



❖ A Wake Up Call ❖

Life as we know it, can now be divided into 'before' and 'after' the C-19. As the French politician, Pieyre-Alexandre Anglade put it, **“The C-19 is the crisis that makes us leave the 20th century and enter the 21st century.”** This is particularly true for Lebanon, a country that has been fermenting since October, in a myriad of unprecedented political, social, and economic events.

On March the 7th 2020, Lebanon announced failure to pay its maturing Eurobonds, a move that signaled an end to the prevailing business model of the 20th century. From the early age of the oil boom in the middle east up until today, the prevailing economy model in Lebanon -check [February Newsletter](#)- could be summarized in one sentence: what is good for the banking sector, is good for Lebanon. Banks preferred to finance traders rather than farmers because the risk period was shorter and the collateral was more liquid. On October 17th 2019, as this system was collapsing when banks could not attract anymore hard currencies (mainly usd and euros) to keep the economy running, the people's revolution kicked off. People began dreaming of a different Lebanon. Then came C-19.

In 1923 Gibran Kahlil Gibran had the foresight to write:

“Pity the nation that is full of beliefs and empty of religion.

**Pity the nation that wears a cloth it does not weave
and eats a bread it does not harvest.”**

We believe C-19 is a wakeup call to change our behavior to be more sustainable and caring about the world and ourselves. In the Post C-19 era, we could make changes, starting with prioritizing our agriculture. For us C-19 is our Chernobyl that stripped the authorities of its rhetoric and stressed the resources below the bare minimum, C-19 is our “accelerator of history.” In what direction will it take us?



Does it really make sense that in Lebanon our national dish, hoummos, is made with chickpeas imported from Mexico, instead of from the chickpeas grown in the Beqaa? The dry fruits produced in Lebanon are tastier and nuttier than the imported jumbo dried fruits. By the way- the moujadara in Lebanon? Most of the lentils we eat are imported from Canada. Our two national staple dishes have to cross the oceans and pollute the skies before making it to our table - Why?

Farm-to-table dining should not remain a concept reserved to the elite, but a day-to-day reality for all our local cuisine. The majority in Lebanon will accept to pay a premium of 10% to 20% in return for fresher, tastier ingredients from local farmers in Akkar and the Beqaa. And as a consequence, Lebanese farmers will regain pride in their land and guide the country into a model of self sufficiency.

The Corona crisis demonstrates how vulnerable we are as human beings- regardless of our wealth, power, or nationalities. The time has come to pull together our energy and efforts to preserve the environment and our planet. Now, more than ever, we need bold leaders that take responsible actions and prioritize the environment. ‘Sustainability’ will not remain a word used by a few hipsters, but a universal driver for global societies. If our leaders cannot lead us, then it is time for each and everyone of us to take individual actions that will become a collective whole. Let’s start with the basics:



We need to encourage and support farmers in Lebanon by giving them recognition, advice, subsidized loans, equipment and consumables, tax breaks, indigenous crops, and seeds -not the genetically modified or imported species. These steps will foster pride in one's farm and land, while putting barriers to traders who compete against the farmers.

We need to remind individuals of their personal impact. We must show how their choice for a local produce over an imported product **supports their fellow citizens and lower their footprint on the environment.** We must generate awareness about the negative effects of pesticides so often used in agriculture, so that the consumer understands the importance of sourcing food that is organic and free of chemicals.

Villages around the world are famed for their produce: Roquefort for its blue cheese, Puy for its green lentils, Bresse for its chickens, Genovese for its pesto, the Hokkaido for its crab - so why should our villages be any different? We need towns and villages across Lebanon not to be known for their emigration and desolateness, but for the quality of their honey, lupin, cucumbers, chickpeas, meat, craftsmen, waving, etc ... We need food labeling to be supervised and transparent. **We need** fresh markets to flourish and **social influencers to promote the zaatar from Ras Baalbeck, the chickpeas from Kfarmekché, the olive oil from Beino, and the kichek from Baalbeck !**

In the 20th Century, Lebanon had the disposable wealth to follow a business model that shunned common sense and snubbed its rural roots. **Shouldn't we, post-corona, be more humble and realistically proud of our roots ?**



Gibran Khalil Gibran



Lebanon-born writer and artist Kahlil Gibran became known for his mystical Arabic and English works, earning fame following the 1923 publication of 'The Prophet.'

**“I prefer to be a dreamer among the humblest, with visions to be realized,
than lord among those without dreams and desires.”**

Born in 1883 in Lebanon, Kahlil Gibran moved to the United States in 1895 and was exposed to Boston's artistic community. After moving to New York City, Gibran began writing books in English, including his most famous work, *The Prophet* (1923). The popularity of *The Prophet* endured well after the author's death in 1931, making him the third-best-selling poet of all time.

✦ **Meet Rabih Najem** ✦



Rabih Najem started out with Massaya in 1999. Along the 20+ years he developed his skills at work while his family grew up. Father for two children, is responsible of labelling, packaging and handling shipments. He pretty much handles a department on his own.

Rabih grew up in Zahle and he surely loves nature. Every year, around that time, he volunteers to go with our pruning team to take advantage of Lebanon's most beautiful sites.

Yet again, Massaya's team members are always prone to learning and improving their skills. A diverse team with all kind of backgrounds, a snapshot of the Lebanon we love!

[Learn More](#)

✦ **Keep Safe** ✦



Picture: Unknown Lebanese Artist

The year 2020 has surely left us some surprises. Seeing the effects of C19, the world is facing drastic changes in our everyday life. We have to take this matter very seriously by fulfilling our responsibility. The only way to help in these difficult times is by doing our part and staying home.

As students, employees, housewives ..., we are prone to certain duties in our daily lives such as professional obligations, attending classes, visiting relatives or even socializing. Our priorities leave us no room to do all the things we wish we had time to fulfill. So, use your free time wisely, take advantage of it and do all the things you keep on postponing.

Maybe try a new recipe or even learn how to cook, you could organize your closet and maybe donate some things you don't need. You could learn a new language, work out, read a book you had bookmarked for so long, watch that tv series you never had time to, practice your skills if you play any musical instruments, connect with friends or family you have not heard of and above all spend quality time with your family.

We would like to send a big shoutout to the nurses and doctors out there, the heroes of today, that have been putting all their efforts and putting their lives at risk in order to help us get through this crisis.

Gandhi once said, **“Be the change you wish to see in the world”**. Change starts within ourselves as the future of our lives is shaped by the choices we make today.

Stay home, stay healthy, stay safe and together, we will break the chain of this virus.

MARCH SCHEDULE

Massaya Boutiques: Safe home deliveries from Monday till Friday

Fireplace & SunsetBar:
Temporarily closed until further notice

Massaya wines and arak inquiries:
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