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Letter to the Editor | Coronavirus Greeting

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Prince Harry exchanges a namaste greeting with a villager from Bhir Kuna, Nepal, during a March 2016 visit By. EN BIRCHALL - POOL/GETTY IMAGES

Dear Editor,

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, Hong Kong has asked its citizens not to kiss their pets. Italians were asked not to greet each other with hugs and kisses. A German politician actually rejected a handshake from his Head of State, Chancellor Angela Merkel.

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago [which only recently recorded cases of COVID-19] is taking precautionary measures by urging their citizens to greet each other by winking their eyes (known as “sweet eyes” in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago) or to use the peace sign.

I am from the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and I would like to recommend the following greeting to the world. This greeting is of Indian origin.

When Indians (especially Hindus and Yogis) greet each other, they clasp their hands in a prayer-like gesture and slightly bow their heads. They say “namaste” or “namaskar,” which means, “The Divine in me respectfully recognizes the Divine in You.” “Namaste” literally means “I bow to you.”

This is a respectful, no-touching, humble greeting that the world could adopt, not just to stop the spread of the virus but to initiate friendship and amity between strangers and individuals.

The prayer-like gesture, where both hands are clasped together by the heart with fingers pointing upward, is known as the “Anjali Mudra.”

“Anjali” means “offering.” In Sanskrit, mudra means “seal” or “sign” and refers to hand and body gestures that bring about stable and healthy inner benefits. This gesture is used both for greeting people and saying goodbye.

It is said that this mudra also lessens stress and anxiety. It connects the right and left hemispheres of the brain and it opens the heart to awareness and humility. This is my humble suggestion to all who read this. Namaskar (prayer emoji).

Submitted on Monday by: Kirk Budhooram, a Citizen of the Earth

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