



Mr. Yaron Barzilay

# MESSAGE FROM OUR NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Dear Friend,

Along with most of the world, we are in almost complete isolation, as a result of the rapid spread of COVID-19. The world seems to have stopped for a while and people, as well as organizations and governments, are uncertain about the near future.

The scene is somewhat surreal, giving an apocalyptic feeling towards what is yet to come. There are some who report a growing interest in 'end-of-the-world' literature, films, doomsday theories and alike. Even if the world is really far from heading to complete disaster, it is interesting to examine, as some have already done, the root of the word "apocalypse". In its Greek origin, the meaning of the word included the idea of 'revelation'; something that might have been hidden, but is now exposed in broad daylight. As per this sense of the word, we are indeed somehow experiencing a kind of apocalypse.

It seems as if the virus is shaking the ground beneath the structures we have established and a little of the true nature of things is being revealed to us.

Many things that we might have taken for granted earlier, are already seen differently now; the possibility of flying from one place to another, the illusion that wealthy nations with leading economies serve its people well, the incompetence and blindness of certain leaders is clearly revealed, while others are real examples, sometimes even surprisingly, of nobility.

The meaning of boundaries between countries, and between social and economic classes, is highlighted a bit differently in the face of the invisible virus; for it, we are all equal. Nature reappears on the outskirts of cities after only a short period of lockdown, as if laughing at us, impressing upon us who really is the master here...

The quick change in our reality showcases different forms of responses; some respond with panic, some with complete apathy or denial; others manage to keep calm and even dare to act decisively.

Such circumstances also give rise to strange paradoxes, such as the term 'social distancing': for the sake of society, we maintain isolation from each other. The virus has rapidly spread across the globe and has led to complete separation between countries; paradoxically, it is our unprecedented ease of travel across the planet, that has accelerated the need for isolation and separateness.

At this point of time we do not know to say how this crisis will develop, but it is clear that the world will be, at least slightly, different. Even if, as we all hope of course, we quickly overcome the impact of the virus, our perceptions will

certainly not remain the same as before.

Since the response to the virus demands isolation, it is also possibly a time of revelation for the individual; a time of solitude, with a possibility of silence, the likes of which we couldn't easily have had before.

Philosophy is an art of living. Its aim is to see the good in things. It teaches us to pay attention to what really depends on us, and set it apart from what is ultimately not in our control. We cannot change the situation that we are in right now. But we can definitely learn from it, and discern between what should really matter to us, and what does not deserve to consume our time as it may have up until now. This is a time that permits, and even demands, real reflection. In such moments fear and panic easily spread. It is therefore an opportunity to discover the strength of our inner tranquility, based on the stability of our consciousness.

It is a good time to find the pleasure of paying attention to the little things; simple actions which in earlier days might have seemed like a waste of our precious time. In this sense, *what* exactly we do is not so important...what is much more important is, *how* we do it.

It is a good time to discover the power of concentration, the ability to deepen our thinking, to slow down a bit. It is a time to give real value to things, to real human virtues.

The current crisis will pass, as everything passes. Try using the time to invest in what is essential to you, in the permanent things. It's totally worth it.

As much as possible, stay safe and keep calm.

Yaron Barzilay.

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