

**WISDOMTOOTH**

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# Looking for the silver lining

The effects of any crisis are manifold, and we will all have to face together the collective trauma that Covid-19 has inflicted. But from within the effects of these troubling times, we look for silver linings — the unexpected positive effects. And while I write this from a blessed spot of privilege and security, my intent is in no way to ignore or deny the very real struggles faced by a vast section of the world.

The truth is the impact of any crisis varies vastly in its individualised and class-based effect between the haves and the have-nots. So, while sitting in contemplation, often doubting if I am doing enough and more often concluding that I am not, I count the things that bring my nihilism-leaning heart some hope.

One of the most beautiful outcomes of the struggle, pardon my choice of words if it feels tone deaf at this point, is perhaps the outpouring of civic unity, kindness and selflessness that a section of the society has demonstrated. While there is no denying the rot and inadequacy of the governance, or the corrupt sections that will steal even the grain designated for relief. Yet, hope lives, and its light shines brighter every day, in the work of the silent but consistent and selfless service of the volunteers that are providing rations and food to thousands of people every single day.

In a middle-income country wrought with income inequalities and deeply vulnerable livelihoods, it is simply heart-warming to see the strength of the giving hands. I see these efforts as the truest manifestation of 'for the people and by the people,' as the common man's efforts and funds are made stronger in their impact by the participation of law enforcers and civil servants working to the best of their abilities.

As a cat parent, what is even more beautiful to me is that just as people are taking care of people, a lot of gentle souls



are taking care of the street animals, feeding them, treating them, and protecting them. This is a struggle even in normal times, but these kind and brave people persevere then, and now.

For the rest of us staying at home, blessed to have our loved ones around, life has given us a sudden pause. Most of us nowadays are usually always in a rush, running behind things that need to be done, lists that need to be checked off. Be it the grind of education mills, churning out scholars of rote learning being readied for a rat race, or it is corporate soldiers, fighting for profits to line the pockets of their masters. There is a constant push to do more, be more, have more and take more.

Except for a pause. Very few can claim today to enjoying the simple pleasure of just being. The unexpected pause provided by the enforced quarantines, after the demands of "work from home" are met, have given us all a very rare opportunity to just be.

I noticed friends hanging out online for hours, and heard real free laughter after a long time this past weekend. Rekindling passions for music, painting, crafts, writing, cooking et al can be easily observed on all the social media groups too.

I can guarantee that my mum likes having

all of us around this much. The cats don't seem to mind too much either, mostly. This forced pause has given many, and I can vouch for myself, the time to just be and breathe, introspect and contemplate once more.

In many households, it has created time for strengthening of family bonds as people find ways to weather the crisis together. In one particular instance, one of my friends with two toddler sons made a comment that stuck with me. Rather than thinking of this time as a loss of school time, what if the children staying at home for extended periods, along with the parents also forced to stay at home even if working, actually turn out the better for it?

What if this time forges stronger familial bonds and instils values that are otherwise so difficult to imbue? What if these become the fondest memories of their childhood; the time when mum and dad were both home all day, for so many days!

Lessons without constant assessments, reduced peer pressure and physical strain of long commutes, and more play time. What is there to not like? Even vacations are not like this, as we adults usually still have work. Is it ideal in the long term? Mostly not, but it is not yet a critical concern.

For a certain number of individuals, this has been an eye-opening experience in many ways. Of course, being taken out of their daily-life bubbles was not a source of joy, and there is a lot of anxiety about what the future will bring, and the real impact of FOMO, but there has been essential learning of empathy. A public exclamation from a 24-year old about "house work being really difficult" followed by an impassioned plea to their peers to help out more at home tipped me off to this one. It's sad that it took them so long to realise this, but it is great that they did and hopefully the lesson will stay.

Wait, there is more! I have also seen growing empathy for homemakers, our mothers who have lived an entire life with the house at its nexus. I like the newfound comprehension for this gargantuan effort that is often taken for granted. I like how many organisations are (hopefully) realising that working from home is a real and effective option, and haranguing employees to clock in and clock out at the office is not a necessary condition for efficiency.

I like how some elephants were released back in the wild, free from carrying tourists. I love the beaches full of turtle eggs, and baby elephants frolicking in the waves. I love how nature is getting a long-due rest, as the enforced lockdowns prove that they are in fact doable, to combat global warming and pollution.

There is no denying that we are going through a grave crisis, with a terrible, terrible toll on the lives of mostly good people. But this, like others, too shall pass. And hopefully, we shall emerge as a better world, with many ideas, ideals, and solutions from the lessons learned during this forced pause, to cure the world of its ills little by little.

By Sania Aiman

Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed

us on /Sandalina

ঐতিহ্যের আর এক নাম আধুনিকতা  
ঠিক যেমন ঝুপচাঁয় আভিজাত্য মানেই

# অ্যান্ডালিনা

## সোপ

ঝুপচাঁয় আভিজাত্য...



