

The last Buddhist

When we finally know and see
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Worse than not knowing about Buddhism is when we know sufficiently about Buddhism, or any religion, for that matter, and clearly see how it is used as a VIRUS to infect others. We only need to see how so many people suddenly regress into Dark Age mode and think that religion, even religion alone, can save us from the Covid-19.

Even some powerful politicians are deluded enough to believe that it is a hoax to bring them down. Perhaps for such people, the pandemic Virus has not really affected them or their significant others, or they don't really care about others, or, we must admit, they are deeply deluded or worse. Which is worse than what the Virus pandemic can do us to—we are already seriously infected even before and without the Virus.

Far from the viral crowd

From the start, religion—a system of belief in some Holier than Thou figure that demands our faith and controls all our speech, actions and thoughts—is a virus. It is an outside agent that takes over lives, making us see a reality that is different what is truly out there.

The Buddha's teaching started with **letting go** of worldliness by truly seeing that everything changes (impermanence). In this way, we disinfect ourself from the suffering that our wrong words, wrong acts, wrong thoughts, infect us with. By disinfecting ourself by giving up from false views and being caught with viral persons and the unhealthy crowd.

We enjoy **good health** by keeping a wholesome space around us. This is what the lone Buddha radiantly meditating under the Bodh tree constantly reminds us: stay healthy within and without.

The real virus

Yet we notice how Buddhists (but this is true of most religious people) do not really know what the Virus is (**ignorance**). They run around panic-buying (**craving**) this and that: they follow every robed Guru and titled/entitled Teacher, seeing **them** as the solution of their self-made problems.

Panic-buying is the **cause** of food shortage: panic-buyers cause the very thing we fear! It's just like us running after Gurus: it's our ignorance that sustains and prospers the Guru. Gurus prey on us who pray to them.

Prayer means we are not in control. For this reason, the Buddha, in his last days, declare that the greatest prayer is our own practice of the true teaching (reflecting on impermanence in our meditation, seeing impermanence in our lives).

Good health—physical and social—has nothing to do with praying to Others or worshipping anyone. In this sense, early Buddhism is about **true health** (of speech, body and mind). This can only happen when we heal ourself of the Virus (Ignorance/Craving) that are even now infecting us.

Virus-free

The Buddha's teachings begin by reminding us:

Look at ourself — what do we really see? We are simply body and mind.

What is the body? — our eye, ear, nose, tongue, body.

What is mind? — our seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching.

What is wisdom — seeing all as impermanent; true health and happiness.

This too will pass?

Gurus love peddling us with convenient Zennish truths, that make us spiritually lazy and emotionally dependent on them. They pretend to succour us by saying: This, too, will pass. Yes, this will pass, but not our Ignorance and Craving. The Buddha says: work with our inner darkness and burning fire. Turn the fire into seeing light; advance in the light.

Then, we will see that, yes, the Virus has passed, it seems, but it has merely taken a different form, something hidden from us, but always there. Only our Wisdom can see what the Virus really is; with that wisdom, we avoid them, become immune to them; thus, we remain healthy and help others to stay healthy.

Like those deluded politicians, maybe we need to truly **suffer** real pains and losses. Then, perhaps, we will see the Virus for what it really is and does. Imagine what the Virus can do. It may not take us, but it may take all that we love, stop us from going where we want, and from doing what we enjoy. We may lose everything because of the Virus (and his human form, the Guru).

Mary Shelley

Mary Wollstonecroft SHELLEY (the first 2 names were her mother's) had philosophers for mother and father, and she married one of the great Romantic poets, Percy Bysshe Shelley. Mary's mother died less than a month after she was born. Mary's first daughter was born prematurely and died. After her 2nd and 3rd children died in Italy, she decided to write her futuristic novel, **Frankenstein** (a novel about the possibility to creating life) (1818). She was only 18 when she started writing it, after seeing Galvani's famous "frog-leg" experiment. She was also familiar with Charles Darwin's evolution ideas.

In 1822, her husband Percy himself drowned in a sudden storm in the Gulf of La Spezia, off Italy's western coast. Percy Bysshe Shelley and his good friend, Lord Byron, were Romantics (following a form of literary individualism inspired by feelings and a sense of the transcendental characterized by "Eros and Chaos").

Mary, on the other hand, came from a family that was "socially engaged." Her works reveal her passion for family, cooperation and compassion in a reformed civil society, especially for women. Such ideas were, in fact, a direct challenge to those of the Romantics and elitist Victorian morals.

The Last Man

Suffering the loss of practically all whom she loved, the lone Mary, went on to write an apocalyptic novel, *The Last Man* (1826). In Victorian England, its polite society did not see it fit for women to write novels, much less publish them. The book is about a future world ravaged by a plague (like our own time) that practically ended the human race.

Although Mary was a great writer, her father-in-law, Sir Timothy Shelley, banned her from writing Percy Bysshe Shelley's biography. This, of course, did not stop her from writing. In fact, *The Last Man* is also a veiled biography of the people significant in her life.

Biographical

“The last man” Lionel Verney, for example, is largely an autobiographical figure for Mary Shelley herself. Adrian, earl of Windsor (the last king of England) was based on Percy Shelley. The ambitious Lord Raymond is based on Lord Byron. She was also a great literary scholar in her own right, and is even today the main source for the study of the poet Shelley.

Her life-story itself is an inspiration reminding us that we may lose everything of this world, but so long as we see our own true potential and goodness, we will see the potential and goodness in others, too. She rose high above the Victorian polite society and religion of her day, living with great love and compassion for those less fortunate than she was (despite all her worldly losses).

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[an occasional re-look at the Buddha’s Example and Teachings]

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