

EDITORIAL

“Little Things I Learned from the Pandemic of 2020”

by Anil Shrivastava ‘Musafir’

Now that the great pandemic of 2020 is over in the U.S. (at least this is what we are asked to believe), scholars and historians will document the human misery brought upon us by COVID-19. Once again, we will reflect on the fragility of life and its meaning and worth after so much death. It's not the first time we'll go through this drill. This has been replicated many times before in modern times.



The pain and loss suffered due to the great plague of the 1300s have been documented quite elaborately. The plague particularly engulfed the Italian peninsula and forced young Florentines to flee their plague-ridden city to wait out the storm. Unfortunately, there were no medicines, personal protective equipment, or government assistance to mitigate the suffering of the populace in that era. Also, I was not born then.

This time it was different in the sense that we had advanced technology to communicate with doctors, friends, and families. Many of us could work from home. Vaccines were produced rapidly and government assistance saved us from being in dire straits. The pandemic also yielded some valuable lessons for me and others.

I now realize more than ever what our family and friends truly mean to us. As restrictions begin to lift, seeing those we haven't been able to connect with face-to-face feels that much more special.

I learned the importance of personal hygiene. When it comes to our health and

wellness, there is no better prevention than a simple habit of washing our hands frequently.

Acquiring new hobbies such as learning a new language, reading, and writing, or learning to play musical instruments can be healing and invigorating.

Minimalism is not that bad after all. I learned to live without binge shopping, vacationing, going to movies and concerts, and living without extravagance.

I learned to appreciate the importance of essential workers like delivery drivers, supermarket employees, healthcare professionals, and other essential workers. The sacrifices they particularly made during this pandemic haven't gone unnoticed. Showing gratitude for these everyday heroes will go a long way toward building lasting goodwill.

The unabated spread of COVID-19 reaffirmed my lack of credence in spiritual healers, self-proclaimed experts, and herbal diets.

Now I know that viruses can be created in labs by rogue regiments. The world should unite against them and prevent such regimes from doing this again.

Most importantly, The Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated to me the value of freedom – the freedom to move, to be with those we love, to live in dignity and security – for myself and for those around me, from our loved ones to the strangers and the citizens of the world at large.