Earthquakes symbolize the crumbling down of our relationships. Even as the *roof* comes crashing down on us, the message is for us to begin a renewal from the

bottom up – a renewal similar to that which always follows the rejuvenation of Nature after every devastating fire.

Frost wants us to warm our heart by opening it wide, wide and wider without any provisos or strings attached.

Anger, resentment and their spin-offs destroy us. They destroy our health as they destroy our relationships, be they familial, social, professional or political just as hurricanes destroy all that is in their paths.

Hurricanes reflect the angry and negative energy within us, within all of us. There is not one of us, dead or alive who is unfamiliar with anger and resentment. The raging seas also mirror broiling and unbridled anger.

Rain symbolizes our tears – even the ones we don't shed while storms symbolize devastating hatred that is so destructive.

Sunrises that many of us may get up too late to enjoy symbolize awakening and birth while sunsets that we consider so awesome, dramatic and romantic are about dim understanding, blindness and death – on the path to rebirth.

“Because Nature is L O V E and what we see as her anger, violence and disasters are but our own deadly projections and creations,” Moriya explained.



“Just when oceans cannot stand the pollution and junk humanity has been pouring into them, she sends it ALL back with a Tsunami, with floods and heavy rains and hailstones,” explained Moriya, my spiritual teacher. *“So, there is no reason to blame Nature or Planet Earth. There is no such thing as an angry planet – only angry people. Nature and planet earth are only doing their best to keep everything in balance, to clear the air and to bring us blue skies and green flora and nice winds and good rains and warm sunshine.*

The French did their nuclear testing for thirty years until 1996 and the Chinese become the fifth nuclear power – after years of testing underground, surely we can

expect that such activities will affect the balance of Nature which will eventuate sooner or later in earthquakes or tidal waves.”

Our inability to truly see that we are inseparable from one another and from Nature is the cause of all the ecological disasters. Nature works hand in hand with Karma and together they bring ultimate justice.

Unlike the highest of judges in any country, nothing under the sun can bribe either Karma or Nature to change their mind or lessen their blows - just as there should be no reneging when it comes to unconditional love; love that simply doesn't waver in peaks and troughs once exchanged between lovers, families, people nearby or people across the globe.

And this brings us back to the Mammoth or Sleeping giant, the Eyjafjallajökull volcano that, with its ash kept us grounded – as we should be, energetically-speaking. It halted a powerful continent, unraveled society's interdependent web of globalization, affected thousands of lives, detouring some personal journeys – for better and for worse and, of course, the volcano's eruptions short-changed the ailing international economy of billions of dollars.



Another disaster currently making the headlines is that which has been created by the Horizon deep water explosion in the Gulf of Mexico. The grim oil slick, though technically man-made, is nonetheless karmically induced and is yet another visual representation of our deep-set carelessness.

While the volcano controlled air and sky with its first plume, symbol of our pent-up dark energy that bursts out and creates havoc, the oil slick is spreading beyond 40 km wide x 130 km long. It is growing by 5,000 barrels of oil a day.

This disaster, too, will alter human lives on personal and professional levels.

It, too, will further deplete tax-payer's pockets in many insidious ways.

It is important, now, to make one other parallel, that of money and love.

Deng Xiaoping, the once leader of the People's Republic of China in the years that followed Mao's death, has been quoted for having said: "To get rich is glorious." Back in those days, this comment was welcome by many, in Washington, as one of the most intelligent thoughts ever formulated from a member of the Communist Party.



Still back in time, in '87, the Vatican slammed Gordon Gekko, the 'character' in **Wall Street**, a film, for having stated that, "Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit. Greed, in all of its forms; greed for life, for money, for love - knowledge has marked the upward surge of mankind."

Gordon Gekko was almost right. The grip we close over our own money and our covetousness of moneys that are not our own do clarify, cut through and capture the essence of the spirit – but that of the *de-evolutionary* spirit. And, yes, greed in all its form has marked the upward surge of *de-spirited mankind*.

From rich to less rich to poor, the one single-minded pursuit of humanity seems to have been the pursuit of money. Coming in second is the pursuit of sexual gratification in any which way possible. Third place goes to the pursuit of all that the senses perceive as pleasurable.

Which brings humanity back to the main pursuit of all, that of making money - to spend more, to save more, to spend more - because not much of what the senses perceive as pleasurable is free. In fact, the higher the arbitrary pleasure factor, the higher its access price.



Pleasure derived from the delicate flavors of coral-fresh sashimi or the robust fragrance of Thai crab from our local haunts is far less costly than a portion of braised abalone that sells for \$138 per 100 grams.

The pleasure sensations derived from going to work on a scooter are easier to access than those provided by driving a Jeep, which are far more accessible than the thrill of posturing behind the wheel of an Aston Martin.

Though most of us manage to adjust our compulsion to spend on thrills, comfort and pleasure beyond our means - but within reach through loans - many of us do entertain wistful thoughts of one day 'making it big,' through one means or another and, as opposed to hazardous gambling, the lottery system and its Scratch-IT avatars seem to be the safe means of choice.

The bottom line is that money hoarded in vaults, money tied up, virtual money, money for favors, money as bribes all have a corollary in the ways we generally handle 'love'. But, as Moriya reminded me, "What we do not give or adjust willingly, Nature and Karma will adjust for us."

Money flowing freely from the one to another without fear, calculation and tight-knuckled attachment symbolises *intelligent love*, selfless heart-chakra love. Thus, money, too, is intended to flow free of barter, conditions in their many guises.

It is important to understand that, karmically, we are unable to hold on to and/or enjoy *more* than is our intended bounty in this lifetime.

It is equally important to accept that neither can we be irremediably "cheated" of what has been karmically hardwired in our energy field – be it wealth, health or love. Once this understanding begins to dawn, being in the moment in matters of money, love and health choices does become easier.

However, since this understanding has clearly not manifested itself in the past many thousands of years, the cost of repairing nature, of rebuilding the economy of stricken areas, of rebuilding lives and communities, as well as managing the political cost posed by the magnitude of the chaos should be accepted as the price we, members of the greatest herd on earth, have to pay for some six billion hearts that have become too closed to all that cannot be bought and open, mostly, to all that feeds gratification of the senses.



The forces of nature along with personal as well as separate/collective karma are going about the business of teaching us, mankind, essential lessons in spiritual survival with the single-minded energy of the one who, stranded on an island, must break open coconuts with bare hands to get to the sweet flesh within.

According to a snip on Wikipedia, "On 20 April 2010 Icelandic President said, "The time for Katla to erupt is coming close...we [Iceland .it is high time for European governments and airline authorities all over the world to start planning for the eventual Katla eruption."

Right. And then what?



At the moment, Nature is still not *that* interested in destroying lives, only livelihood, savings, personal plans - horded billions of taxpayers' money = the Economy.

And in that respect, yes, 2010 has been a BIG year.

Epic floods that began on the last days of 2010 are currently still affecting the state of Queensland, in the south-east corner of Australia, a predominantly agricultural, cattle-farming area also responsible for 75% of our coal export. This area is bigger than France and Germany combined.

In its early days, the massive 31 ft [14 m] flooding has so devastated the towns of Rockhampton [population 75.000] and St George that it will take many, many months to rebuild the colonial waterlogged homes and businesses.

Snakes, such as the deadly taipans, brown snakes and red-bellied blacks, floated from the undergrowth, are clinging to trees and fences, just as they search for dry corners in people's homes.

In this corner of the world, when town streets become overflowing wide river arms carrying fragments of putrefied, drowned cattle, pets and thousands of bush carcasses, crocodiles – symbols of the mechanical nastiness that lurks deep within each of us to strike from 'below the surface' - cannot be far away.

The residents of Gympie, in that same corner of Queensland, have faced 60 ft [20 m] river swells through their streets since the Mary has broken its banks. And, because *separation is only a figment of our imagination*, other towns and communities downstream are bracing themselves for the worst.

Floods and, the greater the flood, the greater the need for us, as separate entities, to wash from ourselves all negativity of thought, all dark emotions and actions or risk being flooded by them, swept away and left to drown in them – literally as well as figuratively. With that in mind, Senator Barnaby Joyce's words on Sky News, are anything but *spiritually* encouraging. Still, they are the words that the afflicted residents want to hear. That, and the word Compensation – of course.

"It's not fair on people's lives to have water tearing through their homes," he said. "It's not good for our economy to be shut down and lose billions of dollars in production. In the future I think we need to look at building dams to mitigate the effects of floods."

Clearly, the message from Nature, our benevolent Nanny, is still not being heard.



Yesterday, January 10, 2011, still in Queensland, twelve days after the first flood in Rockhampton, pedestrians downtown Toowomba [population 90.000] ran for their lives to escape a tsunami-styled torrent of muddy water, a flash flood, that came out of nowhere, overturning cars and tearing trees in its path while inflicting quick and hulk-like unbelievable damage to homes and businesses.

Then it was in Grantham that many houses were ripped off their stumps and floated away. The list of victim-towns grows daily. The floods have kept rolling down south. Tonight, they have just now reached the first river-side suburbs of inner Brisbane - third largest city in Australia, Brisbane [population 2 million approx] where I live. The flood, here, is due to peak in two days' time.

In an outburst of concern and emotion, our Prime Minister, the State Premier and the leaders of all manner of support groups involved are urging us to keep ourselves

safe, to look after each other, to go 'meet' the neighbors we normally don't see - or choose to ignore - and check up on them.

We can replace your house, is the current motto, but we can't replace you. Your personal safety is our priority. Please, make it yours.

Absolutely heart-warming :-)

At the same time, many people are offering their time and efforts as volunteers.

That IS the Spirit. **That** is the blue-print of how Nature wants us to DO life – from now on.

Lesson learnt if we can sustain this new M.O.



Although the Queensland flood death toll, is for now at an incredibly low 10, it will undoubtedly rise - maybe triple. Still, Nature seems much more interested in cleansing the planet by reducing our belongings to watery pulp, by leaving behind most of what we could not do without, and by forcing us to rebuild from the ground up - literally as much as figuratively, with a different awareness, with different personal priorities.

However, as the saying goes, *there is no more dumb than the one who does not want to learn* and we are all familiar with the determination of five-year olds to get what they want.

Collectively, in spite of our self-inflated perception of maturity and in spite of our collective brain potential, we position ourselves again and again on the side of the 'dumb' and the childlike.

Our *material* losses break our heart.

We hit our head against the wall and we pop our pills and *drown* our pain. We cry, "My god! Why me? What have I ever done to deserve that!"

We accuse Nature.

We call her violent and we call her angry. We call her random and erratic.

We call her all the things that we are.

And we keep our purse strings wrapped tightly around our heart.



We are in charge of our lives and of our plans, but only as long as nature snoozes on impassively as we collectively, haphazardly and blindly, stack on karma.

And now on this glorious day in February, 2014 ... what else is new?

More importantly: *Where to from here?*



About me, C.C. and

Stepping Stones To the Top Of the World

Born of French parents in Casablanca, I am a native French speaker, although I completed my formal education in the United States at The University of Texas [Austin], majoring in English Literature.

By day, a teacher of English. By night, in 2000, I launched into the writing of LGBT romance novels with a definite slant on social realism.

I went on to self-publish seven books, the best-selling ones being *Silent Goodbyes*, *Far From Maddy* and its sequel centered around an empathetic FTM character, *Morgan in the Mirror*.

From there, I published various short stories with themes ranging from erotic 'fairy' tales, *The Crab-Catcher and the Fish-Whisperer*, to strong spiritual writings such as *Awakening*, a Tao-type tale.

It is around 2006 that I chose to weave my writing around All Matters of the Heart and Soul. I have since published many articles some of which are now gathered in one book, *Stepping Stones To the Top of the World*.

Free of religious and self-help talk, each of the thirty-one sections of the book gives a fresh and unique insight into what Karma and Soul *really* are. Together, they draw the reader into a probing exploration of the Great Forgetfulness, the missing link in a culture that worships science and all things material, namely the connection to our soul.

To unleash the power of this karmic connection, we must first understand how it works. *Stepping Stones To the Top Of the World* provides a secular spiritual understanding of the energy we generate because of the way we love conditionally, and why being aware, developing an active acceptance of What-Is and blocking out recurring flurries of What-Ifs *are essential skills to develop from the inside-out*, here and now.

All the classic concepts of psychology, spiritual philosophy and Zen spirituality leading to self-growth through authentic mindfulness are brought together to help create a genuine rewiring of the brain for those of us who dare embark on an honest understanding of how our myriad of patterned responses which, at times, can become destructive emotions, have come together, moment by moment, day by day, to shape our present reality.

Interestingly, new findings in the field of neuroscience, along with research in stress management, heart intelligence and heart energy, corroborate the importance of activating these concepts throughout the many separate moments that, daily, present themselves ... under our feet.

My interest in spiritual philosophy has also led me to the conundrum posed by Jesus of the Christian faith and his historicity.

Did such an historical figure ever really exist?

Why isn't there a single snippet of Jesus' movements written *in his lifetime*, while local historians, philosophers, politicians and judges, both Hebrew and Roman, as well as army men and freedom fighters, were actively chronicling events as they happened contemporaneously with the period ascribed to Jesus' life?

What if the Jesus of the New Testament fame had been inspired by a Hebrew prototype named Yeshua?

Such questions have resulted in two articles: *Jesus-The Man Behind The Myth* and *From Gethsemane To Arimathea*.

And then, why not go back to the source to revisit Genesis?

casts an alternative view on both theories.

It's easy to imagine how such varied research and writing endeavors have kept me busy - and out of trouble - for quite some time already :-)



End Notes

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