

Lessons of Hope

Reflections around Covid 19

Gabrielle von Bernstorff-Nahat

This book is dedicated to the memory of Michael Sorkin, beautiful, relentless and progressive Architect, Urban-Planner and Artist in New York, who unfortunately passed in the first days of April 2020 due to complications with Covid 19 at age 71. We miss you and all those passed.

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Preamble

The Corona Pandemic has caused inexorable suffering world-wide and unfortunately continuous to so as I write. Families have been torn apart, have lost loved ones around the world, individuals who have thankfully recovered have suffered. Millions of people have tragically lost their jobs. The poor have sadly gotten poorer and no one has been spared. This pandemic knows no borders. Everybody has been touched by this pandemic in some form or other. The world will not be the same again.

Suffering is not just individual. The Corona Pandemic shows this, there is such a thing as suffering together as well, next to individual suffering. Perhaps this pandemic has shown us more than anything else, that individual suffering only truly is individual when shared.

One of the four noble truths of Buddhism is that suffering exists. In Mahayana Buddhism the aim is not so much to transcend suffering, as it is to transform it. As many of its wise teachers say, suffering calls us forth, as an individual and as a group to embrace our existence together in all its

realness and hereness, to live life truthfully. Sufferings are seen as messengers, calling us forth in specific ways to heal the world from suffering. The call is to treat our pain with love so it becomes wisdom.

As I as of yet belong to the fortunate ones who are not infected and who have a home to stay in, I am taking this time to reflect. What are the lessons which can be learned from this experience, which has endless arrays of faces. The essays in this book range from personal contemplation, to the plight of the poorest of the poor. From reflections on politics and public discourse to the climate crisis and from one to one help to large scale efforts to be learned from.

I hope that many human beings take this time as an invitation to reflect on their personal lives as well as the world as a whole. For this pandemic is next to the suffering, anxiety and hardship a curious wake-up call to us all. The world should not be the same again after what we have gone through, being hopeful, it should be better than before spiritually and materially for all.

The essays are short, sometimes no longer than the flash of a firefly. But they are nourishment for thought, reflection and meditation. May we truly pay heed to this wake-up call, may the world become a better place. There are lessons of hope to be learned from the suffering of this pandemic. Suffering can make us better and stronger when shared.

Prayers

Since our dear friend Michael Sorkin passed in New York during the early days of the pandemic I pray for him and all human beings who have passed due to and during the pandemic of Covid 19 every morning. I also pray for those afflicted and for the wellbeing of all healthcare and other workers struggling on the frontlines.

I would like to begin this book with two prayers then.

The prayers are from the Prayer Book by Hazrat Inayat Khan, Prayers, Breath of the Soul

Prayer for the deceased

Oh Thou, the Cause and effect of the whole Universe,

The Source from whence we have come

And the Goal toward which all are bound:

Receive these souls who are coming to you Thee into Thy
parental arms.

May Thy forgiving Glance heal their hearts.

Lift them from the denseness of the earth,

Surround them with the Light of Thine own Spirit.

Raise them up to Heaven, which is your true dwelling
place.

We pray Thee grant them the blessing of Thy most exalted
presence.

May their life upon earth become as a dream to

Their waking soul, and let their thirsting eyes

Behold the glorious vision of Thy Sunshine.

Amen

For those afflicted by the illness and for the workers on the frontlines struggling to save our daily lives and the lives of those in imminent danger

Healing prayer

Oh Thou, the light of all souls, the life of all beings,
The healer of hearts,
All sufficient and all-powerful God,
The forgiver of our shortcomings,
Free us from all pain and suffering
And make us Thy instruments
That we in our turn
Free others from pain and suffering
And that we may impart to them
Thy Light, Thy Life, Thy Joy, Thy Peace.

Amen

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Solidarity

Solidarity is different and more than the collective. While our lives prior to the pandemic were often ruled or interrupted by the collective, a kind of swarm mechanism within the social arena, solidarity, which is motivated by love and selflessness, grows from small to large during the pandemic. It is heartwarming to see that not only are large scale government aid packages suddenly possible, artists, orchestras, theaters and museums open their doors to free concerts and events, my neighbor shops for me because I belong to the high risk individuals and the young are entertaining the old on their balconies of their old age homes, Formel 1 racecar drivers are building ventilators and companies are donating taxi rides, food and clothes to health workers and some hotels are opening their rooms to the homeless. This is beautiful among all the hardship there is and we wish this solidarity could extend to the poorest of the poor. For as much as this solidarity is beautiful, it shows how some are still and again left out, the refugees, the homeless, in Nevada relegated to parking- lot-fields outdoors, unbelievable, the starving in Yemen. This beautiful wave of solidarity has a shadow

side, it shows us who is being left out and it is the poorest of the poor. Covid 19 spread first in the wealthy countries because here people can afford to travel. The aid also ran along the lines of the wealthier countries and their inhabitants first. By now, April 9th 2020 the Coronavirus can be found also, sadly enough, in refugee camps and the poorest of poor countries. To date, unbelievably enough, - not even the EU manages an agreement on aiding the poorest European countries most afflicted by the pandemic, such as Italy, Spain and Greece. How can we expect help then for the poorest and most marginalized, the refugees and the starving such as in Yemen? Well, we simply must. LeaveNoOneBehind which is one such promise amidst the clamor of aid drowning out unfortunately the forgotten. LeaveNoOneBehind means just that. So let us learn from the beauty and love of solidarity experienced and practiced during this pandemic and extend aid, help, solidarity to all of human kind.

Health Care

Public health Care grew out of a response to the deplorable living, working and health conditions as a result of the brutality of the Industrial Revolution. Today we are experiencing a digital revolution as much as a global revolution. Human beings have rarely been as mobile jetting around the planet and day-laboring across borders as we are today. The global nature of this pandemic makes visible the short comings of each countries healthcare system.

Public Health Care has been on the decline since the early days of neo-liberalism. Perhaps we could also speak of a neo-colonialism, as we see certain countries fight for dominance beyond their borders at the expense of public well-being inside their borders and towards the colonized. Be that as it may, this pandemic is not only showing the weakness of each countries health care system, it also shows the interconnectedness of all countries and their population world-wide. Whilst the tragic extremes of the pandemic are to be found in Italy, Spain and France in Europe, the U.S. is also being hit very sadly by exorbitant numbers of infected and dying. Worse

even in Ecuador, where the health care system has virtually become non-existent, with the dead being left in parking lots in front of hospitals and churches because the people no of no other where or how to go. This is deeply tragic. It is hard to imagine the even more tragic outcome of the course of this disease in refugee camps or countries plagued by famine such as Yemen.

Governor Andrew Cuomo, demonstrating admirable leadership during this crisis repeatedly says that the chain of fighting the Corona Virus is as good as its weakest link. This not only applies to cities or states, but also to our beautiful planet. Health Care and poverty are directly linked and this pandemic is showing us just how much. Predictions are for future pandemics of this kind and the weakest link will be the poor, whether in Italy, Spain, the U.S: or Yemen. If the world is to have a fighting chance against this and future pandemics of this nature than health care, like housing needs to be a basic human right applied. AN this is not a matter of left-wing talk, it is a matter of doing the right thing in questions of life verses death in a globalized world. We share each other's fate, we are interconnected, this pandemic shows the fragility of this

interconnection, which in truth is a beauty, because if we all take care of one another, we shall be well.

Self-Criticism

Pandemics are also the hour of science and pragmatism. Interesting to experience is the different degrees of experimentation nevertheless, amidst this pandemic of the democratic governments. It is a time when true democracies show their faces because each government is weighing individual and personal freedoms with public health issues within their specific cultural contexts. Mistakes have been made and will be made, it is what makes us human and democratic. Whilst New Zealand opted for an early lock-down Great Britain tried the path of herd immunization and Sweden believes in a mid-way response to the pandemic. All persons responsible rightly enough are willing to admit mistakes and decisions made are negotiable, even if only up to certain degrees. There now is a level and degree of honesty and self-criticism in most democratic governments, unfortunately this can't be said of the current U.S. Federal Administration, which is truly refreshing and appreciated. It would be valuable and would put, if not a halt, then a damper, to current populist momentums, if this culture of shared, open and public self-

reflection were maintained during the times following this pandemic.

The Environment

The meteorological colormaps show in beautiful blues and greens over areas usually red. It is clear to see how the environment is a breathing earth recovering from emissions after only a few weeks of the world coming to a halt.

The various lockdown measures world-wide have shown one thing: it is possible with large scale measures to curb CO2 emissions dramatically in short amounts of time. It is amazing how fresh and clean the air has become in many polluted regions of the world after weeks and months of shut-downs of industries, land and air traffic.

Why is it, that a global pandemic can lead to necessary measures of such a scale but not the global climate crisis? After all, it too affects us all and after all it too puts Billions of lives and livelihoods at great dangers.

Can it be that large segments of the population still do not realize that the death of the environment not only signifies but brings with it us who perish as well? Here a great need for rethinking needs to take place.

Yes, the earth is a bodhisattva and we are of the earth. What the earth suffers we will as well. Perhaps this pandemic will make us more aware of our own vulnerability and hopefully this will lead to greater compassion and action with and for all sentient beings and the environment.

The Himalayas are visible again for the first time in 30 years the clouds of pollution have vanished, the waters of Venice are clear, the Chinese can breathe again. Let us keep it this way in the future. It is possible to meliorate and soften the climate crisis. It is possible to avoid further catastrophes for the generations who follow us.

Global Cooperation and the WHO

There are numerous reasons why the Covid 19 spread as fast as it did. Among these reasons are globalization and the lack of global cooperation at the time of the outbreak. International differences, differences inside of nations and the lagging behind of political and ideological strife competing with the advice of medical experts.

While Donald Trump is unfortunately threatening to withdraw funds from the WHO, and is unwilling to withdraw sanctions against Iran, there are signs of hope however. China and Russia are sending medical relief to the U.S. and Europe, there is an exchange of medical health workers within Europe, the U.S. and Latin America. Cuba is sending medical relief workers to other countries and Europe is exchanging patients between countries, and the E.U. has agreed on a Europe wide relief package, but unfortunately not specifically for those countries hit worst by this pandemic.

This excursion shows the patchwork of global cooperation, and as hopeful as it might be, it is not enough. And as the medical community and epidemic experts

agree, this is only the beginning of a series of pandemics we might be facing.

Among the many lessons to be learned from this pandemic is the need for global cooperation. Even if the closing of air and person travel between countries and regions needs to be put into practice in order to curtail the virus, this should not hinder global cooperation among countries.

Just as the United Nations is a direct outcome of the horrors of World War II and an institution to promote peace world-wide, this global pandemic calls for a global health response now, as well as for the future. This is a time when the WHO needs to be made stronger and not weaker. International measures need to be implemented in dealing with future global pandemics, so that the kind of dangerous down playing as we saw in China, the U.S. and Brazil in the early phases cannot happen again. Furthermore, medical supplies need to be stored globally for crisis times so that the kind of deadly bottle neck of a shortage of supplies of basic equipment such as masks, gloves and the like can not reoccur. A strong WHO would further international and global cooperation. May we be

reminded that one of the WHO's main mission is the prevention of pandemics.

Social Democracy

The founding mothers and fathers of post WWII social democracies were very well aware that the harshness of an unleashed capitalism had led to the second World War and that only a social democracy was going to be a safeguard for lasting peace. With the onslaught of neo-liberalism beginning with the election of Ronald Reagan Social democracy has been on the decline ever since. Now 50 years later the Corona pandemic shows all the more brutally how cutting welfare, health care and school income has left many countries, also in Europe badly equipped to meet the crisis. While unemployment rates are soaring in the United States to 17 Million human beings in only three four weeks, hospitals of the US, Italy and Spain are overcrowded, understaffed, basic protective equipment is missing for health workers, ventilators and breathing machines are virtually non-existent.

It is heart-wrenching to hear the pleas of health-workers and doctors in Italy and the US asking for help and to hear the admirable leadership and fight Governor Cuomo of New York State is putting up to save lives, while the bully in the White House knows no better but to sabotage ‘his’

people with his dangerous incompetence. How can it be that President Trump sent the Pandemic Committee of the White House packing only in March 2018? And it baffles my mind seeing a country that can unfortunately bomb a country like Iraq to rubble cannot provide 50'000 ventilators where needed most in the United States. Something is desperately wrong here.

I really hope that many social democracy bashers will wake up during the course of this pandemic, realizing we cannot give up on basic human rights such as housing, an income to be able to live from, education and healthcare. I hope human beings will wake up that work deserves a pay that allows us all to live in dignity and not to have to hold 3 – 4 jobs at companies like amazon in order to earn a minimum wage or earn slave labor wages, which is the true name of the work done by the Billions of working poor in developed and especially in the less developed countries. There is something wrong in a society where the owner of amazon can earn 150 Billion or more while amazon hardly pays taxes and workers own a minimum wage unable to exist from. There was a time during the early days of social democracy where businesses and the

super wealthy paid up to 70% taxes, this also in the United States before Reaganomics took over. Schools, work and the public infrastructure for all was better in the 70's compared to today. It is possible to taking civic pride in paying taxes rather than dodging the issue by only looking out for tax havens.

The West is in serious need of reconsidering its social democratic heritage, not only for itself but also for the less developed countries. More children die each day in the so called third world than from Covid 19 at its peak and any of those deaths is wrong and unnecessary. It will become increasingly more important to consider the poor and the poorest of the poor, they have been neglected long enough. Social democracy is a promise from bottom up whilst populism unfortunately is a surrender to bad politics top down. This pandemic shows, life is lived bottom up.

Simplicity

With the lock down and social distancing during the corona pandemic many of our lives have gotten simpler. There is a waiver on going out, socializing, seeing friends and family, we work less or differently, we travel less.

Simplicity brings us closer to the essential. We learn to appreciate what is truly valuable in life. There is a sudden wholeness, an escape into a new kind of silence, a new life. Perhaps you experience your loved one or children in unknown closeness, or perhaps your own presence. Greeting the sunshine in the morning, the moon and stars at night is something you have not done since childhood. Perhaps you engage in spontaneous wanderings, not so much those of the feet in times of lock-down, but those of the heart and soul. There is a suberabundance of ordinary being. Now is the time to practice mindfulness in a new way, a way that may carry over into life following Covid 19. Perhaps you can make yourself a vow to carry over simplicity to your everyday life from here on.

The Planet is recuperating, convalescing, the Himalaya is showing its beautiful peeks again, for the first time in 30

years because the clouds of climate pollution are dissolving as India too is in lock down. Perhaps you will decide to waive one yearly plane travel following the pandemic. The environment will be grateful. Perhaps you will decide on a rhythm of shopping less, being more with your loved one, family and friends instead of watching TV. Mountains of garbage will recede if each one of us does that. Your loved ones will be grateful for being more with you. Perhaps you will decide to have more real personal relations and decide to put away the smartphone for one day a week. What superabundance of being is to be found within simplicity. Your wanderings a foot will be new, you will continue to greet the sun, moon and stars. You will enjoy being an earthling again and perhaps wriggle your toes in the sand again, remember, the happiness of childhood when simply being was enough.

Essential Workers

The word essential comes from essence, essence is the quality that makes a thing or person what it, he or she is. Synonyms for essence are, being, nature, soul, stuff and substance. Words related to essence are heart, spirit, alpha and omega, center, core, keynote, seat embodiment, epitome, incarnation, manifestation, personification and nub. Essence is known as the core attribute of something such as, the essence of democracy is the rule of the people. What is most beautiful about this word is the connection between spirit, soul and embodiment. It is the pouring of the spirit embodied. Essential workers are the alpha and omega not only during this crisis but also during the everyday of, so called normality!

The health care workers, bus drivers, grocery store workers and all further essential workers such as teachers and more are the alpha and omega of our society. This is becoming very clear during this time of crisis. As I am writing there is an article in today's Guardian how Hedge Fund speculators are earning billions during this time of the pandemic, whilst essential workers are not only putting

their lives and those of their families at risk but are also underpaid. This is shameful.

Human beings working in public service, in the broadest sense of the word, I am including all essential workers including the cleaning staff in hospitals and grocery stores, do so with a sense of purpose for others. This is more than taking pride in your work, it has something to do with embodied spiritedness and a sense of purpose for others. This is what is driving the essential workers especially, but not only, during this time of crisis.

Following this pandemic, we as a society will have reflect and act upon having millions of human beings doing the most important work but getting the least appreciated and paid. This inequity cannot continue. We need a more equal economy valuing and treasuring the work which upholds our everyday lives.

The service industry society is a far cry away from the valuing of work as is known from worker's pride and identification during let us say the 50's and 60's. Billions of human beings maintain especially our urban daily lives with low paying jobs, a new kind of slave labor class has

ensued and this can no longer be tolerated. It is unbelievable that the owner of amazon can amass hundreds of millions in personal wealth while amazon workers are under paid, poorly protected during this pandemic and asked to take sick-leave without pay. This is scandalous!

Essential workers, all work is essential, because we do not only live in a society with lock-down measures, at least we hope to return to the vibrancy of everyday life, even if a new, deserve a livelihood and humane and safe working conditions. This includes the ‘essential workers’ suffering in the cobalt mines of the Congo so that the auto industry can manufacture climate neutral automobiles for the developed countries.

May this crisis and the bravery of essential workers make us reflect upon the conditions and nature of work and practice a new kind of solidarity with workers world-wide.

Essential workers: embodied spirit,- don’t forget.

The Very Poor

The economic aid packages of the developed countries led me to write an open letter of hope to several leaders around the world.

Stein am Rhein 28. March 2020

What the reactions to Corona can teach us in terms of World Wide Solidarity – An open letter of hope

Your Holiness Pope Franciscus, Your Holiness the Dalai Lama, dear Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel, dear President Barack and Michele Obama, dear Governor Cuomo, dear Bundesrat Alain Berset, dear Ständerat Cedric Wermuth, dear Christian Amanpour and dear Jean Ziegler,

I am sorry the Corona Pandemic exists and I pray every day that it may be over soon. My thoughts are with the afflicted and the helpers. May you come out of this safely, may you be well. Every death is one too many.

What is heart-warming to see are the Pandemic surmounting efforts of many people, including politicians

and governments. It is good to hear that the USA has devised a 2 Billion Dollar Aid package, hopefully not only for the rich and for corporations, but for the human beings and their families struggling for their daily existence during these times of the unfortunate Pandemic. Germany has decided on a 156 Billion Aid Package and Switzerland 42 Billion Aid packet for its citizens. It is good to see large scale and small scale down to neighborhood and door to door human solidarity, providing help and new forms of closeness.

Disturbing however is, how the Coronavirus Pandemic has blown other areas of human suffering off of our sight. Moravia, Lesbos, the refugees at the Greek Turkish borders, the Yemen Starvation Crisis, just to name a few collective plights and including the individual hardships of women's rights activists in Iranian and Saudi Arabian prisons as well as the unjust incarceration of Julian Assange.

When we see how quickly the rich and democratic countries can muster up tools and avenues and resources for help it is shocking to see the neglect of non-coronavirus hotspots and it shows just how quickly help could

reach such areas and human beings if the humanitarian and political would win over not-acting. This then, is also a time of reflection for everyone.

How much of this money would be needed to keep the Yemenese from starving, to allow refugees humane living conditions with dignity and in safety? We always dream of one large concerted effort that would end a food crisis for millions of human beings, - and the plight and suffering of refugees. And here we go, an unintended proof that this would be possible.

Let us not forget the hungry, the refugees, the mothers, fathers, children and countless individuals also fighting authoritarian repression world-wide. Please open our horizon, go deep within ourselves and help in the corona circle as well as ‘outside’ of it. We are all in this together, please do not allow the fork between rich and poor to open even more than it already is. It is bad enough already. One such concerted effort and the starvation in Yemen would come to an end immediately, the life of the fleeing could be given the face of humaneness. It is possible, here is the proof, the Corona Crisis has offered inadvertently.

May there be such a concerted effort as we see in the Corona Crisis also for the starving, fleeing and the forgotten ones. It is possible. Prayers for them, may help arrive and hope be answered. Prayers also for all those suffering from and fighting Corona. So many human beings are rising beyond themselves and the courage, strength and perseverance is one big heart. This is the beauty within this tragedy. Let's not forget other tragedies and act here as well.

Thank you for reading this open letter

Thank you for responding to the need

Thank you for your guidance, prayers and leadership

Wishing you good health and perseverance

Sincerely

Gabrielle von Bernstorff-Nahat

Personal Reflection and Meditation

That there is suffering is one of the four noble truths of Buddhism. Suffering can call us forth, as with Siddharta whose palace walls were penetrated by suffering before he left his palace and wandered and became Buddha.

At a time like this pandemic personal reflection and meditation become wider, beyond the individual. We share and realize that we are interconnected. Our personal walls are penetrated by the suffering in the world. If we can see our suffering and that of others as a calling us forth, then we are fueled on our journey, no matter how arduous and trying it might.

The aim is not so much to transcend suffering as it is to transform suffering into something else. So, embrace your suffering, be with it and be gentle and kind to yourself, then you will be able to be loving with others.

Leadership and Good Government

April 8th, 2020 the sad news reached all of us, that Bernie Sanders left the presidential race, clearing the field for Joe Biden for the democratic presidential nomination. I cannot think of a current candidate more able to reduce the inequities within American society, augmented a thousand-fold by this pandemic. But as Bernie Sanders said, the presidential nomination has been given up, but not the movement and that he will do everything to help oust the most dangerous president the United States has had in modern history from the current office. And indeed, Donald Trump is the worst president of the United States perhaps not only in modern history.

What this pandemic shows without white washing is Trump's complete lack of emotional intelligence. I follow Nancy Pelosi in sometimes praying for this unfortunately strange man, that he may find some kind of equilibrium so that he becomes less dangerous for the American people and the world as a whole. Not only did he dismantle the pandemic board of the national government in March 2018, he also did not pay heed to warnings of the ensuing pandemic as early and late as January 2019. He was made

aware that half a million American lives could be lost and did nothing, unfortunately. His unbelievable comment that losing up to 200'00 lives in the United States would entail 'doing a great job', says it all at a time when Governor Andrew Cuomo is fighting for every ventilator in the country that can save one life of the sadly ravaged New York State and City by Covid 19. Worse even than the current U.S. administration, some troubling developments in Hungary, where right rulers like Orban are unfortunately using the pandemic to install complete authoritarian rule.

How nostalgic I am for the presidency of Barack Obama, aren't we all, particularly at a time like this. This is the president to mobilized aid together with global partners to fight Ebola in 2014, knowing very well that such a pandemic could threaten the entire world population. Now that is good government together with Andrew Cuomo's larger than life performance for New York and as a shining example in the face of incompetence of the current federal government. Populism shows its ugly face no clearer than during such a pandemic, when global and national solidarity should be practiced whilst Donald Trump wants

to withdraw funding from the WHO in order to hide his own incompetence and insists on calling the Corona Virus the ‘China Virus’. Let’s pray and act that the upcoming elections will see a turn for the better for the United States, which inadvertently includes the world. If we could be so lucky that Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders run together in this race, it would be amazing and a beautiful sign of hope in a country where unemployment reached over 17 Million people, think of the families involved, because of the Corona Pandemic. I love the pioneering spirit of democratic America, the solidarity and sense of justice for all. Perhaps a miracle will happen and the movement the Bernie Sanders people started is only just beginning to take on a new momentum. Let’s hope so. My heart bleeds that there are any Covid 19 hot spots and that the United States is leading this one is tragic news. I am happy for the people of New Zealand, one death in contrast to the over 14’000 in the United States. Chapeau to the Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern, compassionate and good.

Good Leadership saves lives!

Economy

Basic income packages in the developed democratic countries to the millions put out of jobs during the lockdown/Car companies manufacturing ventilators instead of cars/Alcohol producers manufacturing disinfectant liquids/Basket weavers producing face shields and clothes manufacturers producing masks/Alibaba offering its clouds to hospitals for exchange of medical data/Bank CEOs donating millions of their salaries to aid Covid 19 victims/Shoe and clothes companies donating millions of scrubs to health workers

Whilst the suffering of millions economically and existentially shall not be ignored due to the world-wide lockdowns it is amazing to see just how flexible governments and business can be in times of this crisis. What in the auto-industry is a slow move in creating climate neutral movement due to supposed technological shortcomings, is all but blown aside in this time of crisis. The economy is more flexible than we think. Basic income, unfortunately a red flag for most during so called normal times, is a welcome measure of warding off poverty for millions of human beings during the pandemic.

Lessons to learn from for the future. Living wages, guaranteed healthcare for all, unemployment and labor rights are not left-wing issues but of right verses wrong and a matter of life verses death not only in times of the pandemic.

As I am writing figures are coming to light that African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans are being hit especially hard by Covid 19 with a death rate up to 20% higher than other groups. There are several reasons, such as that minorities makeup large portions of essential workers. A large factor is poverty. Public policies will have to address these causes quickly and sustainably: urban planning, red lining, food deserts and health insurance to name just a few systemic racial and economic barriers and reasons for this injustices.

Housing

Whilst millions of human beings are losing work, income and a home, companies like Blackrock are unfortunately using the pandemic to buy up large ‘stock’ of empty housing, especially in urban areas, which will increase the already staggering inequalities in housing in most cities world- wide.

Housing is an inalienable human right, not only in the developing nations, but across the planet and it should be treated as such. This pandemic has shown that the necessary social distancing during a time like this is not doable for the homeless, the refugees, the poor, the slum tenants and millions of migrant workers and day laborers in the developing world. For those who do not yet see housing as a basic human right, this pandemic demonstrates a passionate proof, that without adequate housing for all, this health crisis can not be met. Governments need to step up in the near future and counter the sell out of cities and land and the lives of human beings by companies such as Blackrock. Also, the deplorable living conditions in refugee camps on the borders to Syria and on the Greek islands are not only inhumane, they are

a danger to global health. According to the U.N. Human Rights Charta adequate housing is a basic human right. country on this planet needs to adopt this precept out of humanity and for the future. The living conditions of Billions of human beings is not equipped to battle future pandemics, and they may be worse than this one. Adequate and healthy housing needs to be practiced by all countries on this planet if we are to have also a safe future. While the time of the pandemic is the time of the Executive, the time following is that of the Legislature, learning and applying the lessons learned from this crisis. This is a call for new Legislature for the right to adequate housing for everyone globally, nationally and locally.

Gratitude

This time of crisis is a time of renunciation and pain for many. We have lost friends, family, a loved one, we miss our friends, the work place. Perhaps sadly enough we are out of work, perhaps we have even lost our home. There is much tragedy and plight and many ask from where they gain the strength to continue.

At such times I have learned and experienced that gratitude is a warm and great reconciliatory with life. I think and feel into all moments in my life to be grateful for. I return to my ancestors, my family, my youth my friends and love. This is a great source of strength.

I wish you strength and perseverance and much love in these trying times. May you be well or well again.

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