



The Real Hero and The Real Challenge in the COVID-19 Era

Apolos B. Landa^a

^a MD, MSc, MTh, Past Regional Coordinator for South America, Luke Society, Moyobamba, Peru

We are going through a truly historic event — memorable for generations to come. Us old doctors, separated from the service due to precautions for COVID-19, had, in our time, cholera, malaria, yellow fever, and guerrillas (MRTA, Sendero, etc., in Peru), but those are nothing compared to the challenge for this generation of health workers (HWs). My young colleagues have a leading role to play — a priestly role like Aaron, the brother of Moses, when they came out of the oppression of Egypt (Numbers 16: 45-49), who interposed between the living and those who died in the plague of Core, Datan, and Abyran — and the plague stopped! We offer prayers for you and your families!

The real hero is not the celebrity from sports, Hollywood, politics, or the CEO of pharmaceutical or biotechnology corporations, but the hard-working and dedicated health professional — those who serve in markets, farmers, bank employees, police, and workers of municipal cleaning that are exposed every day, so that every country remains standing and the nation does not collapse.

The coronavirus is showing us how absurd it is to try to live with our backs to each other, without wanting to recognize that we are all, in everything, interdependent and co-responsible. The materialistic system based on receiving for oneself, dehumanized us and made us depend on individualistic profit and consumption, without responsibility for each other, and even less for the creation/nature of which we are part. We evaded our part and passed our responsibility onto others.

And now nature/creation sends us a virus that shows us how vulnerable we really are. We pretend to be cordial and affectionate, when in reality we are not concerned about the well-being of others. This vulnerability shows us that in this way we may never become part of the mutuality system for which we were created, in which the law of mutual responsibility and guarantee governs. That is, we all give the best of our abilities for the greatest well-being of all, and we do not worry about ourselves because we have everyone worried about us too (2 Corinthians 8:12-15). So, nobody lacks because nobody accumulates too much for himself. That law is as old as Creation itself: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18; Luke 10:27). Hopefully, this time we do not ignore that ancient directive. As in Exodus, before Sinai, it is only in obeying it that we will understand. As Rabbi Dr. Michael Laitman would say it:

In fact, this virus is a remedy for my ego and it comes to show me that I must rise above my ego and connect with others and in this I find the remedy, the correction for our situation. Let's try to realize that running away, that my selfish "I" towards the common point between us, in this connection is the upper world, the upper force, the main dimension, a higher level than mine, this is what is called Israel (right / *yashar* / ישר-אל - G-d / *el* / אל) - right to G-d, and there we will be directed towards the Creator and there is our eternal, spiritual life in the connection between us.¹

Even the meaning of professional and personal success seems to have changed in our times. Success was usually defined or perceived as a feeling of fulfillment by fitting into a role, which in turn confers value and meaning to the very existence within a system.

Much more than in all history, in the last two generations, the current socio-economic system linked success to monetary gratification, to wealth or material attainment, to the level of power, control and influence that one exerts on others; and to the unlimited satisfaction of our desires, making them insatiable.

Health professionals have not been immune to this distortion, which has led to perceiving health as a commodity, the health system as a profit industry, and illness as a recyclable condition that gives us the opportunity to achieve professional or personal "success".

This is the reason why at the same time that humanity has reached the maximum capacity to generate wealth and welfare of all kinds; along with the greater technological development to prevent, early-diagnose and eradicate diseases, there is more soul impoverishment, misery and disease than at all times in the world's history.

True, health is the most complete state of physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being - ie. *Shalom*, and not only the absence of disease. However, to achieve this we need to postpone money, prestige and power as satisfying determinants of success in our doctor-patient/community relationships and we must recover the value of the total person; the significance of the human connection and social, emotional, and spiritual unconditional reciprocity as the basis and guarantee of personal and collective well-being.

How do we achieve this? Such is the challenge and the task that we have before all the health professionals and society, who awoke to what this coronavirus is making us conscious of.

A virus is a message, a piece of information, a string of precise RNA commands or instructions, but a message nevertheless. Maybe, then, the SARS-CoV-2 virus is a message from our damaged world – from nature, be it non-human- or human-manipulated – a message from our damaged system of life due to our materialism and our attitude of receiving insatiably for ourselves without considering others. This dehumanizes us, when we depend on an individualistic profit and consumption, and disregard the other — including all of creation/nature.

Like when our computer systems get hung up when the software is contaminated by a distorted message from an extraneous virus, our systems of life in the world get hung up until we scrutinize and discover the errors and correct the software.

Our ego was created as a recipient, always desiring to receive; we are not guilty of that. However, the final purpose of our creation was to be conformed to the image and likeness of our Creator. But the One who created all was never lacking anything. In fact, He is The Source, the Eternal Bestower, the One who is Good and Doer of good. His glorious nature is just being the source, the existence, and end of everything (Rom 11:36), never lacking, never wanting, and complete in Himself.

How could we ever become like Him, for everything we are has been received and so does proceed from Him. We start to resemble Him when we acknowledge Him, turn towards Him, and want to be like Him in all His communicable attributes, above all the attribute of *bestowing*. Hence, this changes the intention from receiving for ourselves to receiving only for the good of His creatures (humanity) and creation. So, we give delight to the Creator when we also want to give what we have received and so fulfill the desire of our Creator for His Creation, which is to be good

and do good to all, which will bring about total well-being, which is Health for all!

אין עוד מלבדו (Ein 'Od M'lvado)²

References:

1. Laitman M. From the morning lesson. Destacados Seleccionados. 2020 Apr 1. Cabalá

Media. Petak Tikva, Israel. Available from: <https://kabbalahmedia.info/es/lessons/cu/xva3jwC9?sstart=0m54s&send=4m41s>

2. Deuteronomy 4:35c "אין עוד מלבדו", "Ein 'Od M'lvadoh" is the transliteration of the Hebrew text which literally means "there is no one (nothing) but Him alone" from whom all things proceed.

Competing Interests: None declared.

Correspondence: Dr. Apolos Landa, San Martin, Peru. apoloslanda@gmail.com

Cite this article as: Landa AB. The real hero and the real challenge in the COVID-19 era. Christian Journal for Global Health. April 2020;7(1):30-32. <https://doi.org/10.15566/cjgh.v7i1.383>

© Author This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are properly cited. To view a copy of the license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>
