

THE ARIES FESTIVAL 2020 THE EASTER FESTIVAL

8 Apr 2020
©Malvin Artley

Topics, linked to paragraphs:

What is lockdown like, then?
The Aries festival
The gift of Aries
Mercury and Aries
Aries and renewal
The full moon
Infectious diseases
Connecting the dots
Ockham's razor and 5G
Instead, air pollution
Agenda 21
The rays of nations: an opportunity
Final thoughts on conspiracies
War of the Worlds
Feverish minds
Where are our values?
1984? Get real
Where is the hoax?
What to do, as a nation
Uranus, Mercury and finance
Where is the goodwill between nations?
Some advice

Greetings Everyone!

This is a special early edition of the yearly Aries letter. I am writing to you from the European epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic, northern Italy, where we have been on lockdown since 10 March. Here in Rovereto we have only a few cases, comparatively, but Lombardy, where the outbreak has been the harshest, has no more ICU beds as of 17 March. That's important, as that is where the biggest danger to any society from this virus lies, because people who would otherwise need those beds on a normal basis now find themselves with some rather uncomfortable choices and realities. What we are seeing in the timing with this virus is probably the biggest economic and geopolitical reset of our times. That is not overstating the fact. We will investigate the reasons for that in this letter. What we are also seeing is a reset in our personal lives, too, as a result of the pressures on our nations. And in that resetting of priorities, there is much in the way of a brighter outlook for the future. We will examine that in this letter, too. What we will see is a 'new normal' arising over the coming months and the next few years – the good the bad and the ugly of it in all its aspects. But when the dust settles, the good will outweigh the ugly. Simply put, the version of reality we have been led to believe over the past decades is being revealed as the illusion that it is. Aries governs 'the new normal', being the sign of beginnings and new order, so it is not by accident that a tiny virus has led to so much being revealed and to the reset we are seeing.

What is lockdown like, then?: Many readers will already know, as the major European nations aside from the UK are already in that state of affairs. At first it is a shock. Suddenly, you can't go out without a valid reason. The bars, restaurants and all non-essential shops are closed. The only ones remaining open are pharmacies and food shops, as in supermarkets. Only the pizza delivery shops here are operational in terms of restaurants, but one cannot go into the storefront to order a pizza. It has to be delivered. Then, after a few days, the new realities set in and one adjusts. Quite remarkable things begin to happen then. We have four dogs, so we have a valid reason to go outside. Yes, one can go out and walk the dog under lockdown. But you begin to notice things. Firstly, there is the silence. It is eerie at first, but then you start to appreciate it.

Walking through the city streets you begin to notice things – murals on buildings you had not seen before, even buildings that had gone unnoticed, the sounds of the birds, the blueness of the sky – things around us all the time, but of which we take little if any notice, so immersed as we are in our everyday affairs and thoughts and distractions.

One is left with one's own thoughts. That, too, can be disconcerting. When we are distracted by the millions of things we think we have to do, we lose sight of what is essential, which is the very thoughts that go through our heads, and more especially, the ones we can and really should do without – the irritation at people we encounter, the irritation of blaring of horns and radios, people talking loudly and parties into the night. We seldom realize how irritating life can be. Then, we notice there is no trash about. There is no smog, because people are not driving. One begins to smell nature, and what the neighbors are cooking for lunch. The people you do encounter notice you, and likewise, and nod their greetings. For us that usually elicits comments from across the street: *Complimenti ai cane! Che belli!* (Complements on your dogs! How lovely!) People do love their dogs here.

For writers, like myself, lockdown presents an opportunity, but also a challenge. Being at home, if one has a dedicated space (which is essential in lockdown), one can steal away to the workspace and produce some good work, uninterrupted by the affairs of the world. The challenge comes if one has a spouse and/or kids. Being at home doesn't mean one's work stops if one is an artist or a writer, at least to the one wanting to work. Family has other ideas, though. You're at home, *ergo* you are available for them, so they think. But that is not all bad, either. It will be interesting to see how many babies are born toward the end of this year and the beginning of the next, if you get my meaning. On the other side, we may well see a spike in divorces, too. More than that, though, the solitary artist must learn to reconnect with people, and make time for others.

Cabin fever is a thing, too, especially if one is alone or in a small space. It is especially the case if one has no avocations other than Netflix, YouTube or the tellie. Those get old pretty quickly when one is stuck to the house all day for days on end. However, lockdown is a brilliant opportunity – and this is a major point – to renew a hobby, to read more, to renew one's spiritual practices that have been left to flounder, to self-examine, to reflect upon what is essential in one's life, and to reconnect with loved ones. Ultimately, lockdown is very similar to a spiritual retreat. First, it is hard being left only with oneself. Then, the loss of freedom of movement becomes a freedom from mind. One starts the journey inward when one can no longer go outward. It is not as severe as being in prison, but on the other side one begins to have compassion for people who are imprisoned. And then, for the people who are not free within themselves, who think they are free to do as they please, we have ultimate compassion, because there is no prison more severe than one's own limiting thoughts. We begin to realize what true freedom really is, and it has little to do with outer circumstances. Restriction can be rather liberating, to a point. There is a good lesson about Saturn in such circumstances and its effects, the 'planet that bestows opportunity'. We learn to practise patience, too, and that is a good thing to learn as well.

Those of us who will have to go through this lockdown, which will be the vast majority of us, are offered probably a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. We will hardly see it that way when it is happening, but so it is. Then again, it may roll around next year, too, if there is no immunity or vaccine available. But in such circumstances we gain some insight into people who have to live that way on a daily basis, as in Palestinians, for instance. The opportunities are several. There is sacrifice to the greater good at a very physical level. There is the bonding experience of living in a shared community effort, as Italians are demonstrating, and as the Chinese and Koreans have lived. There is an opportunity to explore creativity in ways one had not imagined before. *There is the opportunity to look at life anew and to establish a new order, an order based on what is truly valuable.* This latter is the most important takeaway from this experience, and we will address it more later on in this piece. And that point also brings us to the title discussion of this letter, Aries.

The Aries festival is associated with the World Teacher. In Christianity, this is the Christ, embodied in the life of Jesus. The Second Coming of the World Teacher is Maitreya. But what exactly does the office of this teacher represent? It is concerned with the evolution of human consciousness toward an ever-increasing revelation of living spiritual realities. The Aries festival at the full moon is also known as 'The Festival of the Risen Christ', which is connected with the Resurrection after Jesus' crucifixion, 'arising from the dead'. More than that, it represents victory over death, which can also be read as victory over the requirement for

reincarnation. The Resurrection is also connected with the fifth initiation, as outlined in the Alice Bailey books. There are some ideas worth parsing here.

Resurrection and revelation are themes connected with Aries. These are concepts we do not normally associate with the headstrong, martial aspect of that sign, the Aries type ruled by Mars. Instead, those themes are connected with the esoteric and hierarchical rulers of the sign, Mercury and Uranus, respectively. The orthodox Christian association with the Resurrection of Christ after death, which Easter celebrates, is called the 'Initiation of the Revelation' in theosophical terms.¹ The revelation so conferred at that initiation (expansion of consciousness) is omniscience, and mastery over the laws of the three worlds – physical, emotional and mental. One becomes a 'Master of the Wisdom'. This initiation marks the final path in Buddhism, the 'Path of No More Learning'. There is nothing left to learn in terms of worldly life. Personal karmic necessities have been completed. The Four Noble Truths are completely known and the newly christened master then becomes a world teacher in their own right. Then, the opportunity for new paths of development and service are opened to the initiate.

Aries is said to govern the final planetary initiation, the ninth, or The Refusal. We don't need to cover that here, but it carries a specific meaning for Aries, in that with this sign, there is, in a sense, a refusal of the life in the three worlds (physical, emotional and mental) when one's orientation is turned toward more spiritual matters rather than everyday affairs. It is represented for us in the first stage of the [shamatha diagram](#), wherein one takes on the practice of meditation, or 'turning inward'. It is a new orientation toward life – really, one could say, an orientation *toward* life. Of course, we have to attend to those everyday affairs, too, remembering the Zen koan, "Chop wood, carry water."² It refers to the fact that we have to attend to necessities in our realms of existence regardless of our orientation, but our consciousness of them changes with progressive stages of enlightenment, bringing us to the esoteric motto of Aries: "I come forth and from the plane of mind, I rule."³

The gift of Aries is that experience through it has the capacity to change our outlook. It is one of the 'catalytic signs' along with Taurus and Capricorn.⁴ And that means experience through those signs provoke the events that present us with the opportunities to change our outlook on matters, hopefully in a more spiritual direction, speaking at a strictly personal level. And, if we are born as one of those types (Sun or rising), we also provide those opportunities for others. Others may not always see the events we provoke as 'opportunities', but the opportunities are there, nonetheless.

Mercury and Aries: The primary planet connected with Aries on the spiritual path is Mercury. Mercury can be the trickster or the purveyor of wisdom, being the agent/messenger of the Sun. And very often, we are tricked into enlightenment. The retrograde periods of Mercury, for instance, offer us opportunities to learn and to see things differently, by showing us that matters do not always work out as we had planned. Mercury brings the mental conflict that leads to beauty and harmony, a quick apprehension of facts and rapid progress on the Path. In the resolution of the conflicting currents within our own minds, we reveal the truth to ourselves, and later to others. Wisdom is always a matter of self-revelation. It is something we must always *experience* for ourselves. It is never gleaned from books. We don't garner wisdom from sitting in front of computer screens or in libraries. Wisdom is gained through experience, first through doing, and then by doing nothing. There's a Zen paradox for you. The ultimate revelation in human terms is that everything is empty of inherent existence, from Buddhist philosophy, the end path of the Four Noble Truths. A parallel paradox is in saying, "In doing nothing, everything is achieved."

Aries and renewal: In Aries, we must take time to sit with ourselves, to examine our minds, to cease 'moving outwards' and instead, move inward by ceasing moving. It is easy and it is hard, as easy or as hard as we make it. But our own 'Christ Light', otherwise known as our higher Self, is always there, ever presenting opportunities to 'turn on the lights' inside the house. In that, we find renewal, and resurrect capacities long forgotten, gifts learned along our soul's path. Aries brings renewal every year. In Aries we break new ground, seeking the sun from beneath the thawing earth. In Aries, we build on the best of the past and discard the dross of the past. And on the world scale at this point in our collective history, that is exactly what we are seeing in the timing of this virus. It is time, and there is the opportunity, to cast off what has not worked for the majority of people everywhere, in so many areas, and build our future anew. There is our opportunity. And in being locked down, we also have the opportunity, like it or not, to examine what has worked, what is efficacious, and to discard the rest. This Aries festival is supremely important in that regard.

And in keeping with the saying for the Chinese New Year, particularly for this year, *the time for decisions has come*. The battle is here, but it is a mental battle, not against a virus, which is only the outer event veiling the meaning we are meant to see, but against wrong thinking and poor policies. With that, we move on to a look at the full moon.

The full moon takes place on 8 April 20 at 2:40 UT (12:40 pm AEST). One of the main features of the chart, and one that will be with us off and on for the remainder of the year, is the Jupiter/Pluto conjunction in Capricorn. This is indicative of plutocracy – the 1% – and of inflamed, over-the-top reactions we are seeing in people regarding this pandemic. Jupiter inflames and makes things worse, as is well known in medical astrology, when conditions have degenerated in the course of an illness. At its best, this conjunction can call forth real, inspired leadership in times of crisis. As is always the case, the chart needs to be seen in the context of the times and environment. We are in a point of world crisis, and it relates especially to financial matters, health systems and the general tone of leadership internationally. The Sabian symbol for the lunar degree, the Moon reflecting the light of the Sun back to us, is quite revealing regarding plutocracy and leadership in general:

“A gang of robbers in hiding” 19th degree of Libra

We will address this as we go along, but we are already seeing disaster capitalism taking root. The problem lies far deeper, though. The light from the Sun that is being reflected via the Moon (the latter also representing the past) is

“The ‘magic carpet’ of Oriental imagery” 19th degree of Aries

What is being called for here is transcendence, rising above worldly concerns and especially fear, taking a wide overview of our surrounding circumstance, and letting our imagination take flight. When we couple this with the Jupiter/Pluto conjunction, we get a more complete picture. That conjunction makes a t-square with the full moon axis, giving extreme force to this full moon. There are several ways to view this. Firstly, the plutocracy that has emerged across the world in the past decades is driving much of the financial fallout we are seeing. What is being highlighted with this virus is the inequality built into the financialized economy that runs most of the world economies these days, with resulting cuts to those sectors of society that are most vulnerable and who will suffer the most from this pandemic, not just health-wise, but economically in lost wages and work, loss of jobs, inability to pay off debts and so forth. The pandemic is only now just ramping up in the US, Australia and the UK for instance, and we are already seeing the signs of such activity. There are [long queues at Centrelink offices in Australia](#) because people have suddenly found themselves without work, for instance. This goes back to the midpoint we examined in the last letter, Neptune=Saturn/Uranus. It is in effect at this full moon as well and the effects bear repeating:⁵

“The inability to face emotional stresses, falsehood or malice caused through weakness. - A resolve to resign oneself to the inevitable, the abandonment of resistance, weakening strength, separation, mourning and bereavement.”

That is also accompanied this lunation by another, since Mars is conjunct Saturn this full moon, Neptune=Mars/Uranus:

“Cunning and deceitfulness, a low and mean way of acting, the desire to harm other people, a person with bad intentions.”

These are undercurrents that go along with the t-square just discussed. Who would have bad intentions, for instance? The very plutocrats (billionaires) who have been gaming the stock market, knowing full well the disaster that was coming, yet withholding the knowledge the public needed in order to deal with it until the market had already crashed. And not even the richest of the rich have engaged in it. There have been [several US members of Congress who have been caught out](#) doing so. That sort of activity needs to be carefully monitored and called out. It badly erodes faith in the leadership of any nation and fuels public anxiety and discontent.

But there is another way of viewing this t-square, and is more positive. The Jupiter/Pluto conjunction is also at the midpoint of Venus/Neptune, pointing to leaders with imagination stepping forward in the midst of this crisis. Jupiter/Pluto combinations are two-sided. In one respect they point to the desire for power and can lead to corruption, squandering of resources and speculation. On the other side they can point to powerful

organizers, an appreciation of the need for social or religious regeneration, a brilliant gift for organisation, and spiritual and intellectual leadership. Unfortunately, we can expect the former negative expression, but we hold the thought for the latter more positive expression. Those leaders are there, though, if even in the background at the moment. Even now, people in the UK and US are beginning to realize the policies of leaders like Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sanders in terms of health care and the need for socialized policy in certain areas of society are not so daft after all.

Infectious diseases: And this brings us to a prime point of focus for this letter and for this crisis, outlined in the following quote, and remembering the mental focus of Aries:

*The infectious diseases, such as measles and scarlet fever, smallpox or cholera are, curiously enough, definitely group diseases and are **definitely allied with the mental nature**. This will surprise you but so it is.”⁶*

Emphases added. This crisis – real or manufactured – is a call for us, worldwide, to re-examine our priorities, our world view and to re-think the ways we have been doing things, implementing those corrective measures necessary to keep such a crisis from happening again – and that means in every department of human life – or at the very least, for our leadership to be on top of it for the sake of their public instead of looking out after themselves first. I have posted two [articles on the blog site](#) about this virus. [The second one](#) looked at why the response in the West has been so slow, and it is sadly because a few leaders were too self-absorbed, or even selfish, to properly address the developing crisis. So first, we take a look at exactly what we are dealing with here, which will lead to a wider point, keeping the preceding quote in mind.

Connecting the dots: When we were kids, in my family there were lots of children’s books available that had the game ‘connect the dots’, you know, with the numbered dots that reveal a picture when you drew lines in sequence between the dots. It was a good way to teach kids about sequence and about counting. Some adventurous souls liked to connect the dots in their own way, ignoring the numbers, and come up with different pictures. Maybe they just didn’t know how to count. Doing it their way had merits, too, though, as it stimulated the imagination. Still others ignored the dots altogether and just drew what they liked on the page. They created their own reality, again showing imagination and perhaps a rebellious spirit, but at the same time even more independence than the first two types. And then, as one got older, the picture was there in evidence without even connecting the dots. Well, there has been quite a bit of dot connecting with this outbreak, some of it factual, some of it from a parallel reality and some of it just plain outlandish. We won’t go over all that here, except for a few points.

Ockham’s razor and 5G: In philosophy, there is a concept called ‘[Ockham’s razor](#)’ – the simplest explanation is usually the correct one. Ockham’s original statement was, “Plurality must never be posited without necessity”. That applies to this virus, as it does with anything we encounter that is new and unexplained. It doesn’t mean we should not investigate or look farther afield, but it does include the principle of KISS – keeping it simple. So, we start with the basics: This outbreak is caused by a virus. It has been photographed, tracked, analysed and documented. With that in mind, we can debunk one theory here: This outbreak is *not* a result of 5G mobile phone networks, much as the timing of the outbreak coincides with the locations of the 5G rollout. It probably has more to do with air pollution than electromagnetic pollution. The biggest thing that puts pay to that 5G theory is that China still has 5G operational in the affected areas, but the number of new cases of COVID-19 are essentially non-existent in China now. There are two videos that have sparked a lot of questions and adamant statements to me regarding 5G (I won’t reference those videos here). They are full of inaccuracies and speculation – a lot of cherry-picking and dot-connecting from parallel realities.

One side of the argument against 5G is that the frequencies involved, and one in particular, are particularly harmful. Another side of the argument states that the pandemic has resulted from the electrification of the Earth and saturation by these frequencies. The latter ignores [all the epidemics](#) and pandemics that beset the planet before electricity was even discovered. But that also leads to a wider consideration, coming.

I’ll simply say, regarding 5G, that there is a fair amount of scaremongering about it, along with partial information and admixed with questionable science, plus healthy scepticism and concerns. It will eventually work itself out. As to the frequencies involved, handsets operating on 5G are not transmitting and receiving 60 GHz, the frequency that has people so up in arms. Those operating frequencies for handsets are a mere

hundredth of that, thereabouts, the simple reason being that the chips that go into phones are incapable of operating at 60 GHz. Plus, plus that frequency is difficult to transmit over large distances and is stopped by obstacles, as in human bodies and plants. There are too many obstructions on the ground to use 60 GHz in a handset. 60 GHz is used for huge data transmission between base stations, not for phones. And that data transmission is beamed, not diffuse, and has to be done so from elevation, as it is blocked significantly by trees, buildings and people at those frequencies.

We may find at some point that the base stations need to be connected by fiberoptics instead of radio, to eliminate the strongest millimetre waves from the atmosphere. I point this out as well to address some of the hysteria we see in social media about 5G in general. So, you can breathe easy if you purchase a 5G phone, if you get my meaning. You aren't going to pass out in the street from using one. We will all be forced to go to 5G eventually anyway if we own a smart phone unless there is a strong enough public outcry. That is doubtful, given the quality of data transfer that people will enjoy once they see 5G in action. And if we remember, we saw similar hysteria with the rollouts of each of the 'Gs'. I am neither for or against 5G. To me, the jury is still out on it. There are dangers associated with any radio frequency. The key to health is to limit exposure if there is danger, much as there is with infectious disease of any sort.

Instead, air pollution: There is one environmental factor that unites northern Italy and China regarding pulmonary diseases, and that is the high level of air pollution that is found at varying times of the year in both places. Northern Italy is the industrial hub of the nation, has high road traffic and is densely populated, as in Wuhan. But more than that, due to geography, the air tends to get trapped in that region of Italy and stagnate. You can see why from [satellite photos](#). The area in Italy mainly affected by the virus is the Po river valley, which is the industrial heartland. It lies between two mountain ranges, the Apennine and the Alps. That air pollution shortens lives, and is a good example as to why we should probably lessen our reliance on fossil fuels. Perhaps one reason for this outbreak is to bring attention to such matters. This is the more likely cause of the high death rate in Lombardia and the entire valley, in which the region of Veneto (think Venice) also lies, also with high death rates. So, for the 5G folks who are adamant the deaths are caused by 5G, you may want to take another look.

Agenda 21: Then, there is the notion that the lockdowns being put in place in many nations now are an attempt by a select elite few as a stepping stone to enforce the [Agenda 21](#) of the United Nations and martial law by 2030. This is a favorite topic in alternative media. We are not under martial law here in Italy. The UN document is 351 pages, if you care to read it. I have been asked to comment on this as well, so we will look at a few points here. Firstly, the document was created in 1992, when globalization was really starting to take off as an idea to 'reduce poverty' and address our growing population and attendant problems. That was the cover story for what was actually happening in the financial world. The Cold War had ended. The US and European think tanks thought they had this world dominance thing in the bag with the ex-Soviet Union on its knees. The next few years under Clinton saw the turbo-charging of financial capitalism, a.k.a. neoliberalism. All was right with the world, until that dastardly Putin came along and spoiled their plans.

9/11 happened about the time Putin came to power. That was the result of the influx of the 1st ray (will and power) at the close of the last century. Such 1st ray impulses always come at the end of each century.⁷ The think tanks in the West again thought they had another opportunity at their world dominance, and then we quickly saw the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, followed by the Arab Spring uprisings about ten years later as a result. Again, in those actions they thought they had the dominance of the world's energy supply in the bag. Ever tried to put a cat in a bag? Well, that cat Putin came along and spoiled their plans again, along with Iran and Hezbollah. The 15th year of every century also has significance in the turning of world affairs, which was when Russia intervened in Syria. So, with this in mind, is there an elite that is driving this Agenda 21 and are they likely to succeed? As always, there are grains of truth in interpretations of events.

Let's be clear about enforcement of such an agenda, especially by elites. Yes, there are elites who would be more than happy to force through ultimate control over all the world's people and resources. The problem with such an attempt is that people and nations want their sovereignty and freedom to make choices. From what I am seeing, the ability to enforce such an agenda and provoke a dystopian 1984-type of world is dead and buried. Oh, it could still happen, but it is becoming farther and farther out of reach to enforce it. To do so would require keeping the world populace destabilized and in constant fear, and that is just not happening. People are resisting, effectively, and waking up. On the other side, the think tanks who would like to see it

happen keep stumbling over themselves in trying to find ways to do so, which is caused by a combination of hubris, one-sided thinking, a lack of perspective and their own selfishness – what we might call a collective delusion, fantasy or even insanity on their part. This is particularly true of the think tanks influencing policy in Washington and higher-ups in the EU and UK. One of the factors that has saved us from enforcement of such an agenda is the veto power wielded by Russia and China in the UN Security Council, along with factors like China's rise, Sino-Russian cooperation agreements, the 'Axis of Resistance' in the Middle East, and so on.

The rays of nations: an opportunity: It is a funny thing to watch. What were called draconian measures by our mainstream media in the lockdown in Wuhan, by a 'totalitarian regime', are now many of the same measures being employed by nations across the world. The [rays of nations](#) are standing out in these efforts, especially their soul and personality rays. If the soul ray is revealed in times of crisis, then people who study the nations and the rays have a brilliant opportunity here to observe and take note. There is an interesting quote in that regard:

The impact of the soul is called forth by the dilemmas and through the emergencies of the later stages of the path of experience. During this stage, the urgency of the need, and the dilemmas brought about by the forces of opposition, lead the man to submit to a higher influence. He calls then in desperation upon the soul and upon the spiritual resources laid up in his divine nature and hitherto remaining unused. This impact is called the "*Touch of Acquiescence*," and marks the acceptance by the soul of the demand of the personality for help and light. The soul acquiesces in the plea of the personality for guidance.⁸

The Italians, for instance, have followed the ideal set out by the Chinese response to the virus, though to a lesser extent, ([see here for each nation](#)) reminiscent of their 6th ray soul. And the 4th ray of their personality has rung out in song and creative use of the crisis in the community. The people have acquiesced and have accepted what needed to be done. The PM's ratings are above 70% now because of the actions he has taken, if that is any indication. On the whole, [Italians have been fairly stoic](#) about the whole thing. And we all know here that it will soon pass. There is no sense that the move is authoritarian. People are happy to protect their neighbors and loved ones, and the idea of family is paramount here. This is speaking generally, of course. There are always malcontents, too, but they are barely noticed here. The French have been more severe in their response, with their 5th and 7th rays, but also more scientific in their approach. The Spanish have pretty much followed the Italian model, but their 7th ray personality leans more toward the French, the 7th ray being in resonance with France's 3rd ray.

When we look at the US and UK, both with strong ray 2, the situation is different. The response is slower and not as severe. The UK with its 1st ray personality has the capacity to act more quickly than does the US, but is failing the test so far. And then we see one of the lower aspects of the 2nd ray – hoarding. This is to be seen in Australia, too. These examples are mentioned here for future research and interest, and will demonstrate more and more as the crisis unfolds.

Final thoughts on conspiracies: We want to finish with this part of the discussion and then move on, as interesting as all the conspiracies and theories going around actually can be. We want to get to the main point. So, to finish, [this virus is likely not a bioweapon](#), at least not on the surface of it. It could still prove to be one, but if so, it is about to blow back on the most probable producer. And we don't mean China. It was *not* something released into Italy, Iran and China to disrupt China's BRI project. Then, people have asked me why the death rate in Italy has been so high. There are several reasons, adding to the bit about air pollution, starting with why Italy was hit hard in the first place. Primarily, it has to do with the late detection of the virus, with it being misidentified, and with the high concentration of migrant workers in northern Italy, the nation's industrial center, particularly its textile and fashion industries, where people are back and forth from many parts of the world, especially the East. However, there is now a question as to where the virus actually started. It was noted that [there were reports](#) of a "...very strange pneumonia, very severe, particularly in old people in December and even November," in northern Italy. So again, we don't know where the virus originated. But [there are other considerations](#), too:

UN and Italian health authorities have cited a variety of reasons for Italy's high toll, key among them its large elderly population that is particularly susceptible to developing serious complications from the virus. **Italy has the world's second-oldest population after Japan and the vast majority of Italy's dead - 87 percent - were over age 70.**

Jonas Schmidt-Chanasit, a virologist at Germany's Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine, said Italy's high death rate **could be explained in part by the almost total collapse of the health system in some parts.** "And then people die who wouldn't have died with timely intervention," he said. "That's what happens when the health system collapses."

Emphases added. That is part of the story, but the number of elderly who are dying has another. There is a high concentration of them in *case di riposi* (rest homes). The people are close together, are difficult to isolate and in a weakened state anyway. The virus takes hold and sweeps through quickly in such cases, hence the need for distancing between people and the constant need for disinfecting. It would appear there might be an ancient connection between China and Italy with this virus, with reminiscences of Marco Polo. There is another side to the Chinese connection, too.

That Chinese population in the north is also in the heart of *Legia Nord* territory, Italy's right wing party, with Salvini (ex-PM) as its head. There have been many cases of xenophobia against Chinese there, many of whom are also Italian citizens now. This infection and the high death toll in Italy were not caused by the Chinese. The Chinese have helped the local economies. The xenophobia comes from a loss of Italian jobs and industry, but that was caused by the West's insistence of globalization and the neo-liberal experiment that underpins the economy of the EU, not China. The Chinese are hit by the lockdown here, too, because a lot of Italian export goes to China. With Italy in lockdown, those exports are not happening. Aries, like Capricorn, is also a sign associated with scapegoating.⁹ It is easier to blame someone else for one's problems than to clean up one's own back yard. China will be made the scapegoat for this crisis for some time to come. However, people who do so will be changing their tune soon enough.

And lastly, though there is much more we could discuss, the infection did not come from bats. The Chinese do not eat bats, [unless perhaps they are on vacation](#). Some South Sea Islanders do. There is zero evidence, though, that the infection came from such consumption. Bat droppings do carry the virus, though. And then there is even [doubt that the infection originated in the wet market of Wuhan](#). As was stated before, there is no 'Patient One' who has been identified. And as a matter of interest, for people so alarmed at the wild animal markets in China, [the Chinese have now banned the consumption of wild animals](#). But it will be difficult to stop the trade. Let's get to the point then, finally. What are we really seeing with this virus and what does it represent to us?

War of the Worlds: Most of us are familiar with the film and perhaps the novel that inspired it, *The War of the Worlds*, by H. G. Wells, written in 1898. When the story was broadcast over the radio in the US by Orson Welles, it caused a small local panic. What many people may not know is that the original novel was an exploration and indictment of British invasion and subjugation of foreign lands and indigenous people, and in the case of that particular novel, Tasmania. There are parallels with the current crisis, and we will come back to this idea.

The Martian invaders in *War of the Worlds*, Mars ruling Aries, were defeated by a bacterium, against which they had no immunity. This was despite their technological superiority and their superior intelligence. We might note that superior intelligence does not necessarily equate with wisdom, and can often be an obstacle to the latter. The novel also had themes of social Darwinism, as in survival of the fittest, an elitist idea that gets levelled in the face of something like an epidemic, for instance.

Feverish minds: Remembering the quote about infectious diseases being connected with the mind, there is another aspect to infectious diseases. They cause fever, for the most part, implying the element of fire in the course of the illness, and therefore purification. Anyone who has had a fever remembers how they feel after the fever has broken. There is a sense of feeling cleansed and renewed, aside from feeling weak. Fire is associated with the mind, esoterically, and we can view this virus as a kind of mental purging. There is another aspect to infectious disease, too, which is that the agents of infection are opportunistic: They strike where an organism is weakest and most out of balance, thus *precipitating* an illness. No microorganism can take hold in a healthy body under normal circumstances, with a strong immune system. Where are the nations of the world weakest, then, and what are we in process of purging? We are purging quite a lot, actually, but there is one thing in particular that stands out.

The last pandemic we had was in 2009 (swine flu). Before that was a cholera pandemic from 1961 to 1975. Before that was the 'Spanish flu' of 1918, preceded a few years before by Encephalitis lethargica in 1915. In 1889 there was another flu pandemic, and before that a plague pandemic in 1855. Cholera epidemics are not

listed, as they last for many years. And then there have been many very deadly but localised epidemics. Do these years listed have anything in common? Well, not really any one thing. However, when we look at an infection as something that has been *precipitated*, then a door opens to understanding. Looking back at those years, there were certain great events that precipitated along with the pandemics, and they changed our world view.

2009 was the Great Recession, which could have seen neoliberalism scaled back and confined, but instead was allowed more free rein. 1961 was around the time of the Cuban missile crisis, at the height of the Cold War, when fear of nuclear war was at its height, along with the stirrings of a wider involvement in Vietnam, and it was the year Eisenhower gave his speech on the military-industrial complex. The latter was another lost opportunity to rein in certain powers. 1915 to 1918 were the years of the First World War, following the creation of the Federal Reserve in the US, and then the Russian Revolution. That again changed our world view. 1899 was the year the US emerged as a world power, expanding its territories into the Pacific and the Caribbean, and when Marconi made the first radio broadcast. 1855 saw the Bessemer converter, a major boost to the industrial revolution, the Crimean War, and mass media was created in the UK. It was also the period where slavery in the US was a huge political issue and led to the American Civil War. But there does appear to be one common thread with all those years. They were years of significant rebellions. But even that does not show any clear correlations between pandemics and the state of the collective mentality, or public opinion.

So, we are left with what is facing the human family at this particular juncture and what needs to be clarified in our collective consciousness. One factor stands out above the rest – financial capitalism, along with the overwhelming power the US dollar has had over the world's economy since WWII. We have seen widespread protests and riots against austerity measures in many countries in recent months, especially in South America and the Middle East. Discontent with IMF policy and austerity measures has been rising in the EU, too, especially in nations like Greece and Italy. The wealth gap grows wider by the day, while the average person in most nations faces an increasingly uncertain future. And since the 2008 bank bailouts, the economic bubbles have only been made worse. And now they are bursting. The virus is bringing all of that into stark relief, as well as the quality of our leadership, or lack thereof. The lockdowns due to the virus are giving us an opportunity to stare this sort of thing in the face and question. And we must question hard and deeply, using that to motivate us toward overthrowing what is essentially a gigantic Ponzi scheme of economics, also known as 'socialism for the wealthy'.

Where are our values?: What we are talking about here is values. What is it we really value in these times – economy or people? The Chinese, Singaporeans, South Koreans and Italians chose early on in the evolving crisis: They chose the health of their people over their bank balances. In the US, the leadership is more concerned with the economy. It is there for everyone to see. There are politicians saying things like, [the elderly should 'take one' for the health of the markets](#), essentially meaning they should be willing to die in order that the economic fallout is not too bad. Let's take a step back from that for a moment.

Who are these elderly who should 'take one' for the populace? These are the same people who gave us life, who sacrificed on our behalf, who carry the wisdom of years of experience, who transmit our stories and history, who have looked after our children while we went to work, who put their lives on hold to raise us so we could go out and change the world, who loved us in spite of ourselves and because of who we are. And there are people saying we should just let them die and that they are a burden on society. Well, I have an opinion of what we should do with such people who want to sacrifice the elderly, but I won't voice it here. If anything, we should be 'taking one' for the elderly, which many nations are now doing, finally. The economy can wait. It can be rebuilt. Parents, grandparents and great-grandparents are priceless and irreplaceable.

Trump questions the value of distancing measures and locking things down [except for maybe a few weeks](#). The WHO says that would amount to a health disaster, with the US becoming the next epicentre if the pandemic. Seems the [Republicans are all pro-life unless the economy looks like crashing](#). In Italy, business groups strongly opposed the lockdown and the government complied initially, until the death toll rose. Now the scenes out of Bergamo are absolutely heart-breaking, with [convoys of military trucks headed to the crematorium](#) there loaded with coffins. Unfortunately, all of the Western nations followed suit in delaying response. Now, we are all in the same boat.

1984? Get real: I have read people calling what we are going through some sort of dystopian nightmare, which is more than a little melodramatic. Nations shut down for a month or two. It is not the end of the world. A rich nation should be able to cope. There are means for doing so. China is already bouncing back

after only two months. Shutting down a nation for a couple of months [will allow it to bounce back more quickly, and stronger](#) than if the pandemic is simply allowed to run its course. And there is no guarantee there will be ‘[herd immunity](#)’ even were that to happen. Boris Johnson has since had to walk that approach back. And then there are people calling this pandemic all a big hoax. Tell that to the Italians. Here is where the real hoax is – that we ‘must’ protect the economy.

Where is the hoax?: We have seen high officials in the US and many alternative media outlets especially calling the pandemic a hoax. This is no hoax, nor is it a cruel joke on the populace, nor is it an effort to enforce martial law and set up tracking of all citizens. The latter is already done subversively anyway. Such sources make statements about a hoax because they lack understanding of the crisis. The problem is not the number of cases, nor the death rate. It is true that so far this year the flu has killed and infected far more people than the coronavirus, and there is no lockdown for the flu. Their statements are based in such numbers. But it is neither the number of cases nor deaths that make this virus a problem. It is the effects it has on those people who develop the severe respiratory symptoms, effects which the flu does not produce. The problem with this virus is that it places an extraordinary strain on health care systems in the nations affected, especially in intensive care units (ICU).

People who develop the extreme respiratory symptoms have to be intubated and placed on ventilators. That is not just for a few days. The average time is around two weeks, and up to three. If isolation measures are not put in place soon enough by governments, then the ICU in hospitals get overwhelmed quickly. Then, as mentioned before, doctors and families have to make some very uncomfortable choices. Many of us now have heard the term ‘flatten the curve’, referring to lessening the impact of the infections, and the only way we have to do that at the moment is by enforced isolation. There is no vaccine as of now, and in spite of what we are hearing, no effective cure. People will not self-isolate voluntarily, as a general rule. The government must step in.

What to do, as a nation: In a rich country, prepared for such an eventuality, certain measures would take effect. There would be debt relief until the economy picked up again. There would be regular payments to families and individuals for the duration of lockdown. Small business would be supported, so they could gear up again after the crisis and begin to re-float the economy. Large corporations would be required to provide leave pay for those people affected. There would be universal health care, meaning health care and testing would be provided free of charge or at minimal charge. The press would be required to provide accurate and timely information instead of scaring the public. *Finances would be regulated.* Watchdog agencies would come into force to monitor scalping and inappropriate movement of funds. Emergency production measures for essential goods would be enacted. And these are just a few measures. How many nations do this? Many social democratic nations do, to one degree or another. We’ll see if nations like the US learn anything from this. We will be addressing economic and financial measures related to this crisis in the next letter, Taurus/Wesak.

Uranus, Mercury and finance: In terms of astrology, though, there are a couple of things worth mentioning with regard to finance. Uranus, the higher ruler of Aries, is currently transiting through the sign Taurus. And part of what we are seeing with this pandemic is the start of an international reset in terms of the nature of our economy. If nations try to keep the current neoliberal order in place and do not change to better benefit the common good, then we will soon see things like hyperinflation, even greater bubbles and a crash that would rival or surpass even the Great Depression, and in a matter of a few short years. Adjustments are being attempted in the realm of consciousness now, in the run-up to 2025. The policies that are hindering people’s freedom to pursue a more spiritual way of living are being challenged and hopefully removed over time. This relates specifically to economics at this point in our history. The sign in which Uranus transits at any time highlights the themes that the Aries interval each year seeks to address.

Then, much of this crisis is happening during the Mercury retrograde period. I recently wrote the following regarding that in a social media post: There is purpose in this [transit] for the United States, and in Europe and Oz too. This Mercury retro period is showing us where we have had the wool pulled over our eyes, Mercury being a trickster sometimes, especially in finances and economics. By the time Mercury goes direct the bald truth will be there for all to see. So, will the big boys be bailed out again, or will there be real stimulus for the 99% instead of putting lipstick on a pig? Will corporations be held to account for stock buy-backs and outrageous CEO salaries instead of investing in their company infrastructure and employees? Will

there be a movement toward nationalization of healthcare, or will the insurance companies and big pharma see the benefits instead? This is the value of people being kept at home. In a sense, it is like a nationwide strike. That trillion dollar+ stimulus from the Fed did nothing. It was socialism for the rich. The financial sector is what really needs to be watched here, along with corrupt practices and disaster capitalism.” Again, we will address these specific things in the next letter.

Where is the goodwill between nations?: And finally, there is the international realm in terms of cooperation between nations. In a recent speech by Trump there is now a viral post, sticking with our theme here, of [the word ‘coronavirus’ being blacked out and replaced with ‘Chinese virus’](#). This is blatant anti-Chinese propaganda. It also encourages racism. He has since walked it back. We still have no ‘patient one’ for the start of this pandemic. We do not know conclusively where it started, even though the epidemic was first identified in Wuhan to be from a new virus. And to counter the American propaganda, the Chinese have started their own, saying the virus could well have been introduced into China from the US, as a sort of bioweapon. Here are a few things to keep in mind, regarding international goodwill and propaganda.

Since the pandemic started, Washington has imposed even harsher sanctions on nations like Iran and Venezuela, in the hopes of toppling their respective ‘regimes’. Those two nations may have the last laugh. In addition, Washington has also [imposed sanctions on firms in the UAE](#) for aiding Iran in its sales of oil. And to top it off, there was a [fight in the Beltway about whether military strikes should be done](#) against ‘Iran’s proxies’ while they are down with this pandemic. [Many US citizens feel differently](#) on the matter and would gladly send aid to Iran, for instance, and they call for lifting of the sanctions. The strikes against US military bases in Iraq these days are being done by Iraqis, in effect pushing the US and NATO allies to honor the will of the Iraqi parliament, when they voted for those forces to leave. They are acting independently, not at Iran’s behest. The hawks were ruled out on those military strikes, thankfully. It would have been a bad look. So, where is the vaunted humanitarian ‘good guy’ US exceptionalism in this crisis? So much for the so-called ‘Christian values’ of the US, speaking of some people in the US leadership.

As it turns out, there are two nations that have been sending crisis aid to nations worldwide since the pandemic broke, and they are pariah states in the Beltway’s books: China and Cuba. [China has sent massive aid and medical support](#) to Iran, Iraq and Italy. Even Egypt has sent aid to Italy. [Cuba has sent doctors and expertise to Italy](#). Cuba is a popular vacation spot for Italians, so there has been goodwill between the two for a long time. Even hard-hit Venezuela, under brutal sanctions by the US, [has been requested by Italy](#) (machine translate) to send doctors to help with the crisis there. And they are now here. But it seems the media and Washington simply cannot help themselves when it comes to China.

Russia has sent aid to Italy, even though Italy still has sanctions against Russia for the Crimea incident. Those sanctions may be dropped soon. But in a bow to the US, Poland would not allow the flights to pass over its territory, saying it was ‘[a Russian attempt to undermine NATO](#)’. The flights arrived anyway. [Trucks loaded with aid to Iran have been similarly stopped](#) at the borders of Bulgaria and Romania. And in a stark statement about solidarity in the EU, [EU member states refused to send aid to Italy as the crisis was ramping up](#). There are many EU member states who will now be looking East because of that, and this illustrates the fractures and dysfunction that has existed within the EU all along. I will be writing more on that shortly, too, as I have seen a big crisis coming in the astrology of the union.

Now that China is sending aid worldwide, its efforts are being cynically cast as China seeking to ‘redeem its standing’ and ‘curry favor’ in the eyes of the world, as if it needed to do so. Where is US aid going? Washington is not talking about aid to other nations. It is only now seeking to pass legislation to help its own people, amidst cross-party wrangling. And one can just about bet that what is decided upon will not go far enough and will put the most vulnerable in the US at risk. A single check mailed to every person will not help in the long term. It is too much to go into here. But it brings us to the major theme behind the panic we are seeing in places like the US. That *panic is manufactured and promoted by the media*, still. But many Americans are starting to see it for precisely that, yet ignoring or ignorant of the effects this virus will have on health services in the US. Instead, what we are seeing in policy circles and planned responses are a repeat, but on a larger scale, of what took place with the 2008 financial crisis. All the big players now have their hands out calling for bailouts. [Boeing Aircraft is a case in point](#) and illustrative of what we will see over the coming months.

In closing, there is far more we could say, but it is sufficient here to note that this pandemic will bring wide benefits to world in the fallout from it. It is changing our national and world view. Certain nations are standing out tall, while others are showing their true colors, which are not very pretty. In a way, this virus is the crisis we had to have. It is part and parcel of the Saturn/Pluto conjunction and further precipitating the changing historical epoch. '[Westlessness](#)' is being demonstrated for all to see in this crisis. The Chinese, Koreans and Singaporeans bought us time and valuable experience in this crisis, and for whatever reason it was squandered. Now we are paying the price for our reluctance and the supposed assaults on our freedoms we thought such measures would bring.

Some advice: Here are a few thoughts for the immediate weeks ahead, from someone who has lived with the lockdown for the past two weeks, as in practical measures:

- Be constructive. Be creative. Use this time for creative pursuits. You'll regret it if you waste your time in front of the tellie.
- If you live with other people, set aside dedicated spaces, inviolate places, where people can escape and be alone when they need to be. Familiarity breeding contempt is a thing.
- If you live alone, make sure your tech is up to date and that you can stay in contact with people. This is especially important in rural areas.
- If you are diagnosed with this, you must self-isolate, away from family. Families are a prime breeding ground for the virus. Besides, we want to keep our loved ones safe.
- Get sun on your skin, if possible. Sunlight boosts the immunity and kills microorganisms. Also, wash frequently, especially your hands. If you go out, leave your shoes outside and wash your hands immediately on entering the house.
- Eat well. Takeaway pizza and McD's every day is not eating well. Re-learning the art and value of cooking at home is a valuable asset.
- Be kind and patient with people and with yourself. Being angry and frustrated will not change the situation. Find some way to physically work out your frustrations. And if others get in your face, send them to their room, or go to yours.
- Finally, see this as an opportunity instead of an imposition. That single attitude will change the way you see your world.

There are other points I could make, but these are basic things I have found that help. Otherwise, to all of you, stay safe and well. We need to look out for each other, especially the more vulnerable. Regardless of whether or not these measures are necessary – and they are in most instances – they are here with us and we must live through them. Our world view is being jolted into a new reality, hopefully a saner one. Nations and people will not be the same after this pandemic passes. Let your imaginations soar above the tumult and see life as it could be, as we think it should be. Our souls are acquiescing to the cries for help. Be still, be silent, and listen. A new day is dawning.

Easter blessings,
Malvin
25 Mar 2020
malvin@malvinartley.com

These letters are sent as a service. If you wish to be added to or deleted from the mailing list, let me know. Feel free to pass them on, but do so without charge or alteration.

¹ Bailey, Alice A., *The Rays and the Initiations*, Lucis Publishing, NY, NY, p. 533

² Ancient Zen koan, attributes are disputed: "Before enlightenment, chopping wood and carrying water. After enlightenment, chopping wood and carrying water."

³ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, p. 109

⁴ Ibid, p. 158

⁵ Ebertin, Reinhold, *The Combination of Stellar Influences*, pubs., The American Federation of Astrologers, 1972. See relevant sections.

⁶ Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, p. 313

⁷ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, p- 1039

⁸ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology II*, p. 269

⁹ Bailey, *The Reappearance of the Christ*, p. 82