

Coronavirus: Messenger from the Gods

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Tips of the Day · 3 min read

I much prefer to call our ‘Messenger from the Gods[1]’ Coronavirus rather than the bland Covid 19. It gives a certain majesty (corona/crown) to the role it is playing in our human world. There is the fear it inspires, especially to those who are vulnerable. It connects us to the fragility of human life. How ironic that this minute arrangement of chemicals has the sensitivity to pierce our cells and destroy them. The aversion towards it for upsetting our daily routines, undermining our economy, destroying our jobs, impoverishing the already poor, worsening the suffering of the mentally ill and fragile. Painful in preventing us from being with loved ones and the young from enjoying each other’s company. And most painful of all when it kills the ones we love. And all this is spiced with anger at having to comply with rules and regulations. In some it has brought out a boldness, perhaps a bravado. Life must go on. We can’t be covered by a disease. There have always been diseases. So what! We all have to die anyway. Life becomes meaningless when everything stops. Then there is the libertarian – no-one tells me what I am going to do! No-one not even death should undermine my personal freedoms even if it imperils others. What has been your response? On a wider scene, Coronavirus has confused the leaders of our countries with differing responses. The authoritarian lockdown of China which learnt from the Sars outbreak. The wise response of Jacinda Ardern. The macho response of Trump and the confused efforts of our own Boris. But there have been great pluses. How quickly vaccines have been produced when co-operation is demanded. And with no testing on animals so easily sacrificed for humans! How well local communities responded in helping those who are vulnerable. There was a re-discovery of neighbourliness. Some inkling as to how we could be so much happier as a community of interdependent citizens rather than isolate entities, vying with each other for personal advantage. New communication especially with Zoom. It is not the same as a real presence, but it surprises how real the encounters are. It has been a great boon to be able to join online courses of every description. A change for many in work habits. Working from the comfort of home. The saving of time and money for travel as well as carbon footprint. Every indication is that this will be a permanent change in working habits. Finding ways to make life enjoyable in lockdown has led many to new pursuits and to re-ignite the joy of education, of involvement through social media in the problems of the day. The virtual collapse of tourism which has its negative effects on jobs, but so much better for the Climate Crisis we are in. It maybe that people seek vacations closer to home, discovering the beauty of their own countries. Greater appreciation for ‘front line’ workers – health care[2], shop assistants, refuse collection, bus and train drivers. Also seeing importance of NHS over private medicine. And we can add the BBC as a trusted information media. The forces to re-assert life as it was with an economy based on personal greed at the expense of social welfare and the environment will without doubt return with great force. But hopefully, it will be guided towards

the sustainable. And it may just be that there is enough conscience especially in the Democracies of the world to start addressing the unsustainable balance between the rich and the poor and the neo-liberal economy that has produced it - and the growing far right politics..And the consumer also plays an important part. Many have realised that they do not 'need' all the stuff they are used to buying. A visitor told me how he envied the Travellers who work for enough money to live by, live simply and contented in their caravans.Perhaps you see further advantages and disadvantages from what is after all a plague.Some commentators talk of a turning point. There are grounds for hope.

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