

## Seeing the Pandemic from the Positive Side through a 5D Thinking Perspective

**L**ife has almost come to a standstill. The world we live in has been on lockdown for months! Why? Due to a minuscule, lifeless virus that has the capability of disrupting and destroying millions of lives. As of June 2021, more than 172 million people have been infected. Over 3.5 million people have lost their lives. The virus has disrupted economic and social lives everywhere. It has brought human civilization to its knees! We hear almost every day about the destructive sides of the pandemic. But is there any goodness in such an apparent calamity? If we look from a positive perspective, we may give a short answer: “yes”. For a long answer, let us explore it through the 5D thinking perspective.

### ◆ **First Dimension: Analytical Thinking** *Scientific Understanding of the Corona Virus*

**T**his dimension of the 5D thinking perspective is the scientific understanding of Corona virus and its vaccine, and since it involves a scientific evaluation of the pandemic, we refer to it as “analytical thinking”. What is a virus? According to modern science, a virus is like a zombie, half dead and half alive. It contains the blueprint for life (DNA or RNA), however, it does not have the full machinery to function like a living cell. Therefore, it is nothing, but a group of chemical codes wrapped in a protective shell. If it is left alone, it does not do anything. However, as soon as it penetrates a living cell, it turns into a monster. It is designed to take control over the cellular machinery to duplicate itself.

A single virus is capable of producing thousands of clones. Even if it does not encounter other cells, one virus is sufficient to duplicate itself into billions of viruses and destroy its host’s cells and organs. It is important to note that not all viruses cause disease. In fact, there are more viruses in our planet than stars in the universe. However, most of them do not pose any threat to life. They actually support life. For instance, some viruses carry genetic information between plants and animals to help them survive in hostile environments.

The world has been on lockdown for months because of a tiny virus!



## What do we know about the Corona Virus?

**C**oronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause respiratory and intestinal illnesses in humans and animals. They are relatively simple structures with spikes of protein. They penetrate into a particular cell by using those spikes. The viruses carry genetic instructions that can be duplicated by their host cell. However, the instructions are not in DNA form, but in RNA form which is subject to constant change. Like a key fitting into a lock, a coronavirus fits into a respiratory system (pulmonary) cell. Once the virus invades the cell, it hijacks its circuitry to duplicate itself based on its own RNA instruction. Each cell becomes a virus factory, producing thousands of new cells.

## Amazing Scientific Facts about Viruses

- An estimated 10 nonillion (1 followed by 30 zeros) individual viruses exist on our planet (if we distribute them equally among stars, each will have over 100 million viruses; if we divide them among droplets of seawater, we will have 10 million virus particles per milliliter (a drop) of water).
- Viruses are everywhere around us. Every one of us breathes in over 100,000,000 every day. However, they do not always harm us.
- Out of millions of species of viruses, only 200 are known to cause disease in human beings.
- Viruses were unknown until very recently. Walter Reed discovered the first human virus, the Yellow Fever virus, in 1901.
- The biggest known viruses are mimivirus-es, which are 400 nanometers (0.0004 millimeters) in diameter.
- Coronaviruses measure approximately 120 nm (1 nm = 1 billionth of a meter) in diameter.

Do you know that all the coronavirus in the world could fit inside a Coke can?



## How do we fight viruses?

It seems like we can't do anything once the virus gets into the body. Medicine only helps us address the symptoms caused by the viral infection. However, it does not do anything to the virus. The good news is that the body somehow has a defense system to recognize the virus and destroy it. In fact, cells have a built-in alarm system to detect viral invaders. Once an invasion is detected, the body activates the immune system to release a protein that interferes with the virus' replication process. Thus, the only effective way to fight against the virus is to ignite the body defense system through vaccination.

A vaccine is nothing but a way of informing the body about the enemy and waiting for the body to develop a defense system when the virus attacks. Vaccines give a type of false alarm to the body's immune system so that it can develop defense "weapons" known as antibodies. Thus, when the person gets exposed to a certain virus, the relevant antibodies will find and destroy it. In fact, millions of antibodies are ready to fight harmful bacteria, fungi, and viruses.

### VIRUSES: MOLECULAR HIJACKERS



[https://youtu.be/wUgEhfo\\_qxU?t=1](https://youtu.be/wUgEhfo_qxU?t=1)

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GET CORONAVIRUS



<https://youtu.be/5DGwOJXSxqg>





## ◆ Second Dimension: Analogical Thinking

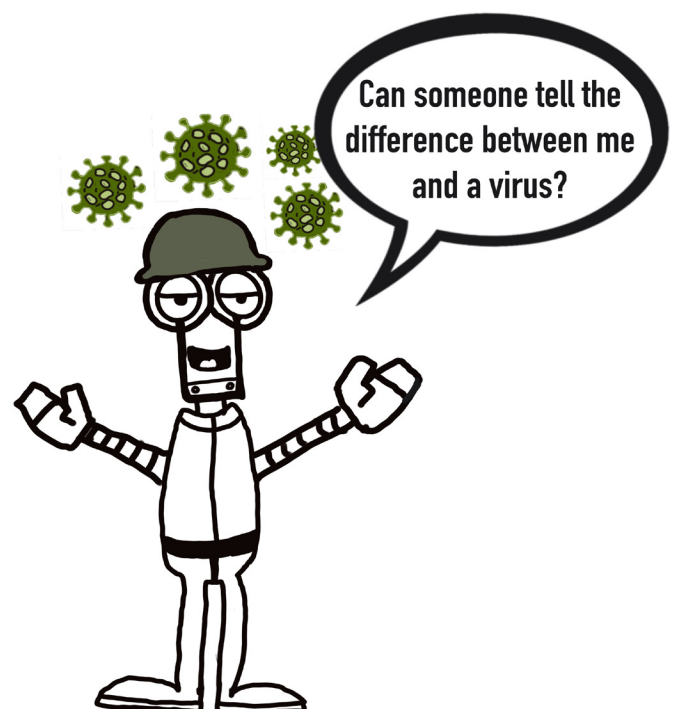
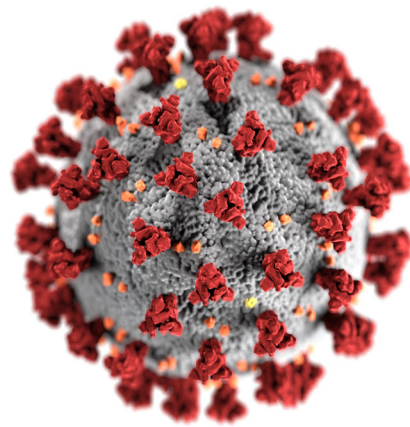
### *Corona Virus vs. Robo-Soldier*

Is there something that functions in a similar way to the Corona virus? If there is then we can use this analogy to understand scientific facts about coronaviruses more clearly. The search for such an analogy is what we call “Analogical Thinking” and we think that a “robo-soldier” may be a good example. Let us consider a virus as an enemy soldier. It is like an extremely small and intelligent soldier who is half dead and half alive. Perhaps, it is like a nano robotic soldier. Let’s just call it a “robo-soldier”. Like human soldiers, a robo-soldier acts as if he receives perfect training. He uses minimum resources to destroy its target. He is invisible so as not to be caught by the enemy.

Only one robo-soldier is needed to penetrate into the body of an enemy soldier for him to duplicate himself into billions of copies (using the body of his enemy soldier). He will change his protective shield often while duplicating himself to make it difficult for the enemy soldier to destroy him. Thus, if we compare the actions and outcomes of the Coronavirus with this imaginary robo-soldier, we can’t help but perceive coronaviruses as invisible, but extremely dangerous, soldiers. That is why we often hear in the news that the entire world is at war with the virus.

A human invention similar to the imaginary robo-soldier described above is the xenobot which are, in essence, “living robots” made up of a combination of biotic cells. Scientists are even going so far as to call their invention a “brand new lifeform”.

A xenobot is made of two different types of living frog cells- skin cells and heart cells. To function and move like a living organism, it relies on the inbuilt capacity of the frog’s heart cell to contract, and the inability of the frog’s skin cell to do so. A supercomputer using a set of complex algorithms, figures out which combination of heart and skin



Xenobot technology has the potential to change the way we treat brain tumors or clear up artery plaque. Imagine how amazing it would be to be injected with a xenobot swarm (made up of your own immune and heart cells for example) to break down malignant cells in your brain. How incredible would that be?

Although the applications of this type of technology are enormous, scientists have yet to refine and develop this technology to a level where it could be useful. One of the major limitations of xenobots is that they die quickly. Scientists found that xenobots have a short span of about seven to ten days after which they cease to function and disintegrate.

In short, succeeding to make Xenobot soldier for sure would give enormous power to any country. In fact, it is a well-known conspiracy theory that COVID-19 might have been developed as a biological weapon. It is no secret that big powers would like to have such a weapon if they can truly control for their own interests.



## ◆ Third Dimension: Critical Thinking

### *Exploring the Maker of the Corona Virus*

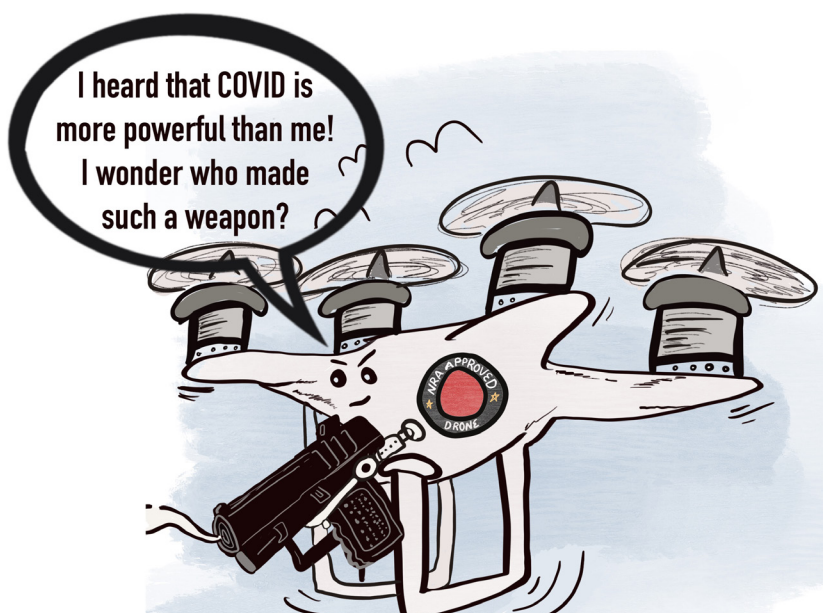
**N**ow we can have a critical approach in order to explore the maker of the Coronavirus and so we can call this dimension “critical thinking”. Let us first think about robotic soldiers (weapons). How did they come to be? We saw the very first type of autonomous weapon emerging after World War II. An autonomous weapon is a relatively a new invention. For a simple reason: prior to the Second World War, we did not have enough knowledge and technology to make such a weapon. Currently, most countries are racing to make similar machinery. In fact, recent wars have shown that flying auton-

omous weapons such as drones are the most powerful soldiers in a war.

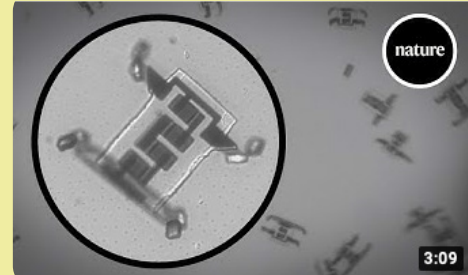
Now, let us reflect on the make-up of those weapons. They are nothing but a combination of certain raw materials along with certain codes- much like the codes in a virus. Is it possible to believe that such weapons could have emerged by themselves from those raw materials? Do you think that if we buy raw materials of drones and have access to strong wind to push them around, they will assemble with the right components and come

together as drones? How about if we place the full instruction book of building drones next to these raw materials? We know from our experience that it is necessary to have a maker with knowledge and power to merge the raw materials into the final product using the knowledge in the instruction book. That is why it took thousands of years to come up with these devices after using the accumulated knowledge of thousands of scientists and developers.

Now, let us think about viruses. As we discussed in the previous dimension, viruses are billions of times more advanced than autonomous weapons. How did they come into existence? If it does not make sense to believe that drones can come into existence by chance or through random forces with no knowledge, how can we believe that a virus came to be without a maker? Imagine a country with the most advanced military power finding itself at war with a country of absolutely ignorant soldiers who use nothing but primitive sticks to fight. Who do you think would win the war? If you see the country with primitive weaponry as the winner, would you not you think that they



## MICROSCOPIC ROBOTS



<https://youtu.be/2TjdGuBK9mI?t=1>

might have been given even more powerful weapons? You would never believe that they got such weapons by luck or through random forces without advanced knowledge. Indeed, thinking that viruses emerged without conscience, knowledge, and will, is like finding an enemy with extremely advanced weapons and thinking they got their weaponry without any knowledge- just through pure luck.

In short, despite the collaborative efforts of thousands of scientists, we have not managed to build even a single virus from scratch. Even recent inventions such as xenobots are made from combinations of pre-existing biotic, raw materials. Scientists do not have sufficient knowledge and power to come up with viruses from scratch. Since we think it makes perfect sense to believe that countries with advanced weapons must have invented them through the use of sophisticated knowledge and power, we should also accept that more advanced "weaponry" such as viruses must be the product of a much higher knowledge and power. Then, who is the Maker of the virus?



## ◆ Fourth Dimension: Meditative Thinking

### *Reflecting on the Attributes of the Maker*

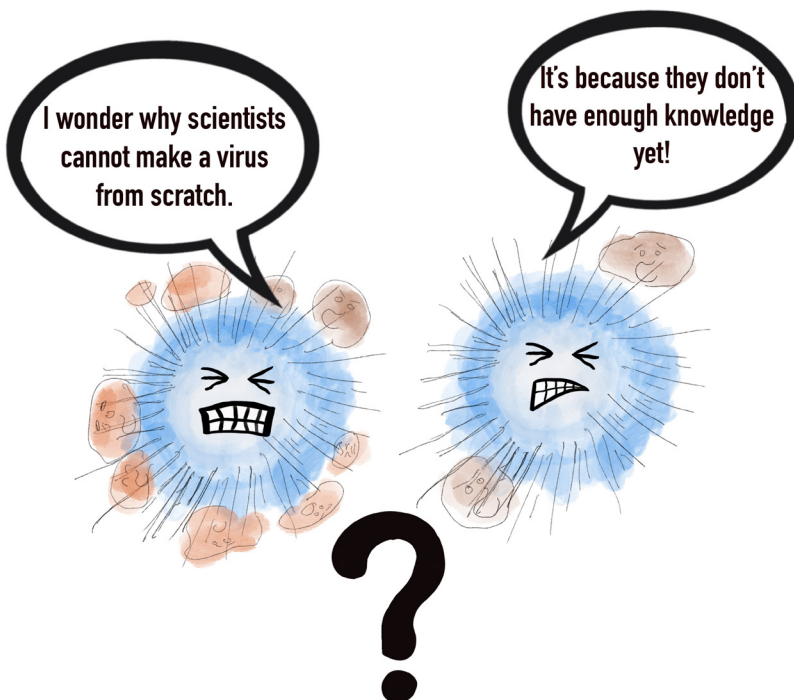
**A**s we learn about the miraculous aspects of viruses, we cannot avoid thinking more carefully about them. As such, it is difficult not to appreciate the astonishing machinery within a virus and wonder about how it came to be. For this reason, we call this dimension “meditative thinking, which is reflecting on the attributes of the Maker of the virus.

For us to know the Maker of viruses, we need to reflect deeply on how they are made. According to modern science, the secret is in their embedded codes. In fact, a virus is nothing but an instruction sheet with a protective shield. Once viruses manage to get into a living cell, the instruction sheet takes over the control of the host cell and uses the cellular machinery to copy



itself based on its own instruction. To believe that the secret is in the DNA or RNA code with no intelligent maker is like studying a deadly drone and declaring that it is made by its codes (software) with absolutely no external manufacturer.

In fact, viruses are considered very simple. They are made of two basic components: nucleic acid (single- or double-stranded RNA or DNA) and a protein coat, the capsid, which functions as a shell to protect. These components are nothing but an assembly of a few basic elements. Let us reflect on the following scientific description of the genius behind the extremely simple make-up of viruses:



*"Viruses strive to be as simple as possible while still maintaining their basic function, a concept that scientists call genetic economy. This means that the nucleic acid genome of the virus can be very tiny, providing instructions for only a few types of capsid protein subunits, each of which get produced in large numbers. Amazingly, these protein subunits can self-assemble in a stable and repetitive way, with each subunit forming the maximum number of contacts with the next subunit. As a result, the capsid of viruses is like a coat of armor for the nucleic acid genome, and the repetitive nature of the identical protein subunits give nearly all viruses geometrical symmetry.... viruses can either assemble their capsid shell around their nuclear genome, or viruses can make a capsid shell, and insert their nuclear genome into it. Viruses also need to make sure that they are packaging their genomes, and not the genomes of their host cells. This is often accomplished through a special signal sequence inside the viral genome that can bind to the viral capsid, helping to ensure that the "right" nucleic acids are included in each virion."*



who has infinite knowledge and power. Indeed, the Maker of a virus must be the One who creates and sustains the entire universe. That is because a virus could not exist in isolation. It relies on the interconnected universe at galactical and subatomic levels. A virus is made of certain elements such as carbon, phosphorus, and nitrogen. These elements are the product of the collision of giant stars. In other words, the raw materials are cooked in the galactic oven. In fact, it was just a few years ago, astronomers detected phosphorus in Cassiopeia A, which confirmed that this element is the byproduct of a supernova explosion. The Maker of viruses must be the One who manages everything since Big Bang to produce elements, protein, cells, and a supportive environment. He should be All-Knowing, All-Wise, and All-Powerful. Then, why does He make viruses, particularly the ones causing disease?

All-Knowing

All-Wise

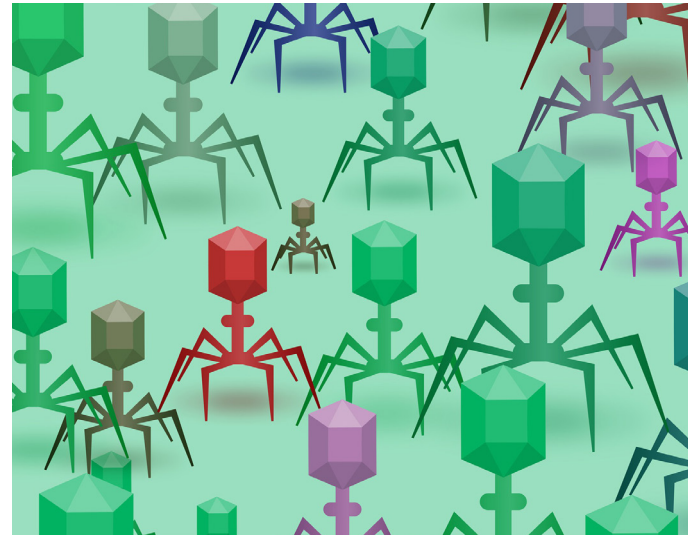
All-Powerful

Again, it is like describing the enemy weapon with all its perfection, but without accepting that it is the product of consciousness, knowledge, and power. It is like studying all the components of such a weapon while never being able to duplicate it. In fact, although modern science does provide a full description of how a virus is composed, scientists are still not capable of making a single virus from scratch.

If an autonomous drone could not exist without an inventor with a high level of knowledge and power, then for sure, viruses could not have come into existence without a Maker



We also believe that first and foremost, the wisdom behind the creation of germs and viruses is to let us know who we are and who our Maker is. In other words, through diseases, we realize that we do not have any power. We become aware of our impotence. Thus, we give up our claim of sustaining our own lives. Rather, we understand that the power which works within us is not from us. It is the Infinite Power manifesting in everything in the universe. Once we come to terms with accepting our impotence, we sincerely submit to the Infinite Power. We give full credit to Him for everything we experience in life including having an immune system which produces antibodies once we get vaccinated. We see Him as the Owner, Creator, Sustainer of everything. As we come to acknowledge that He is the One who created viruses, we can also know that He is the One who actively creates antibodies to fight against these viruses. He is the only True Power behind everything. We rely on His Power, Knowledge, and Wisdom.



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**“He is the One who actively creates antibodies to fight against these viruses.”**

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## ◆ **Fifth Dimension: Moral Thinking** *Responding with Better Character*

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**W**e call this thinking dimension “Moral Thinking”. In this dimension, we reflect on the lessons we have learned from the pandemic. If viruses are the work of an All-Wise Maker, then there has to be much wisdom in their creation. Since He is All-Good, there must be much goodness in making them cause disease. Indeed, through deep reflection, just as we discover the value that underlies the harshness of a cold winter, we can also uncover the multiple good outcomes of having a life that includes disease, challenges, and difficulties. Let us reflect on six lessons we can derive from the painful experience of the current pandemic:

**F**irst, the virus has removed our artificial mask of power and revealed that we are powerless. As discussed in the previous dimension, the pandemic has shown the true power behind everything. Thus, it has helped us recognize the Infinite Power working in viruses and in the entire universe. In other words, the pandemic has given us the opportunity to explore and find answers to existential questions. As Heidegger famously says, we seriously ask life's most important questions when we face anxiety. We begin exploring the meaning of life when we feel the high possibility of our death. We appreciate the true value of what we have when we face the possibility of loss. In short, the pandemic helps us recognize our impotence and realize our powerlessness. Thus, we should seek the Infinite Power and ask help from Him.

## COVID-19 PATIENTS

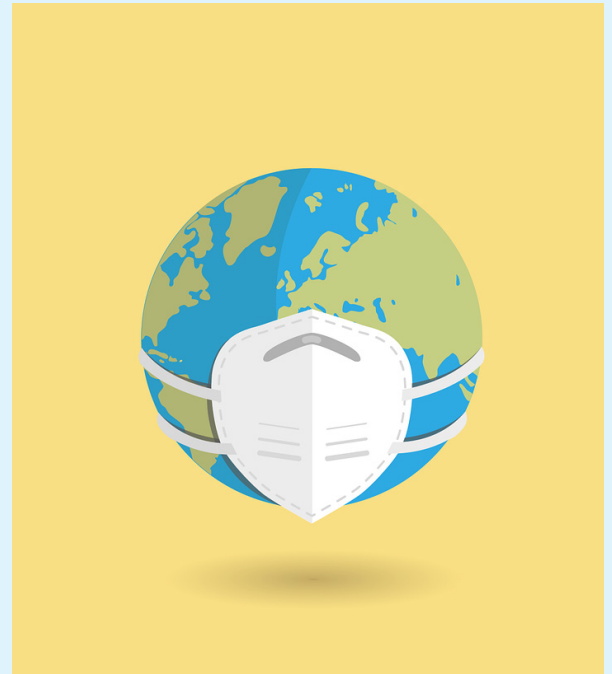


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**S**econd, the pandemic has forced us to stop pretending that we are going to live on this planet forever. The virus has reminded us that we are mortal. With news of thousands of deaths every day and the perceived risk of being among them, the virus has forced us to accept the fact that we cannot escape death. As Ernest Becker eloquently explains in his book, *Denial of Death*, we realize that we live our daily life with the denial of the undeniable: our death. We realize that we indeed do not want to die. Thus, the virus teaches us the lesson that nothing is more important than finding a way to overcome our mortality. In other words, anything less than eternity is not worthy to pursue because it will sooner or later turn to nothing. Therefore, we should never settle on anything less than eternal pursuits. Like an ostrich, hiding our head under the sand will not protect us from the bullet of death. We should lift our head from the sand of heedlessness and face the reality of our own mortality.

**T**hird, the pandemic has shattered our fake paradise which we think we have accomplished through consumer culture. It has shown us that in the face of death, our way of life is absolutely meaningless. Our materialistic success and accomplishments are nothing but ultimate failure. The reality of the pandemic has compelled us to turn to our inner world and seek eternal success by working on our soul. It has given us a chance to see the fake side of hedonic happiness. In fact, by forcing us to wear a mask in our social lives, it has essentially forced us to cover our fake smiles which we do through our facial expressions. It has forced us to seek an alternative way for a meaningful and flourishing life without being consumed by consumer culture.



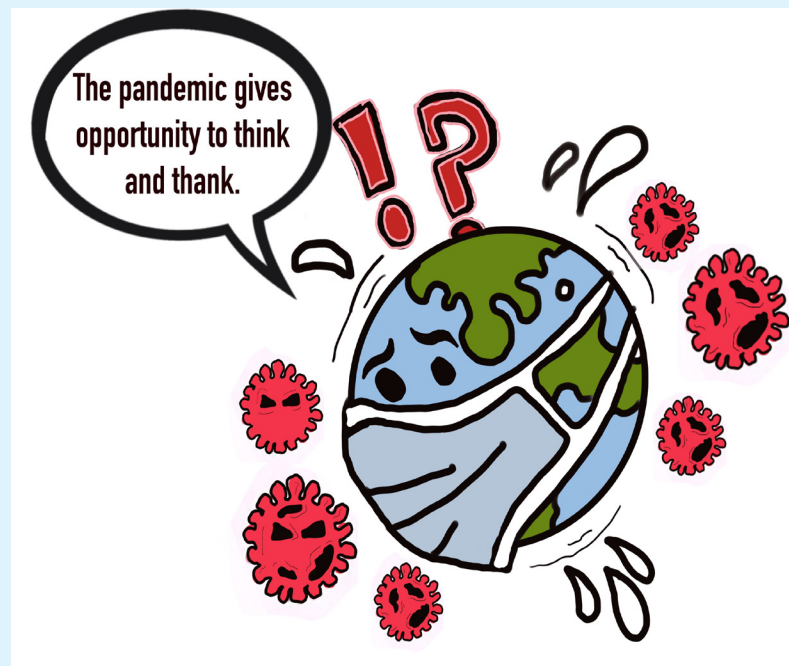
**F**ourth, the pandemic has reminded us that we should not take anything for granted, particularly our five senses. For almost half of COVID patients, losing the sense of smell is a distinctive symptom of the disease. Although the mechanisms are not fully understood, researchers believe that smell loss occurs when the cilia (microscopic hair-like structures) covering the olfactory sensory nerves are lost. To put it simply, the hair like structures that ‘catch’ the odor molecules are damaged by the coronavirus infection preventing the nerves in our nose from detecting smells. Some people lose their sense of taste as well. It takes weeks for most patients to gain back their senses of smell and taste. For some people, the problem lasts for months. Thus, the pandemic has demonstrated how easy it is to lose our extremely valuable senses. When that happens, no one can help restore it. We have to wait for the body to fight the virus and restore the senses. Millions of people now have a much higher appreciation of their senses of smell and taste after losing them for weeks.



**F**ifth, the pandemic has made us retreat to our houses for reflection and has given us time to focus on improving our familial relationships. It gives us an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of life and the meaninglessness of our consumer culture. It directs our attention to our inner universe which is as elegant as the outer one. It makes us think about ourselves. Since the knowledge of the self is the key to the true knowledge of everything, it gives us an opportunity to ponder on the mistake of seeking hedonic happiness at the cost of meaning and spirituality.



**S**ixth, the pandemic has reminded us that we live in a global world. Our wellbeing is connected to the wellbeing of others. Thus, we should give up our selfish behaviors. We should care about each other because we cannot live without helping each other. We should spend time with our family members as well as the entire human family which lives under the same roof of our shared planet. Our survival in this world and beyond depends on how we help each other. We should be humble since we are helpless to fight against a virus as small as a speck of dust. As we benefit from vaccines made by people of different nations, we should acknowledge the absurdity and inherent danger of racism. Just as we praise those who came up with vaccines, we should offer even higher appreciation to the One who makes the body produce antibodies to protect us from viruses.





*“God is both Compassionate (Rahman) and Merciful (Rahim) to all His creatures generally and to every individual being at all times. Times of hardship are no exception. One aspect of the wisdom in the creation of the coronavirus is that it can be seen as ‘a wake-up call’: a reminder that God’s names such as All-Just and Powerful belong to Him and that we have the duty to manifest those names in the best possible way.*

*The Coronavirus pandemic has served as a reminder for all, and has in a sense forced us all to accept our servanthood (‘ubūdiyya) and in turn to acknowledge our total impotence and poverty. For in fact it is only through the submission of one’s poverty (faqr) and impotence (‘ajz) that one can truly give thanks.*

*Poor or rich, we have all been affected by social distancing; we can no longer go on expensive holidays just because we can afford it, and our work and recreation have all taken a different form that is mostly beyond our control.*

*These circumstances, though extremely difficult and at times painful, have nevertheless provided the opportunity for us to acknowledge our absolute poverty, enabling us to give up the ownership of our possessions and wealth, and to come to the realisation that everything that has been given to us, has been gifted to us by God to use in the best possible way. Acknowledging our impotence has in turn afforded us the opportunity to affirm that the power we have has actually been given to us by our Creator not to distort or cause oppression to anything or anyone, but to use in a just and wise way.*

*In a sense we are all in a kind of ‘exile’, but it is up to us to choose whether we, through the recognition of our impotence, wish to turn that exile into a sacred and elevated space or to refrain from submitting and turn it into a kind of imprisonment.” – Dr Mahshid Turner*