

The Soul in Recession

By

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United States and the rest of the world is in midst of a frightening recession and financial meltdown. Individuals are rightfully concerned about their survival, well being and taking care of their loved ones. It seems that there is no way out. We are borrowing trillions of dollars from our grandchildren to finance our thoughtless gambling debts of excess, greed and carelessness. This is tons of negative karma! The problem was caused by our collective greed and the resolution of this crisis will mostly take a global effort, international cooperation and a national strategy. While this is largely accurate, I feel that individuals can take a few steps to master this catastrophic fiscal meltdown.

In my homeland of India, there is an annual festival called Diwali or festival of lights. After thirty days of preparation, on the new moon night, when sky is dark , every man, woman and child lights a small oil lamp or Diya. The skies are lit by a billion stars and a billion Indians light one candle each to light up the earth on the darkest night. In midst of this dark night of hardship and uncertainty in our world, if each one of us lights the candle of our soul; of our

consciousness, we can light up the dark night of the present situation. Here are a few things, each one of us can consider doing to make a difference in our personal life and make a contribution to the collective well being.

Money has no inherent value other than being a mechanism for exchange of goods, services that we need or desire. It gives us access to what we value. The first gift of recession is to reevaluate what is truly of value in our life. Do we value a flashy car, being a big house or quality time with our family? It does not cost any money to spend time with our loved ones. As a matter of fact, the lesser the material distractions, the greater the window of time we have to spend with our loved ones. So the first gift of recession is to help us sort out our personal priorities. We can choose whether we live to work or work to live a quality life, emotionally connected to our loved ones. So this *Sorting Out* of our core goals and priorities is the first gift of recession.

Once we have done some sorting out of our priorities, we have the task of separating wheat from chaff and let go of the redundant life goals, extravagant needs and refocus on what really matters to us. This calls for sacrifice. We may have to sacrifice a big house for a smaller one, a new car for a used one, a vacation in the sun to a local vacation in our home town. So the second gift of recession is the capacity to make a *Sacrifice* of material goals in deference to emotional and Spiritual priorities.

When the going gets tough, the tough get going. Recession times call for innovative thinking and enterprise. It is not a time to work hard but to plan smart. It is a time for strategy. Lay out a Plan A, a Plan B and a Plan C and systematically pursue these. It is a time to honor your intuition or gut feeling about what may work for you, your hidden and latent talents and potentials and go for it. I had a client who was laid off from an executive position. His avocational interest was drawing art work. He decided to pursue this, got a refresher course in graphic design and now works as a graphic designer and marketing consultant for a small enterprise and feels fulfilled creatively while making an acceptable living. So recession is a time to honor your *intuition* and hidden talent and potential and be *strategic* about your goals.

Most of us think of employment as subservience to large corporations. These mega corporations are like warring Rams, undercutting and out doing each other rather than look out for an average citizen. At times like these, it may be wiser to stay out of the way of the warring rams to seek the Golden Fleece they shed. It may be preferable to stay off the radar and do more grounded planning. One approach may be *Bartering* for goods and services within the parameters of the law. We may bypass the money medium and go to the source of monetary system; which is negotiating the barter without tangling with the large corporations or the government. These more personalized transactions of our ancestral culture may be a way to *Return to the Future via the Past*. This method may also connect us

more intimately with our fellow human beings rather than perpetuate the culture of Anomic, faceless Society.

Even with 8 to 10 percent unemployment there are 90 percent of us employed. This recession is an opportunity for *Altruism*. If each one of us who are fortunate to have a secure employment could reach out to at least one other person who is unemployed or in financial and personal crisis, we can make a difference. This may include inviting the family in stress for a nice meal to your home once a week, mentoring a friend or even a stranger to seek employment, prepare an attractive resume, help with networking, teach someone a computer skill, lend them some computer time, help them sort out paperwork to get aid or baby sitting for their children.

Of all things we can do in recession, the biggest is the capacity to *Say NO* to yourself in terms of what you Want in favor of what you Need. If in the process you save some time or money, donate this to someone in need, whether it is your time, money, talent or resources. Saying Yes to others and saying NO to you is one of the highest attributes of an evolved soul. This is an opportunity to step into your invitation to be and Evolved Soul rather than stay a young, immature soul.

Each one of us lives in context of the bigger picture of our existence. For purposes of

discussion, I have divided life into four quadrants: Work, Love, Play and Creativity. When these four are balanced, the quintessence of spiritual life emerges. Work is just one aspect of life. When there is a temporary void in the work sector, it is crucial that we balance it with the other three sectors and reach out to our loved ones, play and activate our creative potentials; interest in music, painting, yoga, meditation, reading, movies, writing etc. When we live a *Balanced life*, we feel more centered and feel more equipped to tackle the work sector of our life.

In psychological terms, the recession is an opportunity for each one of us does some soul searching, for sorting out our priorities, to make necessary sacrifices, to move from Wants to Needs, from greed to Altruism, for learning to say No to ourselves, to reach out to our fellow human beings, to move from a material corporate society to a spiritually informed society, from a lopsided life to a balanced life. If we walk this gauntlet from an *ego driven life to a Soul guided and spiritually purposeful life*, we still have the opportunity to incubate a fair, just and humane society worthy of our present civilization. We would than leave a shining legacy of courage, dignity and capacity to change rather than a massive debt for our grandchildren. In this dark night of the Soul of our society, let us light a candle of compassion, courage and collaboration with each. Divided - we will be merely rearranging the chairs on the deck of titanic. Together we can overcome this crisis and prevail to become a fair, just and a revitalized society.

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