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Learning to live with a pandemic

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We have to seek within and find the strength to combat this malaise

John Donne's famous words, "For whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee," are becoming so real with every passing day, with the fear and thought of the inevitable grabbing each of us. All this because COVID-19 has chosen to become our "unwelcome forced guest".



The reports that people young and old, infirm or otherwise are passing on, affected by the virus, are further strengthening fear and anxiety.

While many of us know that we have little or no control over what is happening around us and to us because of the pandemic, yet each of us is consumed by anxiety. Anxiety, most

social scientists say, is "non-specific". They differentiate it from worry which they say relates to what is known.

Unhealthy force

Anxiety is often induced by our inability to alter or divert disquieting thoughts that bear upon our emotions in an unhealthy way.

As with many deaths which occur on sighting a snake not because of being bitten but out of the anxiety that fear causes, the sudden deaths of some of the persons, more so in the past couple of months, are the result of self-imposed fear.

The "truth" we must absorb, recognise and appreciate is that even if only in the medium term, we have to "learn to live with" the fact that the coronavirus is here to stay.

Given the likely possibility, how do we cope and how do we reconstruct our life and thinking? In my many conversations with persons from various walks of life, from

differing strata, even across varied ages, it is apparent that we have to seek within and find the strength to combat this malaise.

While there may be no ideal or perfect solution, a sensible suggestion being advanced by many is to be mindful of our surroundings; recognise self-preservation is as important as altruism or even more than it; and respect our self and regard our presence in life as significant.

If we choose to adhere to these edicts, we will recognise within us the ability to respond and not react. Responding gives us the required time and space to think through possibilities and choose the options that will benefit us; reacting denies that and instead hurtles us towards damnation..

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