

Who gains from this COVID-19 pandemic? Is it HUMANS or NATURE?



It all began by PM Narendra Modi urged our countrymen to showcase their message of honor and appreciation towards the emergency workers by assembling at their balconies and clapping their hands, ringing bells, or beating vessels. This idea of community clapping not only acted as a sign of felicity towards the innumerable doctors, nurses, policemen, cleaners and others who have burnt the midnight oil to ensure the well-being of our fellow citizens but also was a renaissance of kinship, cooperation and a strong sense of harmony among the masses. The concordial gesture marked just the beginning of the nation's crusade against this pandemic and since then there is no looking back. On April 5, Modi encouraged the nationals to switch off their lights and light candles, torchlights, or flash mobile lights for nine minutes at 9:00 pm while standing at their balconies. Later PM addressed the nation by saying, "*Amid the darkness spread by the corona pandemic, we must continuously progress towards light and hope*". Quarantine has been the testament to '*Unity is strength*'. From Azim Premji pledging to donate Rs1125 crores for combating against COVID19 to the selfless unconditional love that even the children displayed by donating their piggy bank savings for uplifting the destitute, this quarantine has witnessed unprecedented goodwill.' *Chintan*', a Delhi based NGO is

unleashing its creativity and philanthropy by stitching masks from old clothes and distributing them amongst the needy. Sudhir Kumar, a commissioner officer in the Indian Army served the country by making masks at home and distributing it among the villagers of Bihar. 80% drop in crime rates of Delhi, a 40% improvement in the quality of river Ganga, a 15% drop in Nitrogen oxide levels which is caused by burning fossil fuels made us witness the brighter side of quarantine.



Residents of Muhammed Hussain colony in Kolathur in Chennai showed their gratitude towards the unsung heroes - garbage collectors, by showering them with flowers and garlands and offering them fruits as a souvenir of homage. Tom Moore, a British World War 2 Veteran earned two Guinness World Record titles as he raised \$35.2 million dollars through his charity walk for the National Health Service in the UK. Even Twitter CEO, Jack Dorsey has promised to donate a quarter of his wealth, about a billion dollars, to provide funds for relief against the virus. This pandemic has been an ambassador of congruity, valor, and persistence of humanity. Educational organizations across the globe like Udacity, Coursera, edX, Pluralsight and many others are promoting self-learning during the quarantine by providing their courses and online learning resources for free or at a discounted price. Quarantine hasn't stopped corporate companies from meeting their targets. Online meetings have become the norm for discussions. Zoom has now become worth more than American Airlines, Expedia, and Hilton combined. India has strengthened its political relationships with the USA, Russia, UK, France, and fifty other countries across the globe by lifting the ban on export and supplying hydroxychloroquine, an anti-malarial drug that was identified to be a possible treatment for COVID19 by

Food and Drug Administration Department of USA. India has been the largest manufacturer of hydroxychloroquine. Trump later extolled Narendra Modi's gesture by calling him a terrific leader. He said that India's aid in such extraordinary times wouldn't be forgotten. While Modi's leadership has garnered worldwide acclaim, posts on the heroism of incessant toil of police officers are winning hearts on social media. Indian police officers are often feared among common citizens. But lockdown has brought us to notice the munificent and mellower side of them. In places like Mumbai, Goa, Kolkata, and Pune, officers lent their voices to blend iconic Bollywood songs with messages to follow laws and orders. Police officers were seen empathetically providing food, water, and shelter to the needful. The quarantine has not only brought out a less seen, compassionate side of humans, but it has also created a symbiosis between the elements of nature.



The melodious soothing voices of the birds chirping around us are extremely soothing to our ears. Quarantine is a transient phase that would soon fade away. It's vital to relish the little blissful moments that the quarantine has to offer. There have been clips circulating around of playful dolphins taking dips and having the time of their lives while swimming in the waters of Marine Drive. The water that was once flooded with the leftovers of humans is now turquoise and pristine. Sometimes the truth is stranger than fiction. This quarantine witnessed the emergence of the souls of the helpless animals trapped in a cage created by the concrete roads and lofty skyscrapers. There were pictures of elephants crossing the road in Dehradun. It gave us a reality check and made us realize that the elephants aren't crossing the road, the road is crossing the forest. The rare scenes of the mighty sambhar taking a stroll in Chandigarh, or the gorgeous peacock taking a glorious stance on the streets of Babulnath in Mumbai were completely mesmerizing. Italy, which is one of the

epicenters of the pandemic in Europe also beholds the splendid sights of animals reuniting with nature. The canals of Venice that are usually saturated by tourists have now witnessed the resurrection of swans, fishes, and ducks. Quarantine is replenishing the flora and fauna of nature and bringing them together. It is bringing harmony with nature and maintaining the balance of the ecological system which we cruel humans have been disparaging for decades.

According to E.O. Wilson *"Nature holds the key to our aesthetic, intellectual, cognitive and even spiritual satisfaction."*

The sublime sky is heaven over our heads. Air pollution in metropolitan cities has plummeted unlike ever before. Amid the lockdown, pollution levels in Delhi have hit a 20-year low mark. While nature has had its best phase in modern human history in quarantine, so do you. Make a pledge to yourself that you would be the best version of yourself spiritually, intellectually, and morally once you get out of the quarantine. Set goals for yourself and stick to them. Nothing can stop you from achieving what you want to achieve if you set your mind to it. Comfortable silences in isolation are an excellent abode for learning. The quieter you are the more you hear. The more you hear the more you learn. The more you learn the more you grow.

Your productivity in quarantine would surge ahead unlike ever before. Quarantine also means detaching yourselves from all the toxic people that you would have to otherwise meet every day. The negativity of your evil wishers is now replaced by the positive aura created around you by the people who absolutely care about you. Tough times never last but tough people do. Quarantine makes you realize that one close friendship is worth more than a thousand acquaintances. Consider yourself lucky if you spending your quarantine with your near and dear ones. It's a golden opportunity to strengthen the roots of your relationships with your family members by venting out your emotions and letting out your vulnerabilities. Cherish the little moments of bliss that you have ever had with your parents. Be it the moral support that your mother gave you while you did something you were scared of or be it the life- advice that your father gave you when you tried your best but you didn't succeed or be it the close friend that gave you a shoulder to cry on after you had an ugly break up. Quarantine is about self-abnegating yourself from the cynicism of ill-wishers and embracing the warmth of people who truly value your existence. Experience is the best teacher. Your grandparents have been through thick and thin and had their fair share of experiences. Pay close heed to the stories that they narrate. You never know when their last goodbye is. It might look silly to you but believe me, it means the world to them.

Quarantine has been the torchbearer of self-discovery. A person's worth isn't determined by the tangible things that he possesses. These include the materialistic ownership of your bank account balance, your fame, the clothes that you wear, and the fancy cars that you own. In contrast, The soul of a person is the amalgamation of

the intangible things that many of us fail to fathom. Everyone is blindly running a never-ending rat-race for proving their social worth by chasing goals. Everyone knows what they want but no one understands why they want what they want. Quarantine has paved the way to revitalize your soul by self-introspection. The inner discovery means having a profound awareness of your strengths and weaknesses, your likes and dislikes, ruminating the purpose of your life, and finding ways to uplift and better the lives of others in that journey. In this ever globalizing era, we constantly ask questions like 'When is the deadline for the assignment?,' 'What show should I binge watch today?' or 'What time is the train?'. We spend time fiddling around with unnecessary superficial things but seldom do we have a deep conversation with ourselves. Quarantine is an opportunity in disguise to ponder over the eternal meaning of your life and finding your purpose. It's about rediscovering new passions and detaching from social toxicity and practicing self-love. It's about finding your missing jigsaw pieces and completing the puzzle of your life. The magic of silence bolsters creativity which would be otherwise be submerged by the voices around you telling you that you cant do something. Self-excavation during quarantine would absolutely bring in fresh clarity in your thoughts which would be in turn reflected in your actions. Quarantine is not just about reconnecting with your near and dear ones but it is more about bringing your heart and mind together. Quarantine is about appreciating the privileges and building harmony with nature. Quarantine has truly brought the entire humanity together. Many argue that this pandemic is a huge setback. But I look at it this way, whenever life pulls you back, you are about to be launched into something amazing!

-YASH MATE

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Amreen Mulla

+91 91361 76912



Amreen Mulla

+91 91361 76912

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