

Stepping Stones to the top of the world

Rethinking Thinking

Part 2 of a collection of explorations
into 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 #2 [Rethinking Thinking]

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Stepping Stones
To The Top
Of The World
[II]

[Rethinking Thinking]

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

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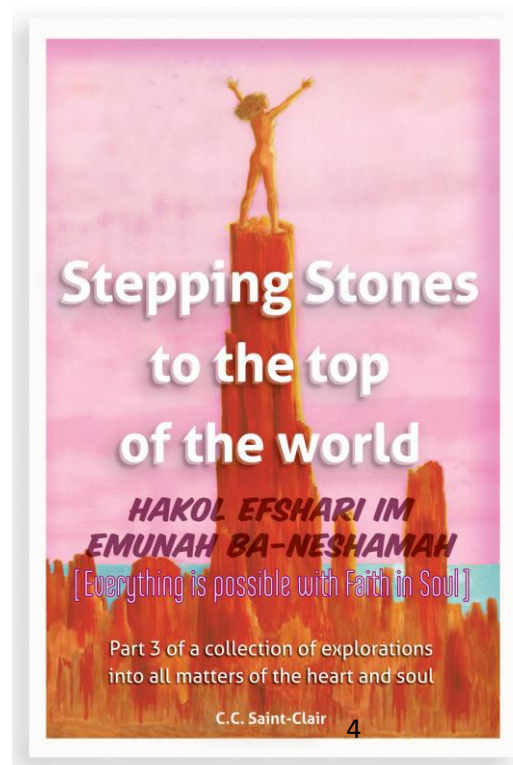
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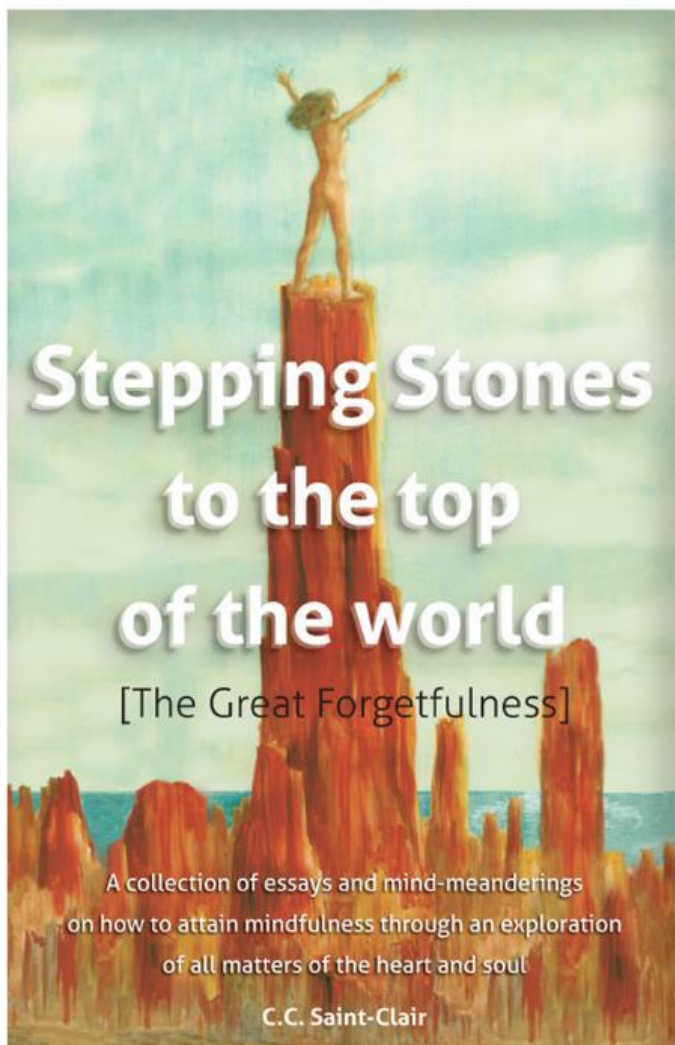
Stepping Stones To The Top Of The World #3

[Hakol Efsari Im Emunah Ba-Neshamah]

Translation from Hebrew: ***Everything Is Possible With Faith In Soul***



Snippets of Reality in Real Time



Yes, generally speaking, we do thank the Greater Energy which, we know, shapes each and every moment in our day but, mostly, we do so *only* when our day is shaped according to our hopes and expectations –
C.C. Saint-Clair

People need to understand that life is not about *what they wish* to see happen in their lives.

Life is what actually does HAPPEN to them, moment by moment.

Every catalyst, regardless of its nature, is an invitation to finalize a debt. If the debt appears too big or requires too much effort and the person feels unable to honor it – that’s the end of the journey.

Nothing, no one, can alter either the karmic deadline or its outcome -

Moriya

.

Give Freely – Receive Freely

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Like children with broken toys and broken hearts, as compensation, we accept to have our resourcefulness and our collective multi-billion dollar might squandered in high profile pursuits that are totally diversionary – thousands of light years removed from the soul-searching job that needs to be done here - now.

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We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful about what we pretend to be -

Kurt Vonnegut

Introduction – **Moriya, the Source**

Those of you who are familiar with my articles will remember that all that I now know, all that I have accepted as my belief system, was awakened and crystalized by the teachings of Moriya.

Let's make no mistake here. Moriya IS the master Teacher. I have no personal aspirations to pose as a teacher myself. I am simply Moriya's student and, after nine years of daily teachings, she still has me on a steep learning curve.

As luck would have it or, should I say, as my karmic destiny should have it – eight years 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 one-on-one the few who were drawn to her approach to spirituality and who, in this lifetime, were willing and able to walk the talk to the utmost of their real ability.

•

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. But, I was quick to realize that this first player's role in my spiritual evolution was, not negligibly, to prepare me for Moriya's teachings.

•

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 she has to 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-eight years.

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



Put simply, I now totally accept that we do not need any peripherals beyond establishing a connection to our soul. This element of the divine, already within us, is all we need to link up to.



Moriya, herself, is an impressive human anthology of philosophical, psychological and religious writings. When receiving her teachings first-hand, if not for the intellectual stimulation of reading source material at one's own pace, even books are optional.



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.



It is Moriya's belief that, by living and working independently, 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 any way.

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, initially, 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 – her *ahot ketana* in Hebrew, her little sister. And yet, it is how the situation has panned out, one enlightening email at a time, daily, over the past eight years.



Before anything else, dear Reader, I really need you to understand a basic fact: there are several 'spiritual' people on the net going by the name of Moriya. Please, do not think anyone of them is the Moriya of my writings, my spiritual teacher, for they are not.



E. Fromm – The art of Loving - Immature love says: I love you because I need you.
Mature love says: I need you because I love you.

I Want To Know What Love Is – song by Foreigner - 1984

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 older

Now this mountain I must climb
Feels like a world upon my shoulders
I through the clouds I see love shine
It keeps me warm as life grows 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
I know you can show me



In answer to the question regarding the nature of LOVE, I'd say that *genuine love* is an emotion.

I'd say it is a way of feeling that healthy animals are quite able to demonstrate better than us.

When animals are attentive and caring, either towards their human carers or their own kind, they do it unconditionally.

When they forgive our absences, our lapses and shortcomings, they do it in the moment, without any ulterior motive – no hidden agenda.

Accepting the other unconditionally – no strings attached - is exactly what Love is about.

To you, it may appear obvious and, yet, it is so difficult to *feel* Love when we are not in the mood.

Of course, it is at such moments that the practice of feeling Love is most essential for our emotional/spiritual growth to manage it.



Acknowledgements

I am forever indebted to my spiritual teacher, Moriya, of Jerusalem, Israel, who has taught me all that I know. Steadfastly, over the past seven years, Moriya has demonstrated the real meaning of giving freely of time, of knowledge, of energy and of healing energy - daily, selflessly, altruistically.

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.



Am I Wrong –song by Nico & Vinz – 2014

Am I wrong for thinking out the box from where I stay?
Am I wrong for saying that I choose another way?

I ain't trying to do what everybody else doing
Just cause everybody doing what they all do

If one thing I know, I'll fall but I'll grow
I'm walking down this road of mine, this road that I call home

So am I wrong?

For thinking that we could be something for real?
Now am I wrong?
For trying to reach the things that I can't see?
But that's just how I feel

Trying to reach the things that I can't see ...

PART 1

All Matters of the Heart and Soul

Let your mind make excursions in the pure simplicity.
Identify yourself with the non-distinction.
Follow the nature of things and admit no personal opinion.
Then the world will be in peace – **Chuang-Tzu** (on the theory of 'letting alone')

What's This Little Voice I Hear?

Finally, all the way back from the layers of life that have been spawned since the Dawn of Time, you and I, dear Reader, have arrived here - now – at the moment that is under our feet - the only moment that is ours to shape from the inside/out.

○

It is commonly accepted that our previous acts determine our present life, that our present acts shape our future.

We reap now what we have sown in our previous births. In the fullness of time we shall all reap what we are sowing now. Or, as is stated Samyutta Nikaya, a Buddhist scripture:

*"According to the seed that's sown,
So is the fruit you reap there from,
Doer of good will gather good,
Doer of evil, evil reaps,
Down is the seed and thou shalt taste
The fruit thereof."*

That does sound quite plausible but, as such reasoning is a bit heavy going for some of us, I thought I would provide a very basic illustration of how Soul and Ego, Thought and Mind come together to interact with Karma.

Here goes:

Here I am, indulging in a series of grumpy thoughts because, last night, my darling announced it was time to invite over a few friends we hadn't seen for quite some time.

I reminded her that seeing as we all lived on average within 30 minutes of each

other, if neither we nor any of them had organised a catch up get-together in over a year then, surely, there had to be a reason for that – at their end as well as at ours.

And now, so many hours later, I am actively stewing about the flaws I perceive in my darling's funhouse plans. Thoughts of sabotage and mutiny flit across my mind.

“Don't go there! Let it go,” says Thought. *“Breathe! Stick to the moment that's under your feet,”* she urges. *“Why get all worked up about a plan that's not even pencilled in?”*

Question: where did this 'little voice' come from?

The obvious answer would be to say that it came from Common Sense a.k.a. Voice of Reason - and don't we all know that voice well.

This little voice brought to my consciousness by Mind is actually Soul's voice commonly known as Consciousness.



What's In Our Aura?

EVERYTHING we do, think, say and feel emerges into our awareness compliments of Soul.

We do not have a self, not as such, but we do have Soul – all of us do and each soul is pure energy.

No one – not even the worst of the international community's current *enemies* - has a dark soul. There is no such thing as a 'dark' soul.

Karma and an Ego-Persona are the other two of our 'drivers'.

Karma and Ego are naturally neutral. They are as neutral as, in itself, fire is neutral – it can warm us, cook our food, stop a greater fire in its tracks, just as it has the potential to create havoc and devastation.

The wind and the rain are neutral, too. So is uranium. So are cars.

They each serve a genuine purpose. Electricity is neutral, too. Neither good nor bad, and we can't live anymore without it. It just IS. As for all natural and man-made

resources, our safety depends on what use we make of these resources and how carefully we handle them.

Similarly, it is the manner in which we interact with Karma and Ego that, too often, renders us energetically volatile and often hostile.

That's mostly because we understand even less about Karma and Ego than we do about electricity, wind and fire. And imagine the chaos in our lives – in the world - if we all mishandled fire and electricity on a daily basis!

Soul uses Mind to push us in the right direction. Here is how she does it: our Karma is embedded in our energy field a.k.a. our aura.



Our Aim – Mind's Aim – Should Be Obvious By Now

Quick question that's just popped into my mind: just as it is through the evolution of the species that we have supposedly 'lost' the tail we have been told our early ancestors had inherited from the salamander, because we no longer needed it, why have we not yet lost our aura, our energy field, seeing as we have done absolutely nothing with it over the past couple of billion years?

Why hasn't it just faded away? Karma and Ego are partly inherited from our Karmic ancestors and partly reshaped by us on a moment-to-moment basis.

Both Karma and Ego are the result of how Mind has responded to the long string of moments they have presented us since our birth.

Quick facts about Ego-persona:

Ego is not an entity. It doesn't come in any size.

The argument based on the theory that someone has a small ego while someone else is said to have an XXXL ego does not belong in this discussion – not any more than the notion of 'dark' souls do.

Ego is not something that can be excised from our brain like a gland or a piece of the neo cortex.

Ego is not something we can sit on a chair and reason with it as we would with a fractious three year-old child.

Although it, too, is pure energy, Ego, like the face of the moon, generates no light of its own. Just as Moon reflects Sun's light, Ego reflects Soul's energy in our energy field/aura. Here is a rough illustration of how all the components interact together: Let's compare Soul, pure energy, to the most amazing program money can buy and let's say that Soul 'runs' through an installation named Ego. Or we could say that Ego is the processor while Mind is the decoder.

▪

Generally speaking, most of us, neither Awake nor Aware nor present in the moment, are far from evolved and we could say that Soul's energy, bright and pure, comes to Mind reflected by Ego.

However, like an old pitted mirror left in the corner of the attic, Ego's surface is pitted and tainted. No matter how bright the light of Soul and the neutral energy of Ego, reflection can only be fuzzy. We could also humbly agree that Ego is like the old computer I gave away last year.

Why did I give away that lovely laptop that was only 2 years old? Because it was not powerful enough to run' the new programs I had begun using. So, in summary, splendid Soul is unable to do its thing because Ego's surface is either dusty and stained ... or lagging.

Our aim, Mind's aim, should be obvious by now. If we want to feel the full energy of Soul, we need to restore the reflective surface of Ego, Soul's mirror, or upgrade Ego, Soul's processor.

●

Mechanics of An Adult Tantrum

Without a clear picture of the entire, huge, millenia-long backdrop of our daily moments, it is very hard to make sense of what makes us tick here & now - and how to attempt overriding whatever that is.

Without a clear understanding of how karma, ego and Soul inter-relate, it is almost impossible to understand the mechanics of our human decision-making processes.

So, if you've arrived to this post by accident and are puzzled, I'd suggest you go back to the source, a couple of pages back ;-)

Soul is the Overseer. She has infinite power.

Ironically, though Soul is free of any automation, she is imprisoned within our chest and therefore can do no more than project her messages via the ego-persona which acts as a mirror reflecting to the mind/brain her images/messages in the form of thoughts and impressions.

•

Soul is of the lightest form of energy and she is always pure and inseparable from the Cosmos/from the Divine.

•

Ego has limited powers because she can only see the world through our senses and thus, unlike Soul who has infinite energy from which to sustain herself, because of her inherent limitation Ego has to burn up energy to remain buzzing.

Ego is a centripetal force that attracts egoistical cravings to itself – like a magnet attracts all that is metal regardless of its shape and size - while Soul is a centrifugal force which spins Heart energy outwards from her core.

Back to the moment of the inner tantrum I have already referred to in preceding posts:

What happens when I'm faced with a situation I find quite annoying? Soul nudges me. She appeals to my better nature.

Ego reflects the beam, Mind decodes it and I hear the little voice that is prompting me to be grown up about my darling's funhouse plan and to deal with it with an open heart.

Mind leaves me with 2 choices:

Option #1: I throw my shoulders back, breathe with intent and agree that my

annoyance reflects an energetic block inside of me, in my energy field.

The block undoubtedly comes from Heart Chakra. Soul understands that I, CC - the body – needs to rise to the occasion and can rise to the occasion – hence this test. My little task, here, now, in the moment under my feet is to ACTIVELY accept What Is.

What-Is, is my darling's wish for a get-together to reconnect with people we have not seen in a long time. I, CC – body - understand that ANY gathering is a huge opportunity to give from the heart.

It is about a lot more than merely cooking up something - or having it catered - and serving it with drinks. I, CC – body - understand that the idea of that particular get-together has been sent to my darling's mind by my Soul as a way to test my *higher* reflexes a.k.a. reining in my automated responses.

Mind-over-matter [under duress] has no place in this discussion UNLESS it comes preceded by HEART i.e. let's do whatever needs doing, but let's always do it heart-over-mind-over-matter.

Should I, CC – the body - shift into Higher gear to respond to the whisper of Soul as reflected by Ego and decoded by Mind, the get-together, once I ACTIVELY accept it, plan AND deliver from Heart, alongside my darling, will score me some nice soulful kudos for I will have acted for the greater good of all AND the greater good of self.

If I actively choose option #1, by the time my darling comes home from work, I will be able to discuss with her the logistics of the get-together with an open mind.

○

By actively challenging my comfort zones for the greater good of all and of self, I will be amending Karma inside Ego and, yes, as a bonus, I will have a good time with our guests AND my darling will think I rock – which is not anything to sneeze at. As an aside – I will add that, as is often the case, the moment we ACTIVELY accept Soul's dare, the dare disappears. It is vaporised.

Option #2: I can keep tallying all the annoying traits of these friends we haven't seen in months, which would confirm why our acquaintanceship has found itself interrupted.

I can grumble about how untimely that get-together would be and also, OMG! I can

even conjure visual images of the sink overflowing with dirty dishes, glasses and pans stacked everywhere, as well as the unavoidable hours of clean up waiting for us the next morning.

Energy already bristling, at the first opportunity, I, through Mind, will broach the topic of this gathering.

An argument with my darling is sure to follow and then there will be the fallout of the argument to deal with. Soul understands that by creating such an obstruction, I, CC - the body - am feeding my base reflexes – the ones that have been purpose-built to indulge Me, My, Mine and I - above all else.

It is only very recently that I have understood the meaning of the Biblical quote that states, “In the day when God created man. He made him in the likeness of God.”

This energy field is the biblical image of God – our ego-persona.

As I am not religious, I choose to substitute God for Soul and still respect the integrity of the message, and what it says is that we, bodies, have within us all that we need to evolve through our Ego to become likeness of Soul – pure energy – in the fullness of time – at the end of many other lifetimes.

Personally, I find this a very interesting concept.



What's a good Person To Do?

Eleanor Rigby – song by The Beatles – 1966

Ah, look at all the lonely people
Ah, look at all the lonely people

Eleanor Rigby picks up the rice in the church where a wedding has been
Lives in a dream
Waits at the window, wearing the face that she keeps in a jar by the door
Who is it for?

All the lonely people
Where do they all come from?
All the lonely people

Where do they all belong?

Father McKenzie writing the words of a sermon that no one will hear

No one comes near

Look at him working, darning his socks in the night when there's nobody there What does he care?

All the lonely people

Where do they all come from?

All the lonely people

Where do they all belong?

Ah, look at all the lonely people

Ah, look at all the lonely people

Eleanor Rigby died in the church and was buried along with her name

Nobody came

Father McKenzie wiping the dirt from his hands as he walks from the grave No one was saved

•

At the time of writing, one of the currently trending approaches to living better and longer is based on Dan Buettner's findings on Blue Zones, a handful of areas in the world where, on average, people live well – and well beyond a hundred years of age.

“The calculus of aging offers us two options,” says Buettner. “We can live a shorter life with more years of disability, or we can live the longest possible life with the fewest bad years. As my centenarian friends showed me, the choice is largely up to us.”

Buettner's list of 9 'commandments' goes as follows:

1. Keep moving

Find ways to move naturally, such as walking and gardening, using fewer labor-saving devices.

2. Find purpose

Pursue it with passion.

3. Slow down

Work less, rest, and take vacations.

4. Stop eating

... when you're 80 percent full.

5. Dine on plants

Eat more veggies and less meat and processed foods.

6. Drink red wine

Do it consistently but in moderation.

7. Join a group

Create a healthy social network.

8. Feed your soul

Engage in spiritual activities.

9. Love your tribe

Make family a high priority.

○

In reality, though the main Blue Zones areas are located in remote areas where life is still mainly 'done' in age-old ways, centenarians still dot all corners of the globe, even our polluted, crowded capital cities.

A couple of years ago, I entitled a chapter in *Stepping Stones #1*, **What is it that IS Keeping Us Here - or not?**

The gist of it was to explain that, though some lifestyle factors do certainly contribute to our death, they are not the main triggers for either life or death – our spiritual lifestyle and our karma [such as it has evolved] ... are.

●

Here is an extract of that chapter which focuses on a much celebrated French centenarian.

[...] 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'.

○

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, wean 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 Gershwin took 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 Tavaréz, 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. Marylyn 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. [...]

●

Anyway, the above reality notwithstanding, **The 9 Steps** to Blue Zone living are fairly straightforward and, because they make perfect sense, many of us have, on our own and years ago, been involved with most of these ‘commandments’.

Equally, I am sure that many of us are currently trying our best to ‘nail’ a couple more.

None of these Blue Zone steps need extra explanation except for #8, which brings us to the title of this section, **What’s a Good Person to Do?** in terms of leading a ‘genuine’ spiritual lifestyle.

Serious question: Beyond the rituals of prayers and offerings, beyond giving to charity, beyond going to retreats, beyond meditation and crystal healings and beyond communing with astral entities, what’s a good person to do to effect a spiritual well-being from the inside-out?

○

Though in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, wrote that ‘The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it,’ my answer would be:

1. let’s curtail the *Me-First/Mine first* side of our Ego.
2. let’s move our persona closer to our altruistic self on the Ego-continuum.

○

Though Ego is neutral by nature, knee-jerks (our automated reactions to any stimulus) do feed the ‘low’ end of Ego, the one that craves sensory gratification and the best of what the material world can tempt us with.

○

Every time we react in a way that spells out Not now, Too tired, Can’t be bothered, Go away, You’re stupid, What’s WRONG with you! – regardless of with whom we are engaging – we feed that *low* end.

○

Reality is that Soul constantly beams at us messages of Best Practice, but either we are unable to ‘get’ them or we fail to understand them because Ego doesn’t reflect them back clearly for Mind to snatch in mid-air and decode for us - or we DO understand them well enough but we ACTIVELY choose to sidestep Best Practice.

We are unwilling to sacrifice time/space/money/principled opinion and/or pride.

We are unable to soften and open up.

We are unable to ‘give’ and we choose to hold on to cold, old ideas, resentment and insecurities.

We let our bad mood push us along.

We create all the thoughts and images we need to shore up our stand until Mind ends up totally convinced that the decision made is the correct one.

Soul sighs in resignation and curls up in her corner, knowing that the wait is going to be a long one before we action any positive change to our M.O.

In not resisting our own thinking, we, bodies, allow Mind to indulge our base nature by feeding the *low* end of Ego instead of the *high* end of Ego – the soulful end.

Amazing program but low RAM renders it useless. Again, what we end up with is this great beam of pure energy reflected fuzzily though tantalizingly by a pitted mirror –

the low end of our ego and so ... the ongoing conundrum is always along the lines of 'What's a good person to do, huh?'

○

If Mind chooses option #2, I, CC - body - will not be amending any karma.

Instead, I will be presented in the fullness of time with a similar situation - except that that new one will, in all likelihood, be more difficult to execute than the original funhouse plan of having long-lost friends over for a get-together.

Imagine! What if, instead of long-lost friends, it were a relative descending on us? And not just for dinner but for a week! For a month? How about FOREVER?!?

●

Indeed, the present moment underfoot is where **we** allow everything to begin and end.

The moment underfoot is the **only moment** we can shape from the inside-out.

How we decide to shape that specific moment, how much traction we give to the 'mood' to respond in one way or another, what we decide to do or not do, **all of these choices are always left up to us.**

●

Ego Is Our Tool to Personal Evolution – not our enemy

The link from one event to another event, from one mishandled test to the new one, though invisible, intangible and lacking any synaptic connection in Mind, is as real and as concrete as the knots that we knit.

Soul dispenses tough love through Karma and through Ego, our energy field.

○

Time to recap and move this along by introducing a few more supporting characters:

Reversed Sight: we are **so** totally focused on 'getting' that we fail to comprehend that all the frustrations and setbacks we get, be they big or small, are stimuli

intended to force us to turn the reflection upside down and give. Oh, it's not about giving money – that would be too easy. Much harder is to actively give of ourselves - and from the heart.

Soul, you see, cannot but give of her energy and Ego's role is to project this energy outward for the benefit of others.

Instead, usually, the Mind intercepts and interprets Soul's message for us and the interpretation is too often steeped in negativity.

○

Mind, in moments of small-mindedness, flicks that interpretation on to the nearest catalyst, the messenger, i.e. the friend, the boss, the child, the stranger in the street, the lover, the neighbour, the parent; and on to that situation or person, Mind's default *me-first/mine-first* small-mindedness sticks like gum to shoe.

I do believe in the Law of Attraction, but only in as much as we do attract what is karmically intended to make us outgrow the way we are, like a bug struggles out of its chrysalis to live its life fully formed.

Unfortunately, instead of growing and soaring, we shrink, skulk, become anxious and become ill.

Ego has little Helpers = Mind, Senses, Thoughts a.k.a. Emotions, Consciousness etc.

They are all integrated in the pre-set configuration of Ego/energy field. As Ego's little Helpers, their sole role is to transmit directly from Soul and back to Soul through Mind. They do that by hijacking Body's basic wiring.

Ego is not 'a rose by any other name.'

○

Psychology has its own definition/understanding of the ego – something in our personality that needs to be cancelled out or shrunk, at the very least, no matter what or how.

Religion also has its specific understanding of the ego – one that equally maligns it.

In reality, Ego and Karma are the only tools we have, the only tools we can use

towards a cleansing of the channel that leads to Soul.



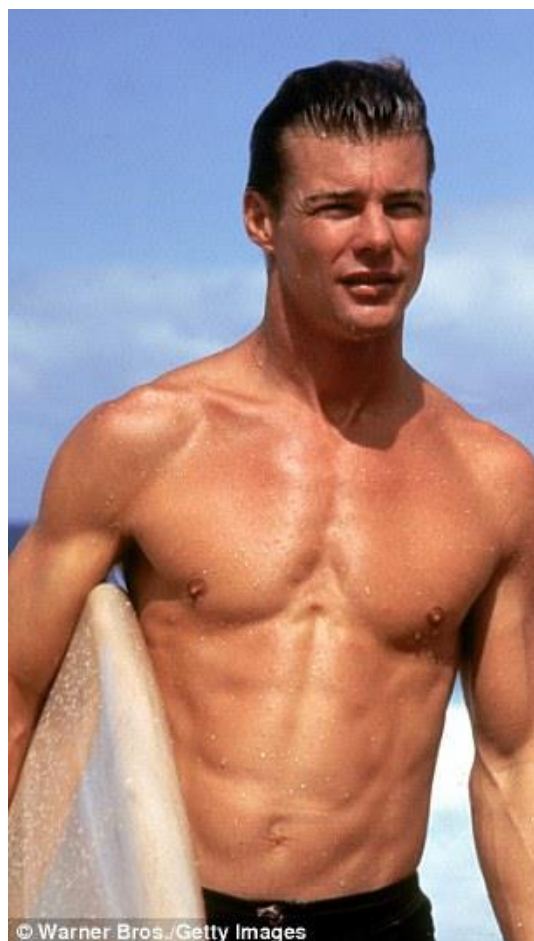
Either by happenchance or by karmic intention, today provided me with a moment that, in a way, I regret because I have found it so upsetting.

The 'event' itself was totally innocuous. After all, what is more common these days than the **Don't Miss**, hype-ish, hot gossip, mash-up of media-constructed texts about a plethora of celebs, current and 'old school', aligned on a side panel of our screens?

It is in this **Don't Miss** panel that I noticed it - an article about an action-man actor, one who, in his day, was one of the most gorgeous 'sex symbols' of the 80s.

Fame, sex appeal, adoration from women and – perhaps for different reasons – a very weighty manly fan base as well.

A blast from the past as, at the time of his onscreen popularity, I was in my early 30's.



As the lead man of the series Airwolf, once upon a time, Jan-Michael Vincent was the most highly-paid TV actor of his time.

If I am to include two photos in this book, they have to be two of the photos I came across today on <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/>

The first one is of Jan-Michael when he had the world in the palm of his hand, bronzed and buff, sporting his customary TV grin.

The picture was taken at a time when he was supposedly enjoying all the glam and fame anyone else would die for, as he expression goes.

The future was his to shape within the constraints of an under-disciplined ego and the blueprint of a karmic plan.

The second photo is of Jan-Michael Vincent in 2014



- Ongoing issues with drugs and alcohol caused him to lose TV contracts and potential super-stardom fizzled out
- three broken vertebrae were the result of a first car accident which was followed by a second crash
- An infection contracted in 2012 forced doctors to amputate his leg, not once but ... twice.

According to the article, Jan Michael Vincent says he “is *lucky* to be alive after his right leg was amputated TWICE.”



Truth: my heart goes out to this man but, beyond that, how not be moved by such a graphic ‘Dorianistic’ illustration of the outcome of living life according to, “The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it,” the motto mentioned earlier and penned by

Doo, was an impossibly beautiful young man but, dreading the day when the freshly painted portrait of his handsome face would become the glaring reminder of depraved old age, he opts for the soft option of pledging his soul if only the face in the portrait alone will, in the fullness of time, reflect the damaging results of his dissolute lifestyle compounded by the natural weathering process of aging.

•

Since Jan-Michael Vincent does not live as a recluse away from the prying eyes of camera lenses, and seeing that he is still alive in spite of the great physical challenges he has survived, it could be said that, *in this lifetime*, this man’s karma is forcing him to expose the devastating results of living moment-by-moment, led by the self-indulgence side of an ego he failed to bridle and tame - year in, year out.

What Jan-Michael Vincent’s face and body reflect now are the physical effects of personal choices made again and again over decades.

Having said that, let’s pause to visualise how we, presumably blessed with a reasonable outer persona, might possibly look like, should our own choices, decisions, actions and inactions, along with our private thoughts and pent-up desires were to, one day, take on 3-dimensional shapes, as illustrated by Ivan Albright’s famous rendition of Dorian Gray. [1]

For the opening line of the novel, Wilde wrote, “THE ARTIST is the creator of beautiful things.”

Yes, the artist, even the untrained artist, has the possibility to create ‘beautiful things.’

But the artist, trained or untrained, also has the possibility to create a dark, unsettling, grotesque imitation of art.

And, we, mere humans, have the karma-neutral liberty and capability to shape and

make concrete say, 80% of our own life-canvas, the karmic blueprint that has been ours to deal from our post-teenage onwards, in this lifetime.

Moment-by-moment, the option is ours to apply the first stroke of 'paint' and the next and the one after that will, in the fullness of time, reveal brilliance from the inside-out, just as we have the ability to create our own horror or - at the very least - our own under-achiever's rendition of success.



Souls are fires whose ashes are the bodies – Khalil Gibran, 1923

She is electricity running through my soul - Vance Joy, Georgia lyrics, 2015

Soul - such a common little word that means so many different things to so many different people.

Questions: is soul a doer, a receiver, a witness or a thing?

Is she the essential component of an act or is she a belief?

Is soul our strength, our weakness or our nemesis?

Is soul a synonym for mind, talent, ego, brain, self and spirit or is something altogether different?

Is Soul a way of being?

Does she command a lifestyle?

Is she holy or is she damned?

Can she be refreshed, tormented or is she tortured?

Is she a commodity that can be bought/sold or traded?

Is she immortal or does she expire when we do?

Is soul always clean or can ego make her dirty?

Is soul our conscience?

Is she Spirit?

o

Soul [sohl] noun
Dictionary.com

1. the principle of life, feeling, thought, and action in humans, regarded as a distinct entity separate from the body, and commonly held to be separable in existence from the body; the spiritual part of humans as distinct from the physical part.
2. the spiritual part of humans regarded in its moral aspect, or as believed to survive death and be subject to happiness or misery in a life to come: *arguing the immortality of the soul.*
3. the disembodied spirit of a deceased person: *He feared the soul of the deceased would haunt him.*

4. the emotional part of human nature; the seat of the feelings or sentiments.

5. a human being; person

When in doubt about the meaning of a word, it is a good idea to turn to a dictionary, but ... are we any the wiser after having read 5 entries under the noun Soul?

○

Folks from all walks of life reference Soul [at times confused with Spirit] and it would seem that without a soul, we, humans, would we miss out on a number of riveting processes such as:

Baring our heart/soul – being the life and soul of the party – being the soul of discretion – refraining from telling a soul – earning enough to keep body and soul together – pouring out one's soul to someone – blessing someone's soul – resting her/his soul – griping one's soul – putting our heart and soul into something – wandering or crying like a lost soul – selling our soul to the devil – being soulful – being soulless.

○

Sacred texts also reference Soul:

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart - **Hebrews 4:12** commonly attributed to Jewish Christians

○

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ - **Thessalonians 5:23** – commonly attributed to Paul the Apostle

○

Not your flesh nor bones shall be judge in the A'khira (Judgement day), but your brain, the centre of consciousness where you reside. You as a soul shall be judged - **Sunni Hadith commonly** attributed to the prophet Muhammad

○

The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living soul - **Genesis 2:7** commonly attributed to Matthew

Jnana –Fight! There is no death for the soul - **Bhagavad-gita 2.11-30** commonly attributed to the Sage

And no soul can die but with Allah's permission — the term is fixed - And every soul comes, with it a driver and a witness - **Holy Quran 3:145** and **50:21**

○
Nureyev, when asked about dancing with Margo Founteyn, said that, together, they danced with "one body, one soul".

○
Albert Einstein believed that only “feeble souls believe in survival of death because of fear and ego.”

○
Indeed, thinkers, dancers, philosophers, pious folks, astronauts, politicians, boxers, writers, generals, poets, starship captains, mathematicians - they all reference Soul:

Only a man who knows what it is like to be defeated can reach down to the bottom of his soul and come up with the extra ounce of power it takes to win when the match is even - **Muhammad Ali**

○
Man found that he was faced with the acceptance of "spiritual" forces, that is to say such forces as cannot be comprehended by the senses, particularly not by sight, and yet having undoubted, even extremely strong, effects.

If we may trust to language, it was the movement of the air that provided the image of spirituality, since the spirit borrows its name from the breath of wind (animus, spiritus, Hebrew: ruach = smoke).

The idea of the soul was thus born as the spiritual principle in the individual. Now the realm of spirits had opened for man, and he was ready to endow everything in nature with the soul he had discovered in himself - **Sigmund Freud**

○
Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul -

Man is so made that when anything fires his soul, impossibilities vanish-

Jean De La Fontaine

○

To live happily is an inward power of the soul - **Marcus Aurelius**

○

If you want to accomplish the goals of your life, you have to begin with the spirit –

Oprah Winfrey

○

Begin to see yourself as a soul with a body rather than a body with a soul

- **Wayne Dyer**

○

We need to fix our souls. Our souls are broken in this nation. We have lost our way.

And it begins with inspiration. It begins with leadership – **Michelle Obama**

○

Of my friend, I can only say this... of all the souls I have encountered in my travels,

his was the most human – **James T. Kirk**

○

I think we're going to the moon because it's in the nature of the human being to face

challenges. It's by the nature of his *deep inner soul* ... we're required to do these

things just as salmon swim upstream - **Apollo mission press conference; ABC**

World News

○

The human soul needs actual beauty more than bread - **D.H. Lawrence**

○

We are still masters of our fate. We are still captains of our souls – **Churchill**

○

What the inner voice says will not disappoint the hoping soul - **Johann Friedrich**

von Schiller

○

Of the three prerequisites of genius; the first is soul, the second is soul, and the third

is soul - **Edwin P. Whipple**

○

Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up interest wrinkles the soul - **Douglas MacArthur**

○

The soul is not a physical entity, but instead refers to everything about us that is not physical - our values, memories, identity, sense of humor. Since the soul represents the parts of the human being that are not physical, it cannot get sick, it cannot die, it cannot disappear. In short, the soul is immortal - **Harold Kushner**

○

Whatever satisfies the soul is truth - **Walt Whitman**

○

The soul is known by its acts - **St. Thomas Aquinas**

○

There is no chance, no destiny, no fate that can circumvent or hinder or control the firm resolve of a determined soul - **Ella Wheeler Wilcox**

○

There is no easy or quick plan to happiness, there is no single spot where you can start. Where you are right now is the best place to begin. Be careless in your dress if you must, but keep a tidy soul - **Mark Twain**

○

Put your ear down close to your soul and listen hard - **Anne Sexton**

○

The principal thing in the world is to keep the soul afloat - **Erica Jong**

○

Never sell your soul - **Laura Schlessinger**

○

To be courageous requires no exceptional qualifications, no magic formula. It's an opportunity that sooner or later is presented to us all and each person must look for that courage in his own soul - **John F. Kennedy**

○

The soul gives unity to what it looks at with love - **Thomas Carlyle**

○

The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul - **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

○

The wealth of a soul is measured by how much it can feel; its poverty by how little -
William R. Alger

○

Buzz Aldrin relives the Magnificent Desolation of space, and the soul-sucking depression that awaited back home - **Vanity Fair**, Hot Type

○

There is one thing one has to have: either a soul that is cheerful by nature, or a soul made cheerful by work, love, art, and knowledge - **Friedrich Nietzsche**

○

Ordinary riches can be stolen, real riches cannot. In your soul are infinitely precious things that cannot be taken from you - **Oscar Wilde**

○

Move to the rhythm of your soul and you'll never miss a beat - **Vicki Virk**

○

The soul, like the body, lives by what it feeds on - **Josiah Gilbert Holland**

○

The soul is indestructible and its activity will continue through eternity. It is like the sun, which, to our eyes, seems to set at night; but it has in reality only gone to diffuse its light elsewhere - **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**

○

There is a great spectacle, and that is the sea. There is a greater spectacle than the sea, and that is the sky. There is yet a greater spectacle than the sky, and that is the interior of the soul - **Victor Hugo**

○

The soul gives us resilience - an essential quality since we constantly have to rebound from hardship - **Wynton Marsalis**

○

A soul should always stand ajar, ready to welcome the ecstatic experience - **Emily Dickinson**

○

You should never risk your integrity or your soul for any amount of money - **Charles Jackson**

All quotes related to Soul were found on motivational-inspirational-corner.com

Good for the body is the work of the body and good for the soul is the work of the soul, and good for either is the work of the either - **Henry David Thoreau**

○

When in doubt about the true meaning of an abstract concept, reading quotes, proverbs and sayings written about it often clarifies its intention and purpose, but ... are we any the wiser after having read pages of quotes written in the name of Soul?

●

From Rock to Pop and across the divide of musical genres,

songwriters can't keep their distance. They, too, reference Soul in their distinctive ways:

'Cause honey your soul can never grow old, it's evergreen – **Ed Sheeran**

○

I will be waiting, with a song in my soul

A fortunate weakling, which I have foretold - **Linkin Park**

○

You see, she gets what she wants 'cause she's heart and soul

She's hot and cold. She's got it all, hot loving every night – **Huey Lewis** ○

Heart and soul, I fell in love with you – **Frank Loesser**

○

Baby, you're my soul and my heart's inspiration

You're all I've got to get me by – **The Righteous Brothers**

○

Oh, my soul! Oh my soul!

Baby, baby, give me all the love you've got – **Janis Joplin**

●

Only you can hear my soul serenade.

I want to be free to fly away and sing to the world

About my soul serenade, my soul serenade – **Aretha Franklin**

●

It's down in the alley, really hid away (treat me) Soul City, Soul City

Peace for the wicked. Life for the living in Soul City – **Mick Jagger**

○

Joy, joy, God's great joy. Joy, joy, down in my soul
Sweet beautiful soul saving joy. Oh joy, joy in my soul – **Whitney Houston**

○

Hot Patootie - Bless my soul. I really love that Rock and Roll – **Meat loaf** ○

If I had to lose a mile
If I had to touch feelings, I would lose my soul
The way I do - **Nirvana**

○

And I know if she had me back again
well I would never make her sad.
I've gotta heart full of soul - **The Yardbirds**

○

My heart is sad and lonely for you. I sigh, just for you only
Why haven't you seen it?
I'm all for you body and soul – **Frank Sinatra**

○

I want to live where soul meets body
And let the sun wrap its arms around me – **Death Cab for Cutie**

○

I vow to play the part in this meeting of the soul
My feelings are unknown
I learn with no regret
I'm getting what I get – **INXS**

○

Look out honey 'cause I'm using technology
Aint got time to make no apology
Soul radiation in the dead of night
Love in the middle of a firefight – **Iggy Pop**

○

Look at earth from outer space
Everyone must find a place
Give me time and give me space
Give me real; don't give me fake
Give me strength; reserve control
Give me heart and give me soul
Give me love; give us a kiss
Tell me your own politik
And open up your eyes - **Cold Play**
Stupid boy, you can't fence that in
Stupid boy, it's like holding back the wind

She let her heart and soul right in your hands
And you stole her every dream and you crushed her plans – **keith Urban**

•
And my shoes, my shoes - I said my shoes!
Ain't got no soul – **Lunchmoney Lewis**

And, in spite, of all this great thinking, the serious questions remain:

Is Soul a doer, a receiver, a witness or a thing?

Is Soul the essential component of an act?

Is Soul a belief?

Is Soul something that burns or something that freezes?

Is she an energy that heals us or is she an energy that destroys us?

Is Soul a spark in our chest or is she floating above us attached to a silver cord - or isn't she anywhere?

Is she the source of our gifts and talents?

Is she the container as well as the dispenser of our karma?

Is Soul a synonym for mind, talent, heart and spirit?

Is Soul a way of being?

Is Soul holy or is she dammed?

Can a soul be lost or, at the very least, is she often misguided?

Do we connect with Soul through our dreams?

Is the dimension of dreams her realm?

Is Soul our guardian angel?

Can she be refreshed?

Can she be tortured and tormented?

Is Soul a commodity we can buy/sell/trade?

Can we barter with her?

Is Soul our strength or is she our nemesis?

Is she our Higher Self from which flows conscience and altruism?

Is Soul pure awareness?

Is Soul our intuition?

Is Soul an add-on or is it Soul who keeps us alive?

•

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.

•

Honest Question: besides referring to Soul with a number of clichéd expressions, on the whole, why do those of us who believe Soul is a celestial, essential element of our better nature, fail to be truly aware of her presence in our day-to-day and fail to acknowledge her in any meaningful manner?

•

Vacchagotta, said to have been one of the many wandering folks who dialogued with Gautama, the Buddha, provides us with a short conversation enshrined in the Aggi-Vacchagotta Sutta.

In its laudable brevity, the vignette encapsulates the entire conundrum we have in determining what Soul really is and its purported link to reincarnation.

Vacchagotta asked, "Awakened One, where is the person reborn?"

"To say that the person is reborn, Vacchagotta, does not fit the case," replied the Buddha.

"Then he is not reborn?"

"To say that the person is not reborn does not fit the case."

"Then the person is neither reborn or not reborn?"

"To say that, Vacchagotta, does not fit the case."

Finally, Vacchagotta asked, "Venerable One, have you nothing to say about the existence of atman, the soul? Does it exist?"

Gautama remained silent.

"Venerable Gautama, is there no such thing as the soul?" Vacchagotta asked again.

Gautama remained silent.

Vacchagotta was preparing to leave when the Buddha answered cryptically.

"Vacchagotta," he began softly, "this teaching is profound and subtle. It is hard to see, hard to comprehend. It is beyond the sphere of mere human logic.

It is to be understood only by the wise - **Thera Gatha, Buddhist sutta**

○

As said previously, this extract illustrates the conundrum; the Buddha does not seem to readily answer our basic questions ... but the cryptic message is that, when we are truly wise, we have no need for such questions.



Is There Such a Thing As a Bad Soul?

Now that the groundwork has been laid, let's cut to the chase and recap 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*.



Serious Question to keep in mind as you read on:

How many 'good' souls might there in a stadium seating 80,000, knowing that Pope Francis, Jamie Marie Hicks, Hiltler, Maya Angelou, Kim Jong-un, Josef Fritzl, Albert Hamilton Fish, Elliot Rodger, Eckhart Tolle, Ted Bundy, Andrea Yates, Polpot, Myra Hindley, Barry Loukaitis and Beverley Allit were present?

The obvious answer has to be _____ .

Our ubiquitous culture of *Me & Mine Come First* notwithstanding, I have come to understand that the cosmic plan for each of us in *this*, as in all previous lifetimes, is simply to edit our karmic balance sheet.

It is our lot to amend some of the karma inherited from our soul's previous incarnations along with the karma we have added to it since our teens.

The only way to edit our karmic balance is to make an active peace by truly moving on, processing and accepting from the heart - not just from the lips - whatever it is that has pushed our buttons.

○

I also believe that each one of us is a 'bodysuit' of flesh and fluids animated by a soul from which comes our ability to *occasionally* activate higher attributes such as genuine kindness, unconditional love, honesty and, even at times, selfless altruistic behaviour.

○

Conscience is the voice of Soul. She uses conscience to prod us to do the right thing and to haunt our quiet moments when we resist.

In short, it is from our soul that we get our humanity.

○

Everyone's soul, being divine energy, is always pure.

Knowing that our ego is an energy as neutrally balanced as any weighing scale, it is neutral by nature.

Our soulful nature sits at the high tilt-end of the ego while our needs and cravings and our myriad of physical and emotional must-haves sit at the dipping end.

Anyone described metaphorically as a dark soul, a lost soul or tormented, cruel and misguided soul or even born soul-less, would be more accurately described as one who has been unable to keep Ego steady – one who has allowed one side of the Ego scale to tip lower than it should have.

Should any metaphoric epithet be needed to describe anyone, then ... dark *ego*, lost *ego* or tormented, misguided *ego* - 'dipping-end of ego' by a myriad of other names – would be more accurate.

○

Even 'happy little soul' only describes the reaction of a 'body-suit' whose dipping-end *ego*-needs are temporarily satisfied.

○

If, at the high end of our ego, soul has figuratively been lulled to sleep from a systemic '*Major Tom To Ground Control,*' soul-to-body suit dysfunction, the dipping end of our ego never sleeps.

○

The dipping end of the ego thrives on sensorial satisfaction as much as a toddler usually thrives on any sort of gratification. *That* end of our ego is always busy, buzzing, fretting, imagining, freaking out and demanding utter satisfaction according to its endless self-generated perception of needs.

○

When utter satisfaction is not obtained easily, ego dips further and we, mere bodysuits, experience a number of setbacks. When Ego interprets such setbacks as failures, intended disrespect, intended humiliation, mind-thoughts complicate matters. They make us anxious, unpleasant, dictatorial and irrational. Some of us become 'crazy' from this that and the other.

○

Quite forgetting *all* the positive aspects of our personal circumstances, daily, by the thousands, some of us become sick or gravely ill while some of us actually die from a multitude of spin-out consequences stemming from ego-triggered knee-jerks. Ego stirs from deep within our energy field - our aura - every time one of our buttons is pushed and it is a darned shame that our bodysuit, our soul's vehicle in this lifetime, is a suit of many, many buttons.

○

Perhaps swimming against the tide, I believe that our soul –everyone's soul - however pure and divine she may be, is a prisoner inside our body suit. I understand this is the case because most of us alive today do not seem at all interested in connecting with Soul. In fact, most of us, though we readily agree that, *yes, we all have a soul [except for psychopaths, we add quickly]* we seldom wonder about her function.

○

We seldom care enough about Soul's existence to try to better understand her role in our life - in this lifetime - as in all previous ones.

○

Sometimes, one's soul is said to be the instigator of nasty deeds, in which case, she's said to be a dark, black, vengeful soul— all attributes of the ego-persona, not of the soul.

○

We mostly only mention Soul by name when it is said that she has departed from the body of a deceased person. Misty-eyed and naively self-important, we give Soul, divine entity, our human blessing and wish her well on her journey or we ask god to intervene in her favor with a "Please God, look after his/her soul." Odd concern, really, seeing as most of us had never cast a thought towards the departed's soul any more than to our own.

○

What folks who believe in god should say instead is, "Please, God, forgive his/her the many ego-dips."

○

Long story made short, though, clearly, it is Soul's energy that keeps us alive [not any sort of medical intervention] until our karmic time is up and not one second longer, I imagine that she has, in all likelihood, given up on us a long, long time ago. Or she would have, if she were not *pure* energy.

○

I imagine Soul curled up, sound asleep from the sheer, dreary boredom of it all. I imagine her thus whiling the time away till her next incarnation.

I imagine her nursing the hope that THAT next one, *finally*, will be Awake and Aware enough to step firmly on the Path, the Path of genuine spirituality.

I imagine Soul hoping that, in a real and sustained manner, her new vehicle for another karmic round will be strong-willed enough to begin amending some of the stacked-on karma accumulated in his/her astral field rather than invite tests, more tests, more challenges and more struggles, as does the one struggling underwater with a huge net of circumstances who refuses to be guided from above.

What also I think is that our soul, pure/divine energy, has already worked that on the whole, bar a few rare moments of soul-stirring awe and/or 'selfless deeds', most of which we cannot explain because they were quite un-intended, we are not tuned to

her channel.

We don't catch her beam.

We don't hear her.

We hardly ever think of her.

Why, she's not a god. She's not a saint. She's not even an angel.

We don't pray to her or ask for her support.

We don't perform any ritual for her - not that any are needed.

We don't even offer her a flower.

○

As far as most of us are concerned, our soul is just there, hanging somewhere above our head, fuzzily defined, even in religious dogma.

As if mistaking her for our wily ego weren't enough, even in sacred texts and in modern guides to spirituality, Soul is often called Mind or Heart, even Ego. Under this mistaken identity, we hold her responsible for our ego's dips, quirks, knee-jerks and foibles. That's for the nicer ones of us.

○

Depending on how we have been managing our karma in any lifetime and the roles, over the millennia some of us have confirmed on our blueprint of life, a huge number of souls have been held responsible for the huge number of atrocities their body suit-persona have been committing in response to a number of misguided Me & Mine Come First dips of the otherwise neutral scale that is our ego.

○

Sometimes, someone or other says 'Bless your soul'. Sometimes, it is meant benignly. At other times, it is meant sarcastically or spitefully.

We are harangued with much conviction to 'Save our soul, halleluiaah' but Soul, being divine energy ... is quite safe already. It is we, mere bodysuits with a damming inability to keep our Ego scale steady, who are not safe.

And we are told that chicken soup is good for the soul and that good friends provide us with soul-warming reassurance, that some locations are soul-less but that some songs are soul-ful.

Dangerous – song by David Guetta – 2014

Show me your soul
I gotta know
Bet that you're beautiful inside

○

We-ell, after ALL of that chatter about her, if Soul is not truly bored-asleep, then she must be rolling on the floor laughing.

Yes? No? Maybe?

Who'd know, right? :-)



Dark? Did You Just Call Me ... Dark?

In the system in which I now believe, there are no such things as dark, sick – or bad souls. Souls are *divine* energy and by definition they cannot be anything but pure. Period.

○

When it comes to the millions of 'horrid' people who have lived on this planet since the Dawn of Time – and still do- from murderers, to abusive parents, to army personnel, dictators, depraved human beings, just to list a few, it's not their soul that has led them to commit their crime[s] but their out-of-control ego – specifically, the *low end* of their ego.

○

I can't even begin to condense meaningfully such an important element of spirituality in this post, but I have already written at length about Soul and Ego, positioning soul at the high end of ego.

It is from there, from *her*, that our more noble moments get triggered – when our mind and heart are clear enough to *feel* such opportunities.

○

At the other end of ego are the impulses that play with our mind and tempt us with selfish knee-jerks, quick satisfaction, greed, action/reactions in response to a terrible

void within and, yes, some impulses are, in certain individuals, very dark, indeed. The shift of awareness needed for such people to turn themselves around is indeed in the order of a miracle.

But in *varying* degrees, for them as it is for us, it's all about WANTING to understand our M.O. and WANTING to no longer indulge that craving.

Then, it's about WANTING to establish a connection with Soul [or with a god]

○

For those who believe neither in their soul nor in a god nor in a genuine prophet, the miracle motivation still is the same.

They need to WANT to make amends, here and now – in this lifetime.

○

But around all of this, let's not forget the all-pervasive and utmost important notion of Karma that, too, comes to us through Soul and our energy field, from millions of years back.

○

This accumulated karma [as well as the karma we have generated in our lifetime] affects the 'perpetrator' as well as the 'victim', *every perpetrator and every victim*, regardless of the severity and nature of the offence.

○

On the topic of murderers and serial killers, knowing that, for me, the title could never be anything like *The Killing Soul*, I might, one day, write an article on ***Soul and the Killer***.

Thing is, even if on the topic of spirituality, I really don't like to spend any length of time dealing with situations that are intrinsically seeped in negative energies – hence my procrastination.

○

Old Scars – song by Ryan Keen - 2014

We going back to the ocean
Back to where I'm from
Cuz every time I try to forget her
I just can't move on

Cuz when I felt her heart, it's when I felt at home -

I like to imagine that the singer, Ryan Keen, is referring to his connection to Soul - he probably isn't. But, then again, who knows? ; -)

Hakol Efshari Im Emunah Ba-Neshamah

Translation from Hebrew: *Everything Is Possible With Faith In Soul*

[Subtitle title for the cover of *Stepping Stones #3*]



No Such Thing As a Lost Soul

I'm into the belief that Spirit is Soul - Neshama, in Hebrew.

A quick peep behind the doors of any emergency room will confirm that we, humans, brain cells and enzymes notwithstanding, are but bones, flesh and fluids. Of course, we are animated by our soul! Our humanity comes from her.

That notion works for me.



The nice thing about souls is that they are neither vengeful nor benevolent – in varying degree, these are the alleged attributes of people and gods. We know

humans are flawed but gods don't cut it for me, either. I simply don't understand the idea of anthropomorphic gods with demands, moods and foibles that religious humans have inflicted upon them.



The concept of an avenging father, of a forgiving father or that of a lord that speaketh to me and will asketh me questions as I stand heart-in-mouth at the Pearly Gates, simply fails to resonate in me. Actually, now that I think of it, who knows how 'things' would have turned out differently if the words of Jesus had not been taken so literally when he spoke of his father in heaven, most likely to tap a familiar chord within the hearts of his listeners.

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.

Basically, my spiritual belief is focused around our soul, an intrinsic part of us, an active energy. And, of course, I believe in the nameless, inexplicable, unprovable but overarching power of the Cosmos.

○

It is only through a connection to Soul - cosmic/divine energy that is always pure and constant that - I believe, we can attempt to edit some of the karma that is ours to amend in this lifetime. It is through a genuine connection to our soul that we can soften the rub of our ordinary, daily life. For religious folks, an evolving connection to Soul would complement the relationship they already have with their god, but matters of the soul can stand alone, free of any rituals, religious or otherwise.

•

Having said that, seeing as our personal karma is partly inherited from our soul's prior incarnations and partly constructed by our contemporary selves, the same goes for our ego.

It will thus take many more lifetimes before our subsequent incarnations can rectify our personal-collective deficit or, at least, tilt the balance the other way i.e. Soul-side.

At any given instant, in turn, they will continue to both create and amend aspects of our joint karma, going back to the Dawn of Time and reaching into the future - just as we, here and now, are expected to be in the process on a moment-to-moment basis.

○

It is through a soulful link to our spirit and through the underlying principle that, though each challenge comes uninvited and is always most inopportune, we need to 'actively' accept all our disappointments and setbacks with an open heart. Accepting under duress and acquiring a 'poor me' victim status are not viable options.

It doesn't score us any points but this resentful passivity does make us sick. It forces us to make mistakes – sometimes irreparable ones.

○

The bottom line is that we need to accept emotionally difficult situations as readily as we always accept our moments of joy and pleasure, without asking, "Why me? What

have I done to deserve this?”

○

Most of us agree that discrimination and separation are always wrong and they are wrong when we apply such attitudes to the events and moments in our days.

Intrinsically, from a karmic point of view, just as there is no such thing as a ‘good’ and ‘bad’ or a ‘happy’ and ‘sad’ soul, there is no such thing as a ‘good’ and ‘bad’ or a ‘happy’ and ‘sad’ moment or situation. These qualifiers spring out from the low end of our Ego and are totally subjective.

Karmically speaking, each moment, good or bad, just is.

Each has come into existence solely as yet another opportunity to amend our ‘balance sheet’.

•

Life is school: the karmic lessons we fail to grasp, the karmic tests we fail, again and again, are presented to us – again and again - until we achieve a ‘passable’ score.

○

What the low end of our ego perceives as fun, good and rewarding is often perceived as great, a blessing or a lucky break.

What the low end of our ego perceives as unpleasant, unjustified and painful is usually considered bad luck or a bad break, a divine injustice – even by agnostic folks.

Having said that, even when a situation in our life is unimaginably ‘soul’ destroying, it is merely ego destroying and we still have to recognize it for the karmic event that it is – and do our best to work through it ‘soulfully’.

•

Reality check: sent to us for reasons we may never know, any nasty situation in our life has boomeranged back from acts performed in lives long forgotten.

While some moments yield rewards that often surprise us and that we incorrectly call ‘blessings’ and ‘good fortune’, the appearance of emotionally challenging moments in our life also stem from the same source.

Each individual situation in our life is a test in the form of a payback or a heads up that is karmically programmed for us to deal with in this lifetime, right now.

Even a lovely, unexpected outcome must be dealt with from the heart, in a soulful manner and not be merely 'enjoyed to the fullest' as a gratuitous indulgence.



Remember, we are souls in disguise. We *are* disguised in our body, in a body suit or, as Alan Watts called it, in our 'bag of skin'.

Remember, too, that though we only have one lifetime to act out, our soul is already loaded down by a heavy string of lives, past incarnations, anchored in the Dawn of Times.

And so, 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."

And so, for me, the litmus test of genuine spirituality is not about looking the part in a robe, kaftan, turban or cassock – or from under a veil.

It is not about rituals and meditations.

It is not about publishing more theories and yet another series of self-help books - and making money, sometime a lot of money, out of people's misery.



For me, the litmus test is simply whether, in each moment that is under our feet, we are able to actively work out an acceptance of our stressors, our illnesses, our disappointments as well as of our emotional pain with a heart that is beginning to open - a heart that is striving for an energetic *Acceptance* – not a heart that beats to the rhythm of our mind/ego punctuated with cries of "Why me?"

In simple terms, can we make an honest peace with the situation and the protagonists within it?

If the answer is a screaming, "OMG! I'm nowhere near that!" it's OK because

practice makes perfect and no genuine effort in altering our heart energy is ever too little, too late. Each one of us is a proverbial Work In Progress.

•

As Ralph Waldo Emerson's now cliché thought states, "Life is a journey, not a destination."

Any journey is only ever accomplished one step, one decision, one action/reaction at a time.

○

Reality check: what we progress toward is entirely up to us.

The very good news is that, really, there is no such thing as a *lost soul*, a *dark soul* or a *bad soul*. The low end of our ego is often dark because it is totally self-centered and unable to love unconditionally, not even the ones we 'love' the most, but our soul is always pure, as per her divine/cosmic nature. She is always there, right in the middle of our chest, right there, right under our hand. All that she needs from us is that we reweave our lost connection to her - independently of any religious belief or ritual.

○

Rethinking thinking and understanding better - within a spiritual philosophical framework - the meaning of what is happening to us and to those with whom we have been cast to share important moments in this lifetime should be our foremost personal goals.

Baby steps rock, particularly when done moment after moment, as every toddler knows well.

○

And what would now you say, dear Reader, is the answer to the very serious question posed earlier in this section?

Question: How many 'good' souls might there in a stadium seating 80,000, knowing that Pope Francis, Jamie Marie Hicks, Bill and Melinda Gates, Thích Nhất Hạnh, Josef Fritzl, Albert Hamilton Fish, Elliott Rodger, Andrea Yates, Bin Laden, Myra Hindley, Kim Jong-un, Barry Loukaitis, Mother Teresa, Beverley Allit, Oscar Pistorius

and Tenzin Gyatso were present?

The obvious answer has to be _____.

Seriously: there have never been any evil, 'Soul-Less Bastards' – men, women or children – alive on planet Earth, nor can there ever be.

However, there have been many ... evil, 'bastard ego-personas'.



Mind-Meanders

Tracks, film 2013 Camel trips, as I suspected all along, and as I confirmed, do not begin or end: they merely change form.

C.C. Saint-Clair's adaptation of Robyn Davidson's quote - Karmic tests, I suspect, do not begin or end: they merely change form.

Ramana Maharshi - *There was a time when we had free will.*

We could act as we pleased.

We acted, and that act produced a certain result.

That "result" became our destiny.

We could not escape it. We acted again.

This time our free will carried with it the experience of our first act and was qualified and limited to that extent.

This act again produced results, and these results again curtailed our original freedom.

Now that we have been acting and producing results for millions of ages, these actions and their reactions act upon us as our unavoidable fate called prarabdha.

Our body, mind, intellect, and reasoning are fashioned by these and make us choose a certain course.

Our previous acts determine our present life, and our present acts go to make our future.

We reap now what we have sown in our previous births, and we shall reap in the future what we are sowing now.



Blog Matters

“When you invest yourself in your passion, the product created will satisfy the need of those who enjoy what you have created. Your product will touch their emotions. Money charged for the product is only a by-product of your passion,” **someone wrote.**

I'd say that having a 'passion' is a blessing. It keeps us [intellectually] busy, focused, and challenged hours on end - years on end - and in the case of painting, writing or gardening, our 'passion' costs us very little.

If an activity has become our 'passion', we immerse ourselves in it for our own gratification – in all likelihood *also* as an escape from 'home life', regardless of the degree of satisfaction it brings us.

Having a 'passion' also a blessing because, as you wrote, through our 'passion', we might actually touch someone's emotions.

Wow! Imagine how awesome that is.

What a buzz when that happens! Priceless, right?

And then what?

After my 'passion' has kept me busy, focused, and buzzing for months and years, forever giving, after it's given me a 'free pass' to escape to do my own thing, after it's given me the humble gratification of touching someone's heart - on top of all these physical and emotional rewards, I expect to be paid for the fruit of my 'passion'?

Argh ... isn't this being a bit too greedy? ;-)

○

My passion is writing and because such a passion is 'priceless', my books on spiritual philosophy cannot be bought. They are definitely ... price-less.

Makes perfect sense to me – **C.C.**

“It is my profound opinion that people derive more benefit from any healing session if they pay a fee.... and I think they will experience more benefit.

As it says in the Bible, ‘labourer is worthy’ of her hire, as it says in the Bible. Personally, I take that advice to heart,” **someone wrote.**

To be honest about our own intentions and motives I think it’s important to resist the temptation of looking for support in scriptures because they, themselves, have been created to serve a specific purpose and can be interpreted in a number of ways.

Having said that, here is a direct swap for your quote. This one is from Matthew 10:7:

“And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand,’ heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff for the worker is worthy of his support.”

Presumably, *support*, here, refers essentially to what the labourer needs to eat, drink and find shelter before moving on ... empty-handed. The proviso being that a ‘good’ labourer will always trust that he will find protection, as needed, from Above.

Give freely and receive freely, has become my personal motto.

Besides, as we have *no idea* of who will benefit from what ... how ... and when, I think it’s also important to not assume knowledge we do not possess.

How to know for sure that the client will benefit more from our ministrations by paying for any ‘service’ provided?

Also, what might be worthy of thought is not so much whether even a barter system is appropriate or not, but whether or not ‘spiritual support’ [in whichever form] should be considered as work entitled, just as entitled to remuneration as any regular job from which a practitioner aims to meet all his/her bills while maintaining a preferred lifestyle, and while *also* aspiring to putting \$\$ in the bank.

“When I perform a healing, I like to ask myself this question: “What is God doing at this very moment?” Asking this question silently grounds me. It moves me to focus on what I am doing. It brings it to me that what I am actually doing is expressing Him as I heal the person in front of me. What I do is whatever He wants me do at this specific moment for this specific person and thus He is enabling me to receive the due He wants me to get at this moment,” someone replied.

Please, know that I am not trying to change anyone’s mind about their M.O. and belief system. I am only sharing mine on this forum.

From a spiritual perspective, my take on healing practioners is that the more genuine they are, the less they actually do themselves.

Actually, rare as they are, they are the first ones to agree to that. They know that their ‘only’ participation in the process is that, having managed to become pure channels, they are able to transmit untainted cosmic energy to their client.

A true healer is like an electrician fixing short circuits and other associated problems. S/he does not carry the power of electricity within but, perhaps, unlike an electrician working with man-made tools, a true healer has faith in the Divine plan, in the Karmic plan or simply has faith in Soul. Either way, they believe that either will provide them with what they need when they need it - as they need it.

Hording/saving/worrying about money and planning how to get more are simply not in the mindset of a true healer.

On that note and for people seeking healing treatment of a spiritual nature, reality is a bit grim: most healers are unable to transmit pure energy because they, themselves, are not ‘open, clear channels’.

The more a healer claims to have a direct connection to God, Jesus, a prophet, an archangel, any beings from Atlantis, planet Orion and so on, be that a result of an innocent delusion or a bid to add credibility to their activities, the more limited their healing ability is likely to be.

This placebo can be laden with toxic energies but, hey ... for many the placebo effect works miracles.

Beyond that, assuming we are in the hands of a genuine healer, again s/he has very little to do beyond getting their own energy out of the way.

A pure *channel* is simply that – a pure *channel*.

Our body knows very well how to absorb cosmic energy channelled by the healer. No real 'placing of hands' is actually necessary.

The real heads up is this: at the very least, a healer should never believe, ever, that s/he is transmitting their own energy because ... should that be the case, they would only be transmitting their own ego's energy - therefore energy tainted with whatever emotional problems have led to dysfunctional relationships in the private life of the healer which, then, would have led to whichever undisclosed health issues the healer might have and, truly, only god knows what else it may have led to.

In short, anyone's *own* energy is truly *not* the energy any client would welcome in their own energy field - if asked – even if given freely. Yikes!

Worrying fact: our body absorbs energy from anyone and everyone with whom we come into contact with.

In this case, the catch cry is not so much *Beware what you wish for* but *Beware whose energy you allow in your own energy field*.



“How can spirituality bring out the best in us?” someone asked.

A number of replies were posted, linking spirituality to Jesus, God or prophets.

We can think and act according to a spiritual belief system without always having to bring it back to either god or esus or a prophet.

The way I see it, genuine spirituality has absolutely nothing to do with religion as such, and the furthest it remains from any religious doctrine, the more genuine it's likely to be.

So, how does genuine spirituality bring out the best in us?

Anything that moves us away from our Ego mindset [actions and reactions and impulses] which is not designed to give us peace of mind, is a great thing.

Our Ego-thoughts are created solely to get us what we want - when we want it - how we want it - no matter how convinced we are that our thoughts and purpose are righteous.

As a result, it could be said that our thoughts - or what some call our humanity - indirectly make us miserable, angry, anxious, sick, as we seldom get what we want as quickly, as regularly and as easily as we would like.

And, even when, after a lot of effort and a lot of grinding of teeth we do, eventually, get what we had been trying so hard to get, as soon as we do get it, our ego-thoughts usually start looking for more of the same - or different/better - for greater stimulation - or so-called *Satisfaction* and on and on we go.

Also, generally, speaking, there is very little in our day-to-day ego/thoughts that is done for the benefit of another person, unconditionally/altruistically - free of any emotional strings or kudos that come to us in a myriad of forms.

And this is where a practice of genuine spirituality comes in to get us a bit more connected to our higher self, our true self or our soulor our god:

so many names for our supraconsciousness.

Eventually, that practice can make us feel better, as we begin to react differently, more flowingly from a somewhat altered mindset.



“When there is no real physical danger, fear is my Ego's response to my feeling of inadequacy. It shrinks me down and it is destructive,” someone wrote.

Very true and I'll add that both love and fear are innate emotions. Where there is fear, there cannot be love. Love/fear and their various spin-off states are mutually exclusive. We cannot love unconditionally the one we fear/envy/resent - not even if it happens to be our parent, sibling or partner.

The effect of these emotions often appears before we even become aware of it.

Totally removing from our ego the Jack-in-the-box [fear/apprehension/mistrust/envy etc.] that pops out uninvited is something only the most evolved ones can master. For the rest of us, at the very least, our aim should be to control our kneejerk responses long enough to soften them somewhat - for the greater good of self and of others.

Ideally, we should, eventually reach the stage of emotion-control in nano-second speed.

That will eventually happen when our spiritual self manages to *instantly* filter and neutralize the gripping, destructive emotion that fear is, even before our ego-persona becomes aware of it.

Get 'over it' from the inside-out and onward we go.

Becoming truly aware is already half of the battle won :-)



“I have been despondent all week and I find myself losing myself online like surfing the net generally, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, my own unnecessary texting, etc. How to deal with pain in a culture that is more and more ostracizing?” **someone wrote.**

Thing is: karmic knocks and karmic knock-backs do pop us in our reality for a reason - a karmic reason.

The karmic reason is cause for personal growth, not punishment.

Karmic reasons are the ones that ALSO bring along the lucky breaks *and the happy moments* – *but we seldom wail about those.*

If we choose [free will] and opt to NOT take the challenging karmic moments straight, if we opt for the use of drugs, alcohol, sex, Facebook, all manner of ‘screen sucking,’ compulsive shopping, frequent time-away or whatever might be our ESCAPE of choice, we are not actually dealing with the situation.

We are in ‘escape’ mode.

Depending on our personality:

Escape mode = denial

Escape mode = crash and burn mode.

There is no spiritual hocus-pocus in this. Psychiatry/psychology confirms that much.

The spiritual perspective kicks in once we accept that *whatever* has befallen us, has been karmically engineered *for us* – for a reason.

In terms of the ‘here and now’, once we become AWARE of those of our relationships in which *we mis-trust* the most, *mis-understand* the most, *mis-love* the most, we come a long way into figuring out why, karmically, ‘bad’ things seemingly happen to ‘good’ people. Or why ‘boring life’ happens to ‘amazing’ people.

But, yes, absolutely: dealing in emotional isolation with pain and perceived setbacks is a very difficult/painful/solitary phase we have to push through.

The more painful it is, the straighter and deeper it needs to be played out.
Certainly not for the faint-hearted :-)



“Sex can become a powerful spiritual experience. It can be made into a union with the Divine. Sex can be soul-sex. We were all created by God and in HIS image. I mean like, why did He give us sexual organs? He constructed us so that we could enjoy sexual pleasure through desire and attraction - not only for procreation. God didn’t do all that simply so that we can practice denying ourselves the pleasure of our body’s specific function,” **someone wrote.**

Oh there has always been and there still is - and there always will be - a plethora of individuals and religious/spiritual communities that ‘worship’ the act of intercourse. This practice is so well documented that I need say no more.

Why some people choose to ‘sanctify’ and ‘glorify’ the act, whether the act is performed with one other or many others, indoors or in the moonlight, is easy to understand, but once we accept that anything that ‘belongs to the body’ - or is done for the body or to it - only amounts to self-gratifying, ritualistic behavior [so is flagellation and any other form of masochistic repression of sexual urges] it’s easy to see that the act of sex has nothing to do with spiritual growth of the kind I am thinking about. Neither does making love, however ‘lovingly’ it is performed – but hey.... attentive love-making within a relationship in which both parties accept each other *unconditionally and communicate honestly – always* – that’s got to be good for something :-))

Serious question: how common is such a pairing?

Back to your comment about having been created in god’s image. S’cuse me for asking, but ... do you think god has ... sexual organs? Or have I missed something?



Yes, our sexual organs are the tools we have been given to procreate. In science

fiction films, the act of 'love' or the act of procreation may be performed in a number of ways but we, humans, are still a very basic model on the evolution continuum.

As I said in an earlier comment, I truly believe that the original purpose of the sensual potential of sex was to give us an incentive to ... procreate.

Of course, that incentive has worked so well, that over the millennia, if all women had given birth to the babies they carried, our population would probably be much closer to that of China.

Reality on a tangent: for a variety of reasons ranging from duty-performance, performance anxiety, impotence etc. 'sex moments' are not always pleasurable the man.

The greater problem, however, is that for reasons of objectification, not all sexual encounters are pleasurable for the woman either, regardless of her age, and we must never lose sight of that.

Is it uncouth to bring up this point on a spiritual forum?

Not sure. You tell me.



“Is money the cause of our cultural unhappiness?” someone asked?

A number of people contributed their thoughts on the matter. Most justified their view that, though money can create complications, earning wages or a salary through 'spiritual ministrations', was the preferred way for some or the only way for others through which to fund their lifestyle expenses. Finally, I posted this:

Fact: the more \$ we have, the more we spend.

Fact: the more we have, the more we hoard, be that \$\$ or items.

Fact: we are seldom able to say, "I have enough."

So, fact is that if we truly want to stop making excuses for treating what 'genuine spirituality' we think we have as a commodity, and the 'spiritual dealings' we dispense, as mere work/job to pay our bills, we need to accept that the only 'spiritual'

thing to do is pare down our so-called needs/necessities while remaining able to live safely, comfortably, independently, eat healthily, still own a car, a TV and a hi-speed internet connection etc. if these are deemed essential.

We can actually get a 'proper' job, too - one that is purpose-built to make money - if we crave more than the sorts of essential basics listed above.



What follows is my response to an article posted on a spiritual forum dealing with toxicity of certain relationships and how the best way to deal with them is to walk away.

The article you used as stimulus for discussion on this forum made me feel uneasy from the moment I read it till now some 24 hours later and I suspect ... bits of it will continue to float back into my thoughts for a while longer.

Look at the loaded language found in the article. Here, I have highlighted it in **bold** and begins in the caption:

This cruel sport which, within the context, suggest malicious and deliberate intent to harm.

Then comes darkly-veiled reference to the burden of sociopathic-induced mindset **working in the shadows.**

Exposure to and interaction with a sociopath in childhood can leave lifelong scars **like a nasty chemical agent.**

Many sociopaths wreak havoc in a covert, **underhanded, hypocritical way.**

Sociopathic abuse is targeted abuse. Their **intentional** desire is to harm.

[In reference to a case study] This case shows how deliberately sociopaths, from a

young age, can target others ... **rotten to the core. Evil from birth.**

To deal with sociopaths effectively, you first need to open your eyes. **Don't be deceived by appearances.**

We call those who **collude** in the sport of the sociopath *apathetic*, or *apaths* = collaboration with the enemy.

Apaths are an integral part of the **sociopath's arsenal** = apaths are compared to weapons.

How apaths, who **might otherwise be fair-minded people**, become involved in such destructive business is not hard to understand = the apaths are hood-winked, blind-sided by their circumstances

This is Machiavellian behaviour of the worst kind. Etc. etc.

I know my comment will probably push a few buttons but, let me explain: if we substitute the word sociopath for the word gay or for the word Jew ... what do we end up with?

I think we end up with a very dangerous propaganda article reminiscent of the anti-Jewish sentiment circa 1943.

The article goes on tainting another group, the empaths, said to be the sociopaths' sidekicks. These are portrayed as weak-minded people who collaborate with 'evil' etc. In reality, empaths are often targets for sociopaths.



Therefore, what a relief to read that the authors of this article "merely" give the following advice:

"if you suspect in the early stages of a relationship that you are being gaslighted, you can protect yourself by walking away."

Phew ... I thought s/he was going to urge us to denounce and scapegoat our 'suspicious' neighbors and relatives, to bring back the medieval torture rack or the not-so-dated electric shock therapy or, why not, the good old one-cut-cures-all

lobotomy.



Putting the aside for a moment the article that triggered this response, yes, of course, we should walk away from ANY unhealthy behavior – but, *beyond that and after that*, the trick is not to indulge in any of our own.

Separation from/removal of anything, of anyone, on the grounds that they are upsetting us – or scaring us –or that they are toxic to our nervous system will always amount to spiritually unhealthy kneejerks.

Me vs Him/her We [people of sound mind and pure hearts] vs the Evil Sociopaths out there [or against whomever pushes our buttons *fooooooo* far] is spiritually unhealthy behavior.



Serious question: as we weave in and out of a multitude of interactions with a number of people daily - and balance a number of different relationships dependent on how we feel, what we think and what we perceive and infer rightly or wrongly at any moment - is it really logical to assume we have *never* spent a moment in the shoes of a sociopath? That we have only ever stood in the shoes of an empath, but never those of an apath?

Reality: sociopaths are not aliens who have descended on us from Planet X.

They are all born/bred in our midst.

Depending, they even grew up in our towns, in our suburbs.

From a spiritual-karmic perspective, sociopaths are partly the by-product of their family life and partly the programmed 'tools' by which karmic adjustment is intended to happen in our life - no differently from the disease we have to live with, accept and deal with, preferably from the inside-out.

Or the car accident that made us rethink something or other.

Or the loud neighbor we wish would move elsewhere, and so on.

Can we, really afford to dismiss the thought that all our button-pushing tests come to us for a reason?

Though it is true there are far too many screwed up/damaged people in our midst are we sure that in the ABSOLUTE

a) we are not 'somewhat' damaged ourselves?

b) the 'triad' made up by the sociopath, the empath and the apath – and ourselves – do not slip-slide in and out of moments or shared consciousness?

They/we are all after the same thing – and nowhere near getting enough of it:
Unconditional acceptance.

OK, I've just finished fastening my heavy-duty fire-retardant suit and am waiting for the first flame-throwers :-))



“My job situation has become toxic, should I walk away?” someone wrote.

Not knowing the specifics of the job that make you so unhappy, I'll go with the voice of the majority on the forum and say, OK ... walk away.

BUT at the same time, I'll add that it would be worth your while to figure out what *buttons* that situation has pushed hard & deep within you.

You see, regardless of the type of work we do, it is useless to point the finger at the 'bosses', colleagues, students or workplace politics. That would be entirely un-productive.

Since you posted your comment on a forum about metaphysical healing and so on, I'll push on and suggest that the most beneficial 'flaws to tweak' must always be found within us, within our own M.O..

What, in the other's behaviour, reflects *our own shortcomings*, which then causes our upset, our insecurity, our resentment or our anger?

It's extremely important to understand the triggers embedded within us to better

enable ourselves to deal with the root-cause of our troubles - not just on the workplace - from the inside-out.



“Simply BEING is simple,” said someone.

I beg to differ with anyone who suggests that *simply being is simple*.

At the very least, I'd say stating this makes what is intended as a lifelong process of personal growth sound deceptively simple.

What motivation is there to invest ourselves heart and soul into something that is ... simple? Like, why bother.

The way I see it, even a beginning awareness of BEing requires a constant rethinking of our REAL priorities, of our values, as well as a readjustment of all our 'dials' and 'buttons', as well as an active reassessment of our many thresholds to anger, fear, resentment etc.

Being authentic is trying and it's tiring. It's frustrating ... it's .. it's because the game always seems to shift. Emotional rewards, kudos, do take their time coming. Seriously: attempting to become authentic to our self is not for the faint-hearted.

The process of Being is as much a moment-to-moment, heart-in-mouth thing, as it is for a jet pilot landing his craft ... with the auto-pilot ... disabled.

Or ... am I missing something?



“Anxiety is natural to humans. It's one of the things that makes us who we are and we should not try to argue with it,” someone said.

Anxiety = non-acceptance of What-Is and non-acceptance of What *might* Be

Anxiety = the frustrated desire to pick & choose = wishing for moments and situations that are easier, more fun, more satisfying and pleasant, the ones that makes us feel safe, loved/loveable while rejecting the moments and situations that we do not welcome, those that challenge us and make us feel unsatisfied,

unloved/unlovable.

Anxiety = fearing the next moment because of the emotional demands it *might* ask of us and the compulsion to control/manipulate it to spare our ego.

Anxiety = non acceptance of the Greater plan, moment by moment, which translates in a lack of faith in Soul



“Too often we fall into the trap of living a life that others want us to rather than the life we want to live. We must write your own story. The canvas is blank. Up to us to fill it in,” someone said.

I always squirm a little when I read something that suggests ‘**Do**-ing rather than **BE**-ing,’ as being on the Path, for me, means trying my best to ACTIVELY accept, as open-heartedly as I truly can, the content of the little moments that fill my hours & create my mood for the day.

Collectively, all these daily ‘moments & moods’ shape my week which shapes my month, which shapes my year - and don’t all these thoughts and reactions to our little moments and days shape *in real time*, from the inside/out, the karma that is ours to deal with, in this lifetime?

Yes, we do have to detach ourselves from the trap of appearing to be the person others want us to be, but there is another trap we risk falling into – that of thinking that we, mere little earthlings, KNOW what is best for us.

After all, yes, we do have free will and free choice so ... why not make the most of that and act, react and edit out what we don’t like in our days?

That would be a splendid idea if we had the gift of true foresight. However, the only sights we have is hindsight on the one hand and the sight generated by our ego on the other. Neither is real. Neither is free will.

When we move forward, when we try to arrange moments and situations to suit us

better, we are as blind as mice in a maze. Many short-term and long term outcomes make that very clear when a decision to do this or that - or not - comes back to bite us on the tail.

We see it happen to others in our social group and we see it happen to strangers in the news. There would be very few films and novels that do not deal with the cause and effect of human decisions made in the exercise of free choice. Some illustrate this through comedy and action plots, others through dramatic storylines.

Yet, when it happens to us, we seldom remember the steps we took – the ones that, in the fullness of time, got us where we are today.

If *Be Yourself* means *Be your Self*, fine.

But how do we even begin recognizing our TRUE inner Self within the ego-self that reacts like a teenager when buttons get pushed too far?

Basically, the dilemma of how much we try to control any given moment depends on our lifelong focus.

Are we trying to DO or are we trying to BE?

Are we trying to achieve something that will top up our credibility in the eyes of our peers and relatives?

Are we trying to top up our bank balance to afford ‘a bigger one of this and more of that’?

Are we trying to deflect criticism?

Are we trying to maximize the number of pats on back we might receive as spinoffs from exerting free choice in ways that we think would enhance our days?

Are we trying to escape what we feel is too hard, too unfair, too stressful to deal with?

Are we trying for happiness in the short term or are we trying for inner contentment in the long run?

Ah, well, now that I’ve typed all of this, I’d better get on with figuring out how to,

come tomorrow, as a high school teacher, I'd best prioritize my thoughts -from the inside-out :-)



“As a child, I have been terribly hurt by the way both my parents pushed me to meet their expectations. Even now that I am in my thirties, I still have to bite my tongue and control my anger,” someone wrote.

There is nothing we can do for our own emotional benefit that works better than Forgiving. However, I agree: words are easy.

Rethinking thinking from the inside out is a lot more difficult – and it's definitely not for the faint-hearted.

Anyway, you know the old saying: *Practice makes perfect, yes?*

Biting our tongue is good.

We just have to make sure we don't bite it too hard ;-)

You see, arguing, explaining, justifying are only words *dead* words spawned from equally dead and equally recycled emotions/thoughts/feelings.

But, beyond that, 'explanations and justifications' are always loaded with 'negative energy' – the energy of the aggrieved, of resentment and/or anger or fear that we have been carrying within for a very long time.

Words will never sway 'the other', not really, not permanently - particularly not when 'the other' is in our reality for a karmic reason.

This other being - father/mother/sibling/colleague/neighbor/stranger in a queue - is our 'foil', here and now.

Wikipedia tells us that “in fiction, a foil is a character who contrasts with another character (usually the protagonist) in order to highlight *particular qualities* of the other character.”

Within the context of this discussion, I'll just rephrase that a bit: “Within the karmic reality that governs our days, a foil is a character who contrasts with another

character (usually the protagonist) in order to highlight *particular flaws* of this character.

So, as you bite your tongue, BREATHE in/out slowly a few times – settle yourself.

Understand/accept that your buttons have been pushed once again.

Understand your insecurity and the reasons for it.

And, most important, convince yourself that your mother is merely the karmic tool, the teacher, the foil, who has been attached to you - in this lifetime - to teach you the hard lessons that will contribute to YOUR personal growth – in this lifetime.



“How has your Spiritual Practice changed in the last few years or so?”
someone wrote.

In the last 8 years, I’ve discontinued the couple of rituals I had become attached to, as any ritual is exterior to Self and requires no personal effort, particularly when we enjoy performing them.

Equally, I am not interested in seeking information about any past lives nor I am interested in communication with any Archangels or any other astral entities.

Whether we ‘see’ an apparition as a real being, in 3-D or as a hologram, Soul’s energy [or divine energy] does not come to us in human form.

I have come to understand that anything coming to us in ‘human form’ is little more than the result of visualization.

Serious question: Why would the *highest* forms of energy bother to disguise themselves in basic human forms when ‘visiting’ beings they deem evolved enough to perceive incorporeal energy?

When astral entities do manifest themselves spontaneously, as ‘ghosts’ do, or as spirits during a séance, they come from the lowest of the astral realms. The fact that such visitations make us feel ‘empowered’ and ‘blessed’ and ‘evolved’ distracts our mind and prevents us from aiming higher up for the pure light of pure energy.

Astral entities are to spiritual seekers as fool’s gold was to gold fossickers.

Instead of pursuing them, I have been focusing my practice on doing my best to heal the couple of most pressing, hot-spot, challenging relationships in my immediate circle of personal influence i.e. me, responding in the most genuine manner that I can muster from the inside-out and do my best to sustain this sort of response over the long-haul period of time.

Cultivating, slowly but surely, an acceptance of What-Is, inching closer to making genuine peace from the inside-out with whomever [without them needing to be aware of my intentions and efforts] - that, for me, has been extremely beneficial. Similarly, practicing this approach in the workplace, and anywhere I feel it is needed has become the focus of my spiritual path and emotional growth.



According to the Bible Luke 17:21, Jesus stated, 'Neither shall they say lo here or lo there for behold the kingdom of God is within you,' someone wrote.

The 'kingdom of God' is our soul. In a way, it is within us.

It is definitely 'attached' to us.

Heaven and hell are not places.

They are not destinations.

They are the situations we have been creating for ourselves since our teen age.

They are the situations that result from the so-called free will we have exerted since then.

Most of us live daily within a sort of a holding pattern: neither in heavenly circumstances and neither in hellish ones.

That holding pattern, on the whole, contains more stress and anxiety than happiness and contentment.

For the luckier ones among us, it contains neither fear nor debilitating pain.

Maybe we could say we live in purgatory.



You Deserve The Best

Admittedly, whenever I come across this sort of thinking, the word 'Deserve' stops me in my tracks.

I ask myself how we possibly can, you and I and the billions of others alive today, 'deserve' anything more than what we have.

○

Looking at our energetic M.O. and the 3-D reality it has constructed for us over time, do we 'Deserve' to NOT lose more than we can stand to lose?

○

Do we deserve personal success, such as we imagine it?

○

Do we deserve the best because we treat family, colleagues, friends and strangers with the same respect and fairness as we would like them to apply to us, until they have pushed our buttons hard enough?

○

Do we deserve the best because we actively love our dearest and nearest unconditionally in spite of the imperfections that we perceive in them?

○

Do we deserve the best because we forgive them whole-heartedly?

○

Do we deserve the best because we know how to ask forgiveness directly from the persons we have hurt, offended or deceived, even if inadvertently - be they the stranger in the street, a colleague, an acquaintances, a friend, a relative or one of our 'loved' ones?

○

Do we deserve the best because we know how to say *Sorry*, and resist the urge to add a justification for our behavior?

○

Do we deserve the best because when we give to charity, we do so from the heart and we don't bother including the donations total on our Income Tax Return form?

○

Do we *deserve* the best because we have resisted the cult of 'Me-First', which is

closely followed, in our culture, by the cult of 'Me & Mine First'?

○

Do we *deserve* better siblings? The best father? The best mother?

○

Headlights –song by Eminem – 2014

I guess *we are who we are*

Headlights shining in the dark night I drive on

Maybe we took this too far.

[...] I went in headfirst

Never thinking about who what I said hurt, in what verse

My mom probably got it the worst, I went in headfirst

The brunt of it, but as stubborn as we are

Did I take it too far?

[...] But regardless I don't hate you cause ma!

You're still beautiful to me, cause you're my mom

Though far be it for you to be calling, my house was Vietnam

Desert Storm and both of us put together can form an atomic bomb

Equivalent to Chemical warfare

And forever we can drag this on and on

But, agree to disagree.

[...] And I'm way too old to cry, that shit's painful though

But ma, *I forgive you*, so does Nathan, yo

All you did, all you said, you did your best to raise us both

[...] And as you left I had this overwhelming sadness come over me

As we pulled off to go our separate paths, and

I saw your headlights as I looked back.

And I'm mad I didn't get the chance to thank you for being my Mom ...

So Mom, please, accept this as a tribute I wrote this on the jet

I guess I had to get this off my chest

I hope I get the chance to lay it before I'm dead
[...] *I hope you get this message*
That *I'll always love you* from afar, *cause you're my mama*



Absorbing is not Accepting - a daughter's tale of her own conditional love

The following section was written circa 2009 after eight years of chronic mutual mother/daughter miscomprehensions fuelled by both our ego-personas. Those years were, emotionally, by far the darkest of my life.



Five years have since gone by since I wrote this chapter, and it is rewarding to note subtle, positive changes in the relationship I have now with my much 'loved' mother.



As the French saying states, *'Il n'est pas sage de laver son linge sale en public.'* Indeed, it is not wise to wash one's dirty laundry in public and, yet, finding the emotion, then the thoughts, then the voice best suited to share family *confidentials* can be therapeutic.



Yet, I assume that doing so is seldom an easy process for anyone in search of a heartfelt resolution to conflicting energies.

This is no exception but, because my mother was and still is, deep-down, so dear to me, neither literally nor figuratively, could I ever seriously consider 'slamming the door' on her and living estranged from her.

Instead, I embarked on the long search for a peace that would come from within, the journey that has brought me to this point, today, a lovely Sunday in 2014.

It's interesting to note how incrementally easier it becomes to operate a shift in self once we truly internalize three basic concepts:

1. Soul and the energies of our karma never load us down with a 'burden' that is truly too great for us to bear.
2. Unbeknownst to them, the 'other person' mirrors back at us our own lackings i.e. how dare we demand unconditional acceptance/genuine love whilst we are, ourselves, unable to deliver in kind?
3. Each one of us, each protagonist, is a mere puppet-impersonation of our Ego-persona.

Perhaps with this line of thinking in mind, about **Petrushka**, Nureyev explained that the ballet telling the story of a traditional puppet, *"is not simply the story of a puppet. It is the story of a human life when it is manipulated. Actually, it is a parable. Petrushka is also like a Gogol character. A little human being who cries out, 'I exist! I exist! This little me.'* And the puppet Petrushka says, *'Look at me. I'm alive! Me! Me! Me! Listen to me!'"* - **Ballet News March 1981** – Museum of Music and History

○

Accepting under duress sounds like this

The nasty little thought, like a persistent weed, creeps up to my ear and asks, 'Why don't you slam the door on her? Why don't you tell her that enough is enough and you're out of *that* relationship? Why don't you move to another city? *Why didn't you stay abroad when you were already living abroad? Why did you choose to live so close to her?'*

○

Another afternoon spent with my mother and another day ends in blurred incomprehension and humming anxiety.

It may seem ironic but, whilst I let emotions lead me by the nose, I am convinced that the best news I could get is that my mother has finally been diagnosed as having Old Age Dementia. Or that she is certifiably bipolar. Or that she has Alzheimer's – not that I wish her that. Of course, not!

○

What I mean is that any one of these diagnostics would not only confirm the symptoms, but give me a concrete reason for my mother's behavior.

At the very least, it would be helpful to have a third party witness some of the moments of red-hot anger she often unleashed on me.

○

A part of the problem is that my mother and I are usually alone when these situations occur either on the phone or face-to-face.

When we are not, my 83 year old stepfather suddenly becomes very deaf. So, in the absence of siblings and relatives, Mom's best friends would do just fine, except that I have yet to be introduced.

○

Should these moments of unreasoned anger be witnessed, even as they never appear regretted, my mother would be unable to deny having chronic and random 'episodes' that pass for expressions of deep-seated resentment at the best of times, hatred, disdain and loathing in even more difficult moments.

○

If my mother knew herself to be observed by a neutral third party she respected, she might choose to express her love for me in different ways for, in her own way, I know she loves me deeply – as deeply as a mother's very conditional love can go – just as I love deeply, as deeply as a daughter's very conditional love can go.

○

If she knew herself observed by a third party who mattered to her, my mother might be compelled to choose which thoughts to feed and which thoughts to starve. Yes, indeed, an eye-witness from my mother's side would definitely lift her veil of denial on what I believe IS the heart 'condition' that overpowers her.

○

In the absence of the latter, when the thinking is done by the low end of my ego, the one that demands sympathy and understanding, a diagnosis of either dementia or bipolar disorder would be great news; again, Mom's illness would be out in the open; she and I would get sympathy and support from well-meaning others, doctors and their pills; I would finally have understandable and concrete reasons for her behaviour towards me – her only child. I might eventually be able to forgive her – everything.

I would finally have an earthly answer as to *why* I have had to spend the best part of

the past thirteen years doing what I could to keep the door open between my mother and me.

○

Aaargh! I, a person who considers herself on the Path, am not supposed wallow and wail. I am not supposed to point the finger. I am not supposed to indulge any fantasy about my mother, or anyone, ever amending their ways as the other is simply the personification of a karmic challenge manifested in my physical reality to test my emotional and of my spiritual mettle.

●

As Moriya reminds me time and time again, *“Remember! No one can never know the thoughts of another – never, C.C.!”*

“We can only decode the clues we see according to our own manual – we can only repeat doing what we know from one life to the next.

“You think your mother is selfish and that she can’t control herself and that she has failed you. You only see with the eyes of your puppet-persona. You fail to see through Soul’s eyes.

Your angry mother is just a lost little girl who is hungry for love. Hungry because, although she has always had a safe life and lacked for nothing of a material value, in her adult life she hasn’t felt love or valued by her husband. You know that.

●

When she behaves badly towards you, for however long she’s done that, it is because she is afraid you will abandon her in her old age. She does not trust you to love her no matter what. To love her unconditionally. Of course, she is unable to love you that way herself, but this is not about her. It is about you because your soul has guided you to the point where you are at now.

●

Your mother pushes and pushes you because you don’t really love her with your heart, only with your head. What you feel for her is a sentimental attachment, but that is not Love. She wants most of all to feel you’ll always be there for her with your heart open, especially now that she is much older.

She is such a proud woman that she will never say such things to you or anyone. She will never lower herself to ask for your love, for visits or for help, but she is very hungry for all three

•

Your mother fears you will treat her like a burden because you are trying to keep her happy with sweet, dead words and dead gifts given with a closed heart, no matter how lovely the gifts seem to you. I'm sure you have seen young mothers shove a pacifier or a lolly into the mouth of a screaming toddler." Moriya added. "You are dutiful and you want that to pass for Love, but dutiful is not LOVING.

•

"Become less dutiful but more Loving. Your mother is the karmic stern teacher you have needed to be prodded forward. Kadima! And remember this: your mother is also your spiritual daughter in this lifetime.

•

*It is your responsibility to look after her and make her happy from your heart, not from some inadequate, guilty, sentimental attachment.
Treat her like you wanted her to treat you, then and now.*

•

Understand this: you are not your mother's victim, C.C., but, living in permanent hunger for love for most of 60 years, like your mother has, in spite of being married, having always nice homes with lovely views, many diamonds, and having a loving daughter, that really is misery you don't wish on anyone."

•

These days, I have come to understand that one of my mother's karmic 'flaws' is her sense of pride. It is true that she can no more surrender by admitting her fears and her hunger for genuine love than the Samurai who prefers to die by his own sword. But, then again, if my mother were any different from how she is, my own karmic tests would be different, too.

•

The hard question, of course, is how to begin to love truly unconditionally the very person who pushes your buttons the hardest and the deepest?

Deeper – song by Ella Eyre – 2014

*And I don't think I'm ready to go in this heavy
I thought we would take it slow*

And now you got that feelin'
You say that you mean it
But for me, I just don't know
I can't see it, I don't feel it
I need to dig a little deeper



How to get my ego-persona into a little box - and keep the lid sealed?

I need to ask myself the hard question:

*Is struggling to 'keep the door open', even partially open, mostly by swallowing my own pride and finding ways to 'make peace' again and again, the same as **loving** my mother?*



I accept the reasoning that suggests that, if I LOVED my mother unconditionally, if I loved her in spite of her imperfections, *as I want her to love me in spite of mine*, warts and all, the next flurry of affronts would finally roll off me as water off the proverbial duck's back.



If I loved my mother unconditionally, in spite of her imperfections, I would not allow the next episode merely to get absorbed, like water into sand, by whichever end of my ego it is that thrives on fear and wail, "Poor me. What have I done to deserve this?"

Whichever end *that* is, is the one which has 'accepted 'the contagion', as Satprem explains in his book, **Sri Aurobindo Or The Adventure Of Consciousness**, "[...] *wearing an impassive mask while we are still boiling on the inside will not do; we cannot cheat with vibrations (as animals know full well). This has nothing to do with so-called self-control, which is only a mastery of appearances, but with true inner mastery.*

Moreover, this silence can neutralize any vibration at all, for the simple reason that

all vibrations are contagious, from the highest vibrations to the lowest (this is how a master can pass on spiritual experiences or a power to a disciple), and it is up to us to accept the contagion or not; if we become afraid, it means we have already accepted the contagion, and hence have already accepted the angry man's blow or the snake's bite.” [2].

○

It is the area of the ego-persona that absorbs the unfiltered negative energy in the tone and actions of the antagonist as one absorbs germs and viruses.

That area of the ego sits opposite to ‘Soul-side’ where genuine altruism and selflessness reside.

○

I have come to realize that one of my mistakes so far has been in thinking that I was *actively* accepting the negativity that was coming from my mother, therefore processing the emotional pain, while all I have managed is to actively absorb it, no differently from how one absorbs nasty bacteria. The sustained and poisonous absorption of such toxic energy IS the cause of my mother-triggered anxiety.

Reality check: Fear and love are two emotions that are mutually exclusive.

Neuroscience corroborates that where fear, panic and anxiety reside *love* cannot thrive.

Sad, yes, definitely - but I know that I must *not* criticize surface, conditional love anywhere other than that deep within myself.

○

You see, if I *truly* accepted my mother’s antics, their potentially energetically toxic side-effects would have as little effect on my ‘heart’ as the blinding, gritty bites of a sand storm has on a camel.

I would be able to LOVE her *as she is*.

There would be none of the deep-seated anxiety pulsing in my gut whenever I think of her and it would not spiral crazily whenever I think of talking to her on the phone or driving up to see her for an afternoon – If I truly accepted unconditionally, none of that negative energy would risk, one day, making me medically unwell.

○

Anyway, how could my mother, a lovely but naturally judgemental and highly

conditional person, as many of her generation, ever be able, *even if willing*, to choose which of her thoughts to *feed* and which thoughts to *starve*?

○

I, who have been practicing daily acceptance of What-Is and I, who actively seek to forgive totally [even if *forgetting* is not a realistic aim] have been unable to do that, after three whole years of active awareness and continued loving *intentions*.

○

We know that Earth is a huge ball of energy.

We know that Einstein confirmed the mass-equivalence with his most famous equation.

We know that our atoms and molecules are energy.

We know that all that is of the spiritual realm is energy.

We know that an energy field surrounds our body.

Many of us believe that we are all souls encumbered by our body suits of flesh and fluids.

Back in the Dawn of Time, it all began with 'the rib'.

●

As an aside and, as discussed in the section entitled, **What's in a Theory: Creation & Evolution**, 'Rib', in the Biblical quotation that follows, implies the creation of the 'skeleton' at the moment of the Separation, at a time when all beings were androgynous:

"So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman" (Genesis 2:22)

Beings received their 'rib' and their covering of skin. With their energy field protecting their new body, they began their journey as incarnated beings in the material world.

○

And so, what if my mother, supraconsciously through her energy field, had many, many years ago, intuited that *I*, her only child, *only* loved her conditionally?

What if my mother had been longing for *genuine daughterly* love as much as I have been longing for *genuine motherly* love?

What if, as Moriya says, my mother and I simply mirrored each other's heart failings?

○

What if my soul's mission in this lifetime, my karma, was to crack me, but not crush me, until I found the code of love buried under a layer of emotional scar tissue, the 'well of honey beneath the rock,' as mentioned by Satprem [3]

○

Though I am considered calm, earnest and even-tempered, what if, in this lifetime, *spiritually and energetically* speaking, my mother was my mirror?

○

What if we had been thrown together as mother and daughter in *this* lifetime to somewhat loosen a tight karmic knot that her soul and mine, possibly clothed in differently gendered body suits, had already visited many times over - in the long tapestry of past lives?

●

What if our current challenge was simply the product of our past inability to open our heart to each other - in whichever roles we have been assigned ... incarnation after incarnation?

Sooner or later, every karmic challenge must be resolved.

Up to us how long we take and how difficult we choose to make it for ourselves.

○

That certainly might explain why my mother, in spite of the ongoing unhappiness she seems to derive from me keeps wanting to see me often – very often – more often – even though there are never any guarantees of an even temper during any of my visits - from either one of us.

○

So, there I am again, back to the starting point of understanding, namely that, in the absence of a more plausible theory, it is my karmic test in *this* lifetime to ACCEPT my mother as she is – to generate LOVE *for her as she is* - something that would go well beyond the merely sentimental attachment of a daughter for her mother which, perhaps, best describes what I have been feeling most of my life.

○

I understand that every new soul incarnation has *at least* one major programmed karmic test set up to enable her to amend karma. Thus, should my mother have

been any less cantankerous, clearly, my relationship with her would not have been the source of the essential karmic test reactivated for me in *this* lifetime.

If *that* weren't it, knowing that *all* karmic tests are cosmically devised to push each one of us towards *real* acceptance of our circumstances and genuine love, out of which *other* aspect of the hitherto comfortable life I have been leading with my [very] long term partner would the main karmic test intended for *me* have manifested itself? On second thought, though it IS a reasonable question, it is not one on which anyone on the Path need dwell.

As Alfred Lord Tennyson affirmed, "*Ours is not to reason why, ours but to do and die.*"

○

The belief that spiritual evolution through karmic amendment has nothing to do with becoming more saintly and locked inside a ritualized lifestyle of offerings, penance and repression does bring me back to the starting point of understanding, but it also positions me on the right track. *It positions me on the Path.*

○

All I now need is to refuse any energetic germ 'contagion', as actively as I would refuse any other contagious situation. My best chance of achieving that is by neutralizing the horde of memories that stand in the way of further progress. Even memories as fresh as yesterday's.

That will happen once I *truly* activate the understanding that, for the one on the Path, the best way forward is fastest achieved not by forgetting, but by truly forgiving – from the inside/out.

Satprem adds, "*We can allow the contagion of a painful vibration to overcome us, or, instead, circumscribe the area of pain and eventually, depending on the degree of our mastery, neutralize the pain by disconnecting the consciousness from that area. The key to mastery is always silence, at every level, because silence enables us to discern the vibrations, and to discern them is to be able to act upon them.*" [4]

Piece of cake, really :-)

If, in the lyrics below, the line “You make me feel like I'm a boy and not a man” had contained the words *child/adult* instead, I would have liked to share this current pop song with my mother, as my theme song.

Heart To Heart – song by James Blunt/Dido – 2014

There are times when I don't know where I stand (oh, sometimes)
You make me feel like I'm a boy and not a man (oh, sometimes)
There are times when you don't give me a smile (oh, sometimes)
I lie awake at night and worry for a while.
It's OK 'cause I know
You shine even on a rainy day and
I can find your halo
Guides me to wherever you fall
If you need a hand to hold
I'll come running, because
You and I won't part till we die
You should know
We see eye to eye, heart to heart.

There are times when I cry 'cause you shed no tears (oh, sometimes)
Your mind's so far away but your body's right here (oh, sometimes)
There are times when I just walked out your door (oh, sometimes)
And thought I'd never get to see you anymore –

○

Accepting Under Duress = Not *Really* Moving On

Deep down, we all understand that ‘getting over’ either an event or a person and ‘moving on’ is the way to go but, for most of us, all that ever happens is that we activate the button that says M.O.M, Mind-Over-Matter, which results in us supposedly accepting the situation ... under duress.

Sooner or later, Time does its thing and we are able to move on but only in a lopsided sort of way. We go through the motions. We believe we've made it when we find ourselves in a different mindset or in a different space a.k.a. a different house, a different partner, a new job, a new baby - or simply a new pet.



BUT from the point of view of our spiritual health, merely accepting under duress filters down through our aura to our emotional health and eventually to our body, usually in the form of aches and pains or a downright life-compromising accident or illness. It is definitely a cop-out that fools no one - not us, not really - and certainly not our soul – certainly not karmic tabulation.



For the one who is spiritually aware, acceptance is not about 'moving on' and it's not about 'getting over' anything.

Acceptance is only about **accepting** from the heart a painful event, a nasty situation, a hurtful person or simply the drag of our daily life.



If we tacitly agree that all happens for a reason, a true cliché, the 'reason' underfoot is to push us to evolve out of our emotional rut by processing the current challenge correctly AND emerging on the other side with a winning, open heart, instead of a heart that is resentful, wounded and, if not downright 'dead', definitely more hardened than before.



It does help greatly if we are able to accept that the situation unfolding at any particular stage of our life – in real time – is tailor-made for us. It does help if we are able to accept that its timing is impeccable.

Yes, impeccable, it is.

It also helps to admit that we have already been presented with a similar sort of test and probably more than once and that, back then, we failed it. Even knowing that, our automated impulse is to re-act to the new challenge in the same mechanical way as previously.

○

It is so clear when we watch others untangling their lives that if they keep doing things in the same way, they always end up with the same result. Yet, when it comes to sorting out our own challenging moments, we lose this precious insight.

So, the deal is not necessarily to *embrace* our personal drama, be it large or small. It's not really about understanding *what* happened either, let alone *why* it happened, for the root of each of our moments springs at us partly from the sands of our soul's past lives and partly from whatever we have done or failed to do ... whenever. Moving our life *forward* simply relies on us facing 'the moment' squarely, placidly from the inside-out.

○

Moving our life forward involves breathing with intent. It involves staying present, awake and self-aware in the moment that is under our feet. Yup, *that* moment because *that* moment, such as it is, is the only moment we can ever shape from the inside/out. Think about it.

○

Reality check: we need to process *that* moment – and every other moment - no differently from when we swallow doses of bitter medicine simply because we trust they will *for sure* heal us in the long run – fingers crossed.

One major difference being, in the case of swallowing pride and neutralising ego, it never *ever* triggers any harmful side-effects.

Any conscious decision that involves practicing a *heart-over-mind-over* matter approach to problem-solving is guaranteed free of any trace elements hazardous to our wellbeing.

●

When talking about medicine, even hardcore, or surgical intervention, we don't often push the enquiry beyond a certain point, not if we think the process will lengthen our life.

We choose to not dwell on the long list of guaranteed side-effects.

Many of us don't really contemplate *not* taking these doses of radiation, of bitter medicine, of chemicals injected through needles, sometimes very long needles.

We choose to not think about malpractice.

Mostly, we accept the complete package willingly because we want to have faith in their medicinal power – in their healing power – and we have no other option.

•

Similarly, for a more holistic approach to staying healthy in our moments, we need to process our day one moment at a time, objectively, neutrally, calmly – we want to make peace with it because we have developed faith in the logical, healing powers that come from understanding that we are in that paining phase because this is how karma works.

•

We want to understand that whatever befalls us has nothing to do with random bad or good luck. Personal power comes from understanding that the word ‘deserve’ is karmically irrelevant.

Pushing us to understand and make peace with whatever eats at us is how karma tests our spiritual mettle.

And more importantly for us, it is how we can begin to make things much better, principally for ourselves.

○

Serious questions: why surrender our body and our mind to soul-stripping chemical treatment by not acting earlier on our emotions?

Why not thwart or grapple head-on the instinctive but unhealthy reactions triggered deep within the low end of our ego - the opposite end of our ego to that where Soul resides, the end that is only programmed to react through physical and emotional knee-jerks to the rub and tear of daily life?

The trick to ‘moving on’, totally, from the depth of our core, with the help of our soul in whom we trust, is to find the Heart-Over-Mind-Over-Matter button and to deliberately, whole-heartedly, *choose* to punch it with all we’ve got.

It is for us, those who care that much, to be fearless, pride-less and single-minded – again and again.

A true warrior never gives up – certainly not one fighting for the best, the only

worthwhile cause of all.



Don't count the days, make the days count -

I don't think there is any truth. There are only points of view - -----

the·o·ry *noun*

proven to be true

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zeal·ot *noun*

wants other people to have those feelings: a zealous person - [merriam-webster.com](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/zealot)

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THEORIES = EMOTIONS RUN

HIGH = EGO-PERSONAS RUN WILD

Whether it's about Atlantis, the Big Bang, the Constant Cosmos, the Evolution of Apes, the Discovery of Vulcan, Gods, Global Wealth Tax, Karma, Monetarism, Moral Sentiments, the Spontaneous Generation, Spirit or the Static Universe - we are attached to several belief systems.

•

One Theory High on Emotions - low on hard facts: Creation & Evolution

The Big Bang theory and the theory of Evolution are, as we all know, theories that attempt explanations as to the origin of humans, among other species, on planet Earth.

If, in spite of over a century of funded research and prestigious brains actively involved in unveiling the mystery, these theories are still called *theories*, it is because neither side has been able to mount the sort of evidence that would bounce whichever theory into the realm of unassailable factual reality.

Put simply, no one knows for sure how our species came to be and this hiatus has recently led me to ponder another theory, one inspired by ancient Sacred texts as well as by the stimulating thinking of modern people such Alan Watts, Maurice Nicoll, Krishnamurti and P.D. Ouspensky – this quartet synergized by the rigorous teachings of Moriya, my mentor.

•

Don't bother googling Moriya, for the Moriya who is my mentor is not anywhere on the net – although there are many others.

These days, I am trying to understand how – since the proverbial Dawn of Time – human 'bodies', bags of skin, bones and fluids – once in full Me-first reflex mode – moved away from their intended role, their sole purpose for being on Earth.

•

First There Were Souls

Without unpacking too much here in the early days of this section, I will simply say that such an alternative 'theory' that is outside of the square relies on the notion that something akin the Big Bang did occur and that its *explosion*, for lack of a better word, released its content like the 'pod' much favored by Sci-fi writers.

From a secular perspective, here is the t.h.e.o.r.y. that I believe in, one which, no doubt, will annoy persons on all sides of the debate:

Like any humble seed that contains within it the potential to create an elegant tulip, a massive oak or baobab, harmless weed as well as noxious ones, the explosion released, at exactly the right nano second, all the combinations and permutations possible to create the world as we know it.

What that explosion released can be called primal matter.

The evolution discussed here is not about how we came to be standing upright, but about our connection to Soul or God or to the Spirits of Nature.

Spiritual evolution does not rise from Below [the Root chakra] to Above [the Crown Chakra]. Genuine spiritual evolution is not a skill we learn. It is not something we develop from the bottom up.

It happens from Above to Below and our soul is one of our tools through which to access some sort of spiritual evolution in this lifetime.

•

Serious question: laden as we are by the heavy energy that is generally referred to as gross energy could we, mere bags of bones, ever have developed souls on our own?

○

Anyone made queasy by the reference to ‘bags of bones, flesh and liquids’ has only to cast a fresh eye on any Anatomy chart, or visit the Intensive Care ward of any hospital, or to agree that it is simply and only the *involuntary* ability to breathe that keeps us alive – this ability is given to us by Soul.

Spiritual/divine energy moves from Above to Below, which explains why we, humans, cannot connect with Soul by any brain-triggered mechanical or chemical means.

Ecstasy can be induced in many ways, but unless the ‘way’ emanates from the heart chakra, the said ecstasy is most likely of a delusional nature.

Knowing that we cannot deceive our soul, let alone any other divine energy, only attempts at selfless altruism, at actively accepting circumstances and others - along with a genuine generosity of spirit - truly shift our karma while induced ecstasy along

with flagellation, renunciation, separation and mortification only serve to enhance the doers opinion of themselves.

○

We Are Souls in Disguise

We have a mind but we are souls. We are souls in disguise. The disguise is our body. Our body is made up of bones, flesh and fluids but - way back at the Dawn of Time, before the earth began to solidify – it is commonly accepted that there were beings of light and energy.

These beings were complete.

They were able to see inward as much as outward.

They were innocent. They were as unaware and replete as babies who are happy being – just being.

These beings were free of karma.

They were androgynous, as is explained in one of the best known of all Biblical quotations: *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them”* - **Genesis 1:27**

○

Being androgynous, both male and female, they had no desire to seek anything outside of themselves because they were complete – as complete as the apple and her core are complete – as complete as the Yin and the Yang form a whole.

Before it became Earth as we know it, our planet was a mass of gases and dust particles. Over millions of years, it slowly cooled down. When the earth solidified, it developed a crust.

●

Just as Nature despatched the thick-skinned dinosaurian creatures to replace them with animals covered with scales, fur and feathers, the beings of light and energy developed a firm body of their own.

As par for the course of evolution, their original purity - as well as their will became

splintered in the process – they became halved.

They were no longer androgynous beings.

They had become gendered beings.

•

When their wholeness was halved, so was their power to see inward.

Their gaze turned outward in the direction of newfound priorities and desires.

These desires stemmed from a longing that expressed itself through cravings.

These cravings were indulged to compensate for their loss – of their missing half.

○

It is through the pursuit of these newfound cravings/desires that these beings sought to become whole and contented again.

At the time of the Separation, when one became two and *“the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them”* - **Genesis 3:21**, these beings were also given a skeleton of bone.

In a body otherwise made of soft flesh, fluids and cells that die off only to recreate themselves, these cells are a testament to our lives as re-incarnated beings.

The skeleton which can technically survive millions of years is of this earth and remains on this earth.

It serves to balance the body between the pull of the Law of Attraction [gravity] and the magnetic attraction of the moon – the attraction that creates such amazing occurrences as tides. It is because of this balanced energetic pull that we, humans, sustain a permanent upright position.

Although the concept appears to go against the grain of the sciences, we are governed from Above-Below through the crown.

○

Spoiler: anyone challenged by the need to better understand the invisible or by the spontaneous ability to think ‘outside the box’ in regard to this topic should abstain from reading further.

•

What About That Rib?

'Rib', in the Biblical quotation that follows, implies the creation of the 'skeleton' at the moment of the Separation, at a time when all beings were androgynous:

"So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman" - **Genesis 2:22**

In effect, the 'rib' - the skeleton - is the symbol of separation.

○

All beings received their 'rib' and their covering of skin and, with their energy field protecting their new body, they began their journey as incarnated beings in the material world.

•

'Deep sleep' implies forgetfulness.

It implies being spiritually un-awake.

It implies being 'asleep at the wheel' which, in turn, implies that self-identity and gratification have become linked to the body's needs and the material world.

Having said that, it is only through sleep that our energy gets recharged and it is mostly through sleep that we get direct messages from Soul via the dreams she crafts for us – her vehicle in this lifetime.

○

The way I understand it these days, Adam and Eve - generic names for our very first karmic ancestors - predate by a few million years the images we have of them frolicking in the mythical Garden of Eden and of them cowering in shame under the wrath of God, as depicted on so many Sacred paintings.

•

Good Snake = Bad Snake

Heads up: From this point on, 'God' is used solely as the most commonly accepted name for the cosmic force, not as the Father or the Creator of the religious doctrines.

•

It has to be understood that the original state of beings of light - as one with the cosmos, as one with all that surrounded them - turned into a state of permanent, lonely isolation in a foreign world that appeared cold and hostile.

To these beings, the period of post-separation would have felt as if they had been permanently blinded and left to fend for themselves.

They could only cringe and cling and grasp and grope.

•

Be that as it may, God had not set these beings on their journey empty handed for they had also been given Kundalini energy- the energy that nourishes the physical body - the energy than can potentially lead to a connection to Soul.

Now, we need to look at a couple of archetypal symbols:

The imagery of the Garden of Eden symbolises the inner temple where our soul abides.

○

Stripped of any 'modern-day' emotional bias, the snake, even to this day in the form of the caduceus, the medical symbol of two snakes intertwined, has always been the symbol of wisdom and health.

According to Wikipedia, *"Dr William Hayes Ward discovered that symbols similar to the classical caduceus sometimes appeared on Mesopotamian cylinder seals. He suggested the symbol originated some time between 3000 and 4000 BCE."*

I suspect that one reason why Dr Ward, back in 1910, did not suggest a time that went even further back is because the earth had not yet released artefacts that date further back in time.

It sill hasn't.

Don't Shoot The Messenger!

Back to our newly formed 'Adam and Eve', our first karmic ancestors, the story goes like this: after their separation into male and female, they were endowed with a knowledge that came from Soul.

That knowledge was the ability to be wise, to interpret symbols and to distinguish between good and evil.

•

This ability was the sole function of the ego-persona for the ego's sole purpose is to deliver Soul's messages. Besides a very functional body and all the attributes and abilities they needed 'to go forth and multiply', God had crafted for them the amazing planet Earth perfectly suited for their survival with its breathable air, firm ground, cascades of water, oceans and rivers, flora and fauna, cyclic rains, seasonal sunshine and so on.

These beings lacked for nothing – except for the will to refute the desires of the flesh, known to us these days as escapism, creature comforts and feel-good therapy and, of course at the top of the list - our moods which tend to dictate our needs at any given moment, on any given day.

•

The ego-persona only serves to reflect signs, symbols and thoughts outwardly – through our mind, through our thoughts – no differently from the way our eyes snatch vibrations of light which the brain interprets into images of the material world that we see.

The eyes/brain connection and the ego/mind/thoughts connections are but mechanical processes which use the senses to transmit and process data.

•

One more point: just as all that comes into our awareness comes from Above-Below, all signs, symbols and occurrences come from within, from Soul.

These 'situations' come to us so that we can deal with them within our physical moments.

Like the seed that contains a flower, all that comes from Soul is reflected back to our awareness via our ego and contains the spiritual solution to all our earthly conundrums.

●

The Gift of Bones

Basically, the first earthly beings had all the attributes and capabilities to reach the goal of their human existence which was – and still is - union with Soul.

Separation and the gift of bones were necessary to the early beings' evolution for, in their androgynous state, self-absorption deprived them, as it still does everyone, from the motivation to forge ahead and expand one's horizon.

Separation was the necessary impetus to get the contented dream-walkers that were the early beings of light to become Soul-aware.

Ripping them apart from themselves, from their other half, was the sacrifice forced on to them in order to get them to 'work' towards accessing the good will and love of their other half.

Knowing that Soul, pure divine energy, is Love, it is through striving to access that love, by giving love and compassion, that they were to re-unite with Soul.

The best laid plans are not always realized quickly, but in the fullness of time.

•

And millions of years later, this über challenge still encapsulates our struggle to reach any meaningful level of personal evolution burdened, as we are, by the enduring, cultural, default-impulse of self-centeredness.

•

Cosmic Intentions Not Yet Fulfilled

Clearly, Cosmic intentions have not yet been fulfilled as, throughout the parade of millennia, though mostly not androgynous, we, as a species, have remained tremendously self-interested and self-serving individuals in spite of a succession of civilisations.

Reality check: Giving and sharing love and compassion is still not our forte.

After the Separation, instead of accepting What Was, these beings were driven by

the need to reunite with their other self – their true other half – but they went about it in the neurotic way of the one who contemplates their image in the dark surface of a pond and - imagining it to be that of their missing half - struggles to touch her, to hold her.

I suspect that each time we fall in love badly enough to lose our rational mind, it is out of an inexplicable, unshakeable conviction that we have found our soul mate in the eyes of the one who reflects us - the one who, we are convinced, will make us whole. I no longer doubt that this state of being is a throwback to the early days of post-separation.

○

Though it could be said that pre-separation, the beings of energy were like zombies or dream-walkers, they were much more than that because they had been endowed with the image of God', which simply means a built-in channel, an incredibly strong mirror, through which to regain inward vision and reach Soul. This channel, the strong mirror, is the ego-persona.

●

While the androgynous beings were as innocent as babies, their ego-persona was inactive. Let's just say that being as complete as yin and yang are complete, they had nothing to imagine. Thus, free of desire, their thinking didn't go beyond a state of just being.

Their ego, like the surface of a pond, was clear and still.

○

After Separation, however, as in the case of children in the candy shop or in the case of us on a shopping spree, the natural by-product of outward sight was a desire, a craving to possess whatever the eyes saw, which then became whatever the mind/thoughts desired.

Their ego, like the surface of a pond on a blustery day, became murky and ruffled.

It is in response to this new state of being that our karmic ancestors' ego-persona got tripped. It was not the discovery of a material world that activated the ego-persona as easily as a 'sleeper spy' gets awoken into action, but their indulgent response to it.

It might have been because the soft skin of their human body was not protected by fur, feathers or scales that our karmic ancestors felt vulnerable and so, beyond creating weapons to suit their various needs, they began to hoard and they began to cling to what they had hoarded.

•

Animal pelts worn for protection were all these beings could access and the trend to wearing leather as protective clothing prevailed well into the turn of this century, but I find it an interesting aside to note that throughout the ages - all of them - generally, we, humans, have enjoyed the feel and the look of animal skin over our body in the form of furs and leather.

Go figure!

•

Accumulate, Display & Stack On More. More! MORE!

Upon being separated into halves, the first humans' focus shifted from inward to outwards. Unconsciously, they felt incomplete and longed for *something* that has remained elusive. That 'something' was the re-union with their soul but unfortunately for all of us, 6 billion+ people alive today, the early beings deployed on planet Earth misread the symptoms. They chose to self-medicate and launched themselves in a single-minded and never-ending search for their 'other half'.

It is from these ancient times that the delusional sense of security that we have been feeding *en masse* over the course of millennia, comes to us.

From the Dawn of Time till today, we have been acting as if we honestly believed – against all evidence - that more, more, more of everything - from more love to more money to more sex to more personal space to more holidays to more bang and bling for our buck to more food to more protection to more leisure - and all manner of possessions would keep us safe, contented and insulated from the crazy world that lies in wait on the other side of our front door.

○

It is helpful to understand that our compulsive pursuit of accumulating and displaying

and stacking our possessions, on our bodies, in our homes and in banks, stems from our equally compulsive search for love and acceptance ... but from Soul.

The sad thing is that since we are blind to her, we deviate this compulsion and mistakenly refer it to a constant, exhausting search for love and acceptance from our peers and from contemporaries – mere bodies of bones, flesh and fluids themselves who can no more give unconditionally to us than we can to them.

It is also why we, as civilizations and as nations, have developed an insatiable lust for all we can conquer – even if death is the price to pay.



And Then ... There Was Karma

Meaning of karma according to Wikipedia:

The sum of a person's actions in this and previous states of existence, viewed as deciding their fate in future existences.

Yes?

No?

Dear Reader: how would YOU tweak the above definition to better link it back to the context of the *Stepping Stones* discussion?

•

Karma was created back in the Dawn of Time to redress our misguided attempts at finding unconditional love.

The soul-full original nature of our karmic ancestors suggests that they were intended to share, to give, to love un-conditionally and move that love and that acceptance forward.

Instead, although these beings were 'in the image of God', able to evolve *back* to their original purity by tapping into the soul energy that had been sealed inside their newly formed chests, these early prototypes of the fabled Adam and Eve had no gauge with which to assess good from bad.

They became hypnotised by the stimuli of the world around them.

Desires arose.

Their minds turned to the selfish pursuits of deceit, greed, and sensory gratification through the chase and conquest of the physical and of the sensual. Gone was their Lightness.

Heavy in their heavy bodies, they became dark and they became stuck. As Moriya explained it, "As the Sons of God descended into Earth and became attracted to what they saw, their feet became stuck in such deep mud that their wings couldn't lift them up again and they remained forever on earth forgetting their true Self."

And so it is that to this day, to the moment that is under our feet, it still is true that our

real purpose for being here in this lifetime, as bodies of flesh, bones and liquids, is to orchestrate a re-union with our soul by detaching from our search for happiness, contentment and fulfilment through all that is *outside* of ourselves in the material world - and once again turn inward.

○

Needless to say that this feat, which has eluded our species for millions and millions of years, can only be done by following Soul's attributes - love, faith, truth and all other altruistic behavior.

○

It is therefore no wonder that every recognized prophet across the globe has created his own set of commandments which have since been enshrined, cultural flavor notwithstanding, in each of the main religions' sacred texts.

○

A re-union with our soul is what will close the circle - the portal - and grant humanity a true period of Enlightenment. Life led through a re-union with Soul would mean that everything - everyone – would become whole and inseparable from the whole.

Which brings us back to Karma – the Great Arbiter.

•

The Scales! Always The Scales!

Karma was created to balance things out. The true belief that karma is for real – that the re-incarnation of our ego persona will occur until the debt has been repaid - does keep the believer honest; more honest, I will hazard, than a promise of walking through the Pearly Gates.

As Moriya, my mentor who - btw seriously does not have a website - explained further, *“Karma is Action. The cosmos is harmonious and everything is in the right place at the right time. Each outward thought and each action on behalf of the self interferes with and shatters this harmonious state of affairs.*

Therefore whatever thought and action, big or tiny, done altruistically links up again with cosmic-pure energy, while negative, selfish thoughts and actions are sent back to sender.”

•

Soul Knows Where We Live

And to that, I might add, that one's soul cycle of incarnations will go on and on until we, senders, act in a manner that will lead to karmic amendment – if not now ... then ... later.

Or much later.

Or later again.

•

No matter how many lifetimes it will take each one of us, sooner or however much later – all amendments will BE made.

They will be made in, around, and through our innumerable moments of grief and trauma - as they will be made in, around, and through our moments of joy and success.

They will be made in and out of many death-moments – those of the ones we love as well as those of our own - many times over – for however long it will take.

They will be made in and out of many birth-moments and out of the subsequent 'love' we give these newly incarnated souls – even as they grows up into age-difficult phases – even as their needs impinge on our 'lifestyle'.

•

Asleep, Controller in Hand

Nepenthe is a plant which Homer, the poet, has described as an ancient herbal drink so powerful that it eases grief and banishes sorrow from the mind.

•

Here is a lovely poem [found in the preface of Maurice Nicoll's, **Living Time**, and often attributed to E.C. Note] about the need to observe and be aware.

Give me Nepenthe with the lulling eyes to shut away the world!

To sleep, to dream, and in this clover-scented air

Slip through imprisoning Time

And find my Spirit free!

Alas, not thus shalt thou escape from Time.

Thou wilt return again and yet again till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Didst thou not know Time is a debtor's prison?

Whom dost thou owe?

Owe not Nepenthe

•

From a text much more ancient, here is an extract that I particularly like from the **Katha Upanishad**, one of many early spiritual treaties, Upanishads, originally put down in Sanskrit between 800 and 400 BCE.

"Know the Atman [soul] as Lord of a chariot; and the body as the chariot itself. Know that reason [mind] is the charioteer and the mind indeed is the reins.

The horses, they say, are the senses; and their paths are the object of sense.

He who has not right understanding and whose mind is never steady is not the ruler of his life, like a bad driver with wild horses.

But he who has right understanding and whose mind is ever steady is the ruler of his life, like a good driver with well-trained horses.

He who has not understanding, is careless and never pure, reaches not the End of the journey; but wanders on from death to death" - 3.3-10

•

In the post-separation period, once the new humans' behaviors had become patterned, their ways of being were repeated by each of their subsequent incarnations – just like, on the whole, each current generation adapts to and magnifies the thinking, the priorities and the behaviors of the preceding ones.

Millions of years later, these first humans' biblical avatars were immortalised through the antics of Cain and Abel.

•

Karma Newly Born

In pursuing their self-oriented lifestyle, our karmic ancestors turned the tables on Soul to assume top-dog status. In doing so, they enslaved their souls – our current souls - by trapping them in such a way that they could neither save them nor save themselves from the fate they created - one action at a time – as they went about living their lives.

It is because of this turn of events that Karma was born. Passed on through Soul and through Soul's reflection on the ego, it has created the cycle of re-incarnation.

Also from the Katha Upanishads comes this lovely illustration of the process:

“As a caterpillar, having come to the end of one blade of grass, draws itself together and reaches out for the next, so the Self, having come to the end of one life and dispelled all ignorance, gathers in his faculties and reaches out from the old body to a new” - 47

Although it does make Soul come across as a body-snatcher, clearly the “body” can only be that of each newborn.

○

Unlike ‘dirty money’ that somehow gets ‘laundered’, karma can only be laundered, one action at a time when we, by responding in a soulful manner to the choices presented or reflected in our ego-persona, neutralize the pull of the self - away from

all that we do for own gratification, for our personal ulterior motives, however well hidden, even from our mind, they may be.

•

And by the billions – the vast majority of us incarnated again and again since the crust of the earth had hardened along with the skeletoned body of the early beings of light - we have never looked back.

•

In a way, this hijacking of one organism by another is no different than when, due to an autoimmune disorder, the body turns on itself and the immune system mistakenly kills cells, tissues and organs.

This is the logical place to quote the words of the Great Master, Ramana Maharshi, as discovered - synchronistically for this piece on Creation - in the morning mail from Moriya:

"There was a time when we had free will. We could act as we pleased. We acted, and that act produced a certain result. That "result" became our destiny. We could not escape it. We acted again.

This time our free will carried with it the experience of our first act and was qualified and limited to that extent. This act again produced results, and these results again curtailed our original freedom.

Now that we have been acting and producing results for millions of ages, these actions and their reactions act upon us as our unavoidable fate called Prarabdha. Our body, mind, intellect, and reasoning are fashioned by these and make us choose a certain course. Our previous acts determine our present life, and our present acts go to make our future. We reap now what we have sown in our previous births, and we shall reap in the future what we are sowing now."



Karma in Motion in the Moment Underfoot

We say, “There’s Only So Much We Can Do!” But is that so?

Really so?

All of us alive today can compare ourselves with the planet Earth.

The Law of Attraction of Earth - gravity - symbolizes the reality that ALL things come from Above to us Below.

Everyone understands that in order to ascend anything and anywhere, any object or body needs to be propelled upward by some sort of energy. Not even birds can fly through sheer will.

•

Reality is that only the mightiest of acceleration can propel a mass of steel through the sound barrier - all the way to the moon - and beyond the pull of gravity.

For us, humans, this mighty elevation can only be done by connecting Mind to Soul via responses made through the statics of Ego.

Only Soul has the right energy. She has an energy that I like to compare to that of a drag racing car and its nitro propulsion that yields around 8000 horsepower. This propulsion, however, cannot be measured accurately because there are no dynometers strong enough to measure such an extreme power – but it, too, needs to be balanced.

•

Ego's energy, like fossil fuel, is simply unable to do more than transmit from Soul to Mind.

Any attempt to bypass Soul and attempt a so-called spiritual ascension simply propelled by the creative powers of the Brain, visualization and an ecstatic faith, can be compared to the elevation of a weather balloon.

It will rise but will not enter the spiritual realm and will bring us down in a big SPLAT – imagine Nitro into a 1.5 litre, 4 cylinder car engine!

As an aside, because we are inseparable from each other and inseparable from the whole of the cosmos, it is helpful to see a link between massive natural forces and our 'Ego eruptions'.

What if we were subjected to the same rules as planet Earth but in reverse?

Here's how it can be explained: Earth supplies us with air and we have no choice whether we breathe or not - our lungs insist on breathing for us.

Earth supplies us with a range of natural food products without which we neither function nor grow.

Earth supplies us with solid ground on which to stand and we are bound to it by gravity.

Earth is surrounded by a huge magnetic field and we cannot but react magnetically to every aspect of it in our days. We react magnetically to fauna, flora and to minerals, just as we react emotionally, mentally, spiritually and philosophically. Our attraction to each other is magnetic.

All aspects of our interactions through body and thought are within the boundaries of our Ego - of our energy field - and cannot pass into timelessness. Our thoughts do not pass into the 4th Dimension.

And just as the planets above, we are swept into the processes of birth, growth and death.

No one can sidestep any of these.

We are obliged to go through each of them, be it willingly or unwillingly.

•

Ah, surely, there is one action we can manage on our own, no?

Surely we are the ones who control the time, place and manner of our deaths – by suicide!

Reality check: Yes, of course, we can set the scene and arrange the décor but, no matter how we might try, we can neither induce our own death, if it's not locked into our karmic plan, any more than we can stop anyone's death from happening, if their time has come –according to their karmic plan.

Grim humor translated from French:

Thierry and Martine are residents in a modern psychiatric hospital.

One afternoon, while Martine, unsupervised, was walking by the lake, she jumped in fully dressed and sank to the bottom.

Thierry immediately jumped in after Martine and eventually pulled her up to safety.

When the hospital director heard how Thierry had jumped in without any hesitation to save Martine's life, he decided to allow him time on the outside because, he thought, *as Thierry was now capable of such a selfless action, the years of therapy had worked.*

The director went to see Thierry. He said, "Young man, I have very good news and also very sad news for you." Thierry blinked and waited. "The good news is that your willingness to risk your own life to save that of another indicates that you are ready for some time on the outside. The sad news is that Martine, the woman you saved earlier this morning, has hanged herself. It happened only moments later in the laundry room where she obviously intended drying her clothes. She used her belt and -"

Thierry was quick to reply, "Oh, no, she didn't hang that way by herself. I'm the one who hung her from the beam so she'd dry faster."

Dark humor aside, this joke illustrates accurately how karma does its thing – by hook or by crook. Nothing and no one can ever alter the nature of any karmic event. Even its time frame is pre-determined.



Dare Accept Karmic Dares!

Whilst at a dinner party, an acquaintance of ours confided that she was in the midst of a major relationship meltdown that was so harrowing that, for sure, it had to be due to *bad* karma. She asked the gathering what to do about it.

I didn't reply as the question was not specifically directed to me and I have long made it a personal principle to not jump off my stool, eager to soothe friends' woes by attempting to guide them to an understanding of 'why' things happen as they do.

•

There are no shortcuts to anything worth achieving and it simply doesn't work to connect heartache, grief, illness and set-backs in our lives to 'bad karma', just as it doesn't work to connect 'lucky breaks', successes and good news to 'good karma'.

Although the deconstruction of a situation from a spiritual angle is meant to explain differently what needs to be understood - as well as empower - it usually falls on fallow ground and annoys more than placates.

What glimmer of understanding might be cast along with a necessary shift of perception from within are mostly overtly or covertly dismissed as drivel, and I understand why it is so.

Yet, part of our human tragedy stems from the fact that we don't often understand that what the 'moment' underfoot contains is not encapsulated purely in that moment.

•

This 'moment' actually contains the result of actions and thoughts entertained earlier today or yesterday which, in turn became linked to actions and thoughts entertained last week, which were the result of what we had thought and done ... previously.

And so, to truly understand where 'this moment' comes from, we need to backward map our thoughts and our actions, such as they already were in our pre-teen years, the beginning of our 'thinking' years – which is why it is impossible to fully understand why the 'moments' that make up our current life are as they are which is

why it is best to 'be' in the moment underfoot and to accept calmly, humbly whatever it intends to bring to our attention.

•

It is far easier to cling to the notion of random bad luck punctuated by occasional 'deserved' breaks than to accept we have been given the tool of free will and are meant to use it.

Though our inherited karma compounded by the karma we have created all by ourselves in this lifetime have us positioned over a blueprint of our life as it will unfold, we do have the means to alter this blueprint to a degree.

•

We live in the delusion that what we wish for ourselves, what we want or what we strive to achieve will eventuate sooner or later – including the future life we plan and, at times, fabricate for our children.

However, when our hopes, our assumptions, are shattered, what we face is a tragedy, a disaster, an accident that would not have been ours except for bad luck. We cry, "Why me!" And we say, "There can't be a god!"

Full of disbelief, we ask, "How could a loving, magnanimous god wreak such pain upon me, such havoc in my life?"

Such responses suggest that we fail to understand that ONLY what happens, what 'comes down', is what is truly MEANT to happen in our life, at any pre-determined moment, whether they be the fun and pleasant moments or the worrisome, the nasty and the freakishly heart-breaking a.k.a. the soul-destroying moments.

•

When one is able to consider one's personal tragedy from a karmic perspective, one must cast a fresh intention on the old question: *Why* is this happening to me? And because there is no greater personal tragedy than the death of a loved one, if the circumstances of someone's passing can be deconstructed accurately, surely the process will help us understand better matters of lesser import, such as a relationship breakdown.

•

And so, in a bid to eventually accept what makes her tick and, with a resolution to be less demanding but more genuinely accepting and move away from dead-end, repetitious patterns, the best advice to give that friend of ours who, at the dinner

table, announced she was in the middle of a relationship meltdown, would have been to slide her own M.O. under a microscope to identify all the fears and insecurities that make her 'love' in the way that she does and make her re-act in the way that she does. But, of course, even if one asks directly, seeking genuine answers, which is not likely at a dinner party, not many people are able to hear 'that sort of advice' - and accept it placidly in the first round.

•

Death is **always** the denouement of a finely orchestrated string of 'human-made decisions and indecisions' – even the death we call *accidental*.

•

To better illustrate this particular point of her teaching, Moriya recently told me about a young man from a local Jerusalem yeshiva, an orthodox Jew, who came to grief in the hinterland of Ein Karem, an ancient, picturesque village that sits a short drive out of the city. According to Christian tradition, this is the birth place of John the Baptist.

Ein Karem, nestled between hills and mountains, is kept green by two rivers (wadis). However, it is common local knowledge that these wadis dry up during the hottest phase of summers.

So ... the orthodox young man began a trek through the forest, perhaps intending to bring his lips closer to God's ear by praying in the *Hitbodedut* style which, in one of its forms, consists of improvising a freestyle monologue addressed to God. Because in this format, the words need to be heartfelt and be energized, it is best to find a secluded place where one is likely to be neither heard nor disturbed.

•

A couple of days later, the young man was reported missing and search parties were deployed in several areas, but none sent in the village of Ein karem, until some days later.

However, once the would-be rescuers did arrive to the village, they were quick to discover the body near one of the dried up river beds.

•

Questions:

Should the police and the search parties, deemed ineffective because of their delay in searching Ein Karem, be blamed for the young man's death?

Should the family seek compensation for their loss?

Did the young man die because of his religious orthodoxy?

Did he die because he had been foolhardy, unprepared for the trek in these particular hills in the middle of a hot summer?

Could his parents and/or friends have thought to warn him of the drought and given him a bigger water bottle to take along?

Should the media badger the local city council for not having had signs posted at the village entrance warning visitors of the risk of dehydration?

Was there any way the rescue teams could have reached that young man any earlier than they did?

•

For the ones who have followed the discussion on karma and karmic events thus far, No is the correct answer to each of the above questions.

•

Karmic reality check: it is neither his need for seclusion nor the lack of water that caused the young man's death.

Driven by his soul, by his karmic energy, but as unaware as we all are, he did organize his trek specifically to the hinterland of Ein Karem BECAUSE *there*, the forest is dense and, *there, nowhere else, lay the agent of his demise*, the dried up river bed.

And because no one and nothing can ever alter or disturb the karmic plan, the choreography of an event due, there was no earthly way the would-be rescuers could possibly have thought or responded differently than they had – not until the event was over.

It is only once the young man had expired that, his last breath, so to speak, released more informative details from here and there - and the rescuers from their fog.

Life – and **death** – are 'staged' and, though we do have considerable scope for improvisation, we all have a part to play.

Once beyond a certain marker, invisible to us, we are cast in the role karmically assigned to us and no Deus Ex Machine can pop out and prevent the ultimate outcome.

Bottom line: the young man made his way into this specific forest, not simply to perform his ritual of Hitbodedut, but to die.

The single-minded intention of death, as embedded in his energy field as in that of every single 'victim' of 'tragic accidents' - the proverbial 'writing on the wall' - would have been as active in his energy field, though unrealized by him, as had been each and every one of his previous intentions – even that of falling in love, of getting engaged or of simply attending a religious festival.

•

As Moriya says, "The biggest tragedy of life is the inability of people to understand that, just as people choose to seek thrills, pleasure and escapes in various forms, so they also seek their way to *pre-ordained* death. All the while though, just like police and forensic experts, we are blinded by the simple circumstantial facts.

To mere facts, we give purpose and intent.

•

When it comes to our own life and its 'tale of woes', we tend to be as 'blind' as the prisoners in Plato's allegory, The Cave, in that, we, too, tend to confuse the shadow of What Seems with What Is because we have yet to see 'the light'.

However, thanks to incessant news flashes, the possibility to deconstruct other *people's tragic moments*, does go some way in helping us develop a different awareness of the process, the actions and reactions that stepped the person towards *their* momentous events. Or, perhaps better said, it helps us deconstruct the subtle stacking up of events that, ultimately, was intended to awaken them - or their surviving loved ones, depending - from an ongoing complacent torpor.

•

At the very least, a lateral deconstruction of what has come to pass is bound to be more productive than a mere surprised, but casual, exclamation such as, *Oh my, the*

poor man! Or even a heartfelt but passing, *Oh, my goodness! His poor, poor parents!
And his wife and children! How dreadful!*

○

If at the time of thinking such thoughts about others' tragedies, we rushed, *emotionally*, to our own loved ones and, having been awoken, did our best to stay actively in that zone of loving acceptance, it could be said that the passing of Person X, a brief blip in our awareness, did not occur in vain.

•

Besides, in our culture it is commonly accepted to say, *If there's even one thing we can do, if there's just one life we can save—we've got an obligation to try,*" as President Obama said, a propos of something or other.

Thus, it should be simple enough to rethink our thinking along the lines of, *If there's even one thing I can do, if there's just one of my loved ones I can love better – I've got an obligation to try.*

In which case we would be giving ourselves a chance to act on that awareness from the inside-out – and make that a life-long project of sorts.

○

In short, some of us will die trying, as the expression goes.

Others will forever hold their peace and grieve more or less painfully.

Others will simply die ... eventually – oblivious of their own spiritual apathy.

•

In a bid to push the point one notch further, here are details of another karmic event, inserted here because it provides as close to a 'graphic' lesson on how karma does its thing as possible. It also illustrates how the 'victim-to-be' is always prompted, one might even say pushed and prodded, by one's own thoughts and/or, inadvertently by others. It shows, too, how it is utterly impossible for anyone or anything to 'tamper' with such a moment once it is in-progress.

•

Byron Bay, New South Wales, in my home country of Australia where I live, one of my favorite seaside escapes, yesterday provided the setting in which

- a man lost his life,
 - a woman witnessed the shocking death of her otherwise healthy 50 year-old husband and
 - a stranger, aware of the danger presented by a circling Great White shark, but at the same time oblivious to it, positioned himself as a would-be rescuer.

Meanwhile, on the beach and in utter horrified disbelief, the victim's wife had watched on as the unstoppable karmic moment unfolded.

•

It is common knowledge that several varieties of sharks do cruise by most areas of the Australian coastline. Throughout Australia some 20 people have lost their lives to shark attacks since 2002, but in the specific area of Byron bay, sharks are hardly ever spotted by Sea Rescue teams or Surf Lifesavers.

Up to that fateful morning, no one had ever come to grief there.

•

On the early morning of the day the local business owner, a member of the swim club, waded into the sea around 10 am, the Coastal Watch's update had been as follows: ***Small surf in the Bay this morning with messy waves ... Try the northern protected corners for some cleaner peaks.***

And it is in that specific 'protected' corner of the bay that a 'passing' great white shark bit the swimmer on the leg and ruptured an artery. The man was quickly surrounded by the tendrils and swirls of his own blood, which attracted the attention of a passer-by who, some 12 metres away, having noted the presence of the shark, waded in thinking to rescue what he took to be an injured sea turtle.

Once he realized the victim was a man, he pulled him on to the sand and he and another passer-by, a woman, gave the man mouth-to-mouth for several minutes before two doctors ran up to help – but too late. It is believed the man was already dead by the time he was dragged on to the sand.

○

In this instance, as is often the case, there was someone close to the victim who was quoted saying, "He died doing what he wanted to do." In this event, these words were spoken by the victim's mother. "It's not as though somebody attacked him in the street," she added. "It's not as though he was shot in Afghanistan which mothers have had to go through."

Of course, when one is interested in understanding why things happen as they do from a spiritual perspective, one of few but essential points to keep in mind is this: whether the cause of death is a bullet, a random driver, a collapsing roof, a medical malpractice, a storm, a fishbone stuck in the throat, an illness, a mechanical failure – or the bite of a passing shark – it's all much of a muchness.

○

Shakespeare's Juliet mused in the moonlight, "*Why do you have to be Romeo? Forget about your father and change your name. [...] Oh, be some other name! What does a name mean? The thing we call a rose would smell just as sweet if we called it by any other name. [...] Romeo would be just as perfect even if he wasn't called Romeo.*"

○

Musing on a parallel: *what difference does it make to me if you happen in the guise of a shark, a bullet, a derailed train, wrong diagnosis, a geriatric driver or a drunk one or in the guise of a fishbone stuck in my throat? What's in a word or in a shape when each is a karmic tool by a different name! What comes to be the reason of my demise will be one thing or another and thus imports little to me. The state we call death will result in the same, regardless how it shall occur and I will not know the difference. However untimely it might appear to my loved ones, whichever karmic 'death tool' comes to me shall be the perfect 'death tool' come to me to affect **them** for a reason. With good fortune my last breath will come and I will not know it was my last.*

●

Serious questions: the section of the Byron Bay beach was not patrolled on the morning of the attack, but lifeguards and helicopters have since been on active duty there for the past couple of days.

the sea ... now?

morning of 9 September, 2014?

Today, a local headline has it that **Byron Bay keeps swimming after shark attack**

Ranging from 17 to 80 years of age, are the locals mentioned in the article, at risk of death-by-shark or could we assume that the sea, there, is once again as safe as it ever was because the karmic event that came to pass, even more unerring than DNA, was designed for the victim and for no one else??

But, wait! There's more. There's always more.

How to not be 'arrested' these days, by the seamless and endless stream of karmic events coming our way via TV and Internet news?

Second by second, anyone who cares to keep an observant watch is given the opportunity to deconstruct more and more karmic case studies, almost as they happen in real time.

[Surface adaptation from] **The Independent - WEDNESDAY 05 NOVEMBER 2014**

As it appears on the surface:

"I know [they] will be upset but I don't care. In my eyes, everything I've done is fine and dandy," Will told experts.

Mrs Maguire's family described the attack as a "monumental act of cowardice and evil".

What came down:

During class, 15 year-old Will stabbed Mrs Maguire, his 61 year-old Spanish teacher, 7 times in the neck and back. She was known as the “mother of the school” and was due to retire in a few weeks.

What is said about Will:

Quietly spoken but academically successful, Will bore all the hallmarks of a typical teenager.

Two months before the killing he had told another friend that 61 year-old Mrs Maguire was: “The one absolute f**bitch that deserves more than death, more than pain and more than anything that we can understand.”

The prosecution said that the boy’s family were decent and responsible people and despite separating when he was young, his parents had worked hard to foster a close relationship. They are at a loss to understand how and why their son has turned out as he has.

It emerged that neither the authorities, nor his “decent and responsible” parents had any idea the youngster had developed an “inexplicable” murderous antipathy towards Mrs Maguire.

Traumatized pupils described how the boy appeared pleased with what he had done. Will sat down, telling classmates it was a “pity” that she had not died instantly.



Serious questions coming up: Not koans, riddles in the line of Zen Buddhism - for I would not presume having the wisdom to develop even one - but nonetheless intriguing questions that require you to return to this page, **after you’ve finished reading** ALL the sections about karma in this book.

Brace yourself for they are many.

I have flagged the questions below with a yellow highlight, so you can find your way back to them more easily once you think you have worked out the answers. 😊

Questions: Beyond the appropriate verdict given by the Courts and the epithets that describe the horror of this crime, from a spiritual perspective, how would *you* deconstruct the events that have led to the moment as they unfolded in the class

room and how would you explain the real reason for the murder and its detail?

What or who, would you say, enabled Will to pull off this crime?

Beyond saying Will is a sociopath or a psychopath, how would *you* account for his impenetrable lack of immediate remorse and the reasons why no one 'saw it coming' and no one was able to stop this horrid deed from happening?

○

Karma = Knock-On Effect of Our Actions- Reactions and Inactions

Albert Einstein - *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.

And you, dear Reader, on the topics of Karma and Soul,

- what can you not conceive?
- What are YOU satisfied with?

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Karmic case study #1 with all due respect for the memory of Mr Shand:

24 April 2014

The Duchess of Cornwall was left 'utterly devastated' last night by the death of her younger brother in New York.

Mark Shand, 62, suffered a head injury when he slipped and fell on the pavement on a night out in Manhattan. He was put on life support but doctors could not save him and he died 12 hours later.

Camilla, 66, was extremely close to her only brother, who was known for his swashbuckling travel books and passionate commitment to conservation.

Mr Shand had travelled to New York to host a Sotheby's auction of egg sculptures decorated by leading artists in aid of his Elephant Family charity and underprivileged

children.

The event, which raised nearly £1million, was attended by Princess Eugenie. Mr Shand then attended an after-party at the exclusive Diamond Horseshoe club off Times Square, which features burlesque and vaudeville-style acts.

A fellow guest said he appeared to be 'on top of the world' after the successful fundraiser. Mr Shand had left the venue and was apparently on his way to bed at 3am when he tripped while trying to light a cigarette and hit his head outside the Rose Bar of the Gramercy Park Hotel.

How to [not] be blinded by Bad Luck and misrepresent karma

Assumed Bad Luck factor #1: Mr Shand felt sorry for elephants and disadvantaged children. What were the *true* catalysts for his concerns?

Assumed Bad Luck factor #2: he was an active fundraiser

Assumed Bad Luck factor #3: he flew to New York from London

Assumed Bad Luck factor #4: he was a smoker

Assumed Bad Luck factor #5: he left The Diamond Horseshoe unaccompanied.

Why, *really*, karmically speaking?

Assumed Bad Luck factor #6: he stood outside the Rose Bar.

When we accept that nothing ever happens randomly, especially not anything that leads to an 'event', we can ask ourselves whether Mr Shand *deliberately* chose to stop *right there*, intentionally or ... did he just 'happen' to stop at that *precise* spot on the side walk?

Assumed Bad Luck factor #7: he gave in to the urge to light a cigarette.

Assumed Bad Luck factor #8: the sidewalk in front of the Rose Bar tripped him up.



Karmic case study #2

14 May 2014

A children's jumping castle set up in the grounds of an apartment block was lifted higher than the surrounding buildings by a sudden gust of wind.

In it were three children who, literally, were 'spilled back to the earth' from a height of

some 15 to 40 feet. One child suffered a head injury, another suffered two broken arms whilst the third child suffered only minor scrapes.

According to The Post Star, one of the children's mother was quoted saying, "My older daughters witnessed it and said it was just horrible. A big gust of wind just blew it right off the ground with the kids in it. It's just sickening."

More frightening, no doubt, for the children and parents nearby than the lifting of Dorothy's house, whisked upwards by a Hollywood-made tornado, in the **Wizard of Oz**.

How to [not] be blinded by Bad Luck and misrepresent karma

Assumed Bad Luck factor #1: the owner of the castle did not peg it securely

Assumed Bad Luck factor #2: parents allowed their children to play in the castle on that specific afternoon

Assumed Bad Luck factor #3: the urban landscape, apartment blocks, created a freak wind tunnel

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Why, really, why did these specific three children just 'happened' to be in that inflatable toy, just at that specific moment?

Where else might each of these three children have been if...?

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Karmic case study #3 with all due respect for the memory of Mr Miller

26 April 2014

A British teenager, Henry Miller, was found dead somewhere in Colombia after taking a hallucinogenic drug during his participation in a tribal ritual.

It was the second time the young man had taken the drug.

How to [not] be blinded by Bad Luck and misrepresent karma

Assumed Bad Luck factor #1: Henri Miller decided to take a gap year.

Why, *really*?

Assumed Bad Luck factor #2: parents, friends and his savings allowed him to do so.

Assumed Bad Luck factor #3: he picked Columbia as his destination of choice.
Why? Really, why?

Assumed Bad Luck factor #4: he tagged along with a tribe.

What was he *really* searching for? Was he *actually* searching for anything?

Assumed Bad Luck factor #5: he was invited to participate in a tribal ritual.

Assumed Bad Luck factor #6: he accepted to take a hallucinogenic drug.

Assumed Bad Luck factor #7: he repeated the experience.

Why, as in really ... why did he repeat the experience?

Was it a thought-out act of free will or did he ... just do it?



Karmic case study #4 with all due respect for the memory of Mr Rockefeller

Jun 14, 2014

Richard Rockefeller, 65, died when the private plane he was flying crashed.

He left the airport around 8 a.m. to fly back to his home, taking off through a blanket of fog and crashed a few minutes later.

How to [not] be blinded by Bad Luck and misrepresent karma

Assumed Bad Luck factor #1: the fog was low and that failed to deter Mr Rockefeller.

Assumed Bad Luck factor #2: he left early in the morning. *Why, really, did he leave that early?*

Was there any *real* rush?

Assumed Bad Luck factor #3: he was returning home.

What, *really*, pushed him to take off in spite of bad visibility?

Assumed Bad Luck factor #4: the aircraft struck the line of trees.



Karmic case study #5 with all due respect for the memory of the children

25 October 2008

Aiming a Uzi, assault weapon, at a pumpkin, while the instructor watched on and his father prepared to take a picture of his boy 'in action', an 8 year-old lost control of the recoil and shot himself in the head.

Aug 27, 2014

The equally sensational news of the 9 year-old girl who, upon recoil, lost control of the Uzi submachine gun with which she was being given a lesson in handling, and accidentally shot the instructor standing at her side.

How to [not] be blinded by Bad Luck and misrepresent karma

Assumed Bad Luck factor #1 for both the instructor and the child: the girl's parents had decided to drive through Mohave County, in the vicinity of Vegas.

Assumed Bad Luck factor #2 for both the instructor and the child: something prompted the parents to stop at the range

Assumed Bad Luck factor #3 for both the instructor and the child: The instructor found himself working at that particular range and was on 'duty' at the time of the family's visit.

Assumed Bad Luck factor #4 for both the instructor, the child and her parents: the girl's parents agreed to treat her to a lesson in Uzi handling.

Assumed Bad Luck factor #5 for both the instructor, the child and her parents: no one at the shooting range objected.

Assumed Bad Luck factor #6 for both the instructor, the child and her parents: though, according to video evidence, the instructor had to steady the girl upon recoil *from one single shot*.

Karmic adjustment in real time:

The instructor steadies the girl, as she fired a single shot.

Immediately, he congratulates her and adjusts the weapon to auto mode.

"Alright", he says easily, eyes shielded by dark glasses, as they may have been by

the black blindfold traditionally applied before an execution to the designated victim.

"Alright, full auto!" He urges, "Now go ahead and *give me one shot*,"

The weapon is fired.

The girl screams.

The video cuts off.

One shot hit the instructor in the head and kills him.

The one shot he asked for is exactly what the automatic weapon delivered, although it can fire five rounds in one third of a second.

Another karmic act has come, impeccably choreographed.

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Questions without answers in the here and now:

News of this dramatic accident went viral and gave the gun debate a new angle. This enduring debate aside, many are asking themselves why such a young child was given permission by her parents and by the instructor to even hold a submachine gun, let alone shoot it once, let alone shoot it on auto.

Why was the instructor standing at the left of the girl when he knew that, for obvious reasons of personal safety and to better steady the person, safety procedures required him to stand behind the shooter.

While the world will go on asking *why this* and *why that* and posturing *for* or *against this* and *that*, we could simply ask another set of more evolved questions, though of course, these, too, will remain unanswered in the here and now.

- What could possibly have 'moved' this veteran from Iraq and Afghanistan to, then, immediately adjust the weapon for an auto round immediately after the wobbly delivery of that single shot - even in the absence of a request from the girl?
- Where, emotionally, will this horrifying event propel and push the victim's family, his wife and children?
- How, in the fullness of time, will the young girl, herself, emerge from this tragedy beyond, possibly, being made the poster girl for the anti-gun lobby?
- How will her parents come to terms with the part they have played, if only as karmic accessories?

- What enlightened support, from the inside/out, will each of the 'characters' in this karmic play be able and willing to give and receive to and from each other for, united in this event they certainly are.

•

At the end of online news pages, on this day – as in every other day - some of the current most 'sensational' global headlines appeared indiscriminately *mashed together* in what one could describe as depressing, callous non-sequiturs:

[ISIS Is Ignoring Islam's Teachings on Yazidis and Christians](#)[Javier Bardem and Penelope Cruz Backtrack on Israel and Gaza Letter](#)[Too Young to Shoot? Why It's Legal for Kids to Handle Uzis](#)[NBC News](#)[American Hostage's Mom's Video 'Brilliant,' Experts Say](#)[NBC News](#)[USC's Josh Shaw Admits Lying About Heroic Rescue](#)[NBC News](#)

•

Stirring, cute, tragic, trivial, horrid, crazy, heart-warming or heart-wrenching and occasionally glorious, such an online mix of seemingly disconnected headlines do illustrate the kaleidoscopic, endlessly creative, mind-boggling ways karma does its thing with us - and for us.

•

On this day – as in every other day since the Dawn of Time - karmic events unfold in our homes, streets, work place, highways, seas and skies. And, still, we seldom understand that thoughts and actions happening in 'the moment' are not limited to that specific moment.

•

Though 'this moment' is the only one within which we can create a positive short-circuit, 'this moment' is the result of actions and thoughts entertained seconds earlier which were triggered by actions and thoughts entertained before that. These, too, were the result of what we had thought and done ... earlier again.

•

To truly understand where 'this moment' comes from, we would have to backward map, moment by moment, our thoughts and actions, such as they were, all the way back to the beginning of our 'thinking' years – which is why, by now, it is impossible to truly understand why 'the moment' underfoot is as it is.

Karmic case study #6 with all due respect for the memory of Steven Sotloff

Steven Sotloff, a freelance journalist, was a citizen of Israel as well as of America. He attended a private boarding school in New Hampshire, USA, and, later, a private college in Israel.

Questions: *really ... what* prompted Steven to subsequently, in 2010, apply to the ANNS faculty at Qatar University, a tiny, but very oil-rich country surrounded by the Persian Gulf with Saudi Arabia as sole neighbor?

Beyond the physical and emotional blind-mice shuffle we all partake in with our actions/reactions/opportunities/impulses/ego-decisions in a bid to take charge of our destiny – our lifestyle - *why, really ... why* did Steven find himself involved with reporting on the Arab Spring and, later, for Time Magazine, on the migration from Libya to Syria of Al-Qaeda fighters and commanders and then on the fight to topple Bashar al-Assad's regime?

What, *really ... what* motivated him to return to the Benghazi compound where 4 Americans had been killed on the night of 9/11 of that same year when he could have gone just about anywhere else on the planet?

Why, *really ... why* years later, while he feared he had been blacklisted by a faction of ISIS he may have angered by doing something or other, did he remain in that part of the world, when he could have relocated himself just about anywhere on the planet?

What, *really ... what* kept him there instead of returning either to Israel or to America, instead of turning his journalistic skills on to any one of the numerous human rights abuses perpetrated from Tibet to Detroit?

•

Then again, at the ISIS end of things, *WHY* was a key person there, so desperate to 'get' *Steven* that, according to some reports, thousands of dollars were paid to someone belonging to one of the 'moderate' rebel groups in the Free Syrian Army for a tip of Steven's whereabouts back in 2013?

It is that tip-off that lead to his capture, as he went through a fake checkpoint with others in his group.

Steven moved about in a group, yes, but he was not the only one reporting for the international media in that particular part of the world.

He was also not the only one who was, perhaps wrongly, on a list of people supposedly involved in the bombing of a hospital.

It's not likely that the reporter would have been coerced by anyone so *WHAT*, really *what* pushed Steven to seek ways to penetrate the Syrian border, his last decision as a free man, the decision that sealed his fate, in the here and now?

•

Rabbi Bookman, a friend of the family said, "In the end, Steven was taken from us not because of who he was but because of what he represented: freedom."

At the memorial, Senator Marco Rubio said, "*He chose to be a journalist in one of the most dangerous places. That's where he chose to speak his truth.*"

Sure! But, Steven, along with hundreds of journalists from all parts of the world, rocket -chasing photographers, exhausted aid workers, desperate Syrian refugees, war tourists, and a handful of European Muslims, was only one person among thousands who wanted, and still want, to bring the suffering of the Islamic people to the attention of the world.

And so, the serious question within the context of this conversation still has to be *WHY* Steven?

Why *him* out of all others who were on the same day-to-day path?

•

Steven Sotloff was the second journalist beheaded by an ISIS rebel on Sep 2, 2014 but, as is often the case when persons come to grief in the middle of one of their chosen occupations, someone who knows Steven is probably quoted somewhere as having said somewhat simplistically, "*He died doing what he loved best.*"

Still, a non-emotional question remains, *Why ...him?*

○

On this day, September 13, 2014, David Haines was also beheaded.

It is in a similar manner that Hervé Gourdel met his fate on September 24, 2014.

The French father of two, a 55 year-old mountain climber, well familiar with North Africa, its people and its terrain was captured by a group of armed Islamist while on a trek with Algerian friends of his. He, too, was beheaded.

Francois Hollande, the French President said, "*Hervé Gourdel died because he was French, because his country, France, fights terrorism.*"

Yes, of course, this is the general understanding worldwide of why such things happen to good people, here, there and everywhere – regardless of their nationality. But, if you are still reading this, dear Reader, by now, we probably can be agree that such a view is somewhat narrow.

○

Serious questions: when all things between people *within a group* are more or less equal, as in the case of Steven Sotloff's colleagues who were following the same reporting trails as he was, or in the case of Hervé Goudel's trekking companions and other French trekkers who, no doubt, were exploring similar areas of the country side - regardless of the nature of the karmic event about to come down - what is it that singles out any *one* individual at a specific time and place for that specific event?

From where comes that invisible **X** that makes that person a 'marked' one?

●

As an aside, but perhaps a telling one, large conglomerates and entrepreneurs are forever seeking ways to create business opportunities for themselves in the markets that emerge through and after every political upheaval. There, as on the stock market, high-risk investment brings back higher returns - just as, at times, it brings back irrecoverable losses.

●

The thing is that more and more businesses seeking to strike roots in volatile parts of the world are turning to Political Risk insurance policies, in the hope that such an insurance will help them mitigate financial risks, should a crisis arise.

The men and women involved in such high risk ventures are often hailed as selfless heroes for putting their own safety and the stability of their 'loved ones' above their own comfort but are they ... *really?*

Serious questions: is the motivating factor to act as vanguard in a dysfunctional political environment that fosters random violence linked in any way to a concern for the genuine welfare of others?

How likely is it that their efforts will play an essential part in the deep *healing* process that must take place in so many parts of the world where persons of all ages, of the same ethnic and cultural background fight each other to death ... because they are 'driven' to it?

If they happen to have parents, a spouse or children, how will the Political Risk insurance compensate them for the loss of their loved one?

o

Beyond the dream of big \$\$, of celebrity status within their own sphere of influence, of acceptance – *the search for love by any other name* - however these might manifest for a business person, a journalist, a soldier of fortune, a missionary or a doctor working in high risk zones, what is *really* pushing these men and women to go 'out there'?

After all, not only do they risk their own lives but, potentially, they also risk the physical comfort and emotional health of their loved ones back home.

Reality check#1: once these adventurers embark on their self-appointed mission, they consciously opt out of the day-to-day love/support/bonding/growth/decision-making of life back home. They choose to escape from its routine and daily 'grind'.

Reality check#2: whether they come to grief by bullet, injury, germ, sharp blade, one virus or another, an unexpected complicated sexual attraction or a financial loss – once we accept that 'all happens for a reason' we, then, need to accept that the '*reason*' is mostly the cumulative result of all actions/reactions/inactions activated by our own thoughts – in what were once ... the present moments underfoot.

Indeed, on any given day, the present moment underfoot is where we allow everything to begin and end. The present moment is the only moment there ever is – the only moment we can shape from the inside-out.

How we choose to shape that specific moment, how we give in to the 'push' to do it

one way or another, is always left up to us.



How to know for sure what our neighbors get up to after we're done waving at each other and saying hi - they've locked their front door?

Karmic case study #7 with all due respect for the memory of both victims

A couple of years ago, a 28 year-old man identified himself as a very friendly, easy going, sexy Australian boy — and a sex worker.

Photos taken last month show this young man as a pleasant-faced, well-muscled lad with shaggy blond hair. He was a black belt in Karate. Although his mother had no idea what her son did for a living, he worked locally, in Brisbane, as a chef particularly interested in nutrition.

He was not known for being a part of the drug scene, however, on Facebook, he was railed against men who hurt women and animals – men, he thought should be castrated.

According to neighbors in the new, fashionable riverside building where he rented with his young wife, this young man was polite and nice – the sort of guy who would open the door for you.

Neighbors reported not having heard sounds of quarrel either before or during the event that ensued, and they described the couple as being just a normal couple who seemed quite friendly, and thought, *Isn't his wife absolutely gorgeous!* However, a friend of theirs stated that, though they had been married less than a year, the pair's relationship had been a volatile one.

A week ago at the time of writing, this young man made a phone call to a 24h electrician. A power blackout, he allegedly said, had occurred while he was cooking a

stew and he wanted to have electricity restored a.s.a.p.

○

When the electrician arrived, the young man apologized for the strong smell, explaining he had been in the middle of cooking pig's broth when the blackout occurred.

According to his later testimony, the electrician attested that, at one moment or another while in the apartment, he had felt a mushy weirdness about the carpet and that he noticed a pair of gloves in the kitchen and the very strong smell of bleach.

○

A few days on, the neighbors were reported saying that the smell emanating from the apartment had eventually become so nauseating, it made one gag. It was, they explained, as if somebody had put out some dog food or red meat and left it out for a few days in the sun. One of them eventually reported the matter to the Police.

The young man was still toiling at the stove, making a meat stew, when he appraised the situation. In a bid to escape before the Police entered the apartment, he ran through a glass door, cutting himself, and jumped over the balcony. He was later found in a nearby industrial bin – throat sliced – presumably by his own hand.

Meanwhile back in the apartment, bits of body parts were found strewn elsewhere in the apartment and the pot full of partly cooked meat was still hot on the stove.

○

It wasn't long before forensic experts declared that these remains, including the bits in the pot, belonged to the man's beautiful, winsome, transgender wife who worked as a high-priced sex worker, sending most of her earnings back to Indonesia - back to her mother and younger sisters who lived there and had no other means of support.

"She was a beautiful soul", said the owner of a legal brothel. "She worked for us for many years."

○

The victim's mother who had never been able to refer to her transgender son as her *daughter* said that she had forgiven her child's killer and, in a press conference, urged all parties to move beyond the unfathomable horror that linked all of them. Very relevant to this karmic case study, the victim's mother asked that the members of

both families should forgive not only their own deceased offspring for what each may have done to the other to prompt the killing.

○

She went even further, urging all parties to forgive each other for the part they, each one of them, including herself, may have played directly or indirectly, intentionally or not, covertly or overtly, in this horrific tragedy.

A week later at the time of writing, the Police appears no closer to figuring what, on the physical plane, prompted the handsome and strapping young man to murder, butcher and cook his gorgeous young bride before slicing his own throat from inside a nearby industrial bin.

•

Truly, we can never know for sure what our neighbors get up to after they're done waving hi and after they've locked their front door, but whatever they get up to, should we accept that the motivation for their actions comes from a sphere of influence that defies our notion of common sense and understanding?

Yes, absolutely.

Does this understanding absolve them of their behaviour in the here and now?

No, it does not.

•

Karma can be imagined as 'bits' off the richest of all tapestries – a tapestry that is constantly being spun.

Some 'bits' might have been spun recently, within living memory. Other bits will have been spun eons and eons back.

Either way, some of these 'bits' eventually stretch up – up to each of us. Some of these bits are in light and happy shades.

They surprise us.

They shape us to fit into 'a scene'.

Other bits are made heavy by dark threads knightly woven threads and knots.

They surprise us.

They shape us to fit into 'a scene'.

•

Death is the narrator in Markus Zusak's novel, *The Book Thief*.

Towards the end of the story, Death has just visited three of the main characters while they slept unaware of the imminent German blitz that would destroy, among others, Himmel Street, the street where they and young Liesel lived.

Death says, "No one intended to destroy a street named after Heaven - it was a misread on a map. No sirens that evening."

Serious questions within the scope of this discussion:

Are there ever any such things as a 'non-intention' or as a 'misread'?

Was the lack of siren really *a mistake*?



Karma Neutral

Karma is neutral. Only we give it attributes such as good, nasty, amazing, bad, pleasant, boring, huge, rude, horrid, painful, unfair, awesome.

Once the surprise effect is over, it should become clear that the 'bits' that have come into our reality are intended to shape our personal, our physical moments like wavelets or waves shape the ebb and flow that shape the tideline. Like tidal waves shape dunes and cliffs. Like tsunamis devastate the landscape and her people.

Regardless of its magnitude on the scales, always, karma comes to us weighed and measured according to a pre-set, unerring tabulation of our thoughts and deeds and also according to the push or shove or dramatic upheaval that is deemed the measure of wake-up call or challenge deemed perfect – the one we are expected to eventually rise from, a new person – a person connected to Soul – in each of moments she grants us from there on.

•

Unless we actively understand and accept the doings or karma as logical and positive, we can only shrug in ignorance when pondering any of the karmic events that bombard us, thanks to the 24/7 newsflashes.

•

To truly understand personal karma, as well as group karma, we would have to backward map, moment by moment, the cultural thoughts and beliefs held in our communities, our thoughts and actions, as well as those of our politicians and those of the ruling parties, such as they have been, all the way back to the moment of their inception – which is why, by now, it is impossible to truly understand why the global political landscape, in 'the moment' underfoot, is as it is.

•

Between 1976 and 2013, *it* killed some 2000 persons who lived on or had visited the African continent.

At the time of writing, the current mega-outbreak has already killed more than 5000 people.

No longer the preoccupation of a handful of dogged scientists, the Ebola virus has finally arrived to our shores - and the West is in the grip of a new 'terror'. This time, however, the threat is of a non-military, non-insurgent, non-religious nature. This time, the threat is a deadly pandemic.

“Ebola has the potential to be like Cholera and other plagues of the Middle Ages which killed millions,” explained Moriya. “These plagues symbolize the inner violence of the era and the many ways in which it separates. In every nation, regardless of its religious beliefs and its political intentions, there is always a separation of parties against each other, of neighbors against each other, of colleagues against each other, of firms and multinational against each other, and so on.

Ebola, like AIDS or cancer doesn't make any distinction and it is color blind. It can potentially come to black and white, yellow and brown persons alike. It comes to Jews and Muslims, Buddhists and to Christians. It also comes to rich and to poor people in the same manner and with the same intensity.”

•

Indeed, Ebola, AIDS and even Cancer have, at various times, been considered plagues and, yes, such diseases are totally egalitarian. They are also very quick to reveal the deep-set sense of separation between the self and others, the self-centred fragmentation that is kept hidden by the shellac of political correctness and cultural mores which encourage emotional distancing and superficiality. It used to be the same with Cancer but, after decades of aggressive media campaigns, the resulting understanding that Cancer was neither an infectious nor shameful disease has slowly lifted the veil of suspicion off Cancer sufferers.

○

Bottom line: The *fear* born out of paranoia and/or misinformation regarding any particular infectious disease keeps friends and family members away from each other – away from their 'loved one' at a time of their greatest emotional need.

In fact, any outbreak on a mass scale, similarly to any threat to our physical comfort like the risk of running out of supplies, even if only of milk, not to mention water or petrol, have the potential to bring anarchy to our streets.

In such cases, life will quickly imitate events found in the hundreds of films based on popular Doom's Day scenarios.

Having said that, we forget that thousands of people this year alone will die of the mundane sort of flu and that heart disease is the leading cause of death In the United states – and that anywhere from 120, 000 to 300,000+ people die each day around the globe.

But the focal point when talking about infectious diseases or about any other *mis*-hap or *good*-hap is to understand that not *one* event ever happens to anyone randomly – and life-changing events are no exceptions to that rule.

•

All who are directly involved with infectious diseases, including doctors, and nurses, family members, friends and relatives have been cast in that role for very specific reasons.

Their role requires the sort of **DO**ing that goes well beyond injecting patients, disposing of waste safely, shedding tears, bringing flowers and tossing and turning at night. It requires a lot more than dulling the pain and finding ways to escape the fear.

Their role requires ACTIVE empathy from inside-out.

•

Also, once the sensational aspect of Ebola begins to wear off, one might be able to ask whether ‘catching’ the Ebola or the AIDS viruses or a cancer really makes a great deal of difference to the ones affected.

Is contracting Ebola, a strain of bird flu or tuberculosis any worse than finding oneself hemiplegic as the result of a car accident?

Is it any worse than living daily with a violent partner?

Is it any worse than living with the spectre of *our* own death by suicide constantly riding on our back?

•

Because scientists have no current reason to fear a major outbreak of Ebola outside of West Africa, the biggest question for some is: what will be the next Ebola?

An infectious respiratory disease like MERS would make *symbolic* sense from a spiritual perspective, as our breaths have become as constricted as our hearts.

The outbreak of a virus transmitted from animals to humans, such as a fresh outbreak of a disease like a bird flu ‘on steroids’ (which scientists believe to definitely

be on the cards) would also make sense – it would make dark, grim, ironic sense. Its acronym could be **TROTAK** – The Revenge Of The Animal Kingdom - karmic payback.

•

Still on the topic of what really amounts to tamper-proof personal karma, a faction of computer scientists have been greatly stimulated by the idea of finally building Turing's Oracle, a hypothetical, hyper computer, intended to answer such as the 'oracle' blue-printed back in 1936 by Professo

Already back then, he imagined that an abstract machine might one day become an entity able to solve problems.

According to **NewScientist** magazine [July 19, 2014] one of the questions currently begging an answer is this one: *Will the universe let us build the ultimate thinking machine?*

One possible reply might be that even a hyper entity called Oracle will never be able to solve non-computable problems – and isn't it the height of Science megalomania to even dare think otherwise?

○

Serious question: if it is not the energy, the support, active or tacit, that stems from the collective delusion of most people alive today, spiritual and religious ones included, that Science does enable us to 'cheat death' i.e. our karma, and that Science will create for us, humans, the Elixir of Endless Youth, what keeps pushing Scientific research to the limit of understanding?

Another serious question: what is the ultimate aim of living to be a 100 + years old, just to prolong, in illness, the life that has already been making billions of us so physically 'sick' for so long already?

•

Though he was controversial and often ethically questionable, Osho, a highly mediatized Indian guru did summarize the state of things succinctly.

"The most fundamental [religious] truth," he said in one of his more spiritual moments, *"is that man is asleep - not physically, but metaphysically; not apparently,*

but deep down. Man lives in a deep slumber. He works, he moves, he thinks, he imagines, he dreams, but the sleep continues as a basic substratum to his life. Rare are the moments when you feel really awake, very rare; they can be counted on the fingers.

"Man lives like a robot: mechanically efficient, but with no awareness. Hence the whole problem! There are so many problems man has to face, but they are all by-products of his sleep.

"So the first thing to be understood is what this sleep consists of - because Zen is an effort to become alert and awake [...] more conscious, an effort to become more aware, an effort to bring more alertness, more attentiveness to your life."



Though this quote from **Ecclesiastes 12** is about Death slowly sucking the life out of the 'marked ones' and, regardless of their age, rendering them feeble, it is helpful to accept that we all 'carry' in our energy field an inbuilt timer that was already programed before our conception:

*Remember your Creator
in the days of your youth,
before the days of trouble come
and the years approach when you will say,
"I find no pleasure in them"—
before the sun and the light
and the moon and the stars grow dark,
and the clouds return after the rain;
when the keepers of the house tremble,
and the strong men stoop,
when the grinders cease because they are few,
and those looking through the windows grow dim;
when the doors to the street are closed
and the sound of grinding fades;
when people rise up at the sound of birds,
but all their songs grow faint;*

*when people are afraid of heights
and of dangers in the streets;
when the almond tree blossoms
and the grasshopper drags itself along
and desire no longer is stirred.*

*Then people go to their eternal home
and mourners go about the streets.*

*Remember him—before the silver cord is severed,
and the golden bowl is broken;
before the pitcher is shattered at the spring,
and the wheel broken at the well,
and the dust returns to the ground it came from,
and the spirit returns to God who gave it.*

“Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher.

“Everything is meaningless!”

Short interpretation:

1. all their songs grow faint: **It is about life fading and no longer having the ability to hear familiar sounds.**
2. the golden bowl is broken: **the inner temple where Soul abides.**
3. before the pitcher is shattered at the spring
and the wheel broken at the well: **ceasing all connections.**
4. when people rise up at the sound of birds but all their songs grow faint:
All senses are now focused on the inner experience that is enfolding.
5. and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God
who gave it: **Soul returns to the realm of the soul.**

Destiny works according to plan, if we believe that ‘*Every bullet hath its lighting place,*’ as was written in **The Fruites of Warres**, in 1575 by George Casgoine.

‘*Every bullet has its billet,*’ repeated William 3rd of Great Britain and many soldiers

over the centuries have accepted that 'Every bullet has someone's name on it' - they just pray it's not their own.

Karma, however, is 'work in progress'. The Karmic plan expects us to be the architects of our lives.

If it is true that the main parameters of our lives are set in stone, we are at least free to redesign, if not the walls, then the floor plan, and the décor is entirely left up to us.

•

We forget about the duality of the physical world, the ongoing relationship between our non-physical mind/soul and matter, 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.

And, yes, 'Every bullet hath its lightning place,' just as every karmic event has its lightning place. The thing to remember is that, as we begin to develop an awareness of our actions and reactions to stimuli, as they exists in their myriad of ever-shifting forms in the 21st century, we unknowingly, subtly alter the point of impact, as well as the consequences of the said impact, as the 'bullet' homes in on us.

•

As Moriya would put it, when a deer is caught by the lioness, this is what is *intended* to happen. It's no good blaming the deer for having been unaware or too slow to react.

It is no good blaming the lioness for being cruel.

Like 'sleeper' undercover agents who, awakened into their role by a call from 'the firm', both animals began their journey days earlier just to find themselves exactly where 'the X marks the spot' for the karmic even to unfold.

•

Similarly, when we happen to connect with, say, the would-be love of our life while in transit from A to B, be that as the result of a workplace reshuffle or while in the throes of a personal drama or as the outcome of ... anything, that, too, is not an accident.

Regardless how this connection, which appears random, will unfold in the fullness of time, no aspect of it, no spin-off will have anything to do with bad or good luck.

All circumstances leading up to that nano-second of impact-recognition has been set in motion deliberately and for a reason – moments, months, years, eons back in time.

•

Reality check: once we accept the theory of the cycle of reincarnations [of souls] in the myriad of human vehicles since the dawn of time, seen from above, from soul-side, no one is *ever* innocent of *everything*.

There is no such thing as an 'innocent victim' – not even a newborn.

•

2% of the world's population dies every year. That means roughly 37 million people worldwide.

In a country geographically as little, but as densely populated as Israel, it means some 150,000 people.

In a country as vast, but as sparsely populated as Australia, it means 540,000.

In a small by densely populated country like France, it means 1320,600.

In a vast a highly populated country like India, it means 25,040,000.

○

Reality check: When we take into account the birth rate around the world, it is easy to accept that souls come and go, as required by the quasi incessant cycle of reincarnation over years, decades, centuries and millenia.

○

One click of the mouse on *reveals* the sobering karmic *click on/click off of life* ... one heartbeat at a time.

Seriously, have la look for yourself to experience **in real time** the dizzying movement captured on the next page.

Sobering thought: when you see how quickly, *how nano-second quickly*, the stats get adjusted on this site ... it's impossible to *not* wonder how many lives began and how many lives ended – how much personal drama-karma has come to pass in the very short time it took to simply highlight, copy and paste the above statistics.

data as of October 14, 2014 at 6:08:30 PM

World Population

7,267,312,459 [Current World Population](#)

109,223,711 Births this year

287,913 Births today

45,067,014 Deaths this year

118,796 Deaths today

64,156,698 Net population growth [this year](#)

Data as of December 20, 2014 at 6:30:45 PM

WORLD POPULATION

7,282,306,013 Current World Population

134,749,537 Births this year

293,814 Births today

55,599,276 Deaths this year

121,231 Deaths today

79,150,261 Net population growth this year

172,583 Net population growth today

○

Karma – *On This Day*

Good or bad luck, as **resulting from one's actions.**

Is that it?

As I live in Australia, throughout the *Stepping Stones* series, I have chosen to highlight some karmic events affecting our local individuals and communities, on the day in which they occurred.

No matter how Americans or Europeans tend to perceive 'Australians' as easy-going people who enjoy the outdoors and are fond of BBQs in a beautiful land of mountains and gorges, of seas and deserts and unique fauna and flora etcetera, Australia, as a country and, we, as its citizens, residents or visitors, are no more immune to karmic retribution than any other group of people.

Two of the most recent events, which I will elaborate on later, illustrate this:

Australian cricketer, Phil Hughes' death and the Sydney hostage siege.

○

It's worth repeating, once again, that one major aspect of what has been called our 'human tragedy' over the millennia is that we seldom understand that thoughts and actions happening in 'the moment' are not limited to that specific moment.

To truly appreciate the REAL causes, the real energy instrumental to any 'wonderful news' or to any 'tragic moment', we would have to backward map, moment by moment, our thoughts and actions, such as they were, all the way back to the beginning of our 'thinking' years.

○

In fact, to truly understand why moments in our lives have happened as they have, not as 'totally out of the blue' as we would like to think, we would have to also access all the data contained in the reams of tabulated deeds, the gentle ones, the ugly ones, the selfless ones, the humdrum ones and the downright damning ones, belonging to each individual's soul's prior incarnations.

In other words, to better understand our circumstances, we need to understand that

the blue-print of our personal karma was already drawn - but not cast in stone - long before our parents ever met.

Serious question: however literally 'far-fetched' this theory might seem, isn't it more intellectually satisfying than the belief in so-called random good or bad luck?

○

Once we accept that we are the current incarnation of our soul, then it shouldn't be too far of a stretch to accept that the blueprint of our life, here and now, contains what karmic load we have inherited which keeps being energetically mashed together with the synergy of what we *now* think and do and don't do on a moment-to-moment basis.

○

Our personal tally sheet has been running since our early teenage years while, unaware then, as we mostly are now, as free-thinking beings who believe ourselves to be the masters our destiny, we have gone on adding our own karma ... up to the point at which *we are aware - on this day*.

The current balance of our karma will reveal itself one little or one big event at a time, as we tweak our thoughts, our actions and reactions, as well as our inactions, here and there.

Sometimes we're in the red.

Sometimes we're in the black, as is our bank balance sheet.

But from day to day, there is nothing random about the tally.

○

Serious questions:

1. 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 - or not - that our karmic tally sheet gets edited in the fullness of time?
2. What if our karmic daily, balance sheet, were 'out there,' here and now, as *intangible* but as real as our emotional status?

3. What if our karmic balance sheet were adjusted by our ability to forgive from the depth of our heart, to bond with our loved ones from the depth of our heart and to forgive from the depth of our heart – or according to our true personal best efforts?
4. What if such behavior were rewarded by less acute grief, in the fullness of time, more moments of contentment than otherwise?
5. What if surviving a tragedy from the *inside/out* were one of our purposes for this lifetime?
6. What if managing our success *selflessly* were another of our purposes for this lifetime?



On this day in November 2014, the legion of millions who, worldwide, have an affinity with the Greater Family of Cricket, supported by millions of others who are not cricket aficionados, are suffering from a karmic reveille, minus the bugle. The freak 'one-in-a-billion' injury which caused the almost-immediate death of batsman, Phil Hughes, is currently considered the most notorious split-second of bad luck.

The cricket ball is hard, and travelling at speeds of 95–100 mph, it can be lethal. Yet, in the age of hi-tech helmets constructed with carbon fibre inside a Kevlar shell and face shields, a batsman's life has not really been considered at risk during a game. Still, a ball bouncing off the pitch in a 'freakish' way, hit the batsman on the side of the neck, knocking him out instantly.

Phil Hughes, a rising star in Australian cricket was 25 years old when he collapsed on the pitch.

Among the noble attendees at his funeral were the Prime Minister of Australia, the Federal Opposition Leader and the New South Wales Premier.



The waves of grief and sympathy from persons who have been touched, in one way or another, by the 'brutal' impermanence of life, attest to the vast number of lives, world-wide, that will have been affected in one karmic way or another by this 'freakish', sudden and improbable death – a lot more than would probably be affected by the batsman's feats on the cricket pitch, even if he had lived into old age.

Serious question: Why has this athlete's passing affected so many?

Simple answer: When we are not sentimentally close to a person who has passed on suddenly, unexpectedly, we do not truly mourn *their* passing.

We do not truly feel the pain of their loved ones. It is not for them that we 'grieve'.

What we do feel is fear. What we do feel is sadness.

We feel fear at the thought of our own mortality and that of our own loved ones.

We feel sadness at the thought that 'it could have been me, my husband, my son, my wife, my sister, my mother, my brother etc.'

We fear also the despair they - or we - might feel if, indeed, it had been 'one of us' who had happened to be trapped in what so often seems to be an improbable 'accident'.

Serious answer attempted from a karmic perspective: beyond a possible change in helmet design to guard other players worldwide against another one-in-a-billion 'freak' ball, it must have been deemed by karma, the Great Arbiter, that galvanizing so many thousands around one event was the most efficient way to *wake up* the numerous ones who, right here, right now, should consider themselves tapped on the shoulder: "*Tag! Time to rethink your thinking. Time to redirect your priorities from the inside-out,*" said Karma. "*Time to do the very best of your ability - here and now – and no looking back.*"

At the last count, there were more than 23 Google pages of links directly addressing Phil Hughes' passing.

The seeding thousands of lives, sometimes millions, sometimes only a handful, sometimes only one through a karmic event such as the passing of someone famous

or a human tragedy works like pollination.

Whether pollination occurs by bee, bird, butterfly or wind, however 'accidental' it may appear, without wide-spread pollination a critical breakdown in the cycle of renewal threatens the entire ecosystem.

○

If pollination happens too slowly or not systematically, we face a bleak future without fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds.

Similarly, the emotional quotient of mankind, our ability to empathize and act altruistically from the heart, would be even bleaker if we were totally left to our hedonistic, *Me or Mine First*, self-serving ways.

○

Karmic events that galvanise the masses can be compared to a rapid exercise in pollination.

If only for a while, until 'life resumes its course,' these moments of pain, fear and anguish should force us to rethink how we think about ourselves, our 'loved ones', our neighbors and colleagues, our community, the animals in our care, natural resources and the planet in general.

They are intended to stop us in our tracks and prompt us to rethink our current priorities.

○

Back in time

Field hockey is another sport, unlike rugby, boxing or downhill skiing, in which athletes are not thought likely suffer serious physical dangers during play.

It is, in fact, so unlikely in field hockey that the players' shins are the only parts of the body that are protected.

Yet, in 2012, elite field hockey player, Lizzie Watkins, was 24 when she died in a manner very similar to Phil Hughes', also during a top-level game.

She, too, was hit by a ball.

Struck in the back of the head, she collapsed on the spot.
Her accident, too, was called a 'freak accident'.

○

Perhaps because of the old but enduring pro-male sport media bias, news of this young Australian athlete who 'died in action' generated little more than yet another sad human interest story quickly superseded by another.

○

In this event, and in opposition to the energy of sadness and fear that spiralled outward after the passing of the male cricketer, for otherworldly reasons that no one alive can fathom, the temporarily unifying karmic energy of sadness and fear did not extend beyond Lizzie Watkins' immediate circle of family, friends and fans.

With only 2 Google pages, the 'freakish' death of this athlete who died young did not go viral.

Serious question: Why not?

Serious answer attempted from a karmic perspective: who knows.

○

The remarkable power of the phrase *On This Day* is that it unerringly applies to any particular day, any number of days.

On this day always applies to a specific day in which [in a *split second moment*, the only moment that truly ever exists] a particular event, most often a tragic one, has occurred.

Having said that, we seldom understand that thoughts and actions happening in 'the moment' are not limited to that specific moment.

○

Good or bad luck, if we choose to refer to life's high moments with such words, result from one's actions, thoughts and also from one's inactions.

As has already been discussed in previous sections, though 'this moment' is the only one within which we can create a positive 'tweaking' of our usual actions/reactions,

'this moment' – full of whatever it contains - is the result of actions and thoughts entertained possibly seconds earlier which were triggered by actions and thoughts entertained moments before that and so on.

These thoughts, too, were the result of what we had thought and done ... much earlier again... *ad infinitum*.

○

To truly appreciate where 'the current moment' comes from, we would have to backward map, moment by moment, our thoughts, our actions, as well as our inactions, all the way back to the beginning of our 'thinking' years – which is why, by now, it is so unsatisfying to attempt measuring how 'the moment' underfoot contains whatever it contains, be that a lucky break or an unpleasant update.

•

On this day, in fact, on any day, any moment is the culminating moment at the end of a very, very, very long string of the mostly innocuous moments that have shaped our life.

○

These days, I might say that life, a.k.a. karma, the result of my thoughts, my actions and my inactions, has shaped 100% of my life.

But year in, year out, from where have these thoughts and actions come?

○

At some level, yes, of course, we are the masters of our destiny, but not exactly in the ways that we think.

Not many of us have actually planned for the specifics of our lives to unfold as they had.

If not, why so much unhappiness?

Why so much illness?

Why so much reliance on drugs?

Why so many persons suffering various states of depression?

Why so many 'flat' lives led by so many well-off, performing, intelligent, gifted, healthy persons, of whom we might be some?

There is a common saying that states, *Be careful what you wish for, as you might actually be granted it.*

Hands up, those of you who have actually, honestly wished for that *'flat life'* that's been making you feel unfulfilled for so long.

Hands up, those of you who have actively wished for that *illness* that you can't totally shake off.

Hands up, those of you who have **not** actively wished for *that* challenging relationship.

Hands up, those of you who have actively wished **neither** for _____
nor for _____.

○

To further bring home the point of how little control we have over the moments that make up our lives, and how dramatic, highly mediatized local events galvanize us *en masse* - for specific reasons – let's consider what that has occurred, here, in Australia – *on this day, December 16, 2014.*

On this day, this morning, several employees and their manager began their work day at the Lindt Chocolate Café, in Martin Place, a pedestrian mall in the central business district of Sydney, Australia.

Many locals consider Martin Place the heart of their city.

○

At some stage, some 20 customers from various walks of life were in the cafe.

Most of them worked nearby, in the business district.

What could possibly be more innocuous than stopping for coffee on the way to work?

And yet, around 9.30 am, news broke that a gunman had taken 16 hostages, men and women.

○

The media, quick to hit the streets, interviewed bystanders, as the event unfolded inside the café.

One woman's words echoed the words of ALL the 'lucky' ones who, *unpredictably,*

had been excluded from being directly affected by the dramatic event that would normally have engulfed them, as well.

Every morning, she said, without fail, she would stop at the Lindt café for a take-away coffee on her way to work.

On this day, however, that very morning, she had been delayed by something or other and went straight to work.

The words of a young man carried a similar echo.

He should have been among the staff at the café, if not for the fact that his shift had been rescheduled at the last minute the day before.

○

As news of the siege went viral, Lindt stores elsewhere around the country shut for the day.

In the light of what has been discussed so far, how or why would that decision have made a karmic difference to anything or anyone?

○

Serious question [already visited in **Stepping Stones#1** and on p. 22 of this book]:

What is it that IS keeping us here - or not?

Good luck?

Good genes?

A healthy lifestyle?

A good doctor?

Money with which to pay a team of specialists?

Luck?

Clear thinking?

Carefulness?

Physical endurance?

A lucky charm?

All of the above?

Or, independently from all of the above, isn't the real decision only ever left to Karma?

○

Interestingly, the first unlikely hostage [of 5] to have seized an opportunity to escape a few hours into the Sydney siege was an 82 year-old man.

Most likely the oldest person in the premises by far, he seized an opportunity and ran into the protective arms of a waiting policeman in full riot gear.

Sheer good luck, was it?

○

With all due respect to the memory of the 2 victims of the siege, and with all due respect to the survivors who, wounded, emotionally or physically, have to succeed in their own healing, the very grim flipside of this octogenarian's 'lucky' escape befell two *much younger* hostages.

They 'were dealt' the 'bad hand'.

According to 7 News: *"Tori Johnson, the 34-year-old manager of the Lindt Chocolate Cafe where the crisis unfolded, and 38-year-old barrister and mother-of-three Katrina Dawson died, as heavily-armed police ended the 16-hour stand-off.*

The gunman, too, was shot dead, but all fifteen remaining hostages were taken to safety.

○

Since most of us agree that everything happens for a reason, these apparently random 20 or so people have been 'tagged' by karma for a common reason.

So have their families.

So have all the personnel involved with the event and, as in the passing of Phil Hughes, the cricketer, so has everyone who feels truly touched by this event.

○

The common karmic reason behind the persons' involvement in varying degrees, no doubt, comprises a number of elements.

Some of these elements, no doubt, date as far back as some of these persons' souls'

previous incarnations.

Then, there is, as always, the 'heads up' intended to prompt affected persons to rethink their thinking, to rethink how they are *doing* their lives within the span of their soul's current incarnation.

For some, this event will lead to life-changing decisions in subtle or in dramatic ways, but in ways we may never know – unless the media run a few human interest updates about some of these persons during the next few years.

For others life will go back to the way it was, as a plant grows back even after a storm of ice has ripped through it.

○

According to News.com.au, *"Mourners gathered at the edge of the exclusion zone around the Lindt Cafe, many of them sobbing and embracing each other as they relived the horror that had descended upon the nation.*

It made a starkly different sight from the usual happy-go-lucky hordes enjoying the summertime offerings of Australia's most populous city.

Now this nightmare has come true, Sydneysiders are standing in unity. But there is one underlying question.

Will the city ever return to the carefree outlook of the days when we didn't believe this could ever really happen here?"

Serious questions: should Sydney, in this case, but any city, any community, any family, any person return to *the carefree outlook of the days when we didn't believe 'this' could ever really happen?*

Would such a return to things as they were truly be in the best interests of everyone?

○

The Courier-Mail wrote: ***The hostages had begun the day as strangers, only to become bonded for life*** – or so it seems at the moment, I add sceptically.

But, yes, ideally, that is how, in part, the real denouement of this plot should unfold. Together, these men and women can be instrumental to much more beyond helping each other heal and beyond, perhaps, successfully uniting each member with their

own family.

More, too, than bonding over yet another humanitarian project that might involve helping survivors of a hostage situation deal better with the aftermath.

More than banding together to create new 'incarnations' of campaigns that have been urging the world to *Say No to Violence* and *No to Guns* and *No to Intolerance* etc. since the '60s.

More than that - from their own inner self and outward - these persons are intended to *make a real altruistic difference*.

○

If they don't bond and band differently, more powerfully, more authentically, it can be assumed within the context of this discussion that their most recent trials and tribulations, as well as the 'good luck' of their survival will have been in vain, at least within the greater tapestry of karma and of karmic intentions.

And off to another round of karmically-ordained challenges they will go, along with the commonest of mortals such as ourselves who, perhaps in the absence of a truly, epiphany-inducing test of our own spiritual mettle, are still failing to read the karmic writing on the proverbial wall of our life, here and now.

○

Back to the place of the Sydney siege, nearby florists sold out in minutes.

From News.com.au: *"The tears flowed and flowers were piled high in Martin Place today after one of the most shocking random acts of violence in Sydney's history.*

A dark shadow was cast over the sunny city, as sombre city-dwellers attempted to carry on with their normal lives after last night's 17-hour siege."

Many hundreds of bouquets now cushion the ground of Martin Place and still, *on this day*, a day several days after the event, there are still queues at nearby florists as more people come to visit the shrine and pay one's respect.



And of course, I'm wondering if, perhaps, in a gesture of selfless, altruistic goodwill, the management of florist shops in the Martin Place area might have decided to not charge anyone for the bouquets.

That would be a lovely gesture, wouldn't it, if flower shop managements had refused to make a profit from this tragedy that has rocked the country?

As it is, these shops have probably sold more bouquets in the past six days than in the past six months – and the steady stream of tributes is set to continue for days to come.

Tsk, tsk! Making a profit out of people's grief is not karmically-sound judgment, now, is it?

Especially if the Archbishop of Sydney was correct when, during the celebration of a mass to pay respect to the victims of the Martin Place siege, he said, "Hell has touched us."

○

Trying to measure one person's grief, one's pain and one's loss against those of another is a puerile exercise but, at the moment, *on this day*, surely the community and the country affected by the school in Peshawar, Pakistan, too, has the right to claim the archbishop's line for themselves.

How can they not think "Hell has touched us" when more than 140, mostly children, have been slaughtered by Taliban militants *on this day*, December 16, 2014?

Borrowing and adapting another line spoken about the Sydney siege, "*Will the city [these hundreds of families] ever return to the carefree outlook of the days when [they] didn't believe this could ever really happen there?*"

○

In Peshawar, Pakistan, December 20, 2014, foreshadows that more community grief than healing is likely to derive from the massacre.

rt.com/news reports that, "There had been a moratorium on the death penalty in Pakistan; however this was lifted after the massacre of 148 people on December 16, the vast majority of whom were children.

Mohammed Aqeel and Arshad Mehmood [...] the militants who were hanged, had no links to the Taliban assault.

The home minister for Punjab province confirmed the executions of the first two, at a prison in the city of Faisalabad.

○

"*We have started these executions by hanging two terrorists,*" Shuja Khanzada told AP. "*Today's executions of terrorists will boost the morale of the nation, and we are planning to hang more terrorists next week.*"

○

A few days later, back in Australia:

On this day, December 19, 2014, the community affected this time is an Aboriginal community in northern Queensland.

The Courier-mail reports that, "*A house that was filled with love, laughter and music - until Friday, when No.34 Murray St - became a house of unspeakable horror.*"

Abc.net.au confirms, "Eight children from the same family are dead following a

stabbing incident which has left the Cairns community [pop150,920] in shock.”

Eight children have died, *‘eight little lost souls,’* as the report states but, though, “*A big fig tree in that same park [where the children used to play] has now become a shrine, laden with flowers, teddy bears and candles,*” it is doubtful that the bouquets and tributes will ever take over the narrow sidewalk.

Serious question triggered by the grim, three-day time lapse since the Sydney siege: how likely is it that the people in Sydney and elsewhere in Australia feel as touched by the death of these eight Aboriginal children at the hand of their mentally disturbed mother, in the ‘up north’ part of the state, as they are by the early demise of the two young hostages?

○

As this children massacre has occurred in Australia [population 23 million], karmically-speaking, the number of persons touched by this event should have been much greater than just that of the Cairns community.

And in terms of grieving and the fear and the sadness already discussed, there should be no difference in the collective Australian heart in terms of empathy, between this event and that of the siege in Martin Place.

○

The essential concept to always keep in mind is that, energetically, all persons touched by this, as every other tragedy, has had a role to play in it, however tacitly or unbeknownst to them.

And all persons touched by this, as every other tragedy, are intended to be nudged into rethinking their thinking - how they think about their life’s priorities.

And, again, how beneficial will it truly be for all concerned to *‘return to the carefree outlook of the days when [they] didn’t believe this could ever really happen there.’*

○

A few weeks ago, now, but on a day that was, too, an *On This Day* sort of day, the most notorious moment of good luck occurred when strollers happened to hear little cries coming from under a concrete slab.

○

The slab, weighing some 200 kilos, happened to cover a pavement drain.

The drain happened to contain a newborn whose mother had abandoned there a few days ago, only a few meters from her own house.

The newborn was crying at the bottom of the well, more than 8 feet below ground. He had survived days of searing heat in the darkness of an oven-like environment. The strollers flagged down an approaching pair of cyclists, a girl, a senior in high school, and her father.

○

That day, as 'luck' would have it, the girl and her father had cycled a few kilometres beyond their usual course.

Together, by the drain, the six strangers worked as one to slide the slab far enough to see what was making those cries.

They thought they were about to rescue a stranded kitten.

○

As things sometimes happen, only the teenage girl, Hayley Otte, and her father, are mentioned in the media.

The Otte family have visited the baby several times in the hospital Intensive Care unit and brought him clothes.

"He doesn't have family," Hayley told the media at the time of the first visit. "So we wanted to try to give him as much as we can, to know that he's got something."

○

Interestingly, in terms of karmic actions and intentions, though the past days' temperatures above ground had soared beyond the mid 30s, the temperature below ground, below the thick concrete slab would have been considerably lower.

Medical experts seem to agree that the specifics of that particular drain are what kept the baby 'miraculously' alive.

○

A few days on, according to dailytelegraph.com.au, Hayley said, "'I was just in the right place at the right time. [...] We reckon there was an angel that wanted us to find him though, these things happen for a reason.'"

○

Winding time backwards to the time I began writing this section, **Karma On This**

Day – a time that already feels like eons ago – let us return to **8 March, 2014**

With all due respect to and reverence for the people affected by events just mentioned, it seems that the most notorious case of ‘freakish circumstances’ is that which is thought to have caused the disappearance of the Malaysian air carrier, a giant plane now remembered as MH370.

The passenger jet disappeared in the middle of the night somewhere over the South China Sea on March 8, 2014 with 239 persons on board.

○

Months later, despite a massive multinational maritime search for debris and the black box, only idle speculations and conspiracy theories abound.

Not one expert is able to explain for sure what happened to the carrier and no one can confirm the fate of any of the ‘missing’ passengers. The world is still stumped but, by now, the media are much less abuzz about this most unusual ‘disappearing act’.

○

What is clear, at least from a karmic perspective, is that in this riveting disappearance all 239 persons have been ‘moved’ from wherever they were, from whatever they were doing to board that plane legally or illegally, to make their way to the seat they had bought for themselves.

Some had included a couple of their loved ones on this journey.

Willingly, they all fastened their seatbelts and settled in the privacy of their own thoughts and priorities. And so, for the relatively short six-hour flight - the unexpected ride into oblivion.

Sensational?

Yes! Absolutely!

But not anymore shocking than any previous disaster that has taken the lives of numerous ‘innocent victims’.

○

Symbolically, the matter of the stolen passports that sent international authorities on, what seems to be at the time I write, a dud hunt for terrorists serves to remind us that

souls recognize each other even when the bodies are disguised in different clothes,

different bodies and bear different names.

○

Nothing can prevent our destiny from happening - neither how 'good' we may have been [or think we have been] – nor common sense - nor how many children/grandchildren we might have – nor the number of friends we think we have - nor how much we give to charity – nor how fit we might be - nor any geographical distance between us and our eventual nemesis, however great.

Once our karmic *rendez-vous* is locked into our energy field and our 'undoer' is set on course, not unlike a 'sleeper' spy, we kick into motion.

Unawares, we minimize all perceived obstacles.

As if in a trance, we rethink our thoughts and our priorities.

We rearrange the content of our days and, sometimes, months, as we prepare ourselves.

We place our self where we have been compelled to place our self – always at the right place - always in the right way - always at the right time.

○

On this day, 27 December 2014, another airplane has dropped off radar screens.

Air Asia Flight QZ8501 is thought to have plunged into the Java Sea with 162 people aboard.

This tragedy has again precipitated karmic circumstances for 'ill-fated' air travellers, their loved ones, as well as for a number of unsuspecting persons who happened to find themselves involved visibly or invisibly with the aftermath ripples of such an event.

This time, the last message from the crew was a request to deviate from the pre-set path to bypass storm clouds, a decision that, no doubt, would have been applauded by most passengers if shared via the plane's P.A. system.

The United States and Australia will join the new multi-nation fact-finding mission.

●

Not mentioning here, the millions of dollars the United States contributed to the

search for the preceding missing airplane, MH370, according to the Sydney Morning Herald, within three months of search, Malaysia had already spent a total of 27.6 million ringgit (\$9.3 million) and Australia more than \$43 million.

Furthermore, the Australian government has already pledged 90 million of next year's budget as its contribution to the ongoing search that has so far been plagued by misdirection and misinformation.

•

Serious questions posed within the context of this discussion and with all due respect for all those who have lost their lives in airplane tragedies and their loved ones:

Is it the long arm of karma doing its random thing again that has already diverted so many millions of dollars from social causes working for the *benefit of the living*, both local and international?

Or from developing the next phase of research that would generate eco-friendly, healthy products of consumption?

Or, alternatively from the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction?

Is it the collective need to know 'what happened,' even as an event is officially declared a freak mishap?

Is it a sense of international obligation or a nationalistic bid to position Australia as the new America, the knight in shining armor, of the Asia-Pacific region?

Is it our collective conviction that more and more deterrents and more and more restrictions and more and more hi-tech checks will keep more and more of us safe in all stages of our travels – and of our lives?

What if our collective and cultural tacit acceptance of all the above factors, compounded by our sentimental attachment to *what was* [whether it be a megaton, physical construction of metal or a physical body of flesh], were at the origin of whichever karmic events have sprung out of 'ground zero', the moment when MH370 stopped bleeping on radar screens 9 months ago already?

•

Alternatively, how to not be wary of many decisions made by ‘the people in charge’, once we accept that the disappearance of the plane has become the architect of an incredibly vast mesh of consequences, mostly invisible to us, that will see lives affected in numbers commensurate to the millions of ringgits and dollars already invested so far in this search!

Another Serious Question but one for which we have an answer:

What sets in motion, and in a myriad of ways that remain largely invisible to us, the long arm of karma?

Answer:_____ .

○

Most of us accept that there is a greater force ruling our lives.

The events that befell the passengers and crews of flights MH 370 and AirAsia QZ8501 are simply another confirmation of karmic reality.

•

When it comes to the karmic realm, there is no such thing as stolen identities or *hidden identities*.

There is no such thing as *karmically* innocent victims.

There is no such thing as disobeying ‘orders given by humans’, as the pilot of flight QZ8501 may have done.

However, what words could be more reassuring for the families of the disappeared ones than the last words the Malaysian co-pilot spoke into his microphone from inside the cockpit festooned with its myriad of colourful buttons and dials, as the deep, dense night sky enveloped the hurtling plane.

“All right. Good night,” he said, as the plane veered off course.

And similarly, why not find solace in the fact that there were no distress signals from QZ8501 and that the pilot’s last recorded words were: “Request to higher level”.

•

Bottom line: We have in us the power to heal or at least improve the quality of all the relationships we have with others, as well as the power to capsize them by

defaulting to the thoughts and behaviors that come naturally to us from the low end of our ego.

○

On this day, 30 December 2014, a total of 427 persons have finally been rescued from **Norman Atlantic**, the ferry that caught fire while sailing from Greece to Italy in freezing temperatures and amid gale-force winds.

Well beyond the more common bouts of sea sickness and fear of capsizing, in hellish circumstances, the passengers had to contend with massive waves that, ironically, did nothing to extinguish the fires on the lower deck and with freezing cold rain that, equally ironically, did nothing to cool the heat that scalded their feet.

○

Although several tanker trucks containing olive oil are, at this stage, the likely suspects for the ferocity of the fire, *what* caused the first truck to catch fire is still unclear.

The thing is that whether arson or a leaking valve are eventually proven to be the cause of the fire or whether simple ‘freakish bad luck’ is once again found Guilty as Charged, the ultimate, unanswerable question remains: *why, really why*, did that catalytic moment occur right there and then - and not before or after the ferry journey while this massive truck was in the open air – or better yet, not occur at all?

○

“Don’t judge a man until you’ve walked two moons in his moccasins,” admonishes a Native American proverb.

Of course, how to judge the *unheroic* decisions and behavior of any man, woman or teenager on that ferry whilst not having been there [or in any other utterly nightmarish situation] that threatened *our very own survival!*

And sure, accounts of heroism will also surface and we already know [from what has been already discussed in this book and in *Stepping Stones#1*] why the impulse to perform such acts were triggered, most often within average ‘Jane and Joe Blow’ types of unassuming persons.

○

For now, though, and within the context of this discussion, personal accounts tell of fear and panic revealing dysfunctional, sociopathic behaviors of the sort alluded to on page 139: *In such cases, life will quickly imitate events found in the hundreds of films based on popular Doom's Day scenarios, scenarios based on the survival of the most cunning and most aggressive, not necessarily of the fittest - or of the most worthy.*

○

Though such persons, themselves karmic tools, may well regret their deeds till the end of their days, if only in the privacy of their own thoughts, at the time, they were moved by a lack of empathy and a strong sense of self-preservation.

○

According to BBC News Europe, "Pushing and shoving broke out as passengers fought each other to a lifeboats slot or a helicopter basket. [..] Everyone there was trampling on each other to get onto the helicopter," Greek truck driver Christos Perlis told the Associated Press news agency from one of the rescue vessels.

"The jungle law prevailed," Greek passenger Irene Varsioti said. "There was no queue or order. No respect was shown for children."

Another Greek passenger said he had, "witnessed an image of hell as described by Dante, on a ship where the decks were melting and we were trying to find some place that was not burning to stand on."

And again, within the context of this discussion, who will ever know why, *really why*, the legally fuzzy, inaccurate passenger manifest bore the names of some 400 + passengers, each one karmically hand-picked, as always – even the ones whose true, physical identity is obscure - even the ones who are still lost at sea.

○

And, on this day, 31 December 2014, as we ready ourselves, our homes and our hearts in view of the festive end-of-year plans that will usher in 2015, which is now only hours away, on we go, alternatingly shaping moments of our own creation, facing, shirking and dealing, as well as with moments that appear to us as bits of random karmic – ‘good luck’ ones that are ‘freaky’ in a good way – a way that gof our ego-centrism; ‘bad luck ones’ that are freaky

in a bad way – a way that goes against the grain of our ego-centric needs and aspirations.

However, all of these moments, together and separately, have been hand-crafted for us, specifically for us, as so many varied opportunities by which we could develop as more mature, more authentic persons and ways by which we could develop more authentic human connections with ourselves, each other and also with strangers – *always... in the fullness of time ... for the greater good of all and of self.*

○

Ah, but wait, there's more!

From an entirely **different part of the world, December 31, 2014** – just before the first stroke of midnight:

On this day, theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/31/ tells us that, “The mayhem centered on a stairway leading up to a viewing platform overlooking the river.

Some people were trying to climb to the platform as others tried to get down, causing panic and mass confusion. People were screaming, women were screaming and people jumping off the staircase to get clear.

By 11.55pm, enough people had cleared away from the staircase to reveal a few people lying on the ground amid scattered rubbish.”

Once we know that 36 persons out for a New Year celebration lost their lives because of the scramble on that staircase,

1. does the location of this end-of-year dramatic event matter *that much*, from a karmic point-of-view?
2. Does the age and background of the ‘participants/victims’ make a lot of difference to the situation?

Though we are told that “the stampede may have begun after revellers scrambled to pick up fake money appearing to advertise a promotion for a nearby club was thrown from a building overlooking the street,”

3. does this information matter an awful lot in regards to our understanding of why this event came to pass?
4. Should the City Council of that city [and of others] rush to investigate 'crowd issues and safety on public stair ways'?

Dear Reader, as personal practice, how would *you* answer these questions and justify your answers, as if conversing with a friend:

.....

.....

.....

Here is another set of questions:

5. Should the injured ones be financially compensated for their injuries?

Why/Why not?

6. Should the families of the deceased seek financial compensation for their loss?

Why/Why not?

7. Should the politicians of the country where this 'freak accident' took place, the persons directly affected and the general public feel that the most important thing to crack is *whether or not the city would ever return to the carefree outlook of the days when we didn't believe this could ever really happen here?*

Why?

If not, then,

8. What could these various groups legitimately ponder, separately, as individuals and together as a nation?
9. And what should each of us ponder about this event, even if we live many

thousands of miles away from the site of this end-of-year tragedy?

10. So as to make it count positively on our balance sheet in a way that might position us as 'awake and aware', how to empathize in an authentic manner with the persons affected?

Dear Reader, as further personal practice, try answering these questions, and justifying your responses, as well:



On Any given Day

In the words of Khalil Gibran, *“Among the people there are killers who have not yet shed blood, and thieves who have stolen nothing, and liars who have so far told the truth.”*

There are also sick people, I will dare add, who have not learnt of their disease. There are grieving ones who have not yet received news of the personal tragedy affecting them and there are dead ones who are still ranking the quality of their remaining moments according to three factors: exciting - easy - cheap/the more expensive, the better.



On any given day, we have the ability to keep ourselves healthier as well as the ability to invite chronic or debilitating illnesses into our body by defaulting to impulses that are triggered in the low end of our ego – the end we embrace each time we shrug and say, “There’s nothing I can do about it. This is who I am. This is what I need. It is my right to expect this and to demand that – and if you loved me - or cared for me – or respected me - you would understand that.” The subtext being, “You have to indulge me.”



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 any more than we do.

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 of loss, all parties, albeit differently, fail 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 or loss and knowing that there is a guiding framework to help us reach the end of the tunnel, is empowering.

It is, isn't it?

•

Be that as it may, Karma is encoded in our energy field a.k.a. our aura. Karma is neither good nor bad – it just is.

•

If the word 'karma' seems too exotic, it can be called 'tests' or 'challenges' or 'rewards' or 'breakthroughs' or 'great news' or 'what a great surprise!' Karma doesn't mind what we call it, as long as we give more than a passing nod to the notion that, indeed, ALL happens for a reason.

Whilst it comes to challenges that push our buttons, test our understanding and our generosity of spirit, we tackle the heavens with a flurry of rhetorical questions: 'Why is this happening to ME! What have I ever done to deserve THIS?'

Conversely, we never ask 'Why ME?' while our body keeps performing well, day after day, in spite of all we put it through. We seldom ask earnestly, 'What have I done to deserve this?' when a momentary burst of happiness flashes through our day.



Basically, bitter or sweet, all our moments only amount to titbits that manifest in our days for reasons we will never know.

That much will always be true. BUT because, good or bad, they are sent to us for a reason – that much will also always be true - what we need to do is accept the unpleasant moments just as easily as we accept the lovely breakthroughs, the nice surprises and the warm happy moments that just happen to come our way. Regardless of their metaphoric size and color, ALL moments, every situation, happen to us for a reason and the reason simply is that we need to ACTIVELY, energetically, accept the challenging moments for what they are i.e. tests/challenges of our spiritual mettle.



On any given day, the painful part - or should I say the mature reaction – is to actively accept the bitter as the sweet, knowing that we have been instrumental [through our words, our actions and our emotional energy] in having these incidents pop up hard and sharp on what would otherwise have remained the faint sort of blueprint imprinted over this, our life, as a karmic tattoo.

In short, just as the architect defines the house of our dreams, we are the ones who choose the furniture, where to put it and how we live inside the walls of this once dreamed home.



As a good friend of mine likes to remind me, it is a mistake to think that our purpose in this lifetime is simply to strive as hard as we can to feel 'free' and 'happy' by hook or by crook, regardless of the fallout.

In fact, wouldn't it be a great waste of evolutionary engineering if the 4.55 billion years of cosmic and planetary shifts, cataclysmic climate changes, the evolution of fauna, flora and humans alike if, from era to era, the human race was simply intended to derive contentment out of materialism, while expressing its longing for a

loftier connection to Soul merely by dotting the planet, way back then, with spired towers and, in modern day, with spire-like buildings reaching for the clouds, as symbols of our yearning for spiritual evolution?

Serious question: how superficial has been our humanity?

•

Bottom line: our cumulative grasp of the world of science and technology is the result of a knock-on effect having, as its basis, breakthroughs going back hundreds of centuries.

Isaac Newton, quite humbly, acknowledged this reality when he said, “If I have seen further, it is only by standing on the shoulders of giants.”

○

After all, back in 3500 BC, extremely thorough numerical data, including astronomy was already recorded by Sumerians and recent discoveries of ancient astronomical artefacts have considerably altered assumptions that had been taken for granted for the past decades.

•

Pending further discoveries, the earliest date known to this day for the birth of philosophy is the 6th century BCE and the discipline of physics developed out of that philosophy.

Carved circa 1900 BC, the Babylonian tablet known as Plimpton 322 is, for now, the most ancient mathematical text available 1900 BC.

•

We don't know who was the 'innovator' who came up with the spark that led to the first life-saving and life-changing fire.

Equally anonymous is the one who, many centuries later, visualised the first cart wheel. But these persons provided the absolutely essential corner stones of the 'technological' world as we know it today as, for example, did Alan Turing in 1936 [mentioned a few pages ago] in the field now known as digital technologies.

Reality check #1: If we set aside the handful of intellectual and artistic giants whose

contributions have, over the millennia, altered the lines of 'thinking' in their day and/or, posthumously, in varying degrees, altered the material world for their descendants – riding on the coat tails of the planet's inhabitants who preceded us over the past 7 million years - most of us have not actually invented anything, not even the proverbial sliced bread – not even the humble coffee grinder.

What is for certain is that the vast majority of us, world-wide, have simply learned to manipulate the tools of our era, just as the troglodytes manipulated theirs – nothing more, nothing less.

Reality check #2: as we know it in our gut and as any catastrophe confirms, we, here, now, are insignificant little beings.

And so, here is the returning question: why would cosmic energy/gods have created a planetary environment in which beings of light [not apes] would develop a skeleton, be given a soul, lack for nothing – if not to maintain a close link to their soul? What, just for the heck of it?

○

How could the millennia of human-made turmoil and upheaval been 'allowed', only to doggedly attempt rewinding time for the sole purpose of making mankind 'happy' in a perpetual Garden of material Eden?

○

After all, even the earliest of our early ancestors had access to water and sun and wind and fire plus the ability to shelter from the elements, as well as access to fauna and flora whose intended purpose was simply to sustain them - in exchange for simple, genuine respect.

Our ancestors, too, had a soul and the karmically built-in ability to love and plenty of people to love. So ... what could they possibly have lacked, back then, in order to strive for MORE?

Similarly, even though our life expectancy has trebled, fauna and flora are still, for now sustaining us, even in the absence of any respect. Water is brought to our doorsteps and our beds offer a degree of comfort well beyond that of a couple of

prehistoric animal pelts strewn on hard, at times icy ground.

So ... what are 'we' collectively still lacking, so many, *many* thousands of years later?

What is it that pushes us to always want MORE while doing less of anything *truly* essential and while giving less and less of ourselves?

What if not a delusional, megalomaniacal ego?



If it is one of our current challenges in this lifetime to 'actively' make peace – inner peace – with partner, spouse, child, employer or with what our body is 'doing to us'.

It does make it easier to see all and any simply as the karmic messengers that have been programmed to pop up on our lifetime blueprint, to force us out of our delusional state to become totally self-aware in regards to our true motivation, our true thoughts, our true empathy, our true shortcomings and to humbly begin rewiring our self from the inside out.

After all, aren't we all souls in disguise?

Or, as according to Buddhist thinking, isn't Buddha Nature is each of us?

Or, as according to Christian thinking, isn't God present in each one of us?



A practice of stopping the usual patterns of action/reaction and me vs him/her/them/it would make a difference.

A multi-moment practice of generating an understanding that we have had a very active hand in whatever IS in our life today would make a difference.

The understanding that we have knitted this life up to the point it has reached 'today', moment by moment, all by ourselves, would also make a difference.



The bad news is that, of course, there is no immediate quick fix.

Good intentions often remain in the realm of intentions. Mere intentions fail to deliver the difficult rethinking of the re-actionary patterns that have so far defined our personality and shaped our life.



We do generally accept that life is too short to sit and worry about ... whatever, but we don't generally accept that, because life is deemed too short, it is our duty to ourselves to make it as 'genuinely' peaceful as possible.

As written at the beginning of this chapter, it appears easier to surrender responsibility and apportion blame to others.

These days, many whose hearts are battered by anxiety and panic attacks and whose arteries are lined with cholesterol plaques find it easy to surrender their heart to a surgeon. Such people are willing to do all of that and risk a mortality rate of 3.3% for a coronary bypass which, though low, does mean that SOME people do not return from the 'walk in the park' that bypasses are said to be.

•

Blades and intravenous lines, heart stoppage, the cracked sternum to expose the heart, the politely named 'harvesting of grafts' from other parts of the body, chemicals to reverse the effect of other chemicals as well as wires – all elements of a bypass - are easier to contemplate than to begin and sustain changes in the relationship the person has with unhealthy eating habits and killer responses to the relationships in their life, in general.

Such people [around 500.000 worldwide each year plus the ones who are dying to get a full-on heart transplant] prefer to submit to all physical tampering, that rather than symbolically 'open' that sternum by themselves to act from the heart with kindness, passion and compassion.

•

The good news is that the moment we actually manage to rewire ourselves from the inside out to a degree significant enough to feel a budding peace shape itself from the inside/out, whatever the problem, it fades away. Test passed - Karmic dare overcome. The gnarly, warty, *pooley*, nasty pop-up expires softly, quietly.

Bonus: The space vacated by anger, hurt and resentment will be filled by something of a different nature altogether.

A karmic reward will manifest itself on the blueprint of our life as it lies ahead.

○

Thinking Out Loud - song by Ed Sheeran - 2014

I'm thinking 'bout how people fall in love in mysterious ways

Maybe just the touch of a hand [...] Maybe it's all part of a plan.

Karma – Forever a Headline Grabber

On another day, in 1971, in a rural area of South Dakota, two teenage girls 'vanished', as they drove to a school party and this unusual 'cold case' has recently made the headlines in America.

Forty-two years after the usual searches had failed to bring up any clues as to what might have caused the girls' disappearance, an unprecedented drought finally allowed a local creek to unburden itself of its ghastly secret.

It surrendered the crumpled wreck of the Studebaker that had driven the young women to their deaths and had kept them safe from prying eyes in its steel coffin. Eerie are the personal belongings retrieved from the wreck. Muddied, slightly rusted, they are, but otherwise intact. The large sepia ID portrait on a driving license is still clear. The blond bob and fringe, the easy smile are not dated. The bluish clutch purse is water-swollen, but not yet rotted.

Though any proof of foul play would not alter the karmic tenor of this event, none has been found. According to DNA results, the driver was not even inebriated.

○

Back in 1971, as today, in 2014, the customary heartfelt outcry must have been, "How sad that these poor girls, in the prime of life, with so much to offer, were killed on the way to a party!

To a party, for heavens' sake."

○

Why not, instead, consider that the only way to make sense of such events is to rationalise that, clearly, this lifetime had not been intended to provide these teenage girls with what *unnecessary suffering would have befallen them one hour, one week, one year or ten years later. In this lifetime, these girls were to be spared the cycle of*

euphoria, disappointment, guilt, hope, pain, anxiety, fear that is ubiquitous in our culture. Now, shouldn't that be counted as a blessing for which their 'loved ones' should be thankful?

○

Certainly, on the one hand, it is absolutely true to say that no one will ever know what possible 'fate worse than death' the two girls might have been *spared* through this karmic plunge into the creek.

However, on the other, culturally, we mostly fail to contemplate, let alone accept, the notion that, in this, as in any other tragic moment, the victims, as they had unconsciously, readied themselves for the anticipated 'event' on their calendar were, in fact, preparing themselves for the pre-set circumstances of their departure from this life - not unlike the spy, the soldier, the person in the proverbial 'firing line', the one preparing for a decoy mission who, at the last minute, is redirected and catapulted into the fray of the 'real' event in progress.

Is such a possibility too eerie to consider?

Yes, in our culture it probably is, but not in the absolute.

●

This morning upon getting up, as I like to do on mornings I don't need to rush off to work, I had my first cup of coffee on the patio. There I sat, reclining on a lounge chair, enjoying the warmth of the morning sun on my face, sipping freshly brewed coffee.

That was what my *body* was doing, but my *mind* was revving on automatic pilot. Again, I became aware of the difficulty of being/staying present in the moment - the only moment that is under my feet, the only moment over which I have any control. This inability is a mental limitation, no doubt shared by many, so before we press on to the next 'serious' topic, I would like to share with you how that moment went.

Yes, my mind was set on automatic pilot because, *me*, carried away by its thoughts, I had quickly hopped far, far away in Tibet, in the hills of the Labrang Monastery. That quantum leap through space was brought about by an article read the day before about the uncomfortable situation that exists in Tibet between the Tibetans

and the Chinese Han. The distrust, anger and resentment of the Tibetans has sparked a new rash of self-immolations intended to 'open the heart' or perhaps 'burn through the heart' of the Chinese government that has poured billions of dollars into the region through infrastructure and investment that, among others, offers 'lifestyle benefits.' This has led to an unprecedented growth of tourism ...mostly from Chinese Han tourists.

The soft, cliquety sounds of the long and supple palm fronds slowly curling and uncurling in the breeze was gentle to my ears. From behind closed eyelids, I saw the fronds exactly where they were, high above my head, crowning trees planted meters in the garden below.

○

Back in the hills of the Labrang Monastery, my thoughts quickly returned. The Chinese government, uncomprehending of the reasons for such Tibetan ingratitude and anguish, have made it a crime to assist a person immolate and/or fail to report intentions of immolation.

The Han majority look different. Difference triggers fear.

Fear creates separation.

Separation fosters violence: *Us vs Them*.

Fear also makes us forget that we are all driven by the same ego, one that responds to the same stimulus, for the same reasons and, besides, we are all alike under our custom-made persona-bodysuits which contain nothing more than bones, flesh and fluids.

Fear also blocks out the fact that we are also alike in that we are ALL souls in disguise.

○

Tenzin Gyatso has popped behind my closed eyelids. He smiles benignly under his yellow visor. Surely, it must have been a lack of faith that made him flee in 1959, rather than face his karma at the hand of the Chinese government and stand side by side with his beloved people. Faith in the greater plan means faith that what is karmically meant to happen will happen, *no matter how grim the odds* on the physical plane. After all, Aung San Suu Kyi didn't run away from Burma. She stood her ground, defied the Burmese authoritarian government and -

○

The soft warble of a butcher bird penetrated my ears. I opened my eyes. Various types of birds had been calling in nearby trees. A crow cawed back harshly. The sounds connected my zip-zapping thoughts to the flock of silver-crested cockatoos that have recently settled in the tall eucalyptus trees that border the high school buildings in which I teach. Cockatoos carry their conversations in loud, shrill and screechy tones. Canaries, they are not.

I became aware of the warmth emanating from the cup held between my hands. I shook my head and reminded myself that, really, I'd benefit a lot more from that lovely moment on the patio if my observations could remain based on the patio - if I were totally present in the here and now.

So, I took another sip of coffee and looked at the large, luxuriant yucca plant directly in my line of vision. I could still see it as it had once been: mangled and near exhausted, when I rescued it from wherever it had struggled to stay alive to plant it in an over-sized clay pot and give it a better plant life.

○

Overhead, the sky was blue but it was dotted by large islands of grey-hemmed white clouds. My thoughts zip-zapped again out of the moment and I found myself with Myahr, my partner, where she was, at the moment, enjoying a day sail somewhere in the middle of Moreton Bay.

My back resting against the mast, I squinted at the mantle of diamantine spread as far as the eye could see. At the helm, Myarh, was mumbling fuzzily about the 'chance of a storm' forecast for the later part of the day.

From there, my thoughts flitted back to this current manuscript and how, considering it already contains more than 400 pages, it might be preferable to split it in two. After all, each volume being free of charge, it wouldn't make any difference to readers once it was published online. Actually, smaller volumes might focus attention better. Then, the subtitle for this newly birthed third volume slipped in.

Riding The Waves of Life. Yes, why not? Good title. That's what being Aware and Awake helps us do and, undoubtedly, some folks already excel in the art of riding the waves of their lives.

○

Saroo Brierley- ah! That's another interesting story of karma.

Yesterday, too, I had read this mans' answers in **10 Questions**, the page in which Belinda Luscombe had interviewed him in this week's edition of Time Magazine [June 30, 2014]

At age 5, Saroo got lost on a train in rural India. Somehow, he ended up in Kolkata, 1, 680 km further up the tracks. His family was extremely poor. He only knew a few words in his native language. He did not know his family name. Through a highly 'improbable' chain of events, within six months of being lost, he was adopted by a family living in Tasmania, Australia.

Some 30 years later his book, **A Long Way Home**, written in English, is being made into a movie. Upon reconnecting with his roots many years later, Saroo found out that his brother had died, run over by a train, very shortly after Saroo himself had gotten lost.

From rural India, as a street urchin, to Hollywood ... what is the real reason behind such 'improbable' karma?

When the 'improbable' kicks in on such a grand, obvious scale, one would think it had to be for a grand reason, no?

Or can it simply be to give the lucky recipient a modern life in terms of comfort and education - to become famous - to make money – to presumably improve the physical lives of his biological mother and of the people in his village of origin and ... eventually die? Could that be it?

Wouldn't that be a partial waste of such an amazing string of 'improbables' coming together?

It would, wouldn't it?

○

From Saroo, a quick zip-zap of thoughts, to Turia Pitt, the Australia model and a runner who, at the age of 26, received severe burns to 65 per cent of her face and body when she found herself trapped by a wild bushfire while running a marathon.

Some three years later and after more than 100 operations, Turia is this month's

featured woman on the July cover of the Australian Women's Weekly magazine. Again, so many 'improbables' have led to Turia's trauma, her recovery from hell and to her emotional survival.

○

Do people like Saroo and Turia feel a particular responsibility as a result of their 'improbable' karma, I wondered? Responsibility? What form might that take? Becoming a 'bleeding heart' humanitarian? Is that what a genuinely grateful person should do? Or is the responsibility about being aware from the inside/out and making each moment, each encounter --

○

I blinked, sipped the coffee and breathed slowly but deeply.

Again, I reminded myself of the need to glue 'my *self*' back to the present and turn this otherwise 'false-thinking', spiritually wasted moment, into a moment of mindfulness.

My thoughts needed to voluntarily stay near the location of my body - on the patio - conscious of the lovely rays of warm sun on my face. They needed to be aware of the many beautiful plants and flowers bursting with green vitality in the morning sun. *Awh*, I thought. *How many thousands of moments will escape me, even just today?*

○

Back at the keyboard now and it seems oh, so much easier to remain immersed in the moment, typing away under the direction of Soul, my muse. But, escaping in our own narrative or escaping in a book written by another, or in a film or in any physical activity - that, too, fails to tether us in the moment that is under our feet.

○

Driving though hazardous conditions and peering through the windscreen, does that qualify as being in the moment? I asked myself. Not sure why this question shaped itself because, *Of course not*, is the answer.

Of course not, because, when we are driving through, say hazardous conditions and all our senses are riveted on the road ahead, our heart is probably pumping hard and adrenalin is probably coursing through our body. When our thoughts are overtaken by ... anything, be that a scary or fun moment, we cannot be a detached 'observer' of What-Is.

Zoning out, losing track of time, being 'immersed' in something or other is not being in the moment because, in that state, we are not Aware of ourselves in the moment under our feet - not when we are driven by ... the moment itself. Whichever activity of choice that transports us away from our moment-to-moment physical reality cancels out our awareness of the present-moment. Groan.

○

How can something so simple as keeping our thoughts on what we are doing [on what is under our feet, under our fingers, under us when we lie down, inside our mouth when we eat, drink or chew and on the movements of our body in general] be so difficult to achieve and maintain for more than a few seconds at a time?

○

After all, it could be that the minutes spent in the shower offer, for now, the most propitious setting in which to anchor our thoughts to our body by keeping our attention on the soothing sensation of water and soap on each part of our body – on the movement of the cascading water flattening our hair, on the rivulets that run over our eyes and ears, on the sharp patter as it hits the tiles, pooling briefly at our feet.

Big sigh.

Back to the keyboard, then.

Back to losing myself through mind-meanders and a maze of words and ideas.

●

When, ***on this day***, headlines claim that, 'A litany of errors cost the lives of more than 150 South Korean students on board a ferry in the east China Sea', as was also

recently the case, it would make good sense to nod in the knowledge of yet another 'karmic event'.

Though the ferry company owner, the captain, along with the parties responsible for the lack of adequate supervision of inexperienced staff and the state of the lifeboats, need to be made accountable in our Courts of Law and assigned due penalties, from a spiritual perspective, it can be argued that the 'litany of errors' was in fact a pre-set

litany of 'purposeful breakdowns' set in motion to speed up the departures of these specific youngsters from this lifetime.

•

Though the characters, settings and props change constantly, the theme of our human tragedies is always the same.

How will these students' parents, families and teachers accept – or not, bond – or not, survive – or not the aftermath of this tragedy?

In these highly volatile variables lie the true purpose of such an event.

How will the ferry company owners, the captain and whichever staff or worker found negligent come to terms with their failed responsibilities, as well as their penalty?

Will any find ways to make amends directly with the families of some survivors?

Ultimately, will a bond be established between these two parties?

Always, for victims' families and their close ones, as well as for the ones responsible in various degrees for any tragedy, how their karma gets updated will depend on how they handle their loss and their guilt.

•

In the words of Khalil Gibran, *“Among the people there are killers who have not yet shed blood, and thieves who have stolen nothing, and liars who have so far told the truth.”*

There are also sick people, I will dare add, who have not learnt of their disease. There are grieving ones who have not yet received news of the personal tragedy affecting them - and there are dead ones who are still ranking the quality of their remaining moments according to three factors: exciting - easy - cheap/the more expensive, the better.

•

Most of us accept that there is a greater force ruling our lives. The events that befell the passengers of flight MH 370 is simply another confirmation of karmic reality.

When it comes to the karmic realm, there is no such thing as stolen identities or *hidden identities*. There is no such thing as karmically innocent victims.

However, what words could be more reassuring for the families of the disappeared

ones than the last words the Malaysian co-pilot spoke into his microphone from inside the cockpit festooned with its myriad of colourful buttons and dials, as the deep, dense night sky enveloped the hurtling plane. “All right. Good night,” he said, as the plane veered off course.

○

We do have the power to influence our life’s outcomes for the better and, of course, for the worse.

We have in us the power to heal or at least improve the quality of all the relationships we have with others as well as the power to capsize them by defaulting to the thoughts and behavior that come naturally to us from the low end of our ego.

●

We have the ability to keep ourselves healthier as well as the ability to invite chronic or debilitating illnesses into our body by defaulting to impulses that are triggered in the low end of our ego – the end we embrace each time we shrug and say, “There’s nothing I can do about it. This is who I am. This is what I need. It is my right to expect this and to demand that – and if you loved me - or cared for me – or respected me - you would understand that.” The subtext being, “You have to indulge me.”

●

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 any more 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?

●

Be that as it may, Karma is encoded in our energy field a.k.a. our aura. Karma is neither good nor bad – it just is.

●

If the word 'karma' seems too exotic, it can be called 'tests' or 'challenges' or 'rewards' or 'breakthroughs' or 'great news' or 'what a great surprise!' Karma doesn't mind what we call it, as long as we give more than a passing nod to the notion that, indeed, ALL happens for a reason.

Whilst it comes to challenges that push our buttons, test our understanding and our generosity of spirit, we tackle the heavens with a flurry of rhetorical questions: 'Why is this happening to ME! What have I ever done to deserve THIS?'

●

Then, **on this day**, April 14, 2014, three weeks after the plane's mystery disappearance, the world woke up to news of another fantastical disappearance, that of 'more than 280' girls kidnapped by Boko Haram in Chibok, Nigeria.

From the missing passengers to the kidnapped girls, both denouements have so far been protracted and failed to tie all loose ends for the public.

With each situation separated by only a couple of weeks, one as mind-bogglingly baffling as the other, the strangeness of the 'disappearances' remaining unsolved for so long is difficult to ignore.

•

Indeed, in this day and age, how can it be that any trace of a missing passenger jet has remained unfound for so long and that hundreds of school girls got 'vaporized'?

These are feats that only David Copperfield, the most commercially successful illusionist in history might have dreamed of – that is, of course, until karma and the need for amendment propelled its human tools into action to execute each of the disappearing acts.

All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women merely players.

They have their exits and their entrances.

Though Shakespeare's lines are taken, here, out of their intended context, they do fit eerily with the concept that karmic fate can, is and will be executed, no matter *how*, no matter *when*, often by unlikely people such as ourselves, our neighbors, perhaps even by people we pay to keep us safe and entertained, by activities we pursue in the hope of good physical health and harmless fun, not necessarily by lurking strangers and psychopaths – each one carrying in us the potential of, one day, being 'awoken' as karma's designated *tool* for an amendment due somewhere ... anywhere ... even on the other side of the world from where we live.

•

Let's return for a moment to the images of the girls as seen in the media, flanked by heavily armed Boko Haram men.

The forced recitation of verses of the Koran chanted by the girls might not necessarily be the proof of a genuine religious conversion but, in our minds the gamut of physical and mental trauma that may have been inflicted on the young prisoners was potentially boundless and eventually, these images galvanized thousands of Tweeterers and Facebookers.

Since then, Boko Haram declared that the girls would be forced into marriages.

Although forced marriages are rather common in Nigeria and in Africa in general, as well as in many Muslim enclaves, the mere idea of *any* forcible arrangement between woman and man is most repellent to us, *women*, living in democratic societies in which we are, for better or for worse and to a great extent, free to choose our partners and spouses.

•

On this day, though months later at the time of writing, the fate of the girls has not yet been formally disclosed, more immediately, the focus should have been regarding the fate of the 50 plus girls who have actually survived their escape – the only ones who could be helped in one way or another.

They have returned to their families and to their neighborhood.

•

After the rush of teary embraces born out of relief and joy has subsided, how have the Chibok community cared for the emotional well-being of the battle-shocked girls? Most of them are of marrying age in Africa. Many probably had young men ‘arranged’ to marry them. Others had formed their own unions.

How have these plans gone ahead?

Have the parents, the parents-in-law and the young men themselves banded together to soften, if not erase entirely, the memories that undoubtedly haunted the girls by ‘loving’ them in an authentic way, just as they were?

Or have some of these plans now been abandoned and the girls jettisoned like damaged goods?

•

In most third world countries, even more so in tribal settings, a woman’s most obvious ‘enemies’ are not necessarily the men they marry, but the women in charge of their husband’s household and these women are the mother-in-law and the sisters-in-law.

Reputed for being unfairly harsh and punitive, how will these future-in-law help heal the girls’ trauma?

How will the men who usually defer to their mothers and sisters redress the status quo in favor of their new brides who, in all likelihood, will be considerably younger than the men themselves?

Whether the setting is in Africa or in our own country or suburb, the answers to such question are recurring moot points when it comes to young women who have been sequestered and/or abused in a number of possible ways by men. Not by alien men who descend upon them from Planet X, but by men who are the product of their own communities.

And this brings us back to the concept of un-conditional love.

Once the dust settles over any event, whether it is the dust of lust or the dust of abuse or the dust kicked up by the media, how much genuine love remains for the victims?

•

The thing to keep in mind is that there are no such things as accidents - no such things as mistakes and mistaken identities - no such thing as 'unprogrammed' events - no such thing as bad luck and being in the wrong place at the wrong time. For that matter, there is also no such thing as the good luck of being at the *right* place, at the *right* time for 'unplanned' surprises, lucky breakthroughs and 'incredible', exhilarating enfolding of events.

•

The thing to remember, as Moriya often reminds me is that "Karma always has a series of alternative plans up its sleeve in case the person refuses to accept open-heartedly plan A, the preferred option from the perspective of spiritual personal growth."

Then, whatever flows on from that botched attempt at plan A is exactly what should happen to give that person another go at that personal growth they are refusing to allow themselves, like a teenager who refuses to go to school or passively lets the content of lessons wash over him – homework left undone.

Of course, what, then, does come about is all too often different from what the person had imagined or planned for themselves and/or for their 'loved ones'.

And, of course, “the person always wails about their setback, loss or tragedy, forgetting that what is *is* unchangeable.

Interestingly, in our culture most afflicted persons perceive their imaginary plans as a reality due to them.

It is as if we believed that a magic bubble containing all the good things in life was due to shower its content over the ‘deserving one’, ourselves included, within days, months, or a few short years into the future – against all odds and statistics.

•

From that point of view, what else but a random and unfair ‘hand’ could possibly rob us of a satisfying life and [shared] happiness?

•

To illustrate the point more graphically, one day, Moriya told me the story of Tamar, one of her students, who had told her about a dear friend of hers who had been fearing for the safety of her eighteen-year old son, as the time approached for his mandatory service in the Israeli army.

To protect him [and herself] from the tragic fate she felt certain would befall him, the woman sent her son to live in England with relatives.

A short time after the lad’s arrival there, he was killed in a car accident.

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Then, Moriya told me about Yael, a woman for whom she was typing the biography manuscript that Yael had written about her mother-in-law who, back in 1940s, had lived in Jerusalem with her six sons.

Her husband’s sister had emigrated to Australia and, by all accounts, was happy there. She had urged Yael’s mother-in-law to join her there with her own family.

So, according to the story as it had been passed on to Yael, passports and visas had been prepared. Mother and sons were busy packing when, out of the blue, the woman felt she could no longer bear the thought of living without the rest of her family, if she left Israel, she cancelled the plan to migrate to Australia.

Time went by and during the War of Independence, in 1948, one of her sons was killed. The woman's sorrow was compounded by the feeling of guilt. She became a recluse. The way she felt it, her decision to abort the plan to migrate had contributed directly to her son's demise, cutting short a life rich in promises.

"In both case," Moriya explained, "we see the same phenomenon: that in every one of us there is a biological clock and when this clock stops – nothing can keep it ticking one second longer. Just as the boy who was sent to England to avoid his military service, was unable to escape his karma, even if Yael's mother-in-law had completed her plan to migrate, that one son would have been killed just as violently in Australia and probably on the same date at the same age.



Why Self-Blaming is an Unspiritual Reflex

A local 'human interest' story caught my attention earlier this week.

Case Study: One's family tragedy

A mother of three young children was found dead in a river, in suspicious circumstances.

Her husband, who soon became the prime suspect, was eventually incarcerated for life.

On the occasion of each press interview, the victim's parents repeated how wonderful and beautiful their daughter had been and how greatly missed she had already been, not only by each member of the family, including her bereft, inconsolable children, but also by the many in the community who had known her to be a genuine, generous and personable being.

It transpired during the murder trial that it had only been through various witness testimonies that these loving parents [who lived near their daughter and her family], her siblings and friends had found out the distressing details that had made up the victim's reality throughout the many months she had lived in fear and an acute state of self-loathing and hopelessness.

The victim's father was quoted as suggesting that since it was a father's duty to protect his daughter, he had damnably failed his duty by accepting to give her hand in marriage to the man who would later become her killer and, thus, he will live with guilt and remorse for the rest of his life.

Until the moment of their daughter's death, the victim's parents had been living the comfortable life of well-to-do retirees involved in charity work. Even before the trial

began, they sought, and were granted, custody of their three grandchildren, the oldest being 11 years old.

As a second impactful consequence of the murder of their daughter, their lives have been redesigned.

This grandfather admitted that after having had the privilege of raising his granddaughters for a couple of years already, he could no longer fathom life without them. These children, resilient ones themselves, in spite of their acute trauma, had become an inspiration to their grandparents.

Again, according to the media, the kind-hearted father/grandfather's touching belief is that his grandchildren will grow up to be like their mother was: intelligent, wholesome, beautiful human beings who will create their own loving families and contribute to a caring community.

•

Grim as it is, this tragedy embodies three of our culture's myths I hold dear to my heart, as one might say.

Myth #1: Family love is expressed by convivial get-togethers, lovely moments spent one-on-one, a deep sense of family unity – and a safe avoidance of anything too personal that might polarize members of the family.

Reality #1: 'Love' within too many family units fails to weigh in as genuine love. Unconditional love implies that 'the other' trusts us implicitly because our *energy* and our active presence are such that we come across as non-judgemental, all accepting, trustworthy and therefore always supportive of 'the other' from the inside-out - even if it is understood that some behaviors or situations must be addressed and redressed.

Being unconditionally accepting of 'the other' has never been a synonym for condoning that person's behavior.

Question about myth #1, as pertaining to the case study:

1. in that stereotypical close-knit family, in which various members connected

with each other over coffee, BBQs and during many family moments both formal and informal, what was the degree of active support given from the *inside-out* to the deceased woman by the various caring members of her family - and the many for whom she had been a dear, gifted, cherished friend and an inspiration - when, for months on end, if not years, she had been trapped in a state of depression caused by her husband's emotionally abusive behavior, his sexual liaisons compounded by shoddy business deals, though he was by all accounts a respected member of the professional community?

•

Myth #2: We, as loving parents, relatives and friends are always 'there' for the other – any time they wish to unburden their 'soul'.

Reality #2: There is hardly a suicide, a murder, a kidnapping or a massacre when, once the story is unravelled, the persons closest to the perpetrators admit that they had no idea, the person had it in him or her to behave in such a way.

Which too often leaves us with a set of 'soul-wrenching' questions;

1. *Why* didn't I *sense* anything?
2. *Why* didn't I ask?
3. *How* could I have guessed?
4. Why didn't s/he talk to me?

○

Another most famous Hollywood actor died by suicide a few days ago. His wife said that they had seen each other the night preceding his death. By the time she left the house the next day, she assumed her husband was still asleep and went out to tend to her own affairs.

In spite of the actor's reported recurring eighteen hour sleeps in his darkened room, clearly, however loving this wife had been, she had not been on suicide watch.

○

Seriously, as well as remembering this actor for the way he made his public feel for more than 30 decades, wouldn't it make sense for each of us to reflect on how well we 'know and love' our loved ones?

Serious question: why, whilst in the throes of excruciating emotional distress for months or years on end, might one chose to hide their truth behind seemingly easy, often vacuous banter?

More serious questions in regards to myth #2, as pertaining to the case study:

1. how could it be that none of the people who loved the victim the most and saw her regularly knew so little about 'her'?
2. of what might the victim's otherwise good father be most 'karmically' guilty, if not to have allowed his daughter to marry her groom?
3. why did the victim chose to seal her fate by weaving a mesh of secrecy over the painful and recurring circumstances of her life in a leafy, quiet, middle-class suburb?

The answer to each of these questions lies entirely within us and, deep down, we clearly intuit this even when we feel we have been loving and caring.

Even if we say that we 'did the best we could at the time' – which, not surprisingly, goes a very long way in explaining why many of us are terribly guilt-stricken in the midst of our grief.

○

As an aside, today, a 17 year-old from Sydney, Australia, is said to have become a suicide bomber when he blew himself up in a Baghdad market, killing 5 people and injuring in various degrees at least 90 others.

It will be interesting to hear, as the events that have led to this situation become properly deconstructed, whether or not the boy's parents, no doubt the heads of a 'normal family' knew - or felt - that their son had *that* sort of potential within him by the time they shared their last moment as a family.

●

Myth #3: The glittery, happy life we envisage for our loved ones is dependent on the effort we pour into their well-being. It's also dependant on our wishful thinking and on the merit we attribute to them, whether at the moment of their birth or while they cruise through adolescence or once they have reached the prime of their life or once

they reach a 'ripe old age' intended to be spent within a cocoon of connectedness and tranquillity.

Reality #3: What is intended to happen will happen regardless of one's apparent worth as a human being – or lack of, regardless of the hopes of their loved ones – or lack of.

When these loved ones overcome a grave health setback – our wishful hope that they will 'beat the odds and go on to live a happy, productive and successful life' does not actually grant them any such blessing.

Question about myth #3, as pertaining to the case study: why is it likely that the wholesome dream lives this caring grandfather has bestowed upon his grandchildren will somehow end up being redesigned?

Bonus question: if, as is always the case when one dies, their daughter's death was the outcome of a fateful karmic due date, what can we imagine could be the great karmic spin-off of this unplanned custody from the grandparents – *the lesson they are intended to learn in this lifetime* – or forever hold their peace, as the expression goes?



Recently, and only a few weeks after the mass disappearance of the Chibok girls, another disappearance occurred, this time in Israel.

Three Israeli boys went missing on June 12, 2014 and were found buried in makeshift graves eighteen days later.



It is difficult to conceive that the shroud of invisibility cast over the teenagers was so thick that, in spite of 18 days of massive ground search, the piercing eyes of Sherut haBitahon haKlali, the Israel Security Agency, were unable to see beyond a lack of clues – which rendered the boys invisible to them.



On July 7, The Jerusalem Post reported that one of the kidnapped boys, Gil-Ad Shaer, had made an emergency call from his mobile phone, which lasted exactly 2:9 minutes.

A male voice shouting, "*Rosh le-mata!*" in Hebrew is clearly audible on the audio file

of that call. *Lower your head!* Also clearly audible is a volley of automatic fire, which no doubt the Police would have recognised as such – particularly the Israeli police. We will never know what the shouted command was really about, but the order to ‘lower your head’ might have been a warning to *not attempt looking to recognize the one about to become your executioner.*

Humans do need eyes to see, but let’s remember that we are all souls disguised as *ourselves* in our bodysuits of bones, flesh and fluid.

Looking from Above/Below, from Soul’s eyes, from the karmic realm, let’s remember, too, that as souls, we do not need human eyes to *know*, to *remember*, to *recognize* each other’s karmic imprint.

According to the Police spokesperson, “The handling of the call represented a *severe failure* that ran along the entire chain of command at the center, crossing a series of police, officers and commanders.”

As Moriya explained, *“It was as if the policepersons were under a hypnotic trance and didn’t understand the real meaning of the call. It was only when they woke up from that trance that they understood what they missed, but too late. This is another example that shows that what does happen is exactly what is intended to happen.”*

Though the Jewish boy, Gil-Ad, managed to make a call to the police, the policeman who took the call and all others who eventually tried to act on that call were unable to make things happen.

The ‘severe failure’ was because, by then, the karmic due date had already descended on this particular event.

•

Any time a meaningful interaction takes place between individuals, it should be remembered that this connection has been orchestrated by soul-to-soul recognition for the purpose of karmic amendment needed here and now.

Soul-to-soul connection works like magnetic attraction i.e. north-south poles attract each other and resist separation.

The belief system that makes sense for me: it is the mutual recognition at soul level that keeps any karmic connection active and maintains the victim within reach

of the would-be 'executioner' – or the other way around - while family, friends, neighbors and, sometimes, even the Law are 'blind' to what is coming down under their noses.

•

It is this karmic recognition which allows the 'executioner', the karmic tool designated to achieve the amendment needed here and now, to return again and again to the 'victim' - until s/he has finalized the deed.

There is no deterrent strong enough to ... deter.

Nor will the victim seek help or an escape with intent.

In the case of 'lucky escapes', as in the case of some 50 girls from the Chibok school in Nigeria, or in the case of survivors of a massacre who, for one moment frozen in time, were in the cross hair of the killer's weapon [but lived to tell the tale as 'observers'] there was no soul-to-soul recognition between the armed men and these specific girls.

No karmic deadline had been planned for them that day.

In such cases, energy worked like the magnetic repulsion of south-south poles repelling each other.

Nothing will make them connect, no matter how close they get to each other.

•

Technical glitches, legal glitches, *unforeseen circumstances*, so-called *bad luck*, being in the *wrong place* at the *wrong time*, coincidences, unfortunate circumstances, bureaucratic or neighborly inertia, flags raised that failed to raise the alarm, calls made that did not generate the expected response, warnings that fell on deaf ears, legal paperwork that got misplaced, etc. - all can be attributed to soul-to-soul recognition necessary to any scenario of karmic amendment scheduled for here and now.

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This 'theory' goes a long way toward explaining why we, humans, have no way whatsoever of ever stopping what is magnetically, energetically, already in progress. These are 'downloads' that are impossible to interrupt.

As has already been discussed at length, our personal karma is blended with

whatever karma it was deemed we should inherit from several of our soul's previous incarnations. And so, like sea water displaced by a tremor generated *somewhere* in the depth of an ocean hundreds of miles away, it eventually touches our personal 'shore' exactly on the **X** that marks the spot under our feet.

•

As a case in point, for many Jewish Israeli women, an unexpected complication stemming from the conflict in Palestinian Gaza, was triggered by having to remain indoors a lot more than usual and/or by having to spend long periods of time in bomb shelters because of the numerous red alerts that disturbed the entire south of Israel.

The organisation, **No to Violence Against Women**, reported 60 percent more calls in July 2014 than in June.

As the organization's executive director stated, "The tension and stress while enclosed together [in a room] results in increased family violence [...] There is a sense of escalation, with women sometimes phoning during an assault."

Question: if this situation is considered from the angle of karma, as the way to personal growth why, might we guess, have *specific* couples and families been thrown together in cramped spaces, unable to engage in any of their usual diversionary activities a.k.a. coping mechanisms and avoidance behaviors?

•

Depending whether it is a simple blow to the head intended to awaken us from our cultural and personal torpor or whether our time for self-amendment has been overshot, sooner or later a wavelet, a wave or a tsunami will eventually reach 'our' personal shore at a specific time and place to hit us with what is intended to lead us to personal growth - personal growth through setbacks, hardship or through joy. As the old adage states, *What doesn't break us makes us stronger.*

•

Why do we need pain to grow?

We are not hardwired like plants.

We do not grow and develop on the inside to produce beautiful, awesome growth on the outside, while basking in the sun and sipping water through our roots.

We, humans, are recalcitrant learners and we only learn through 'tough love'. All our setbacks, traumas and tragedies – as well as all our breakthroughs and moments of euphoria - are karmically tailored-made for each one of us. These moments kick in at a precise nano second, as per karmic schedule. The important thing to remember is that, though we tend to focus on the *bad guy*, the executioner, the same soul-to soul recognition also applies to would-be 'benefactors'.

•

On any given day, anywhere on planet Earth, sometimes in front of our own eyes, more often in the news, we become privy to a myriad moments when strangers self-sacrifice in grand and spectacular ways for the benefit of one or more persons unknown to that 'hero'.

When this hero is asked why /he jumped into the fray, risking his/her own life or possessions, such a person usually replies that they had no idea why they did what they did. They simply had to do it.

○

Why Thumbs up/Thumbs down is Also Unspiritual

On this day, a day that, like many, came before others, another airplane disaster involving Malaysian Airlines has shaken the world.

A missile launched from Eastern Ukraine killed all of the plane's 298 passengers on board flight MH17.

Four days after the tragedy and yet another mystery prevails: which warring faction shot down the plane from an altitude of 30,000 ft, possibly thinking it was a military transport?

"The International Civil Aviations Organization had kept the flight corridor open," wrote Keith Bradsher, for the New York Times, on July 18, 2014. *"The International Air Transport Association,"* he added, *"had not restricted travel in Ukrainian airspace, and European air traffic control officials had continued to direct flights through the*

area.”

○

Again, the common range of ‘explanations’ could be offered such as technical glitches, *unforeseen circumstances*, so-called *bad luck*, being in the *wrong place* at the *wrong time*, a litany of coincidences, unfortunate circumstances - all these fail to recognize the soul-to-soul recognition necessary to any scenario of karmic amendment scheduled for here and now.

○

One such unfortunate circumstance is the fact that, according to experts, each of the international organizations’ decision was to keep that airspace open. They all overlooked the fact that a sophisticated surface-to-air missile system, such as a Buk missile system which, in all likelihood brought down MH 17, could reach a target cruising as high as 70,000ft.

○

“Beyond this,” Moriya reminded me, *“once we all stop being hypnotized by the physical appearances of the 298 ancient souls on board that plane, including that of the deceased baby that first made the headlines around the world, we can remember that, though the passengers were dressed in different clothes and were of various ages, walks of life and nationalities, they still belonged to the same karmic ‘group’ as they had in past lives.*

Again they shared a common fate. Moreover,” Moriya added, *“if this event had happened during a war, especially if these persons belonged to another country, this loss of lives would have been considered merely as something that just happens. I think the term used these days is collateral damage.*

All the passengers were karmically linked and maybe through deeds done on a battlefield. After all, they were brought down by a form of artillery, not a bad engine. And you already know that nothing happens by accident or bad time. Ma la-asot, huh?”

●

As it turned out, a day or two later, Mr Abbot, the Prime Minister of Australia happened to use a common war imagery to describe the situation. “Bodies remain strewn over the *fields* of Eastern Ukraine,” he said.

Upon hearing his words, which could as easily have referred to the after-effect of a tornado or tsunami, perhaps triggered by Moriya's words, a poem came to mind: **In Flanders Fields**, a war poem written in 1915 by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

•

Be that as it may, a couple of days later again, the banner on the front page of the Courier-Mail, my local newspaper, commanded, **Bring Them Home!** a heartfelt urging usually addressed on behalf of soldiers forced by their government to fight too long, too hard and who are dying in too a great number in a foreign country - or on behalf of prisoners of war and hostages.

•

Surprisingly, strangely, since the passengers on flight MH17 were all civilians and many were children but - perhaps, not so surprising, not so strange when one considers what has already been discussed on the topic of 'inherited' karma - the war imagery has endured.

•

And again, with flight MH 17, as was the case in the disappearance of MH 370, even Australian nationals travelling under different passports were 'found out.'

When a *planned* karmic event comes down, there is no such thing as stolen identities or *hidden identities*.

There is nowhere to hide and very little time, if any, to pray for salvation.

•

For the loved ones of the plane crash victims, at least for those of the first forty airlifted to Holland, there could not be starker contrast between the rough handling of the bodies and body bags at the Ukraine crash site and the formal military ceremony that took place at Eindhoven military airport, in Holland.

A lone bugle sounded the Last Post.

Soldiers in dress uniform carried each casket on their shoulders in the manner reserved for heroes who fell in defence either of the Motherland or her interests – not

civilian victims of plane crashes.

Queen Maxima of the Netherlands was present.

The country was silent.

Here, in Australia, the caskets will be greeted by Mr Abbot, the Prime Minister, and a host of dignitaries.

•

Public reaction in the West to the handling of the bodies reveals some interesting attitudes to death. Many of us living in so-called 'civilised' countries were shocked by images of what, for us, was callous, if not downright barbaric, handling of the victims' bodies by pro-Russian separatists.

Our opinion has its roots in the fact that we, in the West, are extremely sensitized to the physical impact of corpses. We often find it frightening and repulsive. Some call it obscene and morbid, even when it comes to the lifeless body of our loved ones. We no longer know how to touch them – or even dare.

Our reaction can be considered odd, particularly because we are a part of the multitude attracted to novels, films and games in which death is graphically rendered. Odd, too, from those of us who, mercifully, have not yet beheld a dead body ... in the flesh.

•

Our aversion to 'real' death is purely a cultural response prompted by 'civilized living', the notion that changed so many aspects of daily life and family dynamics as populations migrated from away from an agrarian lifestyle, forced to leave behind their 'farm-habits' - whether they chose to or not.

The epitome of Western urban sophistication includes having dead bodies whisked away, even those of our loved ones, within minutes of their last breath – those of our pets included. *Musn't upset the children. They musn't see Grandad like that.* Even the animals we eat are slaughtered out of sight – this time for good reasons.

•

Of course, when a natural disaster occurs, we have to deal with the harsh realization

that the veneer of sophistication that made us ‘civilized’ can no longer shield death from us. Then, for a while that feels hellishly long, under freaked-out duress, as fearful of nightmares as of diseases, we do manage to live, eat and sleep among human and animal corpses - as they do in ‘less civilized’ places where, there, life seems cheaper and death more casually present than in our midst.

•

In countries where civil unrest is current, where natural disasters are accepted as common and where ill-health is rampant, the populations have never had the emotional luxury of being prudish around corpses. Dead is dead and corpses are a part of the cultural landscape.

The people know how to deal with one’s discarded remains by themselves. They don’t need an elaborate, sentimental service ‘to celebrate the life’ of their dearly departed. Neither do they see value in the over-priced tag that accompanies so many of our funeral services.

•

In such lands, it could be suggested that people accept more readily that, once life is no longer, soul has departed from the body and her most recent vehicle amounts to not much more than a ventriloquist’s puppet, separated from its minder.

All that remains are the shell and stuffing – nothing to get emotional about. The spirit of the loved one, they know, is liberated, healthy and ... elsewhere.

•

We are somewhat more able to deal with corpses once they are returned to us for the formal farewell. That’s after they have been suitably and, one assumes, respectfully, treated even during the gruesome process of an autopsy.

We want our corpses to be neat and presented with a dignity that, ironically, they may never had experienced while alive.

•

Interestingly, though the public is clamoring for the respectful retrieval and return of ALL body parts of each victim – wherever possible – as they are still, at the time of writing, strewn across fields in Ukraine, what is the likelihood, here, in the West, that

any family member might be desperate to retrieve the limb of a newly amputeed member of the family, be that person a child, a spouse or a parent, before it gets tossed into an incinerator by the hospital staff?

Similarly, how to explain that the white coat and scalpel, in our culture, work in such a way on our emotions as to make the disembowelling of a loved one on a morgue slab quite emotionally acceptable, once the law declares it necessary?

•

Although again, it is not likely to dull the pain and confusion suffered by the victims' families, spiritually-speaking, the fact that all the corpses have so far remained unidentified and have all been treated equally, be that in the initial callous manner of the rebel separatists in Ukraine or with assumed 'dignity' as soon as the coffins were placed on board the plane to Holland.

Young or old, regardless of their religion, health and wealth, all corpses for now remain as anonymous as the symbolic Anonymous Soldier buried under the Arc de Triomphe in Paris for whom a flame is kept burning day and night, without fail. No distinction between one corpse and another.

None of the arbitrary ways of separation that had defined each of the 298 travellers, up until the blink of that moment when the Buk rocket pierced the fuselage. Just as it is intended to be in real life. Just as it should be.

•

Many millions of dollars will be spent over the months and years to come to identify the faction that, allegedly, pushed the button that fired the rocket atop the Buk system which brought down flight MH17. It seems imperative to make a comment in regards to a penalty judged adequate by an international tribunal.

•

Whether or not this massive dollar drain will prove that it is Russia who supplied the hi-tech weapon, that it had been intentionally aimed and fired at the passenger plane with intent to kill and, therefore, constitute a war crime or whether it will be revealed that rocket had been inadvertently fired by a crew of badly trained soldiers, brains fogged by Vodka vapor, aiming simply for a bit of fun, however seriously misguided, like teenagers tempering with a gas pipe as a prank, the karmic plan was executed.

It came to pass and no charges laid, no compensation, no apology, no waving of fists and name-calling, will make an iota of difference to the heart of the grieving ones, *not really*, although, of course, in their grief, they imagine that the ego-persona of their lost loved one(s) will feel honored.

None of that will alter what has come to pass.

Neither will it make any difference to what is already scheduled for any of the unwitting participants in this event.

Neither will any sanction act as a deterrent.



As we observe daily in our society, everyone has been deterred from speeding on the highway – except the ones who speed.

Everyone has been deterred from bullying others – except the ones who bully others.

Everyone has been deterred from committing a murder – except the ones who have committed a murder.

And so on.



As if a couple from Scotland had had any physical part to play in the event, another headline grabbed our attention in the early days of the MH17 news updates:

British family cheats death after being bumped from Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 because aircraft was full.

For the sake of the argument, it would be interesting to know what the couple's initial reaction had been when they were bumped off to a later plane, but the husband was quite right when he said, "There must have been someone watching over us and saying, 'you must not get on that flight.'"

Indeed, though the couple and their baby had nothing to do with the decision to not board the fated plane, their three souls knew that the time to leave this earth, for whatever karmic reasons, was not yet upon any member of this family.

Indeed, these three beings were to be kept safe, along with several others who, for one reason or another, had at one moment or another intended to leave Amsterdam

on the evening of July 17 on a Malaysian Airline flight with Kuala Lumpur as the destination.

The karmic due date for these persons, as for ourselves, is yet to reveal itself, leaving us, when it will, with not even a nano second to 'bail out'.

○

According to the Sydney Morning Herald's article of July 18, apparently, US satellites tracked the missile's path to the airliner in real time and "they would have known exactly where it was launched, where it was headed, and the rate at which it was traveling."

Even if, in days ahead, experts argue that the Pentagon did have a minute window of opportunity in which to warn the pilot, but failed to act, this will only serve to confirm that once the due date is upon us, all efforts to alter the *planned* course of events will always be fruitless even when failure to act defies rational understanding.

●

Generally-speaking, people most immediately concerned, relatives, friends and others who hear of an event in the news, have the childish hope that, regardless of the actual dire situation and risks, all will eventually end well.

○

Sure, it is human nature to wish, to want, to think that magically, life will return to normal and all participants will resume life-as-it was, put the grim moment behind them and that they will enjoy a satisfying life for many years ahead, but human nature does not take into account the karmic plan.

●

grim events in Israel and Palestine, the karmic due

date of **June 12, 2014**, was not merely for the kidnapped Jewish boys who decided to hitchhike, as they often did, rather than take the bus, but also for several Palestinians like Mohammed Dudeen, the 15-year-old boy shot by an Israeli soldier who was retreating from the area after a ground search for the Jewish boys.

○

As if these grim events were not enough, June 12, unbeknownst to all, was the trigger date that led to the death of yet another Palestinian teenager, 17 year old Abu Khudair, whose charred body was found in a nearby forest – and *also* for the violent clashes that have been, at least on the surface, compounded by the severe bashing of his young cousin, a visitor from America.

•

15 year-old Tariq, Abu Khudair's visiting cousin, was seriously beaten by police officers during an alleged participation in a slingshot, stone throwing altercation with the Police.

The timing of the visit to his Palestinian relatives was ... timely.

His activities, such as they were, on that fateful day were timely, as well.

His bruised and very swollen face, has for now, become the symbol of the current Palestinian warfare response.

•

June 12, 2014 was the karmic trigger-day for ramifications that will go on occurring in the weeks and months to come between the Palestinian people, The Hamas, the Israeli Government, its response, and also for thousands and thousands of individuals, strangers, here, there and everywhere, who did not know any of the 5 boys – who may never have set foot in Israel – who may be neither Jewish nor Muslim.

•

Actions/reactions - re-actions to actions ad infinitum – till death separates us from our Ego.

•

What lessons has young Tariq, the only surviving teenager, taken back with him to America?

Will he become radicalized?

Will he become the enduring American face of the Palestinian struggle on social media?

Having seen and experienced the damage of death and pain first-hand, will he become the American face of the Palestinian struggle on the side of a permanent bilateral peace, not merely a cease fire, a truce ?

Will he become a politician? A soldier? A policeman? A suicide bomber? A teacher?

A preacher?

Will he return to being no one in particular – just a person ‘living life’?

•

What is clear is that both political sides, fuelled by the energy of their own people, are trying to inflict as much harm on the other side as possible, before the UN or the US secretary of state broker a cease fire.

So far, 1,300 Israeli air strikes have taken many lives, but the fact that the 800 rockets launched so far from the Gaza Strip have not killed anyone in Israel cannot be attributed to a lack of trying – when there is a will, eventually a way will be found.

•

Tension and distrust is rife.

The situation still is extremely volatile.

The sad, but anticipated scenario, is that a cease fire will be brokered only to be followed by yet another hollow, paper-thin peace treaty.

Since there is no genuine goodwill, no genuine wish to sacrifice anything meaningful to offer ‘free of strings attached’ – from the heart - to the other side as a genuine peace offering, any peace treaty will inevitably find itself shelved alongside all the others for a much longer time than it will have been active.

•

Between grenades, rifles, rocks, rockets, anger and hatred, fear that is visible to the naked eye and fear is frozen within, yes, it’s very hard to make sense of what’s going on in Israel and Palestine but, now that the start-up chain of the current events has been established in this section, there is no point in further documenting the escalation of events, as this is not a journalistic report.

•

Having said that, a serious question needs to be asked: what, *really*, was the ‘epicenter cause’ of this current event - or of any other event - regardless of its global or personal importance?

•

In our own nucleus of loved ones, friends, neighbors and colleagues, how far back in time should we rewind actions/reactions and reactions to actions to get to the root-cause of the current dis-ease/un-ease/crisis/showdown/stand-off or that ‘cold shoulder’, the feeling of being dismissed, deleted off their list, that is keeping us

awake at night?

•

How far back would a *Forensic Archaeologist, specializing in Karma*, peel back the strata of moments upon moments upon moments to expose the original moment when 'our' personal struggle truly began?

•

While dialoguing with Moriya in regards to the current crisis in Jerusalem where she resides, she explained, "Also, we must remember that the kidnapers on both sides, the killers on both sides, the police and the army equivalent on both sides, and the citizens of Israel and Palestine, have all been in it together for many, many years already in this lifetime, but not for the first time."

•

No one ever descends into our 'reality' from Planet X.

Indeed, we, as individuals and collectively, are the by-product of our relationship with each other *and with the other* – no differently from family members who rub off each other, band energies together and bounce energies off one another.

•

The Palestinians' right and duty to resist, an opinion piece written by Gideon Levy, an Israeli journalist, was published in Haaretz on Oct. 26, 2014.

In regards to the ongoing events occurring in East Jerusalem, he wrote, "*[...] Imagine you're the Palestinians. You can't leave Gaza and it's not easy to leave the West Bank, either. The beach, less than an hour's drive from your West Bank home, is beyond the mountains of darkness. An Israeli can go to Tierra del Fuego, between Argentina and Chile, much more easily than you can go to the beach at Ajami. [...]*

There are no dreams, no wishes. Your children have a slim chance of accomplishing anything in life, even if they go to university. All they can look forward to is a life of humiliation and unemployment. [...]

There are two possibilities. The first is to accept, give in, give up. The second is to resist. Whom have we respected more in history? Those who passed their days under the occupation and collaborated with it, or those who struggled for their

freedom? [...] Imagine you're a Palestinian. You have every right to resist. In fact, it's your civil duty. No argument there. The occupied people's right to resist occupation is secured in natural justice, in the morals of history and in international law.

•

Serious question: keeping in mind all that has been discussed so far on the topic of personal and collective karma, our own responsibilities and our own contributions to it, how karmically astute would you say is Gideon Levy's opinion?

•

Anyway, for each person in the multitude who has become entangled in the events taking place in Israel [as everywhere else in the globe], there will be smaller or greater repercussions but not all will be of a violent nature. Where hatred strives, love thrives as well.

And, thankfully, as if to prove Moriya right, a few months ago, back in July 8, 2014, I came across the following headline in the Jerusalem post:

○

Mother of dead Jewish teen condemns Abu Khdair killing

"Rachel Fraenkel, the mother of Naftali Fraenkel, who was buried on Tuesday, July 1, said they shared the pain of the Palestinian youngster's parents.

"Even in the depth of the mourning of our son, it's hard for me to describe how distressed we were over the outrage that happened in Jerusalem," she told reporters outside her home in Nof Ayalon.

"The shedding of innocent blood is against morality, against the Torah and Judaism, is against the basis of our life in this country. The murderers of our children -

whoever sent them, whoever helped them, whoever incited towards that murder - will all be brought to justice. But it will be them and no innocent people, and it will be done by the government, the police, the justice department, and not the vigilantes," she said.

"No mother or father should go through what we're going now, and we share the pain of the parents of Muhammad Abu Khdeir. The legacy of the life and death of Naftali, Eyal and Gil-ad, is a legacy of love, of humanity, of national unity," she added.

And, yes, of course, humanity is linked together like all drops in the ocean are linked together.

Global means global.

•

As Tenzin Palmo wrote, in her book, **Reflections On a Mountain Lake**, the Buddha himself said, *"Hatred doesn't cease by hatred. Hatred can only cease by love or by non-hatred.' This is because if you're putting out anger, no matter how justified the cause, you will stir up the huge reservoir of anger in your antagonist, whoever it may be.*

So however justified it may seem at the time, all you'll get in return is more opposition. It'd obvious. All anger, no matter how justified, how righteous, how holy it is, comes from the same source, which is antipathy, aversion, or hatred. Whether it expresses itself in violence or non-violence, it's still anger, and so however 'justified,' it will never bring about circumstances leading to peace, love, and reconciliation.

How can it?"

The good news, I say, is that it does not take a Buddha to understand Tenzin Palmo's reasoning.

In Tolerance We Are Safer

The series of articles that follows was first published in 2011

I have lived for the past 17 years in a quiet, leafy Australian suburb perched on the edge of the CBD. The first visibly non-locals to appear on 'our' streets a few years ago were Muslim families made distinctive by the women's hijabs and abayas. The next group of migrants to arrive was a colourful mixed cohort of refugees from East Africa.

I have to admit that, in the local shopping artery, walking through the sidewalk throngs of mostly African men hanging about, chatting vehemently in a foreign language makes me feel somewhat uncomfortable.

I catch myself briefly longing back to the 'old days' when these streets were a lot more 'empty', certainly far less exotic and, lost in my thoughts, back in those days, I could just walk straight ahead on automatic pilot.

•

Of course, I am questioning the source of my unease! Surely, it does not simply stem from the lack of familiarity with these people's animated banter. Surely it is not simply triggered by the color and shapes of their faces and clothes, as I have always enjoyed travelling through the Middle East and Africa.

•

The only honest answer to filter upward is the 'U factor': fear of the Unfamiliar. Oddly, and this is what I am questioning, the 'U factor' is more unsettling *here* where these people are a minority of refugees and self-funded migrants in my space than *there* where I am a very visible tourist in their space. How weird is that?

•

Quick update – **December 2014**: to the possibly benign 'U factor' mentioned above, one now has to add the much more dangerous and volatile 'F factor', the Fear factor.

Yes, the political climate has shifted considerably in the past three years and most

notably, here, in Australia, in recent months, as a kneejerk to the brutal and barbaric antics of the most visibly active sections of the Islamic State in Iran and Iraq.

○

Migrants from the Middle East, Africa and Pakistan seem to be tainted with the same tar brush.

Suddenly, anyone who speaks a form of Arabic is 'most likely' affiliated with ISIS and, women included, could be one of its planted or converted 'sleeper' agents who will, one day, 'do something' that will wreak havoc in our otherwise, tranquil community.

Muslim women wearing a hijab are going to come to grief, here, and elsewhere, too, of course.

That much is obvious.

Q: Why the women?

A: Because they are not helpless, 'innocent' children and they are not 'dangerous men'. They are the visible, accessible weak link - the link women, themselves, can approach, aggress and vilify. Not many folks in our midst are likely to dare come up to a self-appointed, bearded iman and attempt tearing him to shreds.

It's much easier, for a woman to hurl abuse at her and perhaps try to unveil her and for a man to, after unveiling her, drag her down an alley and rape her 'just to help her get over he modesty hang up.'

Yes, if I were a woman wearing the hijab or equivalent, Muslim or not, I would be on high alert.

•

Reality check: As Moriya says, "It is only from the humble weak one that the aggressive weak one gets his [or her] strength." Which brings us back to the bully mentality endemic in every nook and cranny of the globe.

And it brings us back to the ole favorites: *Me, First!* and *Me vs You*.

Even if 2011 was the year that marked the, perhaps temporary, demise of Al-Qaeda, 2014 certainly is the year of ISIS, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

And that 'unexpected' turn of events, simply confirms that, globally, we have not yet figured out that when a 'void' is created, in the fullness of time, something will always come to fill this void and beware that new 'entity'.

For us, in our personal lives, the message is Beware what you allow in the space recently created by a 'rearrangement', regardless of its type.

Might 2014 merely be the *first* year in the Age of ISIS?

Argh! I happen to be very fond of the Greco-Roman goddess Isis. The symbol of her horns, the moon crescent reclining on its back, inspired my label LazyMoon Productions.

Beyond that, might Isis be a portent of the next 'blood moon', here, and now, of what might come to pass, if our lack of spiritual mettle allows it?

•

After all, back then, it was believed that the tears of sorrow which Isis cried flooded the Nile River flooded year upon year because of her tears of sorrow and she is usually pictured wearing a headgear intended to represent a throne, she was an important representation of the pharaoh's power but also patron goddess of slaves, sinners, artisans and the downtrodden.

•

Back to 2011 when, in hindsight, the state of things appeared simpler.

As I waited for the green light, while stopped in front of a row of shops earlier this afternoon, I observed a little blond boy at play on the sidewalk while his mother was otherwise busy with a younger child. I watched as he pulled a black plastic gun out of his pocket, aimed it at the woman who happened to be passing him on the right and fired imaginary bullets at her back. He was no more than five years old.

As I noted this little boy's antics, it brought back memories of the liberating debate

that lasted through most of the '80s on the topic of Nature vs Nurture and the sudden awareness it had brought to mainstream families that most of our responses to children – starting with the ways newborns were nursed, bounced or tickled - varied according to their gender, as did their toys.

And I thought it a sad indictment of our culture that thirty years later the effects of this awareness had lasted only the time of a birthday sparkler and, for the most part, we have allowed the damming cop out of *boys will be boys* to settle as comfortably over the matter as moss over decaying wood.

While I waited for the light to turn green, an image of a little Muslim boy also shooting imaginary bullets at passers-by sprang into my thoughts. And I knew, knew, *knew*, that if, from inside the cabin of my car, I had witnessed any one of these alternative scenes, it would have been a struggle to shrug it off with a mere '*boys will be boys*'.

•

Quite simply, my thoughts were tainted by images of the unbridled euphoria in some corners of the Middle East beamed to us during the aftermath of 9/11 and other more recent scenes of mass hatred for the collective West spiced up by news of yet another suicide bomber killing X number of civilians.

If only for a moment in that little boy's gun play, I would have seen the seed of budding migrant violence, the seed of anger, resentment and hatred already pushed in the malleable brain of a young child. I would have imagined this child brought up in a militant extremist family, '*one of many probably already in this country*' might have been the follow up thought.

•

And now, where am I going with this?

At the time of typing this page, today's headline is **After bin Laden**: jubilation, madness, fear and anger is a no-brainer. Death, in our culture, any death, is a solemn occasion and the Sky News footage of amped-up carnivalesque jubilation in New York, Washington and elsewhere in the West was quite confronting. Maybe it was because their euphoria was linked to the death of a human being and, in our culture, death, jubilation and street parties have never been linked together and

should never be linked together – even if the death in question is that of an infamous international enemy - once one of the CIA's most valued assets and trained accordingly.

Maybe it was because the crowds shouldering American flags were mostly made up of young males who, like kindergartners on a rampage, indulged themselves with offensive gestures and racial slurs. Maybe it was because the crude aspects of this revelry were not merely against the spirit of a dead man but were, at the same time, recklessly insulting millions of non-fundamentalist Muslims around the globe.

•

Maybe it was because aspects of these street scenes brought up similar images beamed from other places in the world where it is acknowledged that life is cheap and that blanket-hatred is a killer of innocent people of all ages. In these places, too, out of control young men drape themselves in their nation's flag and they, too, in their own language chant a variation of 'In God we trust.'

•

Is it the 'war on terror' that has eroded our most basic principles even if we, millions of Jane and John Doe living under democratic regimes, have not yet lost anyone to terrorism and live in countries where acts of terrorism are still, thankfully, as few as they were forty years ago – virtually non-existent?

Or is it that, undetected, a collective closed-heart callousness has crept up on us to override our usual basic sense of decency?

Or can it be that, collectively, we have not yet figured out that when a 'void' is created, in the fullness of time, something will always come to fill this void and beware that new 'entity'.

○

Justice is Blind - Palestinian Intifata - 2011

Killing is, arguably, the act of terminating one's life out of fear, envy, anger or blind-hatred. In regards to the murder of 'innocent people', why are most of us fuzzy when it comes to the 16,000 people in the United States alone who are murdered every year? Why do we lose sight of the fact that 1,500 children under the age of 18 make up this tally and that the murderers of all these 'innocent American people' are not androids who come from some obscure planet and they don't come from any vengeful foreign land, either. The killers are most often born and bred locally and, presumably, at least a couple of people in America have loved each one of them.

•

Honest question: Has Justice ever been blind?

It seems safe to say that 'if' she ever was, she is no longer as blind as she used to be.

After all, aren't 'injustice perpetrated' and 'justice served' mere constructs assembled through the lens of the proverbial beholder?

○

Many times daily, in order to protect some people in the name of justice, others are killed in the name of justice. A blatant example of that happened in a recent airstrike on the home of a son of Gaddafi, in Tripoli, where NATO forces killed his youngest son and three of his grandchildren. Which brings to mind the endless rounds of peace treaties involving the US, Israel and various leaders of the Palestinians. There have been many handshakes and many tabloid pictures and many short-lived cease-fires.

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Together, they have synergized into the Fence of Separation that snakes for miles and miles protecting Israeli citizens from suicide bombers **and** isolating the west bank people from 'real' Israelis.

A generation of children has been growing in the shadow of that barrier that is more formidable than the Berlin wall – also with its own checkpoints – without ever coming

in contact with Israelis who are not soldiers.

In short, the only Israelis they come in contact with are the ones who embody their oppression.

•

That generation of young Palestinians never sees a Jewish father who is not a soldier, a Jewish mother who is not as soldier. They never see a Jewish toddler, a Jewish teenager or Jewish grandparents. It is not hard to guess that the sentiments that permeate this 'petri dish' situation can only be helplessness, anger and resentment at 'injustice' suffered by millions of innocent Palestinians who, like their counterparts on the other side of the wall, only want to get on with their lives and keep their family safe.

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And again, where am I going with this?

Sifting through the millennia in all corners of the global world what seems obvious is that no lasting, healthy peace, no heart-felt understanding has ever come out of any relationship in which the protagonists acted out of fear, out of resentment, out of anger, out of envy or out of hatred.

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Perceived injustice and justified retribution have always triggered animosity, regardless of the age, sex, creed, race of the protagonists – and regardless of the bone of contention.

Envy always begets resentment which always begets anger which begets hatred and though we still pretend to the contrary, in our heart of hearts, we know that no amount of diplomacy or deterrent can ever dissolve these emotions, once they become engrained.

Some prefer to cut to the chase and attempt time and time again to annihilate entire populations in one way or another.

And still today, the word '**annihilate**' is the rally cry of many millions.

○

Unfortunately, nothing can annihilate any blend of fear, envy, resentment and anger.

That blend can be forced underground, but it cannot be eradicated – not by bombs, not by solitary confinement, not by racial slurs any more than by cartoons, graffiti and rude gestures. The thing is that though not one of these strategies can stem the flow of hatred and separation, they all work as powerful billows fanning the flames of separation, of *us against them* and the mirror-image... *them against us*.



Law of Attraction: Fear & Resentment

What's amazing is that in spite of millennia-worth of accumulated and recurring proofs of this fact, we, modern men and women, officious worshippers of democracy and justice for all in the guise of human rights, child and animal protection acts, in their myriad of forms, we participate by proxy – anonymously - in the same random manner as the 'others' who overtly appear more callous.



We do that by giving our politicians very specific mandates when we vote for them. What we tell them is this: *"Keep out the bad guys and adjust the budget so that I get more money from the government than I'm getting now. Do that any which way you want, provided you stay under the radar."* And we send our politicians, golem-like, on these tracks of action/reaction and relative justice while we deflect personal responsibility by staying safely tucked behind their coat tails – ready to leap out of the shadows and point an accusing finger at the first whiff of an imminent fiasco – any topic will do - and cry, "It wasn't me! It was the politicians."

Honest question: Why are we collectively, in the home, in the workplace, in our streets and in our politics still following such ancient, tribal, primary patterns? Why after WWII, haven't the good men and women of those days, collectively, slowly, moved to set up a model of global-cohabitation aiming to have a different code of ethics in place ... by now?

Honest questions: are we faring better in these areas than our great-grandparents, our grandparents and our parents who have failed their world and ours?

If we are not faring better on the scoreboard, then, could it be that ongoing *tits for tats* and 'Go better!' and 'Bring it on!' responses, regardless of the financial cost and regardless of the human cost on all sides are simply what come naturally to us and, what the heck, if it's natural, why suppress it?

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It is true that wars and international discord do keep beavies of diplomats fully, if not necessarily, gainfully employed. It is true that the weapons industry does put milk and honey on many a table. And it is true that, generally speaking, any sort of societal/cultural mismanagement of emotional responses to perceived 'injustice' does keep a huge cohort of civil servants, doctors, nurses, lawyers, social workers, psychologists, self-help gurus and jail wardens also in their jobs – alongside by a huge section of the media.

Serious question: could it be said that envy, hate, anger, fear and resentment do, to a considerable extent, fuel our economy?

And then ... what?

○

I remember my mother telling me, when I was a child, that if something didn't work one way, like a key not turning inside a lock, I should remember to turn it the other way. Sound advice it was, indeed. And so, if the general consensus is that hatred, fear and resentment will never bring about any type of satisfying resolution to any sort conflict because these energies attract similar energies as effectively as two poles of a magnet jump at each other, then the only other way to turn 'this' key is towards the opposite pole – towards genuine acceptance, towards making an active inner peace in regards to that 'other', whoever that other happens to be.

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Good news is that we don't have to hug that other person. It is safe to agree that the power of hugs just as the healing power of making love are both hugely over-rated

when it comes to conflict resolutions.

We don't even have to shake their hand, as cantankerous school children are asked to do to show a supposed heartfelt softening of attitude.

We don't have to do any of these things because an honest inner peace is also active energy.

Like attracts like, as effectively as two poles of a magnet jump at each other.

•

The way to alter the energy of envy, fear, hatred and resentment is to try very hard to not respond in kind, while dodging blows - figurative ones as well as literal ones. The key is also to not suffer anything under duress. Accepting anything under duress stands at the opposite side of accepting from a heartfelt inner calm - and duress will NEVER work.

○

An Eye for an Eye – misunderstanding karma

I am not in the least interested in any ritualized religions, but I do keep an eclectic bank of quotes and, on the topic of 'duress', I found a sound byte attributed to Jesus in Matthew 5:38-42, NIV. *"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' he said. "But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you."*

Uh, what? Love your enemy?

Turn the other cheek and open the flood gates to all and sundry?

Go all religious and turn the other cheek and what not?

Let the bad guys take over without a fight? OMG! You gotta be cra-zy!

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Going along for a moment with the belief that Jesus of the Gospels did exist, over

two thousand years ago already, he was issuing us with the warning that, because like attracts like, responding in kind to anyone or anything 'evil' [which for all intents and purposes includes anything we find unpleasant frightening] will keep otherwise good folks from enjoying the deep sleep of the Just.

Even if government are blinded by their own purpose, what I think is really crazy is that even persons who see themselves as religious don't get it either.

Voters worldwide don't get the commandment that is ubiquitous in every main religion: Though shalt not kill.

These 'good' people don't get that as long as they talk about the other, any other, with harsh words, with anger and hatred in their voice, they are magnetizing more of the same – separately and collectively.

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Even more attractive to those who mouth canonical wisdom each time they visit their temple, church, mosque or synagogue is the much misunderstood *eye for an eye* that, these days, passes for restorative ... justice a.k.a. man-made retribution.

"You gouge out my eye. I gouge out your eye and then the other, if I can" – is the model we all understand and many more of us would add action to words, if we weren't law-abiding citizens - afraid of the lawful consequences.

•

Personally, I prefer to think that 'an eye for an eye' is not about a barbaric tit for tat, but about **karmic** retribution – retribution tabulated by whichever entity one feels is in charge of the universe, the name and shape of this entity being totally immaterial. 'An eye for an eye' suggests that karma is unerring.

•

Karma encapsulates all our deeds and all our thoughts and all our words for they, too, carry their own energy.

Like attracts like.

Though this karmic payback is often paid back in kind, it can boomerang back to the sender in a different guise but no matter, in essence, it will still be the same old 'an eye for eye and a tooth for a tooth' – repayment in the exact measure.

Not a skerrick more.

Not a skerrick, less.

•

A knife attracts a bullet.

A bomb somewhere attracts an explosion elsewhere.

A punch attracts a counter punch.

A hurtful word attracts another hurtful word.

A slur attracts a bigger slur.

○

Can THAT Be Karma-Free?

Approximately 150,000 people died in Hiroshima and some 75,000 died in Nagasaki – mostly all civilians.

From 1969 to 1973 the US secretly bombed Cambodia just to cut off Viet-Cong supply lines along the Ho Chi Minh Trail from Laos, gutting deep into the populated areas of central Cambodia.

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The number of bombs dropped on this non-combatant country was equal to that dropped on Japan during all of WWII. More than 500,000 Cambodians died.

A famine ensued as a result of the bombed-out agricultural industry of this otherwise very fertile country. More deaths - children included, of course. With the country on its knees, the scene was then set for the invasion of the Khmer Rouge and most of us know what happened then.

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The United States of America was not an alien entity from out of space. The bombs were made by American people. The pilots dropping the bombs were American people. The orders were given by the American President. Congress was made up of American people. The members of the Republican Party standing by *their* President were American. Then the madness stopped. Peace. Handshakes. Rebuild. Easy. Injustice was perpetrated but was there any amending, any repairing from the

collective American heart?

•

Although the link has most unfortunately, for subsequent events, never been made, how to NOT imagine them, boomerang-like, the key troubles that have since afflicted Americans on their continent!

Which wave of massive complications that has befallen America might be directly attributable to her dealings in Asia? Take your pick.

Japanese people, Germans, French, Italians, too, of course, cannot imagine what their country has reaped as a direct consequence of what their government and legions of soldiers have sowed during the deadly WW2 entanglement ... and so on and so forth.

○

Karmic Retribution – A Law Carved in Stone

Said to have been carved circa 1750 BC, the Code of Hammurabi and its 282 laws have brought to us, almost from the Dawn of Time, the much touted adage, 'An eye for an eye'.

Subsequently, the Roman *lex talionis*, a.k.a. the talion, the law of retaliation and compensation, was adapted by rabbis and enshrined in Shemot, Chapter 21 of the Torah.

*'but if any harm follows, then thou shalt give life for life,
Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,
Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.*

Some time later, it is believed that the rabbis' intention had been to *move away from physical retribution and mutilation* to pecuniary compensation, such as compensation is currently applied in democracies.

Unfortunately, now, in the west, financial compensation can often be mistaken for financial extortion. In most cases, it has supplanted genuine *heartfelt* apologies and

compensation in kind, i.e. proffered in the form of selfless 'repairing'.

There is many a time when, in our culture, 'compensation' appears synonymous with financial extortion - or financial bonanza - when millions of dollars are considered by the Courts an appropriate 'measure for measure' amendment, as per *tort law*, concerning 'retribution' for civil wrongs and when negligence appears to have led to wrongful death.

However, because such compensation is generally paid by an insurance company, the party found guilty does not wear the total brunt of the hefty sanction and the aggrieved one has no qualms accepting a seven-digit compensation.

Pay the compensation – Perhaps accompany it with an apology – Walk away, head held high, knowing you have repaired the damage done.

Not so fast!

As Moriya explained, *"No matter how the Courts interpret these laws of retribution, taking the easy path of giving money, however small or large, instead of demanding that both parties reflect, change their mindset, their heartset, so as to alter their personal ethics and produce a physical/emotional bond and amendment, they don't understand that Karma doesn't align with the Courts and their verdicts."*

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That is because the karmic debt, an energetic 'entity', remains owing.

It remains pulsating in our energy field.

And already it is aligning the next 'blow to the head'.

With money as the agent of 'amendment', the thought is always there for the payer:

Did I pay too much?

And for the claimant: *Did I get too little? Maybe I should have demanded more!"*

•

Bottom line: in the long term, both parties end up feeling 'empty' and unsatisfied.

In fact, the deflated feeling floats upward as soon as wears off the euphoric 'high' that grips the complainants upon hearing the guilty verdict which sends the perpetrator off to do time behind bars.

At the lowest degree of understanding, the concept of retributive justice has become

encapsulated as literally meaning ‘an eye for an eye’ or a physical equivalent. However, in regards to *lex talionis* discussed above, it pays to raise our understanding and take the phrase to mean ‘measure for measure’ – which, as an aside contravenes the notion of financial compensation of the sort commonly dispensed in our culture.

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Interpreted from a spiritual perspective, it can then be argued that the ultimate subtext of the eye for an eye imagery was to warn miscreants that, karmic ‘compensation’ would be apportioned in the fullness of time, with an unerring exactitude commensurate to the wrong doing.

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Serious question: wouldn’t our world be a vastly different place if only we, ourselves, our own citizens and governments worldwide - in centuries past and now - respected a few of the main commandments found in the Torah/Old Testament like:

Thou shall not kill

Thou shall not steal

Though shall not bare false witness against thy ‘neighbor’

Though shall not covet

Then, in ancient times - the inception of Philosophy notwithstanding – as now, wasn’t the root-cause of all the human rights infringements [the societal wheeling ‘n dealing, the wars and associated massacres], due to the people’s inability to ‘Ego trim’?

Having said that, the Old Testament itself is, of course, full of very bloody episodes performed in the name of God such as the time Moses, himself, answering the voice of God, lead the massacre of all Midianites boys and women, sparing only the virgins - even though, he, himself was married to one of their women and ... even though the initial start-up offence had been committed by Moabites.

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At that level, one could say that aspects of the Old Testament are still relevant today

and that, on the whole, as a civilization, we have not evolved an awful lot since that bygone era – at least not at the level of ‘Ego trimming’.

Serious question: how to pretend that wherever we happen to be living, one or all of the above four commandments have NOT been routinely overlooked in our own personal dealings, in our own family dynamics, in our own suburban shenanigans, as inside our own governments’ shenanigans?

And, if we humbly agree that these four commandments have been routinely bypassed, then ... ain’t that the root-cause of ALL our global current, societal ills?



A New World Order – Karmic amendments, the sequel

Serious question: can the ‘new world order’ currently being shaped be any different from the ‘old world order’, in terms of a reliance on violence and authoritarian repression in varying degrees to control outcomes?

State of things: Generally speaking, why has the modern world become a more volatile place than it has been since WW2 and since the Cambodian killing fields of the ‘70s in which 1.7 million people were killed?

Of what use have been the years of endless awareness campaigns, of racial inclusion/racial exclusion, of humanitarian concerns ranging from airlifted clothes, medical supplies, birthing kits and water barrels by the billion, intermingled with the toing and froing of arms sales from the west, weapons stolen and traded between factions, diplomatic tangos and embargos here, there, and scrambles everywhere to contain the consequences of the global mindset and priorities?

Geographical boundaries keep shifting.

Countries are still being renamed along with their major cities.

Parties are still re-imagining and re-branded themselves.

People now, perhaps more than ever, vote for the party that promises to best represent them and their needs, the limelight concern being their buying power. Less concern is given to what might be, in the long term, better for the Motherland. In spite of the upheaval created by such costly and emotionally intense political 'cosmetic' surgery, it still generally all boils down to soul-less political posturing, party-based rhetoric and dangerous shrill diatribe.

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Serious questions – no answers: considering the state of things, is endemic, gruesome, violence reminiscent of the medieval era, inherent to a new world order being birthed?

Is it an inescapable par-for-the course that an organic new world order be birthed explosively, accompanied by the myriad of horrid spin-off events we see currently splashed across our screens?

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Is it inevitable that this new world order be led by megalomaniac incarnations of Attila The Hun, Vlad III, Prince of Wallachia or that of Queen Mary 1 of England, best known as Bloody Mary, who thought that the best way to return England to Roman Catholicism was to burn hundreds of Protestant at the stakes to give others a warning of what would await them in hell if they did not recant - or that of J. Edgar Hoover who, through secretive actions and illegal methods, managed to turn the FBI into something akin the Gestapo, his tool to threaten a number of political leaders and weigh heavily on sitting presidents.

Is it a must that each of these would-be incarnations should be as spiritually un-evolved and as psychopathically blood-thirsty as some who preceded them in history books?

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Similarly, is the model given to us by J.L.I. Fennell's biography entitled **Ivan the Great of Moscow**, the best we can hope for?

"Ivan II's years in power", he says, were "militarily glorious and economically sound." Particularly impressive, it seems, was the manner in which Ivan II annexed a number of territories and centralized control over local rulers.

However, as Fennell adds, *“Ivan II’s reign was also a period of cultural depression and spiritual barrenness. Freedom was stamped out within the Russian lands. By his bigoted anti-Catholicism Ivan brought down the curtain between Russia and the west. For the sake of territorial aggrandizement, he deprived his country of the fruits of Western learning and civilization.”*

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Is it inevitable, too, that the ‘new world order’ should be forged out of institutionalized terror stemming from moral cruelty, moral imperialism, dysfunctional, sociopathic and maladaptive behaviors systemic in all corners of the world in the pre-democratic era?

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Another amazingly tragic headline side-swiped the world today, at the time of writing.

According to news.sky.com, **'Parents Giving Thirsty Children Blood To Drink'** As 30,000 people remain trapped by Islamic State fighters on an Iraqi mountain, those who've escaped reveal "horrifying stories. [...] This is the first time in history where 30,000 people have been trapped on a mountain in fear of being killed - all the leaders need to come together and figure out the best way to rescue these people. We can't watch 30,000 people die."

○

Entrenched sectarian hatred.

Yes, we got that.

But how in the world can such a horrid real-time drama happen in a world which Democracy of the ‘80s, set to spread wider and further, assumed reasonably tamed and pinned under her thumb?

How is it possible that in spite of progress, so many parts of the world have fragmented further to become a puzzle of hotspots fuelled by the sort of ancestral hatred that knows no decency and certainly no mercy?

Serious question: is it also inevitable that this new world should also be culturally

depressed and spiritually bare?

If so, might it be because the current political fragmentation, energized by our collective Modus Operandi of the past 80 years, has brought about the karmic, inevitable outcome of what 'we' have been sowing – separately and collectively?



Present-Time Actions/Reactions

Forged in the Past

Back in 1095, it was the Christian hordes who, in the name of their god and Christ, led blood-thirsty, barbaric invasions in foreign lands.

Under the clatter of the religious diatribe, however, a hidden economic agenda was developed to address an endemic social problem.

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According to the laws of the feudal system in vigor at that time, only the eldest son inherited what there was to inherit from his father, be that a few coins or parcels of land. The younger siblings got very little, if anything at all.

It is thus easy to see what a grand plan, perhaps the ultimate motivation, it was to send these hordes of disenfranchised men of all ages on a charismatic religious *adventure*, away from home ground, in the name of their god, and give the masses ‘something worthwhile’ in which to get involved, while they bonded together through the hardship of battle.

●

915 years ago, as now, the impulse, once given the opportunity to do so, to go to a foreign land and fight for an ‘exciting’ cause for what was claimed to be the greater good of all - in this realm as in the next - worked well on the psyche of these boys and men. That’s even though, they, unlike our own disenfranchised young men, had not been exposed to any of the popular video games based of first-person shooter military fiction

The brain-blowing cocktail of naturally occurring testosterone manipulated by an ideology carefully groomed by the persons who govern lives has been successfully tried and tested over the millennia.

○

However dramatic and deplorable it might feel to us, what is currently looming over our horizon is certainly nothing new – nothing to write home about, as the expression

goes, for anyone able to peep beyond the tree line that fences in our day-to-day busy-ness.

•

Indulging freely in torture and murder, each new tidal wave of Christian militants, eons before the word 'radicalized' was to be coined, sowed panic, pain, fear and death throughout local villages, as it did throughout several continents – always in the name of an assumed 'mission - always in the name of their god.

○

Not of Living Memory, But Culture and Karma Inherited All the Same

Deus vult, God wills it, was the war cry of the Crusaders. Anyone researching 'the Crusades' will agree that the modern-day threat posed by Islamic extremists has already had its pre-cursor: the 'god', the language and the uniforms may be different but the intentions are pretty much the same.

In their heavy protective armor, astride their war horses, the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon, as was the official name of their order, charged at the enemy – trampling, decapitating, maiming all who were karmically 'unfortunate' enough to connect with either hoof or sword – or man - the rape of women and children not excluded.

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The words spoken might have been somewhat different at times but how, might one ask, was these men's behavior any less psychopathic than that modern-day mercenaries, extremists, radicalized zealots - psychopaths by any other name?

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In important battles, The Templar Knights, who belonged to that most wealthy and most powerful _of religious military order, acted as advance shock troops.

The name of the god in which they and the hordes of Christian Crusaders killed so many thousands who were 'infidels' in their own eyes, and mutilated, tortured, defiled and 'broke down' countless thousands of others is not a fact that can be contended.

•

Raymond of Agiles, a chronicler of the 1st Crusade wrote, *"Some of our men cut off the heads of their enemies; others shot them with arrows, so that they fell from the towers; others tortured them longer by casting them into the flames. Piles of heads, hands and feet were to be seen in the streets of the city. It was necessary to pick one's way over the bodies of men and horses."*

•

Foucher de Chartres, one of the Crusades historians, awestruck by the scope of the blood bath wrote. *"If I tell the truth, it will exceed your powers of belief. So let it suffice to say this much at least, that in the temple and portico of Solomon, men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins. Indeed, it was a just and splendid judgment of God, that this place should be filled with the blood of the unbelievers, when it had suffered so long from their blasphemies."*

•

No doubt the Christians soldiers were buoyed by the words of Pope Urban II. *"All who die by the way,"* proclaimed this religious leader, *"whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested."*

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Ironically, the Red Cross, now the iconic symbol of humanitarian help, was originally adopted as the official sign of the Christian pilgrims and of the Templar Knights.

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Once appraised of my intention to attempt unpacking the heavy topic of karmic retribution in **Stepping Stones #2**, Moriya guided to the parallel between the 'illuminated', psychopathic mindset driving that first crusade, supposedly in the name of a god and say, the looming 'terror' the west fears is about to be unleashed by Jihadist extremism. To that effect, she volunteered a snapshot of the culminating flash-point in the long and turbulent history of Jerusalem, the city in which she has

lived all of her life.

That moment is known in history as the Siege of Jerusalem and it still is currently enshrined in history as the decisive Crusader victory.

“Ahoti haketana,” Moriya wrote, “You must stress again that reincarnation means changing roles, and you forget that at the time of the 1st Crusade, the Jews lived in Jerusalem, side by side with the Muslims and when the Muslims escaped to hide in the Temple, the Jews were among them, too, and all of them were massacred together. Energy is energy and it always affects ALL the ones who participate in any particular event, however invisibly to our eyes it is done.”

In response to further probing, Moriya added, *“At the time of the Crusade, the Muslims ruled roughly the whole of Palestine, as it is known today. They also ruled in Egypt and in several other surrounding countries. Then as now, Jews were the minority. They lived, already then, in their Jewish quarters, side by side with the Muslims who gave them permission to live without forcing them to convert, unlike the forced conversion to Islam they forced on to the Christians.*

This is the reason why the Europeans came to conquer Palestine and free Jerusalem from the ‘infidels’ by wanting to make it pure for the second coming of the Messiah.”

In reference to my previous visits to Jerusalem, Moriya added, *“You saw that there is a big wall surrounding the Old City ken? When the Crusaders came, they besieged Jerusalem for five weeks – and then they broke through the fortress wall. Which means that the Muslims and the Jews – who had defended the walls together, escaped to the Temple, as there were more massive walls around it. But the Crusaders broke through this wall as well and massacred everyone, as the chroniclers you mentioned stated.”*

•

It was strangely ‘refreshing’, for lack of a better word, to be reminded that Jews and Muslims have not always fought on different sides of the barricades and that Christians have not always, not often, fought with Goodness in their hearts - not anymore, not any less than any other mob swept up by a cause enflamed by

megalomaniac leaders and, quite possibly, by psychopathic commanders.

“At the level of energies,” Moriya reminded me, *“we should ask ourselves what this horrible deed at the Jerusalem temple stirred up for generations and generations to come. But, you see, there is more: after the conquest of Jerusalem, the Crusaders set fire to the main synagogue and another 2000 Jews within its precinct were burnt to death.”*

And then came another question I had about animal sacrifices performed on the altar of the Jerusalem temple: how was the *energy* that triggered such a massacre any different from the bloody energy which had been kept active, twice a day, for hundreds of years, while thousands and thousands of animals were sacrificed on the altar of the Temple?

“These animals’ blood cried,” Moriya added, *“and not the succession of High Priests, not the endless stream of local worshippers, not the constant flow of pilgrims, no one cared to clean it off the ground it saturated so thoroughly. No one said sli’ha, sorry, to the spirit of these slaughtered animals and no one cared to cleanse the energy of that blood off their own energy field. Quite the contrary.”*

•

The gist of Moriya’s explanation of such still highly pertinent historical events was to remind me that, karmically speaking, no deed is ever neutral.

No deed is ever free of its own energy.

No deed ever remains unacknowledged.

Be that deed of an altruistic nature or of a gruesome one – or any type of deed on the continuum from selfish to selfless - however many hordes of ‘doers’ might be associated with any one event, each deed is forever energetically linked to whoever was involved.

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After the Crusades came the Inquisition in the early years of the 12th century.

After the **Inquisition** came the Missionary ‘spirit’.

○

Karma Updated In the Name of Jesus

In the 16th century, the Society of Jesus a.k.a. the Jesuits, under papal approval, behaved on the whole like evil incarnate from Goa to North America.

In such eras of excruciatingly slow travels, distance was no object to fanaticism and systematic spiritual blackmail.

The admonishment to *Convert or perish by the will of God* was the 'softest' of the Jesuits' arsenal of weapons.

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And so, how does a sound understanding of the cycle of reincarnation help us better come to grip with what befalls us in ... any moment?

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This time around, at the end of 2014, when it comes to the struggle against Islamic extremists, if swords and scimitars are still rattling, it is about whether democracy, as anaemic as it has always been *on the terrain*, can, on the side of aggrieved and righteous ones, yield its own 'holy' sword against radicalised Islam and its total disrespect for any human life.

Some, citizens and politicians, would say that 'this' time, it is about the battle of good vs evil. It is about winning the war against evil etc.

This time, it could easily be argued that it is about reaping what was sowed – yes, again.

Yes, always!

○

This time around, the surface difference is that the battle of dogmas is not about any holy artefact, if it ever was. Not any more than it is about a religious power struggle between Christianity and Islam.

Serious question: is it inevitable, that we, here and now, should be standing at the same threshold as was much of Europe in 1095, at the start of the crusades brought along by the Latin Roman Catholic Church in its quest for the Holy Grail, believed to be in Arab-controlled Jerusalem, and which lasted nearly two hundred years?

A quick flick through tomes of European history will confirm that all forms of terror have already been tried and tested in a bid to achieve any one ruler's objectives or those of an aspiring ruler.

Across the ocean, in America, what greater 'old-fashioned' motley crew of psychopaths united in their own purpose than the Ku Klux Klan responsible for lynchings, bombings and shootings?

In its current format, the KKK chapters regroup some 8 0000 people across America hell-bent on 'purification of American society'. They are associated to white nationalism, Neo-Nazism and anti-Semitism.

So ... in the *civilized*, safe, democratic west, what are the odds that a revival and a new legitimization of these various ethos are ... more than very likely?

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Besides complaining fuzzily that the 'world' has become so screwed up, we could objectively add, "*Just as much as our respective governments' 'occasional', ethical lapses – including the ones we, personally, have been tacitly condoning, if only since the 50's. Just as much as aspects of city-living have always been. Just as much as life behind closed doors, in our safe and friendly suburb has always been.*" Then, we could add, "*Just as screwed up as the flotsam of our inter-personal relationships.*"

If we entertained such an honest reflective monologue, we would feel *less* the urge to query *What on earth*, is producing such human contractions and eruptions - 'out there' in foreign lands, in our neck of the woods and in ourselves.

•

Let' make The World A Better Place has been an enduring popular slogan.

To achieve this ideal, some become doctors while others become lawyers. Some donate sums of money while others adopt children. Some write spiritual books while others become missionaries. The list of options through which some intend making the world a better place is inexhaustible.

Having said that, should one ask, "How to change the world? How to make it a better place?" where would the fallacy lie if one were reply, "*First from within – let's begin with ourselves. Then, let's reach outward to those closest to us. Only then we may accept the challenge of the workplace and then, of the larger community.*"

•

We often hear, "I never did anything to hurt him [her/them] or anyone. I'm a law-abiding person. Live and let live. I never said anything bad about him [her/them]."

However earnestly we happen to feel this is our truth, it nonetheless falls far short of the optimum mark.

Let's not hide behind what we *abstained* from.

Instead, wouldn't it be more honest to have a look at a little list of our positive involvement with whomever, be they a group or an individual?

•

In one verse, **Shemoth/Exodus (34:6-7)** encapsulates 8 attributes, known as the 13 Attributes of Mercy - depending on how the original Hebrew phrases are being subdivided: *"The Lord! God, Compassionate and Gracious, Slow to anger and Abundant in Kindness and Truth, Preserver of kindness for thousands of generations, Forgiver of iniquity, wilful sin, and error, and Who Cleanses (but does not cleanse completely).*

○

In regard to God's Mercy and Forgiveness, on the approach of Yom Kippur, a time when Jews do their best to give serious consideration of their life's direction, a rabbi said, *"It is a period of heavenly judgment. We dare not ignore the need for a strategy for living. We dare not excuse our reluctance to change with the paltry defense that the world never was and never will be a better place. And we dare not make a claim upon righteousness solely by virtue of not being guilty of having made the wrong choices. The high attributes we place on to God are the qualities God has placed upon us."* The rabbi concluded, *"The Talmud says that if you are patient with others, then God will be patient with you. You can only demand that God employ all these attributes if you apply them, yourself, in your own relationships. And, don't worry about the sin of the fathers being passed on to their children for generations and generations because, if the children continue to emulate the iniquity of their fathers, they are not, after all, so innocent. As it is stated in Melachim II (14:5-6) and in Devarim (24:16) Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins."*

Even from a secular perspective, the rabbi's words made sense. All one has to do is substitute the word god for the word karma. Seamless.

•

In a similar vein, the philosopher, Alan Watts, asked in a *koan*-styled question intended to test a student's deeper understanding in Zen Buddhism, *"if you need God's grace to be saved, how will you get the grace to get grace?"*

•

Long that line of thinking the, perhaps better known Eight-fold Path of Buddhism, away from any religious ritual, offers the blueprint for what each one of us, who happens to be unhappy with the state of things *very* near or far, can begin putting into motion, without cutting corners – with as much commitment to personal success as the one who genuinely chooses to permanently abstain from sugars or alcohol without ever wavering.

○

Mental sobriety can come in different flavors:

Right Understanding (Understanding the nature of reality and the path to transformation), **Right Intention** (right attitudes), **Right Speech** (avoiding slander, gossip), **Right Action** (Behaving peacefully and harmoniously), **Right Livelihood** (Avoiding making a living in ways that cause harm to any being), **Right Effort** (Cultivating positive states of mind), **Right Mindfulness** (Developing awareness of the body, sensations, feelings and states of mind), **Right Concentration** (Developing the mental focus necessary to develop and sustain this awareness)

•

Sparks flying outward from a fire, be they tiny or large, are of the same essence. They share the same energy.

The potential for destruction carried by a tiny spark or by a larger one is the same. Each one of us has the 'spark' potential in our energy field and we do 'spark' regularly.

The visibility and intensity of our 'spark' depend mostly on our ability to either control or hide that energy – but, sparks we do create.

Reality check #1: news-worthy events characterize the failure of our politicians, the ones who have been long dead and the current ones – the ones the majority of us have voted in since voting became a personal right.

Reality check #2: the perpetrators of such newsworthy events enabled by our long dead ancestors and by us, people reading these headlines, shaking our heads in disbelief and sighing in resignation.

Reality check #3: These events are the karmic ripples, waves and surges resulting from the callous, cold-hearted manner in which the Arab ‘rabble and chafe’ has been dealt with over many, many centuries, *pre* and *post* the colonial periods in Africa, the Middle East and throughout Europe.

What we sow, whether it is daily or across centuries, we always reap in the fullness of time.

•

It is generally accepted that the great majority of us would not fare well on our own in the middle of the ‘wilderness’ unless, of course, it were our karmic purpose to survive the experience, at least long enough to tell the tale.

○

We are all souls disguised in our body suits of flesh and liquids.

From inside our suit, like any goggle wearer, we can only see what is within the limited angle of our line of vision, once it has been interpreted by our brain as an image that travelled to it through the optic nerve.

It pays to remember that the original image refracted on the retina was upside down. We do manage to ‘see’ provided the light on the situation within our line of vision is bathed in enough light.

Our species is not born equipped with night vision devices.

Interestingly, Dr. Maurice Nicoll, in his book, **Living Time**, wrote that “What we call ‘light’ is only one octave of vibrations out of at least fifty other known octaves of vibration that travel in the ether at the same speed, and reach us from the sun and stars and perhaps galaxies. So that is only this one single octave, out of all these, that our eyes are open to.”

•

Once we become truly conscious of our very limited personal abilities - just as we see little, we sense little, we know little, we understand little, we remember little, we access very little, if anything, of what other dimensions surround us - it becomes easier to accept that in large scale events, as in less sensational, more personal ones, the victims have not always been victims, which means that in other lives in another realm, the victims were in one or several lifetimes, the perpetrators of wrong deeds.

How wrong?

○

Who, genuinely honest about our inherent human limitations, could claim to truly know?

All that suffices to know is that in another or several other lives, the victims, regardless of their young or advanced years were, in one way or another participants in proportionally equal grand act of human destruction.

And, of course, by the same token, today's perpetrators were 'yesterday's victims.

•

Reality check: from macro to micro, from grand scale hatred or insecurity led by psychopathic leaders and disenfranchised mobs to inter-personal differences, the human drama that never ceases to unfold in our streets and even more damningly behind the closed doors of our own homes is equally a reality spawned out of our societal and personal Modi Operandi. Where DNA is shared, where a bed is shared, where food and fun are shared, again, aliens from Planet X can hardly be blamed for what comes down in our own little neck of the woods.

•

OK, time for a little dose of optimism because, in truth, it's not all gloom and doom out there.

Christy Turlington Burns, an amazingly beautiful model and talented woman, has one cause, among others, that is particularly close to her heart.

Through the documentary *No Woman, No Cry* and through the foundation she created, *Every Mother Counts*, she has raised awareness of maternal mortality.

Through increased health education, medicine and emergency care in poor countries, maternal mortality is now down by almost half since 1990, which is taken as a *leading indicator of a better world*. According to Belinda Gates, “Mothers are the beating heart of communities. When they are healthy, everyone thrives.”

Let's just accept that as true – if only for a moment.

•

Putting aside for a moment human logic and political ‘common sense’, karmically speaking, why would a country, *any* country, a province, *any* province, a village, *any* village, any collection of people, think that they can walk away from such horror and not expect a ‘justice adjustment’ - one day or another?

How can it be assumed that once they have done their deed - or deal – they, and what they stand for, will reap dividends in whatever bliss-currency they aspire to?

•

Karma can be compared to tremors triggered far out at sea, far beyond where our limited senses can see or sense, by the subtle shift of tectonic plates or by the thermal bending responsible for the fracturing of sea ice plates.

•

Such tremors might not reveal themselves instantaneously.

They might be difficult to notice and calibrate on the scale of tremors.

They may not reveal themselves to each and every individual in the immediate aftermath of any tragedy, but they will reveal themselves, in this life or in the next.

And, as awful as it sounds, the perpetrators of mayhem, of atrocities, of pain, be they in our midst, in our home, in our families, in our country or ‘out there’ in foreign lands, they were themselves, *our* victims in previous lives.

They were, in any number of ways, victims of the ones they are now destroying, 1 at a time, 10 at a time, 298 at a time, 30, 000 at a time or 6,000.000 at a time - here, there, then – wherever, whenever.

•

But then, as now, here, there – wherever, whenever – ‘aggressors’ and hapless ‘victims’ have always been - emotionally, ethnically, culturally, religiously – intimately as close to the other as the warp and the weft that, jointly, have woven the intricate detail of the massive tapestry in which they are still active – sometimes eons after the initial tremor that was barely noticed on the Richter scale.



About Funnels And The Search

Recently, one of my correspondents in France asked if I might be interested in signing up for a series of 21 free online meditations and reflections put 'out there' by The Chopra Center to help registered members create prosperity in their life.

My answer was a quick, *Non, merci* - No thank you - as I am not in the least interested in any type of meditation that goes along these sorts of lines: As heavenly dew falls on all creatures great and small, *my childlike trust in the universe will be rewarded with prosperity etc.*

•

I am I not interested in telling myself that, as the universe rises up to meet me, it will help me create the life I want and it will guide me into awakening by enabling me to tap into the natural flow of energy that is already within me. And that's in spite of believing that we are all souls in disguise and, thus, agreeing that we do have [soul's] natural energy within us.

It's just that this sort of 'thinking' just doesn't cut it for me because it fosters passivity in the sense that it encourages well-meaning folks to simply visualize, imagine, project, ask, pray – and practice *trusting* that their version of prosperity will manifest itself as their birth right, so to speak – as opposed to guiding them through a serious, sometimes emotionally gruelling, 'hands-on/heart on' practice that would make a difference to their M.O., from the inside out - for the greater good of all and of self.

Besides, I simply don't see how say, ten minutes or even thirty minutes a few times a week – or even daily – carved out of a predominantly materialistic, ego-centric agenda, spent imagining whichever sort of prosperity that would most please my ego can be in any way helpful beyond bringing on a temporary sense of relaxation and a feeling Oh so Zen.

•

Seriously, wouldn't it make more sense to spend that time doing our best, from the inside-out to neutralize this ego by a practice of peeling off as many layers of

'I/me/my' as needed to reveal our authentic self and, in the process, develop a selfless acceptance of the other and of our personal karmic challenges?

But don't get me wrong. Guided meditations are very soothing and totally harmless.

Enough said.

•

Because the core of my connection with my French correspondent is an ongoing conversation that delves into the philosophy discussed in the **Stepping Stones** series, I eventually signed up for Dr. Chopra's 21 free meditations. My sole intention was to keep up with what my correspondent would be listening to and make it easy for her to include in our usual conversations whatever questions, thoughts and feelings she might derive from that experience.

After all, if forty years of high school teaching has taught me anything it's that, though the usual expectation is that the 'student' should be on the same page as the 'teacher, there are many opportunities when it pays the teacher to be on the same page as the student, if only for a while.

Also, Dr. Chopra's reputation does precede him and I thought there might be something in this new series of meditations that linked matters of the heart to neuroscience, the scientific field that is proving Buddhist psychology quite correct in terms of its effects on the heart and the brain.

In that case, I would appreciate hearing what Dr. Chopra wanted to share, with his worldwide audience and free of charge – free of charge always hits the right chord in me when it comes because it comes against the swelling tide of treating spirituality as a commodity on which the provider depends to achieve and maintain a desired lifestyle.

○

Thus, I proceeded to listen to the first meditation, a voice-over audio file spoken by Dr. Chopra, but I clicked off after the first few minutes.

As a new audio file meditation was released each day, I listened to the next three

daily meditations but, again disappointed that these files offered nothing more than what I had initially expected, something along the lines of “ ... *my childlike trust in the universe will be rewarded with prosperity*” etc. I clicked off again - this time for good.

I remember squinting at the banner on the meditation page that, according to the caption in French, aimed to accommodate those of us who were ‘impatient to get to the next days’ release’. Wasn’t it reassuring to know that, at any moment, I could forget about training myself away from impulsive behavior and, because Dr. Chopra said I could, buy the complete set of 21 free meditations - all in one go – only for the modest sum of 39 Euros 95!

○

What came next was an unsolicited email sent by a French man employed by The Chopra Center congratulating me for being one of “plus de 15000 personnes” in the French speaking world alone, to have created, through Dr. Chopra’s gift of 21 free meditations, a ritual of meditation from which I was already reaping infinite benefits that will go on transforming my life and transforming the world.

I chuckled, rolled my eyes, refrained from the urge to help this nice man keep an accurate tally and count myself out of the 15000, but did no such thing, all the while thinking that, no doubt, I couldn’t possibly be the only one to have bounced out of that series of meditations.

●

Anyway, because the entire series of free meditations had been explicitly billed as a gift from Dr. Chopra to the world, I did wonder why, once the pre-determined period of five days had passed, each audio file expired.

After all, a gift is a gift and, one does hope that any gift given from the heart, regardless of its monetary value, will be a gift cherished forever and ever. But for that to happen, the gift does need to be permanently available to the person intended to receive that gift.

●

Long story made short, there ensued a series of emails from The Chopra Center and also from that nice affiliated French man.

Each mail prompted me in various ways to spend 'only 39 euros 90' to buy the series of 21 meditations that would then belong to me forever and on which I could rely forever and keep at hand wherever I went.

•

As a bonus, and to awaken my interest in the product, I was told that I would 'immediately' receive access to a free complimentary guide containing powerful questions intended to release my full potential, as soon as I completed the purchase and the downloaded clips were mine - all mine.

For those of you who speak French, here is the ultimate 'push down the funnel' in its original font and color:

Profitez maintenant de la version haut de gamme dans le confort de votre salon, sans avoir à vous connecter à Internet.

Pour vous remercier d'avoir suivi la version d'essai, nous vous offrons la possibilité d'accéder en avant-première au coffret complet pour l'investissement minime de seulement 39,9 euros au lieu de 59,90 euros.

VOICI COMMENT VOUS ALLEZ PROFITER DES PUISSANTS BIENFAITS DE CES 21 SEANCES DE MEDITATIONS GUIDES AVEC DEEPAK CHOPRA

The gist of it goes along these lines: *Enjoy right now the high definition version [of the meditations] in the comfort of your own living room, without having to be connected to the internet.*

To thank you for having kept up with the trial version, we are offering you the option to access, in a pre-release offer, the complete kit for the infinitesimal sum of only 39,9 euros instead of 59.90 euros.

Here is how you are going to benefit from the powerful benefits contained in these 21 meditation sessions guided by Deepak Chopra.

Then followed a list of 6 points highlighting the numerous benefits to be derived in only 15 minutes of daily use of the download, each point designed to instil a desire for the product.

Here are the first 3:

dès que vous en ressentez le besoin, **vous pourrez être guidé à nouveau par Deepak Chopra pour sortir des situations difficiles** .

As soon as you feel the need, you can be guided once again by Deepak Chopra to pull out of difficult situations.

1. **vous allez accéder à votre grandeur intérieure et libérez vos pouvoirs cachés pour créer enfin la prospérité que vous méritez dans votre vie.**

You can access your inner grandness and free up your hidden powers to finally create the prosperity that you deserve in your life.

2. **Vous pouvez donc les emmener partout sur votre lecteur MP3 et bénéficier des bienfaits de la méditation où que vous soyez.**

You can thus take them with you everywhere on your mp3 player and benefit from the wellbeing procured by meditation anywhere you might be.

And, in a most insistent call for action, Dr. Chopra concluded in his email that, **Rien n'arrive par hasard. Si vous lisez ces lignes, c'est un signe.**

Nothing happens by accident. For those of you reading, this, it is a sign:

Saisissez donc l'opportunité et rejoignez le programme maintenant C.C.! Grab this opportunity to reconnect to the program now C.C.!

Oowah! I was even addressed by my first name!

How cool was that! I mean totally :-)

And so, though I had yet to give any sign of life, emails kept arriving until an ominous one landed in my inbox.

It conveyed a definite sense of urgency.

The last opportunity to save my soul was staring me down.

I only had *till midnight, Paris time, to act upon the offer.*

After that, my right of access would be forever cancelled.

*At midnight, **it would be too late:** Votre droit est retiré à minuit, heure de Paris.*

Votre dernière chance, à minuit il sera trop tard.

Only a couple of months have passed since that amazing marketing effort but, three days ago, my 'spiritual yen' was once again the well-intended target of a new mail

from the Deepak Chopra Team.

The message was urging me to act now and register for a **new** series of free meditations.

‘Dans moins de 48 heures commence le nouveau programme en ligne Sante Parfaite,’ it announced. ‘Je rappelle que **votre participation est gratuite** seulement si vous démarrez le programme à temps. [...] Si vous n’êtes pas encore inscrit c’est maintenant qu’il faut le faire **avant de perdre votre accès gratuit**. Participez ici gratuitement et **partagez le lien aux amis dont vous voulez prendre soin.**’

•

French grammar glitch notwithstanding in the command to **partagez le lien aux amis dont vous voulez prendre soin**, I nodded, suspecting there would probably be at least a couple more emails hot on the heels of that one and, sure enough, two more have arrived since.

•

Today’s mail was labelled: **Last Warning** and the essential part of the text stated that **votre droit est retiré aujourd'hui**, meaning that if I didn’t register today, I would forgo my right to access and presumably ... live to regret my *inaction*.

This time, I did resist the urge to click and glimpse the content of this new series.

○

Funnily enough, the intensity of this funnel marketing campaign brought back to mind another ‘funnel’, one that I had written *in jest* many years ago.

As Dr. Chopra wrote, **Rien n'arrive par hasard**.

Si vous lisez ces lignes c'est un signe. *Nothing happens by accident. For those of you reading, this, it is a sign.*

Thus, dear Reader, **if you are reading this, it is the sign** that, as a break from all the serious stuff that has already been discussed so far, I should now share with you my very own, **my very tongue-in-cheek** funnel.

Ready?

In Search of Self through a hop and a skip over the Stepping Stones

series - a **spiritually oriented satire** on the principle of the rather *annoying* 'Marketing Funnel' – the basis of most sales pitches circa 2012.

The funnel model 'plays' with the consumer-reader on 4 levels:

- **Awareness** – of the existence of a product or service
- **Interest** – triggering an interest in the product
- **Desire** – instilling the desire for this particular product
- **Action** – doing whatever is needed to access target product

Proceed with care: the following pitch is best read with a grin :-)

But, please, don't skip over this chapter, as this 'funnel' is deceiving.

It is a bit longer than a real funnel because it is actually peppered with **real** Saint-Clair content. It's only the format that's a bit 'weird'.

Being present in the moment is such an absolute corner-stone concept to master and yet – weirdly, such a difficult act to manage for more than a few seconds at a time that I'm forever trying to find new ways to explain it, differently, and will stop at very little, as will prove in this 'funnel'.

I had a great time writing it along the lines of the marketing strategy used by cyber entrepreneurs called 'the funnel'. Yes, that one, the one you love to hate: **highlights, bold font, over-use of capital letters and all.**

One major difference though: this blurb is simply intended to make you grin - not spend any of your hard-earned \$. **So, please, Read, Grin & Nod!**

When your mind is not cluttered by a myriad thoughts from the realm of What-If and Why Not and How Come and How could I and Why didn't I and Why Me **and** Poor Me, your mind processes what is happening in real time a lot faster - just like your computer works faster once you've purged all the temp files along with the dud ones and once it's been defragged, debugged and cycled through all the essential updates.

One of the benefits that flow on from reaching **moment by moment emotional neutrality** is that you will be able to handle much more efficiently whatever presents itself in **real time** in the moment that is truly **under your feet**.

Here's How:

When you are 'in' the moment, you are much less likely to make mistakes, any mistakes, be they physical, mental or emotional.

Fact: YOU remember where you saved that one important file created last week.

Big time/anxiety saver

Fact: YOU remember where you left the car keys and you **REMEMBER** the grandchild in your care.

Big time/anxiety saver

Fact: Because **YOU** are **AWARE** of the traffic and road conditions at any given moment, your front bumper doesn't hook up with anyone's back bumper.

Big time/\$/anxiety saver

Fact: **YOU** don't sit on your glasses or on your laptop lid.

Big time/\$/anxiety saver

Fact: YOU don't get dates confused and miss events even though they were diarized.

Big time/anxiety saver

Fact: YOU don't leave any of your digital devices on the seat next to you, then absent-mindedly walk away.

Big time/\$/anxiety saver

Look at it this way: If Time = \$, do the Math!

Rethink Thinking and see how much time **Stepping Stones** can save YOU DAILY once you master **the art of being present in the moment that is under your feet!**

Hear the \$\$\$\$ go ka-ching! in your piggy bank.

Ask yourself this question:

How much is ALL this time saved PLUS all these stress-free moments WORTH to me?

•

Here's a bonus:

Know that when you are in the moment you are mentally poised to **accept** the unexpected in mid-stride.

Not only that but you react as **you would have preferred to have reacted.**

No MORE: *Oh, why did I say that?!? Wtf ...why did I DO that?!?*

When you are in the moment, you **SHAPE** the moment from the inside/out into a moment you will never live to **REGRET.**

AND because your **MIND** is not revving between What-Was and What-Might-Be, because it no longer speculate, about What-ifs, when **YOU** are in the moment, moment after moment, **YOU sleep like a baby cradled in Soul's arms.**

Say No to all manner of sleeping aids = More \$ saved

Once YOU have **mastered the art of being in the moment**, you don't let yourself be overwhelmed by distracting, scary, useless bits of nothingness, intangible fear-mongering, assumptions and suppositions because **you understand that they don't live anywhere but inside your mind.**

•

Not quite ready to take *my* word on it?

Let Alan Watts, the man who brought Zen Buddhism to the west convince you.

In his book, **The Way of Zen**, he has this to say: *“I have realized that the past and future are real illusions, that they exist in the present, which is what there is and all there is.”*

And also this: *“This is the real secret of life -- to be completely engaged with what you are doing in the here and now. And instead of calling it work, realize it is play.”*

No more painting your Self into a scary corner.

When you are IN THE MOMENT, there is no scary ‘tomorrow’. There is only the methodical processing of what YOU need to do right here, right now, one thing at a time, quietly, peacefully aware from the inside/out!

No more Johnny Walker- no more therapeutic marijuana - no more Ibuprofen - no more Prozac = no more emotional crutches = MORE \$ saved

Let me say that differently: when YOU are in the moment, there is NO tomorrow that you can’t control because it is from this ‘right-now moment’ that stem all your other moments.

You want to plan a BRILLIANT tomorrow for yourself? **Sure you do!**

•

Here’s how you, too, CAN get a BIGGER share of ALL the good things YOU DESERVE:

React according to your BETTER judgement – no knee-jerks, no impulsive behavior, no tantrums in response to ANY of the myriad moments that present themselves under your feet - all brought to you on the conveyor belt of Life.

A CALM head and an OPEN HEART, a non-judgmental attitude **PLUS** the deep down understanding that **WHAT-IS simply HAS TO BE** is what you derive from the sustained practice of being in the moment.

ACTIVE Acceptance rules over resentment!

It is the Active Acceptance of WHAT-IS that makes YOU wiser. It makes YOU grow stronger. No moment will ever faze you again!

The results are quick, so brace yourself for the flurry of AMAZING-dazzling-awesome moments that will simply be drawn to you like bees to pollen.

•

When you are in the moment, there is NO sad sitcom playing in your head.

Say NO to unsolicited thoughts!

You Are the Master – FEEL them disappear faster than a lizard at our approach.

When you are IN THE MOMENT you are in charge of **your** SELF.

No thought will EVER drag you along by the nose – **not anymore!**

More than a fact, here's a GUARANTEE:

Being **Aware** 'in' the moment is the only 100% non toxic, natural way with which to combat your addiction to Worrying.

Imagine this:

No more need of retail therapy.

No more need for a chocolate binge.

NO MORE need for that brandy just before going to bed. No more reasons to be either an alcoholic or a workaholic.

Again, don't just take my word for it - **DO the MATH**

•

Moriya reminds us that: *People go about their daily business like hungry animals. They WANT this and they desire that and still they want more than what they already have. The more they buy, the more they ingest and the hungrier they become. People do not SEE that by ingesting without thought and hording instead of travelling light, they become stuck to their old stuff, their old habits, their old negativity and in their old preferences. It all amounts to mental and spiritual decay. No wonder year after year, they become unbearable and unbearably lost to themselves.*

Once you' re kitted-out with your own **Stepping Stones**: a purpose-built, lightweight, breezy lifestyle **AWAITS** you!

Yes! BEING in the Moment will save you real DOLLAR\$ – if you dare!

BUT Wait! There's MORE! *Lo! - I'm on a roll, dear Reader - can't stop now ;-)*

Bonus #1

When you are in the moment, you are lighter on your feet BECAUSE you drink less and you eat less.

BECAUSE you are AWARE of **what** you are drinking and of **what** you are eating, you are also aware of the quantities you ingest.

When in the moment, you chew more - you ingest LESS.

Yes, you are your own Personal Coach!

Say goodbye to gym gear and to gym memberships. **AGAIN** do the Math.

Visualize the savings!!

Hear the \$\$\$\$ go ka-ching! in your piggy bank but don't horde that money.

Reward yourself.

Treat yourself to the next 'Zen must-do' on your bucket list!

And if you WANT more, you can have more!

•

Here's **Bonus #2**

Each meal taken quietly on your own, be it while at work or at home, becomes a meditation known as Mindful Eating meditation.

As the Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, affirms, ***“When we are mindful, we recognize what we are picking up. When we put it into our mouth, we know what we are putting into our mouth. When we chew it, we know what we are chewing. It's very simple.”***

Need still MORE convincing?

OK. Here's yet another MASSIVE extra **BONUS @ no cost to you!**

When you are aware and awake in your moment, you can skip meditating - altogether.

Yes, you heard right and here's why:

Fact: when you are in the moment – you focus on what you are doing – you are 'in' what you are doing. The moment absorbs you.

You do what you do with integrity and with love.

You do it to the best of your REAL ability. You do it with CARE – even when it doesn't slot in according to plan - and THAT is meditation in real time.

•

Alan Watts knew that *Zen does not confuse spirituality with thinking about God while one is peeling potatoes. Zen spirituality is just to peel the potatoes.*

Serious question: Do YOU **really** have time to spend 15 or 30 minutes daily – let alone hours – seated in the lotus position, tracking your breath and gazing fuzzily at a candle flame?

No more \$ wasted on meditation workshops, retreats and crystals. **ka-ching!**

When in the moment, your awareness of the moment + your acceptance of the circumstance of the moment ARE the one-pointed focus.

Your 'yoga' is done in your REAL life, as it should be – **not in a scene visualized inside your mind** – and **not in an induced state of ecstasy** that disappears the moment you open your eyes.

“My meditation practice consists of observing the world immediately in front of me and I also observe the shifts within me,” says Moriya.

“The art of meditation is a way of getting into touch with reality,” echoes Alan Watts

Understand this: When you master the ART of **BEING PRESENT IN THE**

MOMENT through a daily hop and a skip over your **Stepping Stones**, you say goodbye to meditations – forever.

Time = \$, remember? Imagine the time saved = Again, do the Math!

Visualize the \$\$\$\$ saved. Hear them go Ka-ching inside the piggy bank!

The Stepping Stones system REALLY works!

Stepping Stones ...

Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back!

Fine Print: Uh ... mmm ... Sorry, no can do since no \$ have been outlaid ;~)



Yes, Yes! Believe It!

Believe it and See it happen!

The AWARENESS that leads to actions from the heart and acceptance - in the moment - beats *sitting* in meditation a few minutes or even hours daily.

You see, the whole point of Walking the Talk of the Path is to DO, which is why Taoism is more known as a method of DOING life than of *sitting* in meditation, which is why the great Alan Watts, said in *The Way To Liberation*, **“If you think by sitting you can become a Buddha ...”**

Which is also why the great Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy is about **consciousness being the means - consciousness being the key - and consciousness being the goal** in all our wakeful moments –

Consciousness HERE - not delusional spiritual escapes *out there*... to another realm or galaxy.

And, remember – just **by becoming AWARE that you are not very aware - you already are on the right Path.**

Reality check: just by reading this far, YOU have already begun Rethinking your Thinking.

FEEL the AWESOMENESS of THIS realization!

•

When you are aware and awake in your moment, you KNOW when a test of Acceptance has just presented itself to you.

When you are awake and aware in your moment, you are aware when a new situation has developed - within your family, friendship or colleague groups. You know it is up to you to make silent peace with the person inside your heart.

No words need be spoken.

When you are awake and aware in your moment, You KNOW when what is required is MUCH more than a well-intentioned ‘Come, come. It’ll all be all right.’

More than a hug and a pat.

More than being a good listener.

•

Carl Rogers, the influential American Psychologist, himself one of the founders of the humanistic approach urged, “*When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving me advice, you have not done what I asked.*”

When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way, you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do something to solve my problem, you have failed me, strange as that may seem.

Listen! *All I asked was that you listen, not talk or do - just hear me.*

•

When you are awake AND aware in your moment, you can tell when a test of Patience is staring you in the face. **You know how to side-step REGRETTABLE annoyance.**

Pass or Fail this karmic test?

When you are in the moment, such a test is only a test. It is not an ordeal.

When you are awake AND aware in your moment, **you recognize it when a test of Non- Separation materializes out of nowhere and is definitely IN the moment under your feet.**

Pass or Fail karmic test?

When you are in the moment, such a test is only a test. **It does not need to lead to escalate into bizarre complications.**

Pass or Fail karmic test?

When you are in the moment, **YOU do know when more than a round of drinks or candles on a cake are required of you.** You KNOW that yet another non-essential, dazzling digital new toy will be a betrayal of the 'other'.

You sense when a situation requires **your** active energetic empathy from the heart.

•

And because, when **you are Awake and Aware in the moment under your feet, you are not too frazzled, not too stretched-out by ALL that's already happening in your life.**

You are able to respond to this **new** moment in that NEW, very cool spiritual manner - from the inside/out - in a mindful/soulful manner.

When you are aware and awake in your moment, **you develop a sixth sense. That, too, is a FREE bonus to YOU.**

So who benefits the most for a diligent hop and a skip on the Stepping Stones?

YOU do.

Benefits are your Reward. Embark now in a Practice of Benefits!

Now is the MOMENT to top up your emotional BALANCE!

•

Moments are like the water of a stream.

You can tighten your fist to grab a few drops at a time, but you can NEVER hold on to them. And so, when you are in the moment, your palms are open – the moments, like water from the stream, flow over you **unrestrained – unblocked**.

BUT WAIT, Being In Charge of Your Moment Yields EVEN more Bonuses for YOU!

Still reading, Dear Reader? Gee, you must really BE in the moment :-))

•

Bonus #3

When you are in the moment with a mind that is **uncluttered** - empty of fabricated c.r.a.p., your mind is able to notice the myriad of little messages that come from all around – including from your SOUL.

Think about it: how could you possibly hear Soul's whisper over the whirring and the clanging clatter of colliding thoughts?

You need to be mind-still to 'grab' these synchronistic messages.

These faint little messages are little mirrors. They reflect your shortcomings – the attitudes you need to **energetically** work harder at.

They give you the opportunities to **move away from the low-end of your ego and slide your thoughts Soul-side** – the **high end** of your ego is where the **Altruist YOU** resides.

•

Bertrand Russell, the philosopher, said, *“While you sit in a taxi divide your time into 3: in the first 1/3 take a look outside to see Nature and how small you are in comparison; in the second 1/3 talk with the driver so that you'll SEE someone else; in the third 1/3 you are allowed to turn your focus on yourself.”*

•

The AMAZING **Stepping Stones**, a step by step course of ACTION, is **guaranteed to keep you sane and healthy – loveable – and in tune with your Higher Self, the real YOU.**

When you adopt C.C.'s FREE **stepping stones**, you **UNDERSTAND** that the **'other' is your mirror.**

The other, the one who fails to behave as you'd like, is YOU!

This 'other' merely reflects back at you what all along you thought was THEIR shortcomings!

Not only do you reap what you sow BUT once you understand the secret of the **Stepping Stones**, you come face-to face with your own thistles and your own crown-of-thorns. Sometimes, when you try hard enough, you even come nose-to-nose with your own crap.

How Awesome is this FREE bonus realization for the one who TRULY wants to find **Stepping Stones** to the Path?

•

If all of the above benefits to you are still not enough, **Imagine This:**

The long term result is that whatever your so-called ASPIRATIONS may be, when you are present - Awake and Aware in the moment - they are linked MORE snugly to what YOUR real Self needs in THIS lifetime rather than to the flurry of imagined What-ifs induced by engrained life-long insecurities, yours and that of those closest to you, that attached themselves to you like a contagion.

Hard to imagine but All these benefits and MORE are contained in the **Stepping Stones** are yours to keep and develop *forever* - without spending ONE single cent!

Yes, You've read that correctly! Not one single cent!

The **Stepping Stones** method, **distilled from the unique teachings of Moriya**, works even better when your wallet is tucked away.

And as a REWARD for being here and still reading, we've **SAVED** THE BEST for last!

•

ALL of these incremental improvements DO lead to **ACTIVE karmic amendments**.

That might be hard to believe, but YES! YES! ABSOLUTELY, they DO!

You already know there HAS to be [and there IS more to life] than **to eat**, drink, sleep, spend, save, work, work some more to spend some more to **save** some more, get fat, get thin, get lost, lose a lover, get found, find a lover, find more and more escape routes away from reality, love conditionally – **and die**.

Life reality: you ARE your soul's CURRENT INCARNATION.

As such, you are alive @ this very moment in a 'body suit' of flesh, bones and 70% fluids which is YOUR SOUL'S vehicle in THIS lifetime.

That's **only** so YOU can amend 'some' of the karma that is yours to amend in THIS life time.

○

Once you are present in the moment, often enough to allow your *self* to be GUIDED by your soul's whisper, it is ONLY through your thoughts, your words and a HEART-DEEP ACCEPTANCE of ALL that IS in your life that YOU BEGIN to DO this ... but more on that later.

For now, DARE to imagine all the LIFE IMPROVEMENTS possible in this lifetime!

Imagine YOU in control of YOUR thoughts, of YOUR emotions, or YOUR **actions** AND of your **reactions!**

Imagine your NEWFOUND sense of purpose!

Imagine your NEW wellbeing!

Imagine a budding sense of contentment.

○

Better than that: Imagine the new YOU, bobbing along on a sea of inner calm, as you go about your NORMAL, daily occupations.

Imagine yourself hopping and skipping over the Stepping Stones!

Imagine IT all - **if YOU DARE imagine anything at all!**

•

Phew.... like the little train who hoped s/he could-could-could make it to the top of the hill, and who ends up shouting with glee, "I knew I could! I knew I could!" as s/he reaches the top and both momentum and gravity grip 'it' to make it fly down hill, I know **it's hard to stop 'creative' momentum once past the so-called point of No Return.**

Anyway, as I said, earlier, writing this hype-full, 'funnel' satire was particularly a lot of fun.

Seriously: *isn't it excellent to KNOW that we CAN truly achieve all of the VERY **real** benefits spun out in this blurb without having to spend either a penny or a cent in whichever world currency happens to be in YOUR wallet or purse?*

Isn't it great to know we can finally begin figuring out WHO this ***I*** and who this ***me*** are, through an unwavering commitment to the daily **practice** of being **AWAKE and AWARE in the moment that is under our feet**, the only moment that, in truth, exists in real time - **the only moment we can shape from the inside/out?**



Like most excessively beautiful persons, he had studied his own reflection minutely and, in a way, knew himself from the outside best; he was always in some chamber of his mind perceiving himself from the exterior.

[...] He could see his own self now, poised in the doorway of the smoking room, and he knew that the figure he cut was one of perfect composure. He was near trembling with fatigue; he was carrying a leaden weight of terror in his gut; he felt shadowed, even dogged, he was filled with dread - **Eleanor Catton** -The Luminaries - Novel - 2013

Gibran's parable, **Lament Of The Field**, is inserted here because its eloquent simplicity provides a wonderful introduction to our next topic, Angry Planet - Global WarNing .

Lament Of The Field by Kahlil Gibran

At the hour of dawn, before the sun's rising from beyond the horizon, I sat in the middle of a field communing with Nature. At that hour filled with purity and beauty I lay on the grass, what time men were yet wrapped in slumber, disturbed now by dreams, now by awakening. I lay there seeking to know from all that I looked upon the truth of Beauty and the beauty of Truth.

And when my reflecting had set me apart from the flesh, and my imaginings lifted the covering of matter from off my inner self, I felt my spirit growing, drawing me near to Nature and revealing to me her hidden things and teaching me the language of her wonders.

Thus I was as the breeze passed through the branches of the tree, sighing plaintively like an orphan child. I sought understanding and said: "Why do you sigh, gentle breeze?" And it answered: "Because I am going to the city away from the sun's warmth. To the city, where the germs of sickness and disease will cling to the hem of my clean garment, and the poisoned breath of flesh breathe on me. Because of this do you behold my sadness."

Then I looked toward the flowers and saw dewdrops falling like tears from their eyes.

I said: "Why weep you thus, fair flowers?" And one of them lifted up its head in reply and said: "We weep because men will come and cut off our heads and take us to the city and sell us, who are free, as slaves. And when evening falls and we are withered they will cast us into the dust. How then should we weep not

when men in their cruelty would separate us from our home the field?"

After a while I heard the brook lamenting like a bereaved mother over her lost ones, and I asked: "Why do you lament, sweet brook?" And it answered: "Because I am driven to the city, wherein men despise me and exchange me for the juice of grapes and make me to carry their dregs. How then should I not lament when soon my innocence will become guilt and my purity dross?"

And I heard the birds chanting a mournful chant like to a dirge and I said: "Wherefore do you mourn, comely birds?" Whereupon a small one among them approached me and said: "Tomorrow a man will come bearing in his hand a fearful instrument to destroy us, as the sickle cuts off the standing corn. We shall bid farewell one of the other, for we know not which among us will escape his doom. How then should we not mourn when death follows us

wheresoever we go?"

The sun rose from behind a mountain and crowned the treetops with gold, the while I asked myself why men pull down what Nature has builded up. [5]



Back in 1994, Carl Sagan spoke to Cornell University Graduates. He said, "The Earth is a very small stage in a vast, cosmic arena. Our posturing, our imagined self-importance, our delusion that we have some privileged position in the universe are challenged by this point of pale light – our planet is but a drop of light in our universe....It underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly to one another, and to preserve and cherish the Pale Blue Dot. The only home we've ever known."



G20 Brisbane, November, 2014

Barack Obama declares climate change the world's biggest challenge but ... *is it ... really?*

Perhaps it has taken all the devastation that we see and hear of to begin to awaken people to the fact that we are custodians of our planet, as we are custodians of the land we 'apparently' own and the property in which we live – Reshad Field, **1982**



Good-Natured Nanny Seriously Annoyed

The first part of this comprehensive chapter on **Angry Planet - Global WarNing** – has already been published in **Stepping Stones #1** [The Great Forgetfulness]. I hope you find this sequel equally relevant to our-day-to-day.



27 September, 2014 – Mount Ontake, Japan

Magma heats up water deep inside the volcano.

Water becomes steam.

Steam bursts out of the volcano = a highly **unpredictable** phreatic explosion

It must be satisfying to lean back on such sound scientific facts and talk about viscosity of silica- rich rocks, the degassing process happening inside a dormant volcano and Hydrogen sulfide gas and so on.

However, such facts fail to explain why more than 200 trekkers and strollers out on the mount to admire its colourful foliage on an otherwise lovely day, ended up trapped in an horrific, eerie darkness and struggling for breath in the billows of thick ash clouds.

It also fails to explain why more than 50 persons, all there at the same time, at the same place, presumably for the same reasons as the others, have become parts of the death toll stats.

•

Today, at the time of editing this section, rescue efforts on Mount Ontake have been halted by the approach of Typhoon Phanfone.

Serious questions: within the context of this spiritual discussion centred on the belief that absolutely all that happens to us and around us is a kaleidoscope of karmic events intended for reasons other than luck and fate, could this volcanic shudder been anything else than ... *highly unpredictable?*

Could the seemingly random mix of 200 trekkers and strollers have been any different?

○

Zigzagging Back In Time

October, 2010

The Independent published a statement from the Hungarian Aluminium Production and Trade Company: "According to the current evaluation, company management could not have noticed the signs of the natural catastrophe nor done anything to prevent it even while carefully respecting technological procedures."

The residents of Kolontar, the area nearest the leaking reservoir, eventually returned to their homes. Apparently, a protective wall erected for that purpose will keep them safe from further leakage.

Within the context of this article written for a readership interested in understanding day-to-day matters from a spiritual perspective, I think it is safe to say that this so-called protective wall symbolizes the hard wall that is around the heart of the industrial hunger we, as a consumerist society, keep feeding.

○

One month before, in September, a massive earthquake shook the city of Christchurch in 'little' New Zealand.

The city sustained NZ\$ 4 billion worth of damage – a massive amount for any country of its size – but, again, the fortuitous lack of casualties points to the fact that

nature knows well that the purse strings around our collective heart are knotted so tightly that the purse has to be slashed open.

○

November 7, 2010

On a lovely sunny Sunday somewhere in Australia, I read that international flights had been suspended to and from Indonesia and that Air Asia had cancelled 11 of its own because the activity of Mount Merapi, a volcano, a few hundred kilometres out of Jakarta, in Indonesia.

A week later, I read that villages and all that made them - from huts to buildings, to statues, to the common place palm trees and roads in between – were ‘ghosted’ by layers of sticky, thick, grey ash. About 200 people died. 400.000 more fled their homes and the clean-up cost was counted in billions of dollars.

○

Also in 2010, still in Indonesia, on Mentawai island, a legendary destination for surfers, more than 400 people died including many children when the approaching giant wave failed to trigger alert warnings.

Again, I remembered thinking, ***And then... what next?***

○

This year, on **May 30, 2014**, Mount Sangiang, also in Insonesia, erupted sending its ash cloud some 12 miles into the sky.

The ancient ones considered volcanic ash the messenger heralding the awakening of the earth-shaking, fire-spitting dragon - the eruption of lava. Indonesia has had an uneasy past and, to this day, corruption is rampant and costly.

Again, it might well be that for the local government, as well as for the world around, an eruption of molten lava there should be interpreted as yet another of nature's gesture to cleanse, not just the immediate area, a mere dot on the world map, but to burn out the spread of the pandemic virus identified as **G.a.D.**, short for **Greed and Deceit**.

○

No one can ever know why it has so far been the Indonesians' collective [inherited]

karma to bear the brunt of these acts of god/nature but, knowing that disasters are not only aimed at the ones, victims and survivors who are directly affected, it certainly would not hurt if all government officials, big billionaires, little millionaires, business folks as well as us, little people, currently suffering from the **G.a.D.** syndrome managed to wake up long enough to address our priorities and redress our M.O. while we still can.

○

Sadly, it was also in Indonesia that, in 2006, a giant wave killed more than 130,000 people - only two years after another ocean quake triggered off the coast. That monster wave, referred to as the Boxing Day tsunami, plucked 230,000 people off the coast line of fourteen neighboring countries.

●

Current news headlines make it clear that, as rolling waves born out of nowhere keep riding hard the horizon line to slam against jetties and destroy livelihood, flood streets and occasionally take lives, here, there and everywhere, the answer to "And then what next?" has already come to us in multiple ways.

○

As an aside, a couple of years ago, during a season of devastating floods that had spread throughout Europe, I remember having found it symbolically relevant that the Visla's swell had reached all the way to the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial site. About time! Its flood finally cleansed the horrid energy that undoubtedly still lingered, as energy does, so many years after the last prisoner walked out of the gates.

The death camp 'artefacts' had been moved to higher grounds, which in itself suggests the symbolisms of Elevation and Purification. Why dismiss the notion that this 'act of god - one that did not take any lives - could have been the hint that generally speaking, we all need to forgive, forget and move on?

○

The thing to keep in mind is that the greater the flood regardless of where it happens, the greater the need for us, individuals, to wash off ourselves in the present moment the deeply engrained scenarios from the past that have long dropped out of real-time, the ubiquitous suspicion of others' motives, the dark

emotions and the murky fears of the future that, too, only exist in our mind. It's either that or risk being flooded by them, swept away and left to drown in them – literally as well as figuratively.

Since, it has been confirmed that 20 million people have been affected by the devastating monsoonal floods that began drowning Pakistan in July. One side-result of the catastrophe is that 99 cases of cholera have been detected since, and another is that there have been more than 3,000 cases of Dengue fever leading to 29 deaths, and counting.

○

Back to in 2010

In June, came the string of nimble-footed, beautiful and massive supercell storms that hit Dakota.

In the face of more frequent natural and man-made disasters pockmarking our landscape, heart-in-mouth won't do. Heart-on-sleeve won't do.

Heart and soul would fare much better.

○

Early in October of that same year, too soon on the heels of the BP spill, Hungary found itself besieged by toxic red sludge of comparable amplitude. The waters of the famed 'Blue Danube' have since become poisonous.

○

A long section has already been devoted to *Angry Planet and global WarNing* in **Stepping Stones #1** [The Great Forgetfulness] and I had never intended for my first reply comment on a blog some 3 years ago to grow into such a long chronicle of dire woes and human tragedies.

However, each time I hear of yet another blatant example of our 'herd blindness', my keyboard jumps up and down, urging me to type and type – and who am I to refuse, huh?

○

Be that as it may, since I'm sure my point and concerns are by now quite clear, this

one will probably be the concluding segment of 'Angry Planet' or, as I prefer to think of it, *The Good Natured Nanny's growing annoyance with her misguided charges*.



After a while, events and views and reasons and excuses do become very familiar, very repetitive. As it is, at the moment, 'we' are already condoning by proxy a new and massive exploitation that is for now partly illegal. Yes, Nature contains yet another resource that is currently deemed essential to us - in the world as we have made it: minerals found in red clay and going by the name of ... rare earth – you got to love that name!



Though rare earth is not yet a part of our trivializing small talk – the reality is that the strong acids used by miners, gangster-miners, to process the minerals in Southern China are polluting all the wells, ponds and streams in the area. These have become watery poison for the local villagers.



Why are we, in absentia or by proxy, condoning yet another anti-Nature mining activity? Why are we generally willing to see the mining of rare earth legalized by the Chinese government?

For now, China has the monopoly on the rare earth alloys, which allows her government to turn on/off the supply. China, for now, decides the quotas allowed for export to other countries and we turn yet 'another' blind eye to the toxicity of this mining practice because rare earth minerals are deemed essential, to the manufacturing of everything and anything ranging from our compact fluorescent light bulbs and our iphones and S5s, to our flat screens and missiles and, also, to our low-emission cars and our giant wind turbines.



Here, in Australia, AustralianRareEarth.com states that, "Rare Earth Elements (REEs) can be regarded as the "vitamins" required for the shift from a carbon-based economy to the new 21st century electron economy and produce some wonderful investment opportunities.

Even if that doesn't sound lovely to our ears, how much, collectively, are we willing to

be collectively inconvenienced by rejecting this mining practice? How determined are we to collectively miss out or do without while *Science* comes up with more alternatives to old alternatives from its collective linear-thinking brain?

○

Even though, as already stated, two of the key criteria for a successful global society are personal contentment and personal safety, science and technology have not yet made us more contented - *or more safe*.

●

“Oh! What *Luck!*”

Uh ... Did Anyone, Here, Use That 4-Letter L Word?

Strong in the belief of what I first wrote years ago on the topic of *Global WarNing* and annoyed by flood-survivors' reactions in Queensland, Australia, where I reside, back in **February, 2011**, I blogged the blurb below:

No matter how hard I try, I still don't get why for the survivors of the massive earthquake that, yesterday, crumpled the city of Christchurch, in neighboring New Zealand, is either the complex matter of a 'miracle' or the simple matter of 'luck' – good or bad, depending.

Either way, the subtext from people using such words is: “I've got no f-ing clue why I was spared. And no f-ing clue why my world has been shattered. And no f-ing clue either, as to the true heads-up for me of this tragedy.”

Not a clue as to how to 'grow' from the inside-out.

●

When one survives an ice storm such as the one that recently brought Chicago to a stand-still or when one comes unscathed out of raging floods, a crushing landslide or has been spared by a volcanic eruption - it is never a matter of *random* luck. For

heaven's sake! Even catching the flu or getting pregnant is neither a matter of *bad* or *good luck*.

○

Anyway, Category 5 cyclone Yasi hit our coastline a few days ago. According to the experts, Yasi was statistically bigger than & wider than & stronger than ... any other preceding cyclone including our cyclone Larry & U.S. cyclone Katrina.

The system was so huge that I can't begin to comprehend its mass but this snip goes some way into clarifying: "It is so large it would almost cover the United States, most of Asia and large parts of Europe. The pre-landfall core was over 500km wide and its associated activity stretched well over 2000km."

○

Rather than paraphrase however objectively, here is another snip from abc.net.au/worldtoday:

"It's just amazing. It's like a nuclear bomb has gone off," said a resident of Mission Beach, a town that found itself in Yasi's path.

BARBARA MILLER: How would you describe people's mood as they're wandering around? Do they seem stunned or are they busy getting on with things?

RON DARLINGTON: No, in a daze. In shock. Just pointing, looking, stopping. They're not even taking pictures. They're just walking around in a daze, hands in their pockets, wondering what the hell has happened, what was that?

○

Bottom line: Yasi has wreaked tremendous devastation over an amazingly large area – a populated area. That happened in the wake, literally, of the turbulent floods that submerged most of the south east corner of Australia, all the way down to Brisbane, the capital city, and way below into the state of Victoria –it all amounts to a BIG, huge, gynomous piece of land.

○

I will dare say that in these floods 'only' 35 people perished –quite amazing, really, that so few lives were swept away considering the thousands of flood miles that filled every nook and cranny... all the way up to the rafters.

Perhaps even more amazing, is the fact that, though Yasi uprooted massive trees and shredded homes, businesses and all manner of infrastructure, it spared everyone that happened to be, antlike, burrowed under its huge wild footprint – except a 23 year old man who died asphyxiated by generator fumes.

○

My unspiritual energy tonight has to do with hearing on the news more unwitting survivors break down, wherever Angry Nature has struck, as they contemplate their personal financial losses. They are overwhelmed by the thankless task of cleaning up and rebuilding in the fastest possible time whatever has been taken away and ... that's about it.

I have yet to read about an interviewee flicking mud or icicles or blood off their person or putting down the mop or the chain saw to say that, though unfortunate the destruction, losses and setbacks, s/he is GRATEFUL to the powers above [make that a god, their soul or to the power of Nature] that the cyclone, mud slide, volcano, earthquake or that snow/ice storm has spared them – and how humbling is this realization – and how differently they have begun to re-prioritize their 'priorities'.

○

I would like SOMEONE, a 'normal' person, if you know what I mean – not a religious zealot, not a doom's day wannabe prophet – to clearly state that they do UNDERSTAND that their physical wellbeing has absolutely nothing to do with LUCK and that, furthermore, there is no such thing as LUCK – not even *bad* luck.

And because luck has nothing to do with it – they, we, all of us need to thank our soul for having stirred us a hair's breath away from fatal danger.

Gratitude - not mere incomprehension or relief - is what we ought to feel.

○

Life on Earth as it Used To Be?

In **1982**, Reshad Feild wrote, in *Here to Heal*, "*Today we have only to look out of our windows to see the chaos we have perpetrated. Look at the telephone poles with their sagging wires, criss-crossing with no order at all, and at the electricity pylons*

and power lines”.

When in the months ahead, as we read about more advancement, more discoveries, more ‘progress’ made in our name and as we hear, feel and see more ‘coldness’ inside our world and as we, doubtlessly, witness the Good Natured Nanny, becoming more and more impatient with us, her misguided charges, three questions will still be begging an answer:

- what appears to be the greatest herd any culture has ever created to take an individual stand on this, on that and the other?

- potential?

- too often as frozen, as barren and as toxic as the world we help create around us?

○
Nature is squeezing us from where we sin when, collectively, we put monetary preoccupations above all others with a careless exploitation of the planet's natural resources and with our penchant for hoarding our money on the one hand while, on the other, using it as a hybrid of bribe and ersatz for love within our family units.

○
Mega billions of dollars are being squeezed out of our global economy by acts of nature and man-made disasters. One way of making it all less gloomy is to think that wasted as they are to all of us, at least these mega billions of dollars are no longer available to fund more wars.

○
The use we make of money, as a commodity, has to be re-thought. Money, world-wide, needs to flow freely.

A massive cultural re-thinking is long overdue.

Money does not want to be hoarded under beds, inside vaults or buried under the spot marked **X**, as on pirates' maps of old. Nor should it be gripped by closed hearts

and tight fists.



Money should be used to do good, but not instead of physical engagement, not instead of real affection. It has to be given generously, not held in a tight bargain, not used as emotional blackmail, not to tip the balance in power struggles, not instead of true affection - not solely for pleasuring our senses.

If the flow of our global money is dammed high and deep, nature knows how to rip it away from us while, these days, it does so, sparing a maximum of lives.



Disasters are not only aimed at the ones who are 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.

Finger-pointing, over-acting and over-reacting are traits that are strictly human.



What nature is trying to do for us is to force us away, totally away from the false notion that we are all separate from one another—separate as individuals inside a family, separate inside our workplace, separate within our communities, separate from inside our countries while, in reality, seeing as we are all souls in disguise, we are as inseparable as the water droplets that make up the immensity of the sea.



Anything one does affects others - *always*, even if ADHD little blind mice that we are, we are rarely aware of such synchronicity. Our need is to move on from the dubious gift of hindsight without over-estimating the usefulness of foresight. Our need requires the ability to be present - aware and awake - in the moment.



Just as family tragedies bring bereft people together for a moment, the spontaneous outpouring of neighbor to neighbor/stranger to stranger solidarity that springs from 'acts of god' disasters offer brief glimpses into what selfless, shared kindness and selfless *active* support can look like and feel like. How much different our society would become if slowly, slowly, we could retrain ourselves and our children to value

much less what is material and much more what springs from the higher end of our ego - from our soul.

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I do find it interesting to note that the *cost* wreaked by the current international 'acts of god' and 'acts of man' is for the most part purely financial. Recent wild floods, massive toxic releases, weird landslides and top-of-the-scale earthquakes, as potentially deadly as they were, have spared lives as carefully as a deftly-handled whipper-snipper spares the tiniest of flowers.

•

The consequences of the global financial meltdown are lingering, particularly in America. It already seems clear that *the world* has not yet learnt enough of the intended lesson. Nature knows that it is from our hip-pocket that we suffer the most because of the purse strings tied around our heart. Thus, this is the way nature has chosen to play it out with us, here and now. Game on!

Reality check: Why isn't it *yet* time to be awake and aware of what Nature is telling our civilization?

Why isn't it *yet* time to let the Polish flood and the Icelandic volcano and the fast succession of super storms in Dakota and Italian landslides and Asia Pacific disasters cleanse a path for us to follow – differently?

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A leaping, raging, devastating new strain of killer fires – fires of unprecedented ferocity and agility - have become common in California and here in Australia. They 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 no 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.

•

Why isn't it time for us to admit the obvious: that no amount of electric bulbs and other chargeable devices are likely to bring happiness to our hearths. If electricity

had the potential to do so, it would already have started doing so at some time or other during the past 100 years.



Though clearly not many of us have individually contributed anything meaningful to 'progress', our problem-solving energy being mostly focused on securing other people's understanding of our immediate needs, our culture has made us top-heavy and easily topple-able.

That is because of our cultural worship of the linear, problem-solving brain, the one that generally *must* get us what we want, by hook or by crook. It is that doggedness that has led experts in their field – at the expense of our collective inherent soulful nature - to engineer, slowly, slowly, 'progress' as we know it.



Put simply, our ancestors, our contemporaries and our *selves* by default have shaped our civilization like the very edible *girolle* mushroom – a wide-topped mushroom.

Its top symbolizes the collective worship of our so-called 'brain-driven power' while its particularly anaemic, spindly stem symbolizes the collective 'thin' interest in genuine soul power.

It is in this imbalance that lies the source of our chronic, deep-seated, mostly silent, emotional discontentment discontent with our selves – the one of which culturally, we only ever treat the symptoms never the cause, which is a quasi-total disconnection from our soul, even if one considers oneself religious.



Though it is said that, Maurice Nicoll, a leading British psychologist of his time, wrote his book **Living Time** many years earlier, it was first published in 1952.

Still in the pre-dawn of the digital era and endemic globalization, as we know them, Dr Nicoll was already saying that mankind saw *'the solution of its difficulties lying in something outside of itself. And with this attitude there inevitably goes the belief in mass organisation of peoples, and a corresponding loss of the inner sense of existence, the effacement of individual differences, and a gradual obliteration of all the rich diversity of differences of custom and local distinction which belongs to*

normal life. [...]

People lose the power of any separate wisdom. In place of it, they imitate each other increasingly. And it is just this that makes possible mass organisation. Hand-in-hand with this goes the linking up of the world by rapid transit and wireless communication, so that the entire world abnormally responds to a single local stimulus.

And above all this hovers the strange chimera, that seems to shimmer in the imagination of all humanity today, the phantasy that science will discover some secret, some solution, that will rid the world of its brutality and injustice and restore the Golden Age.

This idea, that we can discover final solutions to the difficulties of life, and that mankind as a whole can reach 'truth' at some future date, ignores the fact that every person born into the world is a new starting-point.

Every person must discover for himself all that has been discovered before."



About Dr. Nicoll's comment regarding the common 'phantasy that science will discover some secret, some solution,' one of Time Magazine's covers in September 2013 had these words written large and in the iconic colors of Google: **Can Google Solve Death?**



A few months later the cover story of the February 17, 2014 issue was: **The Infinity Machine.** *TIME explores the exciting new frontier of quantum computers — an enormous new source of computing power able to solve some of our most vexing problems.*

The article written by Lev Grossman began with these words: *"It promises to solve some of humanity's most complex problems. It's backed by Jeff Bezos, NASA and the CIA. Each one costs \$10,000,000 and operates at 459 degrees below zero. And nobody knows how it actually works."*



On the topic of the covert hope that eventually, science will, indeed, solve our 'most vexing problems,' who'd know? Maybe the Ancient Greeks were on to something greater than the simplistic theatrical device they called *Deus ex machine*.

God from the machine, for them, was a plot beat device, perhaps invented by Euripides, by which seemingly unresolvable conundrums were suddenly, almost miraculously, resolved. *Ya gotta luv the idea :-))*

•

In any case, for now, it is far easier to pop pills than trying to earnestly understand what lurks at the low end of our ego. It is also much easier than to begin sorting out from within the fears and insecurities that lead us by the nose moment by moment, one impulse, one knee-jerk at a time. It is so much easier that, in spite of each pill generating an inordinate list of possible side-effects, we have made ours a drug-dependent society - not to mention the drugs we ingest daily because of other ailments which, dare I state the obvious, from rashes and constipation to heart attacks and arthritis and cancers, all have their root in our inner malady.

•

It seems clear that no amount of new technology is going to free us from its pervasive tendrils of its so-called 'connectedness' already wrapped around our lives, even if we think 'we can't live without it' and even *if it's all oh so cool* that the need to upgrade has become a societal suicidal compulsion?

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Even though two of the key criteria for a successful global society are personal contentment and personal safety, science and technology have not yet made us more human, nor more responsible.

They certainly have not enabled us to be more content - *nor more safe*.

○

Witness the enduring societal woes that go on plaguing our civilization:

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comforts and more liberties than ever before, are more at risk of self-abuse than ever before.

- yet it remains a dry par-for-the course that must be endured.

- just *to feel* – just for a sense of *belonging*, if only to ‘a pack’.

- themselves and to others.

- has gone ‘mainstream’.

-
- the home’ than in the streets.

- of people.

By and large, once the impulse to hurt a woman or a child kicks in, modern man activates that violence, as have done his [less equality-aware] ancestors since the Dawn of Time.

- behaviors that used to happen in a distant past.

- pregnancy is on the rise and so are drug-related deaths.

- that even pre-pubescent girls are ‘pushed’ to perform fellatio to satisfy their equally young, but sexually curious boyfriends.

- their circumstances graduate from an immersion in video-violence to an immersion in hands-on violence either towards themselves or others – friends and foe alike- in their home, in the street or in other countries.

○

Rant time:

Once upon a time, but not so long ago, the veteran feminist activist, Gloria Steinem said, "I have yet to hear a man ask for advice on how to combine marriage

and a career." That is probably true enough :-)

And beyond that, adding salt to the wound, as one might say, so many years into a post-Feminism era of sorts, 'girls' from 4 to 40 feel compelled to expose 80% of their bodies in tight, diminutive shorts and tiny tank tops, while 'men' are forever very modestly clothed in long T-shirts and shorts down to their knees, baggy-crotch and all.

Might as well rant on a bit longer:

Men on the international tennis circuit, too, dress as if a Modesty clause were embedded in their contract.

Women players, however, are as skimpily clad today as they were forty years ago.

Tennis fashion has always afforded men the practical comfort of storing their spare ball inside accommodating pockets while women have only ever had 'the tennis ball bulge' option i.e. tucking the ball under their 'skirt', presumably inside their sport underwear.

Ah, but things are looking up: some off-pro circuit women's tennis fashion outfits do offer the player the option of tucking one or two balls against her lower back.

I mean, really!

•

Ranting wish:

Ah, Fashion Moguls, please! Bring back the 70's *short* shorts for men and let's make them shorter again.

Worn with torso hugging tops, decree the combo compulsory attire for the next 50 years for all males between the ages of 4 and 40.

While at it, also make Speedo, form-fitting swimsuit, the default swimwear for men – if only for sanitary purposes. Why not?

It is after all the official swimwear of [very manly] competitive swimmers!

•

Oh and, please, Feminist Activists, take over where my generation has left off.

If there is no way under the sun to jolly girls and women into wearing sexy but *sensible* footwear, then, how about finding ways to teach 'boys and men' to walk in 6 inch heels.

What's good for the goose is also good for the gander, or so it is said :-)

Here is a video that will prove a useful teaching aid:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yq6KjCHKj8Q#t=35>

Yes, of course! I *am* giggling at the keyboard :-) but

Serious question: Isn't it time to foster the *energy* of *respect* when it comes to the heart, body and mind of girls and women? Indeed, of boys and men, too?

○

Seriously, too:

- shifts.
- homeless people has been steadily growing since the 70's and rather than the Nouveaux Riches, our main cities are filling up with the Nouveaux Poor.
- rampages and snuff the life out of multiple victims that appear innocent and unrelated to them in *this lifetime* – because they can. Because they hear only their own thoughts.
- fostering conversations between trusted family members and friends.

On the other hand, though the days are long gone when 'man' was the bedrock, the sole provider for his family– and 'woman' was *nothing* without him by her side - we have not moved far enough away from the masculinization of man.

Boys/men still don't cry ... much.

Too many emotions repressed for too long, increased testosterone [in younger males], compounded by culturally *diluted expectations* to 'grow up and take charge', combined with reckless doses of alcohol, do render volatile what is

brewing within.

On the physical level, the pressure still is on boys and men to act *naturally* manly, which is proving more and more difficult in a cultural environment that requires them to spend more hours seated behind a desk, on a sofa or in a car.

These days, fewer boys/men perform physical work... naturally.

Fewer men, too, seem to find pleasure in washing and waxing the slick curves of their car, in moving heavy objects around the house, in doing home renovations - and in mowing the lawn – all typically manly pursuits of a bygone era.

•

created by 'no sex' or 'not enough sex' or 'I want/deserve better sex' is by far the main cause of relationship/marital break ups.

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mention death-by-loneliness.

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more anxiety, depression and dysfunction across all age groups.

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the not-so-young through cyber-bullying ... 24/7.

•

again with explosive violence.

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peace and the heart symbols on walls are, these days, are much rarer than sex toys under beds.

•

It is not all gloomy, though.

We can buy ourselves holidays anywhere in the world, really.

We can do this in environmentally friendly - carbon from planes notwithstanding – eco-tourism style.

We can share our knowledge with others and buy ourselves a righteous working

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holiday in a remote village in Viet-Nam, Africa or Lebanon but when we return home, all our unfinished business as well as all our *badly* finished business are on the doorstep, like a faithful dog awaiting the return of its neglectful owner.

So, besides the fact that, on average, we tend to live longer than say, 100 years ago or even 50 years ago, thanks to the advances in science and technology, how much happier are we?

•

How much *happier* and how much *healthier* are we than the yak herders in the wind-blown steppes of Mongolia?

Than the villagers on the edge of a remote patch of sea?

Than the Dharavi slum dwellers, in Mumbai, who understand the true meaning of the word 'community and the contentment that springs from embracing 'communal living'?

•

The bottom line is that the long list of ills that no amount of progress can scrub out of the fibres of our societies world-wide points to the sad reality that science, progress, good intentions, a growing plethora of welfare and charity programs along with subsidies for this and that have not led us to a culture that is more supportive and less dangerous than any other past or present, though clearly it is the most *comfortable* by far.

So, why go on frittering our collective potential?

○

Why isn't our civilization or, more to the point, why aren't we, within our culture, much more interested in throwing together our collective will, assisted by our collective intellectual power and our collective multi-billion dollar might at the challenge of harnessing the natural powers of the sun, of the wind and of the sea aptly named *clean energy*?

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Clearly, it would be totally impractical to lobby for a return to a pre-1940 ethos and an agrarian lifestyle but it does seem essential *for us* all to be AWARE of how the cogs

are turning worldwide to support [in]directly *our chosen lifestyle* – an endless need for more and better in the domains of ‘fun’ and ‘comfort.



Why don't we accept that drilling more cunningly into the earth's core, mining deeper and further, exploding cavities, vibrating and widening more cracks in the earth's crust, shaking and stirring deadly gases within coal seams simply invite more mine explosions and cave-ins? Why is it apparently so difficult to accept that these activities *probably* trigger more earthquakes, more floods and mud slides – the tools Nature uses to symbolically plug up with her grand *Cyclopic* strength what *we* and *our* machines have been irremediably altering?

Oh, why not mention, here, the ugliest ‘F’ word of this current era: fracking.

The word itself sounds obscene.

Certainly the activity *is* obscene, environmentally speaking.

It refers to the process of drilling and injecting high pressured fluids into well bores to fracture shale rocks and release the gas contained within.

Massive equipment is needed to drill several hundred meters into the earth. An armada of tankers is necessary to carry *to each site* the average 8 million litres of water necessary to mix several thousand tonnes of sand and two hundred thousand litres of chemicals.

Pumped hard and deep into each bore, this mixture causes the shale rock to crack. The sand keeps the cracks open and, from deep layers inside the earth, the gas flows through the fractures to the well bore.

In the States, over 60% of all new oil gas wells are drilled through fracking.

From explosives used to loosen the rock and coal in mining to high pressure mixtures that crack deep layers of earth, not forgetting the myriad of disastrous combinations of chemicals and poisonous gases released by each operation, it is our lifestyle priorities that, globally, fuel *all* the destructive industries that destabilize our planet.



Though clearly our culture is well past the point of no return, as individuals, unless

we are willing to severely curtail our consumption of energy and control our own consumerism that fuels our lifestyle, we need to stop pointing the finger as readily as

the child who, caught red-handed, blurts in a blatant attempt to shift blame, "It wasn't me. I had nothing to do with it."

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Why aren't we *yet* ready to let go of our dependence on the dark, dirty and dangerous resources Nature has buried some 2000 feet below *our* world - no doubt for a reason?

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The same question can be applied to the mining of gold and diamonds. Though these ores do not release toxic gases and though both are considered 'pure' elements, the killer toxicity they unleash is envy and greed on a global scale.

From the young woman who dreamily window-shops for her engagement ring to the lover who buys a diamond to declare his love [*has anyone ever felt LOVED upon receiving a carat or two or ten?*] to the violence inherent to the illegal traffic of gold and diamond, to the violence amongst ubiquitous small-time thieves, to the gold and 'blood diamonds' that fuel murderous conflicts in many parts of Africa to the involvement of child labor – all to cater to our collective worship of the gleam contained within these ores.

Meanwhile, miles of downward shafts and tunnels have turned more sections of the earth's core into destabilizing rat runs.

In that same vein, it's only very recently that I have begun to surmise the inevitable damage - beyond carbon emissions – that is undoubtedly caused by the ever denser air travel grid that criss-crosses our skies.

•

When do we begin to conceive that the vibrations, the roaring decibels and the displacement of air and other particles that emanate from the tens of thousands of jets flying on any given day might affect the atmosphere and outer space?

Knowing that an 'average' jet weighs about 351,000 pounds and that an airbus weighs some 1.2 million pounds, how do we begin to envisage the impact of these

behemoths thudding down on the earth's crust to land roughly 18 million times yearly, year in year out, in most areas of the globe?



New strains of killer wild fires, here, in Australia and in California; the December 2010 Mount Carmel fire, the deadliest in Israel's history; supercell storms; unusual volcanic activities; inexplicable 'freak' occurrences; inaccessible harvests mildewing in miles of flooded valleys here and elsewhere; unusual and severe weather patterns in America and Europe – all such events can be explained scientifically but *only after the 1st piece of data has been picked up*. Scientists are great at backward-mapping their way to theories.

Scholarly theories and precautionary principles get bandied around. They generate nods and accolades from peers as well as a few variations on, 'Uh, yeah ... OK,' from us laypersons but they can never, never define the *original* catalyst that created the very first instance of their very first observable piece of data – the X factor that caused the *first* domino to wobble before falling - the data from which scientists create theories after *observation* and calculations of their evidence, their empirical evidence.



Serious question #1: as we look for answers 'out there' in areas far removed from ourselves, why not *also* contemplate the possibility that punishing ice and snow storms, for example, do more than symbolically cleanse what, collectively and globally, we keep soiling in many areas of the planet?

Serious question #2: Why not consider that such storms do point their icy finger at our frozen state of thinking and at the cold-hearted attitude we generally bring to the table the moment our comfort zones are challenged - be that in our homes, in our streets or in our work places?

Serious question #3: Can we totally dismiss the fact that our ways of thinking/responding are too often as frozen, as *barren* and as hard as the ground

beneath the snow?

Reality check: Instead of *our heart going out to those who endure* the brunt of disasters and personal tragedies, it would be more beneficial to all if we had the heart to consider how our collective, unbridled consumers' needs, compounded by our fear of inner change and our fear of acceptance, by now, demand a reaction from Nature.



Why stay attached to old habits and old ways of working and old ways of thinking and living that should already be obsolete - relegated to a series of books entitled *Life on Earth as it Used To Be?*

The various generations alive today might think of themselves as the most informed... and they certainly should be if they accessed, understood and processed the mega gazillion bits of information that stream past daily, but statistics and simple observations tell us this is far from the case. Though the World-Wide Web offers us the best view possible of the real world, we only look at the panorama through the narrow gap allowed by our ego-persona.



On average, we have little wish to broaden our understanding of anyone or anything unless we have a reason to do so that is *personally* involving, personally rewarding – thus, along with our generational clones, past and present, we hold on with both hands to ideas and patterns that come to us from a far distant past, that have failed us in *our* past – we hold on to them instead of unlearning them.

These patterned habits have failed us *then and now* because they focus exclusively on what is extraneous to ourselves – life as it manifests itself around us.

These habits have failed us because they include neither gratitude, nor mindfulness nor compassion nor genuinely anonymous altruism – the linchpins of the science of contentment.



An undiagnosed cause for our collective failure to be contented beings living in a wholesome emotional landscape lies mostly in our collective admiration for the 'thinking' of the over-active, anxious and chattering mind - while it is a *quiet* mind that is needed for mind expansion.

By the same token we are equally amazed by the linear thinking of the problem-solving brain. In this new millennium, oblivious to the practice of forgiveness and gratitude, we pride ourselves for belonging to the most intelligent of all generations because, physically and knowledge-wise, *we* have gone *where no man has ever gone before*.



We forget that all early explorers in their respective fields have had to go through uncharted territories and we forget that *we*, as individuals, apart from a few thousands, have not contributed *anything* to the furthering of *anything*. And so, another cause of our failure is that our cohort has stopped seeing humility as a necessary virtue – a long time ago.

Reality check: Today, as thousands of years ago, the individual only works at a 'trade' that has been mastered with varying success.

Now as then, we are fluent with the tools of our era – but nothing brainier than that.

Now as then, we form sentimental attachments we mistake for Love, seemingly unaware that real Love can only be selfless and unconditional.

Now as then, we procreate.

Now maybe *more* than then, without our plastic cards and without our cell phones, we would be as helpless as waifs if dropped off naked at some corner far away from home. Hello post-traumatic stress!



While on the topic of *then and now*, if we mull over passages in the Bible, one main difference between now and thousands of years back, is that the holistic interaction of early civilizations with nature and the cosmos brought them right up close to the

Fountain of Longevity – the very fountain which millions of us have been spending billions trying to access.

Preceding Bible writings, there existed conversations with Huang Di who became the legendary Yellow Emperor. One day, he questioned a wise man in his entourage, *"I've heard that in the days of old everyone lived one hundred years without showing the usual signs of aging. In our time, however, people age prematurely, living only fifty years. Is this due to a change in the environment, or is it because people have lost the correct way of life?"*

○

What is interesting is that Huang Di, regarded as the founder of Chinese civilization, reigned from 2697 BC to 2597 BC – roughly from 5000 years ago.

Here is a part of the answer he was given:

"The accomplished ones, of ancient times, advised people how to guard themselves against disease-causing factors. On the mental level, one should remain calm and avoid excessive desires and fantasies, recognizing and maintaining the natural purity and clarity of the mind. When internal energies are able to circulate smoothly and freely, and the energy of the mind is not scattered, but is focused and concentrated, illness and disease can be avoided.

These days, people have changed their way of life. They drink wine as though it were water, indulge excessively in destructive activities, drain their jing - the body's essence that is stored in the kidneys - and deplete their qi. They do not know the secret of conserving their energy and vitality. Seeking emotional excitement and momentary pleasures, people disregard the natural rhythm of the universe. They fail to regulate their lifestyle and diet, and sleep improperly. So it is not surprising that they look old at fifty and die soon after."

5000 years later, we, in the 'smart' parts of the western world, have only managed to lengthen our lifespan by some 30 years.

●

One question worth asking is How much of the Happiness factor have our various freedoms, rights and comforts added to this 30 years extension on life? A fair answer might be *Not as much as anyone would hope for.*

●

We pride ourselves for belonging to a culture that routinely produces headline-grabbing 'advancements' in one area or another. We forget that, like acrobats at the top of human pyramids, what our current luminaries have accomplished rests squarely on the cumulative intellectual/physical and creative powers of those who, over the stretch of centuries, have preceded them in their field.



Like children with broken toys and broken hearts, as compensation, we accept to have our resourcefulness and our collective multi-billion dollar might squandered in high profile pursuits that are totally diversionary – thousands of light years removed from the soul-searching job that needs to be done here - now.

Such diversions that plumb the depths of the seas in search of weird species of fish and the depths of the cosmos in search of yet another gas cluster, however brilliant, can never provide us with the glue with which to repair our broken toys and the salve with which to mend our hearts. They will never provide us with the means with which to repair our broken planet.

Climate models tell our experts that the situation will only get worse, especially if we fail to take **strong action** now.

Serious question: what actions might we considered 'strong' within the context of this discussion?



And Again: 'Then ... What?'

Several years ago, I watched a documentary on the very poor country of Laos and its government's plan to build a hydropower dam, the Xayaburi Dam, on the mighty Mekong River.

The damming of the Mekong will displace village populations that have, for centuries, lived autonomously from their daily catches and barter system.

According to Wikipedia, “2,100 people would be resettled, and more than 202,000 people living in the dam's area would experience impacts due to the loss of agricultural land and riverbank gardens, cause an end to gold panning in the river, and provide less access to the forest resources of the Luang Prabang Range.”

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In terms of the impact on nature itself, in all likelihood, as the unique, 3-meter long giant catfish exclusively native to that area will no longer be able to spawn upstream, this plan will lead to its extinction, as well as to the destabilization of fishery industries in each of the countries that line the river banks downstream.

In short, the damming will interfere grossly with the ways nature intended things to be all the way downstream through Thailand, Burma and Cambodia.

Ah, but that's all good because foreign companies faced with quasi nil demand for hydro dams will deploy their workers along with their mega tonnes of concrete. As a result, the Laotian top-dogs won't be scraping the bottom of *their* barrel anymore, as they will be peddling surplus electricity to neighboring countries **and there will be light** in each peasant's hut.

•

Currently, in 2015, solar panels that emit a strong glow are being brought from the west to energy-poor areas of countries such as Burma/Myanmar. One reason among a couple given as validation for this lifestyle 'improvement' is the deemed necessity to not have to interrupt daytime activities simply because night has fallen over the jungle.

At least, this time, though for man and beast alike, it will upset the ancient and natural cycle of day/night activities ruled by sun and moon light, the west's preoccupation with 'There will be light' - or with *there has to be light* in every home to extend 'daylight' activities - is non-invasive.

The light-giving program in Burma is considered a gift but, whether it is - or not – will only be seen in the fullness of time.

Sadly, though solar light can be brought to the jungle, humans rights cannot be 'smuggled' into the country. Burmese authorities have been forcing hundreds of

thousands of Rohingya Muslim into camps where disease is as rife as despair.

Though, karmically-speaking, there is nothing anyone needs to do beyond empathize with these people's plight, on the physical level, how to help the Burmese government see the 'light' – *that* light? That is a question worth pursuing.

○

Returning back in time, back to 2010 – just because nothing really ever changes

We were awed by yet another discovery.

Scientists announced the discovery of RMC 136a, a *monster* star hundreds of times bigger than the sun some *165,000 light years away*. Interestingly, '165,000 light years away' means that this monster star appears through the telescope *as it was 165,000 light years ago* - not as it currently is - and it might no longer exist. It is in this quirk that lies our tragic flaw - how we lead our lives aching and longing, as well as resenting, many past moments, big and small, as if they were still active in our real time moments. This is the crux of our pan-generational emotional discontentment.

In any case, it wouldn't be surprising to hear that this giant had already been discussed by Ancient Chinese, Mayans and Hindus genius astronomers as it would have been much closer to them in real time than to us. *And* again we can ponder the multi-billions of dollars spent on such prestige 'discoveries' that could have gone towards changing the way we interact with the planet and with each other – in our living rooms, in our streets, at work and in the real wide world.

Heaven forbid that astronomers should find a warm watery Earth look-alike out there because then ... *then what?*

●

What we have lost in Spirit through a disconnection from our soul, we have not gained in any other area. Money world-wide, symbol of the Love we lockup in leak-proof vaults, needs to flow freely. Yes, but a massive cultural re-thinking is long overdue to redirect its intention as well as its flow.

All in all, when it comes to societal issues, personal contentment and the pro-active administration of natural resources, it is difficult to gauge any worthwhile achievements made by post World War I generations and Nature has sent in her emissaries - burning sun, fire, ice, water, wind and rumbling earth - to warn us that what we call *personal best* is not actually any person's *best effort* at all – and such a lame approximation is simply not good enough.



On that vein, and for the sake of the argument, it might be worth considering that if the 18th century Age of Enlightenment was about a critical questioning of traditional institutions, customs, and morals, successive generations might nickname ours The Age of The Rampant Ego or, more bluntly, The Age of Ignorance.



Several legions of natural disasters has wreaked havoc across the globe since I typed the last line in the above section but, thankfully, not many have rivalled the horror that descended on a province in Afghanistan on May 2, 2014 when an enormous landslide, followed by another, buried the village of Abi Barik.

According to a May 19 LightBox snapshot in Time Magazine, the slide had buried more than 2000 people and had destroyed some 300 homes.

Considering the megatons of earth involved and the shortage of earthmoving equipment in that region, the authorities had soon turned their attention to helping the 4.000 people the disaster had displaced.



Presumably, the 2000 dead are still resting in the largest mass burial grave known to this day.

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An undulating heat wave scorched parts of Europe during the first weeks of July, 2015. The southwest regions of France reached temperatures in excess of 40C. Such was its intensity that electrical supply units caught fire. However unusual such a heat wave might be, it occurred nonetheless.

The spin-off effects of the searing heat created havoc on highways and byways at the time of the summer holiday exodus. Hundreds of travellers were affected in a number of ways and, in spite of careful management from the authorities at least 3,000 persons have died.

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A new **Godzilla** film, of the cli-fi genre, has been released this year.

Unlike its previous incarnations, this modern-day Godzilla is stirred into waking by

the misdeeds humans have inflicted to the earth. This Gozilla is a metaphor for the planet's revenge.

In the words of Gareth Edwards, the film director: "I think that films like Gozilla are like the phantasy punishment for what we've done. The real punishment will happen if we keep going this route. Films like this help remind us not to get too complacent - and that we should really try and fix some of these things that we've done before it's too late."

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Right! [And Now ... What ...] Next?

Question: what do Epsom Salt, insecticide, an anti-acne wonder agent, matches, an ideal exfoliant, gun powder, fungicide, saccharin, a deadly chemical warfare agent and the ubiquitous Organosulfur compound essential for life all have in common?

Answer: Sulphur

Question: Where does sulphur come from?

Answer: Sulphur is found in meteorites.

Very cool but, clearly, we, earthlings, do not yet have the technology needed to despoil meteorites in full flights to harvest sulphur which, luckily for us, is nowhere near becoming an unobtainium on planet Earth.

Sulphur is also produced from petroleum, natural gas, and related fossil resources. In fact, 98% of the sulphur we consume is produced and refined mostly in the States, in Canada, in the countries of the former Soviet Union and in West Asia.

Question: what about the missing 2%? Where does it come from?

Answer: it comes from the island of java, particularly from a volcanic crater called Kawah Ijen.

In that nook of the world, the sky is often blue and so is the surface of the world's largest acidic volcanic lake in which the base of the volcano is anchored.

The pungent smell of rotten matter is the only give-away that an idyllic venue, this is not.

Cast against the blinding yellow thick swirls of the sulphur mantel that covers the volcano's crust and fit setting for a hellish scenario of survival, this one kilometre wide lake has the same pH of car battery acid. It will eat through a car and reduce to fizzy debris in no time at all.

It is from the edge of this lake, up the slopes of the steamy volcano which rises 2148 metres above sea level, through poisonous plumes of sulphuric gasses and into its belly that local men, with nothing more than a handkerchief tied over mouth and nose as sole protection, dig up cooled slabs of sulphur.

Each man loads more than 80kg of the yellow slabs into baskets. Down the yellow slope, side-stepping fumaroles that emit sulphuric plumes, they trudge down to the weighing station a few kilometres below where they will receive approximately US\$6-7 per basket.

So arduous is this occupation that, setting off at dawn and returning to their village at sunset, these men can only manage two round trips per day.

According to Naturescapes.net, the resource for nature photographers, "the best time to start hiking to Kawah Ijen is in the early morning, around 3 or 4 AM. This will allow you to reach the crater just in time to watch a beautiful sunrise peeping through the mountain tops."

Of course, these intrepid tourists will execute the climb at a leisurely pace, wearing the best protective footwear and wearing modern gas masks.

Let's stay tuned to incoming newsflashes.

They will track for us Nature's ongoing responses to our cultural greed and complacent thinking.



The Image of God

Written in Hebrew and translated by Moriya

The Image of God – Male and Female He Created Them

"So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27).

Human beings were created in the Image of God, that is, in the shadow of God's Back, for withstanding the blinding rays of True Light, God's Face, is well beyond the physical capabilities of human eyes. The spark of True Light is hidden from our sight.

Only its reflection can be perceived. Physically, human eyes cannot discern the ultraviolet or infrared bands in a rainbow or identify items upon the surface of the sun without being dazzled, but only their refraction on the water.

Due to the limitations of physical eyes human beings cannot see their own face.

Mirrors enable humans to see only REFLECTIONS. Dazzling sunlight turns the reflection into a shadow.

Exodus (33):

18 Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

19 And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

21 Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. 22 When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. 23 Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

Because human beings have been created in the shadow of God's Back, everything we perceive through our senses is upside down.

Human eyes can only perceive vibrations. What we 'see' falls on the retina at the

back of our eyes upside down, as in a camera. Equally, the images we see are projected upside down at the back of the brain. Just as our brain interprets vibrations as images and assembles the information into a form we find coherent, the lens forms images, too.

True Light is hidden in the darkness. Thus, it is through the black pupil that we see light and not through the white of the eye. Darkness is pure matter. Darkness and light are the two sides of the same coin.

Thick darkness and extreme light make people grope around like blind ones. It is logically assumed that the more light there is, the better able we are to see, but that is true only up to a point. In reality, human eyes cannot see beyond their limited border. Only the inner eye can perceive lights within darkness while the physical eye is blinded by darkness.

In order to understand what is happening around us, we need to reverse the order of what we experience. As long as what we experience is perceived in its state of reflection – everything is upside down, unintelligible, incomprehensible and irrational.

Reflection mode is an hypnotic state that prevents a clear vision of what is happening. This is a state in which we see reflections wherever we go, whether they are people or objects.

When we are faced with another person, it is as if we, in fact, look in the mirror and see a reversed reflection: our right side is the left side of the figure standing in front of us, and our left side is the right side of the figure.

This condition prevents clear communication between people because whatever we see or hear is understood incorrectly according to OUR frame of reference and interpretation. In order to know clearly what the other person thinks or feels, we need to stand exactly where s/he stands and NOT in front of them, because looking straight ahead means we see OUR REFLECTION and not the person, per se.

Let's take the example of a car. When we stand in front of it, we are looking at a reflection because its right and left sides are inverted in regards to ours. But if we sit in the car, for example, in the driver's seat, we are in the ideal position to assess

correctly the person in front of us, and we are able to respond to what is happening before our eyes, just like the driver can.

But this situation is impossible in the physical world, since no two objects can be in one place at the same time. As a result, humans identify with the character standing in front of them and with words said to them, without realizing that they are interpreting everything according to the data already in their mind. The dialogue that takes place between human beings is always incomplete and always accompanied by a lack of understanding as to the true intentions of the person in front of them.

Looking around us, we are unaware of the way we perceive the surrounding world as being upside down. For instance, when we drive and see a sign of an arrow telling us to turn right we say: 'Here we are turning right', while really it is *right* ONLY from our angle of view, while in reality it is left.

The mountains, towers, trees, animals, etc., indeed everything looks at us from the right angle which for us is upside down because of the reflection of our perceptions.

This simple truth is best illustrated by the entire cosmos, the galaxies, suns, stars, planets, etc., which beam down on us from the 'right angle'. It is like standing before a mirror and seeing ourselves as their reflected images, while at the same time we are deluding ourselves that we are OUT HERE, separated from them instead of being WITHIN them, as an inseparable part of the whole cosmos.

We perceive everything in its momentary position – be that images, thoughts, or feelings – although they have long ago ceased to exist in the state and location in which we experience them. In short, we are stimulated by and respond to something that no longer exists in the NOW.

The story of Adam and Eve illustrates this condition (Genesis, chapter 3):

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

*2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,
3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the*

garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’ ”

4 “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

11 And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

12 The man said, “The woman you put here with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

In the above passage, we see the snake as a mirror reflecting images which tempt the eyes to see what is not there. Although both man and woman are in the garden, neither SEES the fruit of the forbidden tree – not until it is reflected to them by the snake/mirror. This is the seminal reflection that has set mankind on its course.

Although both Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit, they accuse their own reflection: man projected his guilt onto woman and woman projected hers onto the snake, because of their inability to recognize their true image. The snake talks in an

understandable human language and, because humans can only recognize what is already known and familiar to them, it means they are looking at their own reflection, as in a mirror, and the snake merely exposed it. This type of misunderstanding has been repeated many times daily by each person throughout the history of the planet and, as such, has created its myriad of misconceptions, confusion and disharmony in human relationships ever since.

Most people live permanently in a mirror-image reflection mode, projecting their thoughts and feelings onto others, believing this to be the "objective" truth. Such incorrect interpretations are the reason for so many conflicts and wars.

Men and women are designed to complement each other in order to come to realize their true inner nature. When the balance is lost and one side dominates the other without mutual sharing, they experience tragic and dead-end situations which, to them, seem as a punishment from heaven for unforgivable sins.

According to Midrash Tanchuma, (Bechukat) Rav Acha [a.k.a. R. Aha b. Jacob, a Jewish Amora sage of Babylon]:

When the Holy One Blessed be He wanted to create man, he consulted the Angels. He told them: "Let us make a human". They said to Him: "This human, what quality shall he have?" He told them: "His wisdom shall be surpassed only by your own wisdom".

What did He do?

He convened every animal and bird and they passed before the Angels.

He asked them: "What is the name of these?" And they did not know.

After He created the first human being, He called every animal, bird and beast and delivered them before him, and He told him: "What's the names of these?" Adam said: "It would be nice to call this one an ox, this one a donkey, that one a horse, that one a camel, that one a lion, that one an eagle," and so for all the animals.

God asked Adam: "And what is your name?"

He said": "It would be nice to call me Adam. And why? Because I was created of the ground".

"And I, what is my name?"

Adam replied: "It would be nice to call you, Lord. And why? Because you are the Lord of whatever you created."

Why couldn't the Angels themselves name the animals? The answer is clear: Angels experience the world as a unity that cannot be separated into categories such as humans, animal, plants, planets and therefore, they cannot see separate objects within wholeness. They experience the world as if everything were painted in one hue that does not allow any separation.

Humans, unlike them, experience the world through colorful items, which gives them an inexhaustible abundance of objects and options.

Angels experience life according to their essence, that is without an ego and, thus, they have neither shadow nor reflection. Humans, however, experience life as reflections, constantly trying to reach the other side of the mirror to be reunited with their real Image of God looking in the mirror. While the Angels experience the world as an inseparable wholeness from above/below, man experiences the world linearly, as separated into multitudinous items from below/above. Therefore man's vision is blurred and accompanied by misperceptions. Only the unity offered through woman's vision can prevent the evolution process from being very difficult and painful.

Human society is established on the basis of male dominance which rules all aspects of life. This cultural model is completely contrary to the surrounding world in which everything is intertwined with another and is inseparable and thus harmonious.

In Nature, large herds that ensure the survival of the herd and, ultimately that of the species, are only made possible through the activities and the nurturing of the females while very few males are needed to keep the line going and maintain the order.

Man is in fact completely dependent on woman when it comes to his daily needs and his personal well-being, success and achievement. Without woman, man is emotionally weak and destitute and it is only through woman's efforts that man can raise a family.

One essential aspect of achievement that is considered *ideal* for a man is to have a large family, the modern equivalent lifestyle of rulers of the past who maintained big harems with wives and concubines. King Solomon, for example, held a harem of 700 wives and 300 concubines. (I Kings 11:3).

Single men are proud to have many lovers as if this proved their success as conquerors. In Western countries where polygamy is forbidden, married men often have temporary lovers, long-term affairs and even children by women who are not their wives.

Other measures of man's ideal achievements include a flourishing business, a big house, a large this or that. However, man is never deeply satisfied with any of the achievements he garners for himself because their impermanent nature can never fill the heart.

Whatever is not an integral part of the person, such as thoughts/feelings, the ability/inability to give/accept etc., is merely a temporary artificial addition and, thus, it forces a separation from what should be left inseparable. It restricts the full potential of the true self. For example, animals that are kept behind fences, like cattle and horses, are only used to generate profit for their owners.

Looking reversely, we see clearly that their owners reflect the animal equivalent, the same lack of freedom, as suffered by the animals, though to man, this situation comes by choice.

Man chooses to keep himself behind closed gates in a bid to protect himself and his possessions against others, judging outsiders as untrustworthy. Man separates aspects of his private life from the public.

This state of permanent insatiability pushes man to hoard, at all levels, more than he needs which, in turn, creates disease of the body and illness of the mind, symptomatic of the imbalance created by the compulsion to dominate spheres beyond his own capabilities – spheres that would be best left alone.

Woman carries her baby nine months in her womb and gives birth through pain. She is the loving mother and the principal carer for the child. Man watches from the

sidelines. His essential involvement is mostly over after mating, but in his delusion, he generates thoughts of being essential to the safety of woman. To justify the role of guardian, man fabricated in his mind an image of woman who is inherently helpless and, thus, in constant need of his protection against the outer world. This idea stems from his inability to live in harmony with his surroundings, to see danger and opposition where they do not necessarily exist.

At some point, man announces: "This child will be so and so! He will learn this and that! I am his father and I decide about his life!" He demands to raise the child as a reflection of himself to justify his position as outsider controlling the real owner, that is, the mother. The child will grow up to become a replica of his father or, conversely, rebel against him, without the possibility to evolve into a better and more enlightened person. When the grown child fails and involves himself in reprehensible deeds because of his uncontrolled lower desires, his mother and his sisters will support him, even against authorities, even against his own wife and daughters, in the case of rape or incest.

The male child learns that society is a false world in which man enjoys extra benefits by forcing the woman to serve him by having however many children he wants, by raising them, by cooking and cleaning and by addressing her husband's or partner's sexual needs even though often she, too, works, out of the house. In many cultures, woman gives up her own personal development because it is thought that only a man truly deserves to develop and to improve his position by going into the world and achieving.

In this traditional set-up, woman must be always at hand to serve and always be satisfied with the success of her husband. Sometimes, a small portion of that relative success rubs off on her. It is such a case among Jews where, for example, the wife of a rabbi is given the title of *rabbanit* although she might, in fact, be cleverer and more developed than her husband. World-wide, it is also the case for the wife of a politician or the wife of a celebrity. Woman imitates man in such circles, but seldom dares to rise beyond it. She is always the woman BEHIND her husband's success but, because she stands in the shadow of his image seldom does she get her real reward in the public arena.

The fact is that scandals of fraud and of sexual abuse continue to be predominantly by men, often by so-called 'pillars of society', and religious leaders – men in a self-appointed position that allows them to control their devotees, believers and followers.

The constant need for the almost invisible horde of formal and informal 'service providers' in attendance to enable man to achieve anything reflects man's state of internal enslavement. He is forever dependant and unable to stand on his own feet without using the woman as a crutch.

The aggressive father, who demands total attention at the expense of his own wife and children's needs, only expresses extreme hunger for love. 'Out there', in the streets and at work, man faces large crowds, especially when he is involved in politics, sports and entertainment where he seeks to satisfy his huge inner emptiness but, alas, true love never comes from fans or the masses.

Generally speaking, most of man's achievements are 'out there'. They are exterior to himself and to his family. Man is heavily represented in the areas of armed forces, politics, religion, science, business, advanced studies, sports and so on. There, man is able to display his wisdom, his strength, his power, his charm and his ability to attempt changing his or others' life. However, how can we explain that the moment he comes home, this successful and powerful man that he is out in the world, immediately loses all his personal resourcefulness and becomes a boy still searching for his mother - using his wife as a substitute - and expecting her to serve him, as his mother did - when he was a toddler?

It is an absurd situation that man returning triumphantly from a sporting, military or business foray will, once the front door closes, reveal a helplessness that disenables him, even when it comes to cleaning the toilet bowl, washing the dishes or preparing a simple meal.

Evidence of this desperate desire to return to the days of infancy is the man's need to shed his clothes as soon as he returns home. However careful he is to dress to impress 'out there' those who see him, at home man feels the irresistible urge to take off his clothes quickly and walk around in his underwear or, if it is impossible for reasons of modesty, then, he favors pyjamas or a loose, old pair of track pants. In doing so, he validates his claim to recognize himself as a baby proclaiming: "Look, I

am a baby!"

Just look at the addictive attachment of men to cigarettes and their need to suck the tip in order to simulate again and again the experience of suckling milk and rekindle their happiness as babies at their mother's bosom. The same attachment is expressed even more by sucking cigars and pipes by those men considered successful persons. Over many decades, action movies in which the hero sucks on cigarettes express man's masculine need to prove that men are strong and not dependable on women. Ironically, a simple look around will confirm that only babies slouch sucking on things, most often, but not exclusively, a pacifier.

Many men accept as natural the option to marry young girls because they reflect man's image as a little child too. Man deals more easily with young, frightened girls than with strong and opinionated women.

Until his very last day, man remains attached to his mother because of the wish to return to the womb and become a baby again. The question is: though having so much influence on their sons or husbands, why haven't more women/mothers/wives taken the reins in order to lead to equality? The answer is: because they are NOT GENUINE MOTHERS but reflections of the male image – of their husbands or sons.

A GENUINE mother never distinguishes between her children – sons or daughters – and she is open naturally to accept all of them into her heart. To differentiate between one's children is a male trait that tells of suspicion, of the inability to accept and, ultimately, of rejection.

Kings have never trusted either their brothers or their offspring, seeing them as rivals to their throne – through which they secured the love of their people.

Kings have always been forced to surround themselves with guards in order to prevent being murdered. All their lives, they fight internally and externally in order to survive and to prove themselves as the one worthy of love.

For woman who is the giver of life, it is difficult to shorten any life. On the other hand, man is quick to kill when taking someone's life appears as the solution to his problems. It is not woman who invented the Inquisition or the idea of impaling people

on stakes because of their different opinions, or to execute them publicly in stadiums. Neither did she create concentration camps and Gulags.

Man does not perceive the duality of power and weakness, and he believes that only more controlling power will remove the obstacles in his path. Consequently, in order to overcome such obstacles, he risks the increased power he uses becoming uncontrollably violent.

Idleness is a prominent male trait. Man seems to have an ability to sit for hours indoors in pubs and taverns, breathing in stale air made even denser by cigarette smoke and body odours, just to drink alcohol with other men and play cards. Man gambles to get more money. He often uses his winnings to treat himself to more fun, alcohol and various sex-related expenses. That same idleness follows man home as he returns from work or play and sinks into his armchair watching television, fully expecting his wife to serve him in several ways. Man enjoys returning to the days of his childhood and to his dependence on his mother who was able to fix what was wrong, to soothe his brow and to clean up the various messes he made in the home and outside of the home.

This idleness is clearly illustrated in (Wild) Western movies in which men sit all day in saloons drinking, smoking and playing cards and being entertained by women. In Muslim and other countries, men sit in little cafes drinking, smoking and playing shesh-besh/backgammon.

Unlike men, women become bored quickly. That's why men tend to bribe their wives/girlfriends with money. "Why don't you buy yourselves something or go out with your girlfriends", they say, which would free them to continue engagement with their preferred activities.

In the West, man has constructed giant cathedrals and monasteries in which very few monks dwelled. In Tibet, Japan and other Far Eastern countries, man constructed big monasteries, sometimes containing 10,000 monks – all of them under the supervision of a Master, doing the same activities together like soldiers, and are punished as well accordingly.

Man feels safe in the togetherness although, from among several thousands of monks, only a handful ever understand real spirituality and gain enlightenment. When they are left to their own devices, men tend to use their status to fulfil their desire, especially sex. They use money to tempt and bribe, as a substitute for their inability to give of themselves – from the heart.

The masculine idea of overcoming desires to be enlightened meant becoming disconnected from society in order to live as a monk or hermit and to repeat dead, empty ritualised words or to meditate away from society. All their achievements were reduced to making themselves more mechanical and to repress desires, especially sexual desire, which would inevitably still explode sooner or later, because opposites cannot be separated. Repressing sexual desire mechanically only allows it to resurrect again at the onset of the next catalytic moment.

While the physiologic nature of man guides him mostly *centrifugally* to push away from the body, away from himself, the feminine aspect of woman's nature prompts her to pull toward herself *centripetally*. While man rejects and denies, the woman accepts and invites. They are intended to complement each other.

Women unite. They are versatile and they vary in their approach to life, and this is reflected in the styles and colors of their clothes, especially in the Far East. In the Middle East, the Bedouin women create beautiful embroideries to their dresses which contrast with the dark colors of male robes. This multicolored variety mimics beautifully the variety in the multicolored surroundings found in Nature. Women do various tasks at home and thus they make the house look as one accomplished unit, including their family. Women invented dances and songs performed with multicoloured clothes.

Man tends to standardize and reduce life's opportunities by creating more repressive laws or prohibitions, mostly intended to curtail woman's freedom. The more man limits woman, the more man becomes extreme and demonstrates behavior opposite to what was intended by the restrictions. He, then, projects it onto woman, as if she allows herself uppity rights that might somehow rob man of his achievements.

This restriction which stems from a narrow understanding of the inability to separate what is inseparable, is expressed by the creation of religious and military

processions of secret associations like Free Masons, Templars or schools for boys, etc. – all this with special uniforms for the soldier, doctor, nurse, priest, nun, Orthodox person, sport supporter, and so on. The intention of any traditional uniform is to make a visible separation from others and to pretend authority. Preceded by the Ku Klux Klan, in USA, in their robes and hoods, Islamic extremists have opted for a uniform of their own, the black abaya. Whether the robe is black or white or whether the headgear is tall and pointy or wrapped close around the head, unbeknownst to them, they actually signal these men's fear of change.

It is clear that wherever there is an uniformity of practice, such as in synagogues, churches and monasteries, which requires long prayers and repetitive rituals; or when there's a need for driving trucks/buses routinely for many hours in the same routes; or to fly planes (how symbolic it is to engage the automatic pilot option) – there are a multitude of men performing such activities. Conversely, wherever there are occupations that demand informality, such as teachers in schools, nurses in hospitals or seamstresses for fashion houses, which required diversity, creativity and constant changes – there are a multitude of women who do the work.

Man, on his own, is a limited being who lacks a built-in ability to contain unconditional love. Therefore he lives in a state of constant hunger for real love which can be obtained only in the home and only by giving the same in return – but such reciprocity seldom happens. That is because, while the woman gives of herself all the time by being subservient in one way or another, man just takes as if it were his God-ordained right. He is blind to see the inverted way in which he behaves by going 'out there' to get love, to supposedly give love to his 'audience' while leaving at home spouse and children hungry for that very love. This renders hollow man's 'giving' potential. It has already been spent 'out there' – and, his wife 'hungry' for the real thing, refuses to be sustained with the leftovers he brings home.

Such absurd situations are well illustrated by man who returns home after a tour of duty or a performance of some kind 'out there' and who just wants his wife/girlfriend/partner to hear of his exploits and adore him as much as his audience does.

However, all *she* needs and wants is his love and devotion. The conflict between

them arises when he compares his successful outcomes 'out there' to his wife's involvement in all matters of the home. The inability to equalize the energy of giving and receiving in and out of the home drains what there is of it, just as it drains the passionate love that had once united man and woman which, by now, has vanished like a wisp of smoke.

Man's needy dependence on woman distorts his vision and he translates the picture upside down. He 'sees' how woman depends on him for many of her needs and therefore he fails to understand why she is in constant revolt and wants freedom. He muses why she is not satisfied with the dependable situation he has crafted for her, supplying all her needs – according to what he thinks is good for her. He does not understand that, in reality, woman, too, is independent and free, and does not truly need him. The protection he allegedly gives her is actually from other men like him who believe that women are property that can be transferred from man to man.

All the restrictions and prohibitions man has created to better control woman stem from the projection of his thoughts on to her. For example, because of his inability to control his sexual desires which, for instance, might lead him to visit brothels or have an illicit affair, he sees his own behavior reflected back at him by the woman like a reflection in a mirror, which leads him to pointing an accusing finger, casting her as a sinner.

Man's greatest fear is to reveal his personal weaknesses and his dependence.

Therefore, he is constantly on the defensive and makes use of emotional, verbal and/or physical force to achieve his goals. Any loss, he perceives as the exposure of his weaknesses, for all to see. Even a loss in a card game or the loss of his favorite football/basketball team may cause him to erupt violently to remove the disturbing outcome and subdue this weakness that he sees reflected back at him by woman.

Perceiving emotion as a sign of weakness, he represses his own tears in all areas of life, granting himself permission to cry only as an expression of his religious fervor and sincerity – in synagogues, churches and temples.

There, it is permissible and legitimate for grown man to cry because he has been

told that his Father in Heaven, Jesus, His son, and Mary, the Mother of all, along with the bevy of goddesses, mother-figures, they all accept crying as a positive, humbling experience and a sign of vulnerability when man returns for a moment to his child-self.

Man measures his weakness by comparing it to woman – as the mother. On the one hand, she is strong enough to give birth to many children and, on the other hand, she's strong, too, when her children die, for example, as victims of war. By contrast, man tends to fall into depression or indulge addictive, unhealthy behaviour like heavy smoking, drinking alcohol or taking drugs – prescribed or otherwise.

We see man's dichotomous reaction to his biological mother. As long as his mother behaves independently, man adores her as he did in childhood but when she becomes needy, demanding more and more attention than he is willing to grant her – or when he sees her as becoming repressive – conflict grows between them. Her needy attitude projects his own demands as a child and he cannot stand to see his own reflection projected back at him by his own mother.

Looking at the phenomenon of retirement homes, it is easy to see clearly how the management and financial aspects lie in the hands of men while the daily, hands-on services have been left mainly in the care of women, such as nurses, carers and social workers. The same is true in hospitals where doctors conduct the daily tour looking at their portable computer screens for reference and information, without bothering to check the patient, before leaving instructions for nurses, mostly female ones, to follow. In previous generations when families lived together, then, too, it was mostly the women, sisters and daughters who took care of the parents and grandparents of both sides.

Man's weakness is particularly evident in his need to constantly be with other men – in stadiums, political gatherings, pubs, clubs; to be a member of a particular group or party. This need indicates feelings of loneliness, the fear to be alone and the strong need for a crutch he finds in a leader.

Man who reveres manly strength because of the weakness of his character always respects a strong leader, a financially successful man, a winner in sport, a policeman who apprehended a criminal, etcetera. Only a woman (Agatha Christie) could create

a gray character such as Hercule Poirot, as the wise and strong person – the anti-image of the masculine hero.

Linearly, leaders are supposedly physically and emotionally stronger than the average person but reversing the mirror highlights their weaknesses. They pretend strength by surrounding themselves with burly bodyguards/police/army, large palaces secured by high walls, large vehicles, etc. But such a crucial dependency on more and more objects only reflects their big, inner weakness which they try to disguise by more strength and more bravado. Not many men are able to deal with circumstances on their own. When the Dalai Lama visited the United States in 2014 he often appeared on the stage with 200 monks standing behind him.

Extremist militants

These men reflect the inner bondage and the inability to break free and develop as free spirits. After all, their countries are not under foreign occupation. They, themselves, have created their own way of life based on a blend of slavery and terror that expresses nothing more than the internal violence that lies within them. It is as if in the midst of total delusion, these extremists truly believed that by imposing more restrictions especially on women, by making them more submissive in the very household they govern, they, men, will become purer and better human beings.

These men behave no differently from bank robbers who take hostages and demand money for their return. So, if their innovative ideology is based on a greater reliance on getting more money, more weapons, more food and clothing, more electronic, digital devices and a number of other goods manufactured and imported from the world they reject, it is such a great error in thinking that creates an endless string of internal and external conflicts for all.

Any attempt to separate the world 'out there' from themselves can only end in spectacular failure and deep-set aggravation. Again, these men are attempting to perpetuate a lifestyle in which man is the autocrat and woman's sole function is to serve him, shut out from the world at home and when outside under her hijab or burqa. They don't understand that women reflect the men's own image: hiding under

a lot of guises, afraid to expose their true face.

No matter how cruel these men can be in all their aspects of life, their weakest point, their Achilles' heel, is their mother whom, by and large, they adore. They cannot bear the thought of her being raped or hurt by men, as they, themselves hurt others' women/mothers. The fact is, these men often head households which support elderly parents, more usually a widowed mother, for there are no homes for old people in Muslim countries.

Man's need to control stems from a lack of internal control. Control means bondage, because to control another signifies dependency on that being, as does his dependence on woman for all manner of services she provides for him.

Men from different nationalities have descended upon many countries in the ex-Soviet block. In particular, they have targeted villages to lure away young women with the promise of good jobs/salaries 'overseas' – only to have them exploited as sex slaves on arrival.

In current times, women from Ukraine and elsewhere have been trying out for a better life. Once having arrived 'somewhere', their passports are confiscated. Instead of reasonable wages and good work, as promised, they are fed less than appetizing meals and are given a mat to sleep on while they are forced to work as sex slaves to 'pay back' the alleged cost of their upkeep, and that is at the discretion of their pimp, their new owner.

Consensual sexual bondage is the legal expression of man's compulsion to control. Kidnapping of women, rape and torture are only extensions made possible because of the above.

Man's constant refusal to accept woman on equal terms stems from misunderstanding that whatever we attract to ourselves exists only in as much as it is necessary to achieve wholeness and to tie up all loose ends of situations that would otherwise be left unfinished. The need to do so is the same as putting an end to a

bad relationship which would otherwise pollute the new one with its murky energy.

Therefore, none of the partners linked by that energy can possibly escape their consequential destiny until a high degree of equality has been achieved.

To maintain the established status quo that has man 'responsible' for woman, man creates and uses laws intended to give him more control but, he, himself, is in constant competition with other men for the same goals and for the same reasons. Man exhausts himself on many fronts. This is why we see so many individuals and groups from among crowds in the stadiums, political meetings and religious public meetings who, living in constant fear of being outsiders, do what is not acceptable according to normal human standards in order to gain acceptance by the group.

We see a similar process in the whole world. Men behave the same and they expect women to follow in their wake to accompany and support them. Woman, whose primary role is to be a mother, moves away from the nurturing of her family to imitate man in her own constant search for the perfect mother figure.

All conflicts between mothers and their daughters are due to the type of thinking man imposes on them. Adoration of the four mothers in the Old Testament (Tanach) especially Rachel, Our Mother, shows typical male characteristics. Motherhood means spiritual and physical independence, power – the flipside of the childish dependency of male thinking.

All restrictions men have been imposing on women are intended to turn the women into a character alive in the man's imagination: the loving mother willing to sacrifice her life for that of her children; the faithful wife waiting for her husband who is far away or simply in his secret lover's house, the obedient wife fulfilling her husband's every wishes; the daughter who rejects offers to marry in order to take care of her elderly parents, and so on.

While surrounding woman with numerous prohibitions bolstered by harsh penalties, even today in the Muslim world most particularly, man finds his panacea and escapes punishment for adultery by marrying several women, thus ensuring that his 'sin' cannot be considered a reason for divorce or punishment.

In Judaism, a husband can refuse to divorce his wife. He can refuse to give her the

document called *Get*, which is the legal document of divorce, signed by the husband who agrees to set his wife free to start a new life, whenever she so wishes. Without this legal document, woman will face many years without the possibility of re-marrying legally.

In Islam it is sufficient for the husband to say three times, "You are divorced from me". The mere suspicion of adultery condones the stoning of the woman who has been found guilty of the alleged offence.

Masculine society is very tolerant of men's sins and does not see error in lauding them as "great" or "enlightened", as in the case of Rousseau:

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (28 June 1712 – 2 July 1778), was a writer, and composer of the 18th century. His as well as the overall modern political, educational thought.

Beyond the fact that Rousseau's idealism was intended as the political weapon by which he was to help the poor and the downtrodden, this man did put his five children in an orphanage, convincing his wife that they would have a better life *there* than with them, their natural parents. Thus, hiding his real intention to rid himself of rivals for his wife's heart.

History is rife with examples of psychopathic male behavior but a couple of examples here will suffice.

The Roman Emperor Augustus (23 September 63 BC – 19 August 14 AD) allowed his wife to murder family members and whoever she thought stood in her way and his to become sole rulers of the empire. And Herod 'The Great' (74/73 BCE – 4 BCE), a Roman client king of Judea, murdered his own wife and children and many others.

Democratic elections in the West and elsewhere only express an illusion of change when leadership passes from one political party to another. No change can ever exist as long as the cultural basis is enacted solely through a masculine perspective.

Sooner or later, the change will collapse as a consequence of the recurring chronic imbalance. Instead of changing the system completely and having it rebalanced by

women – man is replaced by another male and, in spite of surface changes, everything keeps revolving in a vicious circle, repeating the same old patterns because of uniformity in men's thinking. The same old driver might be driving a new car, but his driving habits are still the same old ones.

Man sees the world 'out there', as being separate from himself because of his one-sided perception. In order to see clearly, man needs to access woman's perceptive nature. This need is characterized by his wish to conquer the world and all that it contains, which is then symbolized by the external aspect of his sex organs.

Woman's inward-looking nature is symbolized by the inward/internal aspect of her sex organs. Her ability to give birth symbolizes the ability to bring about the real change – her karmic role.

In order to reach balance between the masculine and feminine aspects, man's goal needs to be to learn to give of himself and to sacrifice body and soul for his loved ones. For that to happen, man needs to realize the falsehood of cheap substitutes like sex, money and power.

Man's linear thinking is uniform and lateral. It pushes him to constantly repeat the same controlling measures intended to solve problems which result in the original 'problem' becoming entrenched and systemic. For example, he uses the language of control and subjugation: Man wages a 'war' against crime, a 'war' against diseases, a 'war' against violence. He talks about conquering space, Nature and conquering the heart of his lover. He fights against pollution, addictions and a number of other things. He is told to dominate his impulses. Man lives as if surrounded by enemies. When he feels control slipping away from his hands, man uses the same methods exactly where he intends to strike: more domestic violence at home and harsher legislations in the public arena: more power given to the Police, more lethal drugs to combat diseases and illnesses, stronger penalties to deter violent teens, more authoritarian tactics to flush out would-be terrorists from our communities, etc. Repeated use of only one side of the coin, the attack mode, creates imbalance and shapes a sort of stopper which prevents the constant flow of fresh energy that would allow a softening or a refinement of the original situation which would, thus, make it easier to have it fade away in the fullness of time.

Man of all religions has attempted to keep woman in a state of ignorance since ancient times. That is as true in Islam as it is in Christianity and Jewish Orthodoxy. Thus, man has expressed his great fear of woman and her capabilities.

What is it man sees when he looks at his ignorant wife and refuses to let her learn and develop her intellect? He see his own image reflected in the mirror as an ignorant one which he projects on to woman which gives him control over woman deemed "inferior".

The fact is, that all over the world, the education curriculum is delivered mostly by women who are often paid lower wages despite the hard work and dedication that teaching entails. Not for nothing it is said in Proverbs (1:8):

*8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction
and do not forsake your mother's teaching.*

Woman is the true teacher. Man's role is to scold the children when they deviate from their mother's teaching. Men are not attracted to teaching not because of low wages but because of their inability to deal with children which reflects their inability to free themselves from their attachment to their mothers.

Man invented all forms of competition as a way to acquire the rewards of success in all types of endeavour. When it comes to studies, students go to school, not so much in order to learn, but in order to eventually get better qualifications that will enable them to get a better job and more money.

Children dislike study because this activity is separated from the reality of the world around and is based on 'dead words'. Youngsters fail to see the connection between themselves, what is important to them and what is taught to them in schools.

Therefore they fail to enjoy what they are learning. Instead, learning becomes the long, inevitable and tiring process of pursuing shreds of validating prestige which comes to them in very tiny measures.

Man's masculine power is derived from the oppression of woman – the suppression of man's feminine side. This imbalance is projected on all aspects of life. Man uses the same oppressive methods to control or oppress workers, by making them submit

to draconic contracts which enslave them, taking away their expected right to live as free people.

Slavery has never been permanently abolished and child slavery has remained a very active business throughout the centuries. Adult slavery was simply changed from being visible on farms and plantations to be made invisible to western eyes, hidden inside sweat shops in Asia where women sew the garments and assemble all parts of the equipment for the best known sport labels and this kind of exploitation is replicated in factories where the world's best digital devices are created for each of the main corporations, mostly U.S. ones.

The real IT industry is thousands of miles away from Silicon Valley and its thousands of workers are equally removed from the protection of Union laws that safeguard American workers and others in the West.

Besides the matter of pitiful wages, workers who travel across Asian borders seeking work in IT factories often have their passports confiscated upon arrival in the same manner as human traffickers confiscate the passports of their human cargo, after having squeezed an exorbitant sum of money out of each one, firstly as payment for the transit, and again to 'buy' themselves the possibility of work in these sweat shops. Suicide protests, groups of workers threatening to leap from factory rooftops, are common and the actual suicide rate in this cohort is very high, of course.

Man's masculinity emphasizes the contrast with its flip side, femininity. Thicker muscles, more physical power, a greater ability to absorb quantities of alcohol, a penchant for rough sport and drinking beer with other men – these traits help define standard masculinity.

Women are at a constant disadvantage because they compete in man's world where pre-existing rules limit them to what men are willing to afford them. Consider examples in sport where female athletes cannot match male power and so need to compete in female-only competitions.

There are several arenas where woman cannot better man but is merely allowed to

imitate him, as is done in Reform Judaism where female rabbis choose to wear the *kippa*, *tallit* and *tefillin*, religious trappings traditionally intended to denote the submission of man to the Torah and its Laws.

Orthodox Judaism, however, has freed woman from the burden of some of the 613 mitzvot [commandments and/or specific good deeds]. Thus, woman should make the most of that freedom.

Below are some of the time-bound mitzvot from which women are exempted:
the compulsory wearing of the

- tzitzit [knotted fringes of tassels tied to the four corners of an under shirt]
- tefillin [a phylactery which is a tiny black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses from the Torah bound on the forehead and hand during prayers]

The time-bound mitzvot from which women are exempted also include:

- reading or reciting Shema Yisrael, a declaration of faith, upon waking in the morning and before going to sleep at night
- listening to the Shofar at key moments of the religious festival of Rosh Hashana
- spending time in a Succah, a makeshift palm-frond hut, in commemoration of the 40 years the Children of Israel spent in the Wilderness
- blessing Lulav at the time of Succoth
- counting of the Omer (= 60 days from Passover to Shavuot)

and, of course,

- circumcision.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) understood that the exemption of women from these commandments was made because they were considered innately more virtuous than men.

נתתיחפב יולת תויהל לוכי ונניא נמרג נמזהש השע תווצמ ראשמ מישנה רוטפ;הרותה וליאכ הרובס,תווצמ נתוא מייקל תויואר נה יאש .
רכ רמול ונל הארנ אלא:הלא תווצמב מישנה תא הבייח אל הרותה, תוקוקז נה יאש ינפמ נמרג נמזהש השע תווצמ לש נמצע לכ הז ירהש:נהל .

תותימא תואטבמ ןה, תובשחמ, םיילמס םישעמ ידי לע תוטלחהו תונורקע; תושדחמ ןהו קרפל קרפמ הלא םיכרע, ונביל לא םתוא בישנ ןעמל ונישעמב םתוא םישגנו, תובהלתה לש תונמאנו הריתי תוקיבד השאל שיש החינמ הרותהו –הדועייל הדועיי םוחתב הל םינמוזמ; ה תונויסנהו םהמ הל תפקשנ תטעומ הנכס; תווצמה לכ תא הילע ליטהל ךרוצ היה אל ךכ םושמ, שיאה לא תולטומה; הנשנו רזוח זוריז ןועט שיאה יכ ודועיי םויקב תונמאנל; ודיקפת יולימב ןויפר לכ ינפמ ותוא ריהזהלו רוזחל ךרוצ שיו.

"The exemption of women from time-bound commandments cannot be dependent on their being considered inferior, as if the Torah considered them unworthy of fulfilling these commandments.

Instead, it seems to us to say this: the Torah did not require women to fulfil these commandments because they do not need them.

After all, such is the essence of time-bound commandments: they express truths, thoughts, principles and decisions through symbolic acts; and they renew these values from one period to another, so that we return them into our hearts and apply them to what we do, and the Torah assumes that woman has more devotion and she is enthusiastically loyal to her purpose.

And the experiences awaiting her within the field of her purpose present little threats for her; therefore there was no need to impose on her all the commandments imposed on man; for man needs repetitive urging to loyalty in accomplishing his purpose; and there is a need to repeatedly warn him against any laxity in fulfilling his duty."

Now, seeing as woman has thus been freed from some of the constraints of religious observance, it could be argued that woman has more time to herself and more time to devote to the spiritual and physical upbringing of her children. It stands to reason that she has also more time to develop her own spiritual knowledge and teach her children to be open-minded and more accepting of their circumstances.

Instead, she only gives legitimacy to man as he rejects her. Man, then, tends to perceive of woman as a rival encroaching on his terrain, aspiring to wrest control from his hand.

The mother teaches her daughter to sew, to cook, to clean, to sing, to dance, and to enjoy what her eyes see. But the father – especially in religious communities –

transfers to his son his own father's teachings, which contain mostly prohibitions and warnings: "This is not allowed; this would tempt you; Do not look at women, God would punish you," etc. In other countries, the authoritarian dictator, and in villages, the local tyrant, replace God and there are many prohibitions in his name.

Instead of taking his son for walks that could create an intimate connection between father-son, the father takes his son to watch football/baseball games in big stadiums in order 'not to be alone together'. And so they 'get lost together' within the mass of other people who are also searching for an escape to their routine and ephemeral bonding according to the scoreboard.

Such behavior is one of self-forgetfulness and it is no wonder that so many men/women in contemporary society eventually suffer from Alzheimer's. It is equally wrong for parents to take their children to listen to religious sermons in synagogues and churches in order to teach them how to accept themselves and others, just as it is wrong for anyone to rely on a guru. Man wearing a uniform of religion or spirituality should say: "You don't need me. Just make honest eye contact with each other and open the heart!" Instead, the persons sit in their synagogue and churches or at the feet of their guru, unable to see each other because they are hypnotized by dead words, dead because they are merely an *interpretation* of the true thought/emotion which, as such, does not need to be explained.

In sport as in all other areas man's perception is to win and subjugate rivals wherever he sees them. In the sport of boxing for example, man sees linearly his opponent as someone to control and leave knocked out on the ring. Rarely, if ever, does he see the opportunity to extending a hand and let the one he vanquished rise up and regain composure.

In fact, the 'strong one' is really the weaker one because the power of the 'strong one' is actually derived from the weakness of the other. Without a weaker opponent, the 'strong one' would be unable to stand in his own right.

Instead of being the shameful failure that it is in our culture, losing in competition, in sport, in business, in politics – not making it – is actually a chance to reverse the mirror and SEE the opponent as a friend to whom we have sacrificed our victory, without which he wouldn't be victorious. The interdependence of loser/winner in all

areas of life is as inevitable as it cannot be underestimated].

150 years ago, in his book *On the Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin, the naturalist, failed to see the impossibility of separating the inseparable, which is as impossible as attempting to remove one side of a coin while ignoring the other side without which the coin would no longer be whole.

His theory of the Survival of the Fittest is another example of misunderstanding the impossibility of being physically or mentally strong without relying on the physical or mental state of the weak. Each is the flip side of the same coin and both are essential to the fabric of the world.

Survival of a being or of a civilization should not be the result of overcoming hard conditions to specific type but it should be the result of personal or collective upgrade. It is essential that the WHOLE system upgrades, as when Nature gets rid of unnecessary clothes in order to wear her new dress, by using cleaning means like rain, ice, earthquake, tornado, etc.

Man's outward perception of himself and the world as separate from each other leads him to try to subjugate Nature. He cannot resist the urge to dig and drill deeper and deeper into Earth's womb, robbing Nature of her treasures in more and more remote and pristine places of the globe: fuel, coal, gold, silver, diamonds, uranium, etc. Once mined, all of them bring about destructive effects. These minerals act as demons released from the bottle within which they were asleep for eons undisturbed.

Once released, they are out of control because of their inability to withstand the contrast between the dense darkness inside Earth's core and the blinding brightness on the surface of the Earth. Thus, these minerals are owned by a handful of corporations who sell them at exorbitant prices for industrial consumption.

The extraction of minerals from the bottom of Earth is extremely costly and, therefore, attracts thieves and robbers. They also increase the greediness of people for more minerals and rare stones that the rich buy to keep in their safes, for fear of losing them or having them stolen from them. Thus, bad energy attaches itself to property stolen from the bottom of Earth and it affects all people using this property

as surely as the one receiving stolen goods from a thief also takes in that energy.

It is the same greediness that pushes poachers to kill animals like rhinos, elephants, tigers and gorillas to profit from the sale of their horns, ivory and fur and various body parts.

The karmic law of nature forbids man to touch what is intentionally kept under the ground. This is because of the interdependence of what is above the ground with what is available below it. These treasures are in fact the essential energy which Nature feeds to the flora, the oceans, the rivers and streams, as well as to all the creatures above the ground. All misappropriation of underground treasures causes deficiency in essential ingredients which expresses itself through disasters above the ground such as drought, floods, depleted streams and rivers, poor land, storms, extreme weather, earthquakes and the like.

Observing the karmic law of nature, it is forbidden to expose underground treasures to the sun where they become a time-bomb ticking for humanity. Look at the care with which scientists need to handle uranium which used to lie safe and undisturbed at the bottom of Earth. As soon as it is brought to the surface, it becomes a monstrous demon that is difficult to control. Let's not forget that every packet of chemical medicine carries warnings against exposing its content to sunlight.

Mining and oil drilling through land and sea, ways through which people rob Nature, pollute every area and ruin the lives of many workers. These robbers assume that, because their deeds are done in the cover of darkness and below Earth's core, they are 'out of sight' and it does not matter. No one asks permission from Nature to dig, drill, wound or build on virgin lands that had previously been home to fauna and flora for many years. No one says *Sli'ha* to them. No one *apologizes* to them.

The irony is that on Earth's surface there is all that man needs to live healthily: sunshine, rain, dew, sea, rivers, plants, wind, oxygen etc., all of it free of charge and given to man by the feminine side of Nature, which gives with love.

People live in a cocoon of their own creation. Within free-flowing, ever-shifting Nature, man has erected rigid cities, roads, bridges, buildings, etc., grabbing whatever Nature's resources he can put his hands on. He tries to cut through the

thick darkness that surrounds him by creating all manner of lighting equipment from torches, flash lights and flood lights to projectors and laser beams, only to have all of them obliterated by Nature, as she unleashes her heavy rains, hailstorms and natural disasters. Nature proclaims her superior position as real power by covering man and his property with daily dust, snow, rain and so on – not on a whim, but whenever and however she thinks it is needed, and so in comes her earthquakes and tsunamis.

The inability to develop trust affects man in all walks of life. This is particularly evident in interpersonal relations, when trust is a prerequisite for reliable and stable connection between people, both men and women. Male-driven society takes for granted the network of mercenaries implanted within foreign armies, ready to kill and commit crimes for money; or for athletes to sell their bodies to various corporations for marketing endorsements, shamelessly passing from one sponsor to another according to their current value in that market; or for other celebrities to model wrong, unhealthy commodities like cigarettes/alcohol – behaviors that are often imitated by the younger generation.

Societal acceptance of all such improper practices encourages man to see no fault with emotional and sexual infidelity in his personal life, and he runs love affairs in parallel to his family life. In addition, mistrust prevents the spiritual elevation that requires total faith in the Higher Self.

On a spiritual level, the aim is to serve others, but to do so in exchange for money is wrong. When giving is done from the open heart – it is a blessing and leads to personal growth, but doing that for money maintains the situation as it is - fossilized. Money causes violence in sports, in business, in politics, etc. Altruistic giving stems from infinite love and acceptance of others as equals. It can never become a commodity.

Falsehood World: Drugs – forbidden but the sale of cigarettes with advertised warnings is allowed. Currently, full-page newspaper advertisements put forward a clear warning: "Every cigarette brings 43 cancer-causing substances into your body"; "Cigarettes cause strokes and heart disease"; "Medical studies have determined that

smoking during pregnancy is endangering your baby." And yet, people continue to smoke and endanger not only themselves, but also their family members with toxic cigarette smoke.

On the one hand, clerics of the major religions, forcefully forbid sex with other women yet, on the other hand they take for granted the role of male gynaecologists, thus allowing a total stranger to take control of woman's body by penetrating her most personal place. Man, even as a male doctor, has no genuine understanding of what woman feels at birth or in other circumstances related to her body, be they physical, mental or emotional.

Man has invented titles, like professor, doctor, director, etc., and they honor the persona accordingly. The director traditionally has a personal assistant and a secretary to serve him and do the more mundane but harder work for him while he goes about the business of managing.

Other managers control factories in which many employees work mechanically, many long and hard hours with machines for a very small salary. On the whole, the manager is not in the least disturbed by the knowledge of such poor workplace conditions and seldom thinks to change them to improve the life of the workers.

To appease his conscience, man has invented titles for spiritual people too, like rabbis, priests, kabbalists, holy ones, apostles, Zadikim, gurus, etc. But how could a holy one, regardless of his title, be really holy while he is still so much attached to *his* title, *his* followers, *his* books and *his* interpretation of dead words?

How could a holy one, like a rabbi, an iman or a Protestant priest not SEE that he depends on his wife for his spiritual achievement, because she is taking care of his personal needs, his home and children while allowing him the hours to sit and meditate/read/write and pontificate and posture for the benefit of his followers?

How could a holy one not SEE that the same society of which he is an inseparable part excludes his wife and other women from their rights to be equal to men? How could a holy one accept such wrongs selfishly, blind to the fact that his wife is his partner in the personal evolution without which he would collapse and fall?

If this holy man were a truly holy one, he would immediately detach himself from such societal falseness. But if he doesn't SEE that choosing only one side of the coin is not only impossible, it is also a big mistake, then, he'll never achieve clear insight.

For similar reasons, man has also invented a horde of super-characters, such as Superman or Spider-Man and Captain America who save the world by killing criminals. Such creations stem from man's state of inner weakness and fears. As always, personal responsibility is transferred over to superpowers to save humans who are assumed to be unable to save themselves from themselves. This assumption yields inferior forces, which only illustrates the definite lack of faith in human capabilities such as being able to transcend beyond the visible world.

Scientists have reduced the world to a lab where they use devices to "see" the world. While they are immersed in their studies, the world streams past and beyond their blind eyes.

In modern society men and women are encouraged to learn secular and religious studies, including science. As a result, the graduates are not developed personally to internalize what they have learned into daily life, and they see their goal as an infinite competition with others next to them, seeing them as rivals. That is why society has created hard-hearted clerics in all religions as well as heartless and dishonest businessmen and politicians.

We clearly see how the dominant form of life devastates man. Just look at how even a young man is prone to losing his hair and how his stomach tends to expand with age. Both symptoms are the results of unhealthy food and wrong habits. Man, if not looking to attract woman's eyes, neglects his appearance.

Man has taken over the 'celebrity kitchen' by re-inventing himself as the chef who creates dishes that are eye-catching but have no real nutritional value for the body. Still, in the home, woman is the steadfast cook.

Man is born endowed with the potential of greater physical strength than woman and man's function is to activate this strength to earn his living by working in the field,

sowing, planting and harvesting; cutting up wood to build houses, furnish them, etc.

All holidays – monotheistic and pagan as well – are based on the agricultural events of the year. However, reversing the order, in Jewish Orthodoxy for example, man sits all day, studying scriptures in a yeshiva, while wife works outside of the home to support the entire family.

In the same manner, office workers, including their managers and directors, are sitting most of the day in cubicles or within four walls with artificial lights, artificial air and eating junk food. No outlet for their built-in power. Within a few years, they look older and develop diseases.

Man has invented pubs, nightclubs, casinos and the like – places, where woman does not go on her own but the existence of such places gives man the approval to drink and spend money inappropriately without being regarded as “loose” and irresponsible. Man also invented junk food which destroys health and shortens lives – theirs and that of their loved ones.

In fact, there is not even a single invention that has been built on the giving of self, that is, something additional from the heart. All inventions have been designed solely to increase the force of man to exploit more and more of whatever is possible.

All machines, from the largest to smallest, operate noisily, preventing the ears from hearing the whisper of the wind, the song of the dew, and from sensing the endless dance of harmonious Nature. Thus man misses out on Nature’s invitation to join and feel light as a cloud. Only Soul hears the voice of the silence and does her best to prompt and push the persona to throw away her many crutches in exchange for a faith in Soul - as only Soul is able to raise the treasure hidden within us.

It is impossible to see the woman and her real value in life – not in modern Western society and not in Third World countries either, because everywhere women are still subjugated to men’s authoritarian control. All we see is man’s image reflected in woman, for example in politics where woman is expected to show herself as the ‘Iron Lady’, the ‘strong’ leader, i.e., exuding raw male power. Female politicians and

women executives have learnt to hide their womanly gentleness, their motherhood and their beauty under dark suits using mannish assertiveness, callous insensitivity and a penchant for false words.

It is impossible to see the true image of woman, without the restrictions and prohibitions imposed upon her by a man-ruled society. This is particularly evident in the area of spirituality. While women are more likely to tend to the spiritual side of pure spirituality beyond prohibitions, men are more likely attracted to physical activities involving various aspects of the body like ritual clothing, baptisms, fasts, prayers, meditations, and especially in veneration of saints, of their graves and relics, the granting of titular saints while they are still alive and after their death.

History knows that queens have often brought about a 'Golden Age' to their people: Queen Salome in Judea is one prime example; and Queen Elizabeth I of England is arguably another – though Catholics were killed during her restoration of Protestantism, the incidence of such deaths is considered low by Reformation standards. By comparison, kings drowned their people and other peoples in rivers of blood and unnecessary wars (Alexander Janai in Judea, Napoleon in France and Hitler in Germany).

Women seldom marched off to war to conquer. In Nature, there is no phenomenon of one species waging mass slaughter against another. In nature it is done one on one, and even predators focus on one animal alone.

Women are not so reliant on physical power because their natural spiritual power is stronger. Prophetess Deborah sat under a palm tree as she judged the Children of Israel (Judges 4:4-5):

4

to

gather people and go to war. He accepted on one condition (Judges 4:8):

8 And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will

not go with me, I will not go!”

Deborah was not an ‘Iron Lady’ but a gentle prophetess, whose language was poetry.

Prophetess Huldah used to teach in the Temple. The nobles and priests came to her for advice on the authentication of ancient Torah scrolls found while not one of them could make a pronouncement (II Kings 22:14):

14 So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college) and they communed with her.

The gentle nature of the prophetesses contrasted strikingly with the rugged roughness of male prophets such as Samuel, Elijah and Elisha who did not hesitate to kill and burn others in spite of the commandment: *'Thou shalt not kill'*. Non-violent

Jeremiah is remembered for his laments about his undeserved fate (Jeremiah 15:10):

10

Perhaps the best example of the essential need to unite both male and female aspects in order to achieve balance is illustrated by drag queen and kings shows that attract large crowds.

There, man disguises himself as a woman and woman disguises herself as man – not merely by wearing each other’s clothes, but by thoroughly mimicking credible details of body movements, voice tones, etc., so that onlookers believe they see real man/woman.

The question is: what do the observers see? Isn't it their own reflected image - the aspect of themselves they hide so deeply so as not to see it themselves and so as not to let others see it? Isn't it TIME to expose the true Self?

"So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27).

The impossibility of separating opposites points at their union and at their wholeness. Any attempt to operate according to only one opposite and to ignore its complement leaves whatever is done or achieved in a state of great deficiency linked to the feeling of incompleteness. The habit of favouring one side while ignoring its complementary side creates the inability to see both sides of the coin that are active within every moment and everywhere. This short-sightedness that prevents the essential aspects of wholeness forces people, for lack of an alternative, to use an ever-expanding number of emotional, spiritual and physical crutches in order to attempt balance, and therefore the only possible change is merely an outward, temporary and ultimately unfulfilling one.



About me, C.C., and the Stepping Stones series

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 and languages. 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 the first two volumes of the series, *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.

The series, *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, practical spiritual philosophy leading to enhanced human connections, self-growth and personal worthiness, 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?

What's In A theory - Creation vs Evolution 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 years already :-)

End Notes

1 Ivan Albright *Picture of Dorian Gray*

2 Sri Aurobindo or The Adventure of Consciousness by Satprem, p.63, 1970

3 Ibid

4 Ibid p.314

5 The Upanishads, copyright Juan Mascaro, 1965

6 www.gita-society.com/bhagavad-gita

