



Dear Kindred Spirits,

Over and over again Judith Strickland has urged me to contribute some of my poetry or writing to the Tumbleweed Tales Society, and I have repeatedly declined. Now she has me against the wall, using my email against me, forcing my participation by relentlessly pounding away at my ramparts, shattering the structures that have protected my anonymity. I recognize the hand of spirit when it flattens me. Therefore, I officially declare Judith one of my most important “sacred contracts,” acknowledge her as one of my guardian angels, and will attempt to satisfy her demands to summarize my life.

How to do that? Each of us has at least one book in us that describes our karmas and choices. Like layers of an onion we peel away our history --- physically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually—and our understandings of our history changes depending upon which of these four filters we are using to analyze that history. Since this account is supposed to be short, I will attempt to recount only my physical history. Warning, I found it impossible to summarize sixty-six years, and the following is two pages long! EEEK,

My birth family was descended from the Mayflower on my mother’s side and Paiute Indians on my father’s side. Both my great grandmothers were victims of violence and lost everything respectively to land-grabbers and massacre. This left my grandparents orphaned, the poorest of the poor, degenerate, uneducated, skirting the law, surviving. Whenever war or catastrophe destroys a family, it usually takes at least three generations for the family to recoup its losses. This is true of our family. My mother, who was raised in “Appalachian” level poverty, had so much courage, determination and drive that she overcame her circumstances and pushed us, her five children, into achieving middle-class lifestyles —although I was the only one in our large extended family to actually earn a college education. Our family activities were centered in camping, gathering, and preserving food, and we children were fiercely proud of our American Indian heritage.

At age twenty, I married a farmer, the son of a millionaire. For the next eight years, we nurtured our walnut and almond orchards, water-skied, and were accepted as leaders in our small community. When I married him, my husband was President of the Lions Club and a member of the Masonic Blue Lodge, and I was an unsophisticated country girl desperately trying to “fit in,” to not embarrass my new in-laws, and to succeed in my new social position. We adopted a child when I was twenty-five. Three years later, our roles had reversed. I was President of Beta Sigma Phi, a social leader, and my husband was drunk and living on his reclining chair. After losing the ranch, kidnapping our son, and putting me through nightmarish dramas, he died from cirrhosis of the liver at age thirty-seven; I went on welfare for two years and earned my teaching credential.

In 1973 after a couple of years of coping with emotional numbness, trauma, being on welfare with a four-year old child, working for environmental affairs, and completing my Bachelor of Arts Degree, I met my second husband, the great love of my life: homely, straight off the commune, filled with talk about God and music --- he is a great guitar player. At the time, I was in complete rebellion against the lifestyle I had been living, especially the cocktail parties and wine tastings where the women talked about their children and the men talked about cleavages. I was on fire about ideas significant in the 1960s and 1970s about social reform, art, alternative lifestyles, spirituality, and discovering who I was and why I was. This was an exciting time in my life. My apartment had become a social center where differing groups — intellectuals, politicians, Wiccans, feminists, musicians, artists, poets, “Bear-tribers” --- met each other for vegetarian meals, music, dance, exchange of ideas, and excitement. In this atmosphere, my conceptual understandings morphed, and I developed psychological tools to deal with my life experiences.

In 1980, I traveled to the Southwest for the first time, fasted for a couple of weeks, prayed to “Grandfather” for help in understanding an unconscious anxiety that had been driving me, climbed a mountain at 3:00 am, and had a spiritual awakening, in which I relived being massacred in a previous life. During this experience, my energy chakras were blasted open, which, in effect, opened my psychic centers. For the next year I incubated the experience, and during this time I lived with several ghosts who tried to communicate through me. Luckily, I was moving in a kind of dream world and was not frightened by these experiences. I did not want to be a medium and rejected this role.

Eventually I blasted myself out of this state of chrysalises by enrolling in the Sacramento Holistic Massage School. After that, I retreated from the social whirl I had been living and became a Shamanic healer who had gained quite a local reputation among my peers because I was able to draw on Shamanic memories and was doing some avant-guard work. My spiritual center was “The Mother Earth” to whom I had made a pledge and who would channel through me during the sessions. It was working with her that drew me to writing.

Several things, especially on the spiritual level, happened to me in the late 1980s that made me quit my shamanic practice. Among them was illness. Because of the “Dalkon Shield,” living with black mold for seven years and environmental sensitivities, I had become a semi-invalid who could no longer work, walk a block, or even drive because of dizziness. When the quality of my life had deteriorated too far, I felt I had no choice but to leave my husband, take off in my Honda Accord, and try to find a place that did not poison me. After some interesting adventures, I ended up in Flagstaff, AZ where spirit rewarded my courage by arranging for me to get my Master’s Degree at Northern Arizona University, free of charge.

From 1992-1997 I taught on the Navajo Reservation in Tuba City, AZ where I finally dropped my guilt and attachments (sankarras) to my American Indian heritage. This was a healthy time in my life because I hiked a great deal and looked and felt twenty years younger than I was. The 1990s was the first time in my life that I had no one to take care of but me. I had a hard time adjusting to loneliness. I tried companionship but never found my match and had some painful experiences trying to find someone to share my life.

I met Ammachi (Amma.org) in 1996 and moved into her Ashram in Santa Fe, NM in 1997. Since then, she has accelerated my growth. Words fail me when I try to talk about Amma’s impact on my life. Through her, I have experienced one miracle after another, been scraped to the bone, and found an unshakeable faith that the ultimate purpose of God is for good and that I don’t need to understand it. I completed my karmic lessons

and became freed of my core neurosis. Part of this process has been turning my back on Amma, teaching Art and English in Shoshone, CA (Death Valley) for seven years, and connecting with my third partner.



George & Mia in Shoshone pool, CA

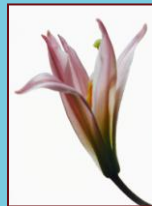
Now that I am retiring, I have been feeling empty. I am not particularly interested in my own history. Without Judith prodding me, I wouldn't bother to write about it. My favorite experiences in life were when I was meditating and going into trance with the "Mother" in the 1980s. Now that I have completed my lessons, I want to go back into that state of Grace.

Update on my life's journey

I have finally come to a vision of how I want to spend my retirement. My problem has been that I have completed this life's karma which has left me empty and feeling like I am no longer on a spiritual path. When I look within, I find that I am empty of the following neuroses that have defined my life and prevented me from exploring who I really am:

- *I am no longer angry at God.*
- *I no longer identify with the victim.*
- *My rift with my sister has finally helped me to let go my attachment to my birth family.*
- *Since I never quite fit into that family and they never liked me, I have been silly to make life decisions in the hopes that somehow they would approve of me.*
- *At last I am free of that desire and accept my karma and even feel gratitude to them for rejecting me.*
- *Letting go of the trauma of being rejected by my birth family has allowed me to let go of my need to have a "partner" in my life. It has only been through sex and partnership that I have met my desire to be the focus of someone else's love and to have someone accept the love my birth family did not want from me . . . I have a strong "sacred contract." Because he refused to marry me, I can let go of "partnership" and do not have to include him in my future plans. However, we love and care for each other, and I sense that we will be good friends and in time may well grow old together.*

Om Namah Shivaya: Mia



Aparna: The spiritual name Amma gave me several years ago