

The Bodhisattva Responds to the Virus

Dear Friends.

We have a choice.

Epidemics, like earthquakes, tornadoes and floods are part of the cycle of life on planet earth.

How will we respond?

With greed, hatred, fear and ignorance? This only brings more suffering.

Or with generosity, clarity, steadiness and love?

This is the time for love.

Time for Bodhisattvas. In Buddhist teachings, the Bodhisattva is someone who vows to alleviate suffering and bring blessings in every circumstance.

A Bodhisattva chooses to live with dignity and courage and radiates compassion for all, no matter where they find themselves.

This is not a metaphor. As Bodhisattvas we are now asked to hold a certain measure of the tragedy of the world and respond with love.

The Bodhisattva path is in front of us. The beautiful thing is, we can see Bodhisattvas all around. We see them singing from their balcony to those shut inside. We see them in young neighbors caring for the elders nearby, in our brave healthcare workers and the unheralded ones who stock the shelves of our grocery stores.

As a father, if she called me, I would fly to the ends of the earth to help and protect my daughter. Now she and her firefighter/ paramedic husband and my toddler grandson await the virus. His urban fire department, like many hospitals and first responders does not have masks. 80% of their work is emergency medical calls and they all expect to get the virus. They will not be tested, because the department can't afford to lose too many of their firefighters.

What can I do? What can we do?

In this moment we can sit quietly, take a deep breath, and acknowledge our fear and apprehension, our uncertainty and helplessness.....and hold all these feelings with a compassionate heart. We can say to our feelings and uncertainty, "thank you for trying to protect me", "I am OK for now." We can put our fears in the lap of Buddha, Mother Mary, Quan Yin, place them in the hearts of the generations of brave physicians and scientists who tended the world in former epidemics.

When we do, we can feel ourselves part of something greater, of generations of survivors in the vast web of history and life . "Being carried" as the Ojibwa elders say "by great winds across the sky."

This is a time of mystery and uncertainty. Take a breath. The veils of separation are parting and the reality of interconnection is apparent to everyone on earth. We have needed this pause, perhaps even needed our isolation to see how much we need one another.

Now it is time to add our part.

The Bodhisattva deliberately turns towards the suffering around to serve and help those around in whatever way they can.

This is the test we have been waiting for.

We know how to do this.

Time to renew your vow.

Sit quietly again and ask your heart: what is my best most intention, my most noble aspiration for this difficult time?

Your heart will answer.

Let this vow become your North Star. Whenever you feel lost, remember and it will remind you what matters.

It is time to be the medicine, the uplifting music, the lamp in the darkness.

Burst out with love. Be a carrier of hope.

If there is a funeral, send them off with a song.

Trust your dignity and goodness.

Where others hoard.....help.

Where others deceive.....stand up for truth.

Where others are overwhelmed or uncaring, be kind and respectful.

When you worry about your parents, your children, your beloveds, let your heart open to share in everyone's care for their parents, their children and their love ones. This is the great heart of compassion. The Bodhisattva directs compassion toward everyone. Those who are suffering and vulnerable and those who are causing suffering. We are in this together.

It is time to re imagine a new world, to envision sharing our common humanity, to vision how we can live in the deepest most beautiful way possible.

Coming through this difficulty, what we intend and nurture, we can do.

In the end, remember who you are is timeless awareness, the consciousness that was born into your body. You were born a child of the spirit, and even now you can turn toward the awareness, and become the loving awareness that witnesses yourself reading and feeling and reflecting.

When a baby is born our first response is love.

When a dear one dies, the hand we hold is a gesture of love.

Timeless love and awareness is who you are.

Trust it.

Dear Bodhisattva,
the world awaits your compassionate heart.
Let's join in this great task together.

Jack

PS

You can listen to these free meditations :
A Steady the Heart in The time of Coronavirus
Compassion in the time and Coronavirus
and more at **Jackkornfield.com**

