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PRESS RELEASE

The Attijariwafa bank Foundation analyzes the psyche of Moroccans facing the ordeal of confinement

Casablanca, June 2, 2020. As part of its conference series "Exchange to better understand" dedicated to Covid-19, the Attijariwafa bank Foundation broadcasted this Monday, June 1, 2020 on Attijariwafa bank's Youtube channel, its fourth digital conference around the theme: **"Covid-19: the psyche of Moroccans facing the ordeal of confinement"**.

This conference brought together **Dr. Hachem Tyal**, Psychiatrist and Psychoanalyst, **Ms. Nadia Cherkaoui**, Clinical Psychologist and **Mr. Murtada Calamy**, Journalist and Columnist.

Moderated by **Ms. Hanane Harrath**, Journalist, the speakers analysed the reasons why the outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic caused so much concern, anxiety and fear, unlike other chronic diseases which have a much higher mortality rate, such as cardiovascular disease (5 million deaths per year) and lung disease (7 million deaths per year). "We see the world with our subjectivity and this representation is our frame of reference. Unlike the chronic diseases whose causes we know, Covid-19 is unknown to us and our fear of imminent death is linked to this lack of knowledge of the virus", explains Dr. Tyal.

As a result, this unprecedented situation gave rise to a series of defensive reactions, such as the wave of humor in social networks or the spontaneous and almost general surge of solidarity. "This virus fed our sense of powerlessness and forced us to become aware of impending death. The media, for their part, amplified this state of anxiety by broadcasting in a loop the images of mass graves in which hundreds of Covid-19 victims were buried, depriving the families of mourning rituals", says Mr. Calamy. These images from the world's most powerful countries, such as the United States and China, have aggravated the feeling of powerlessness and fear in the world.

In this context, widespread containment is seen as a prescription from above, as an injunction that tests our defense mechanisms. This confinement has aggravated the sense of isolation and impaired our ability to communicate with our loved ones. In addition, the widespread feeling of job insecurity is fueled by the threat of a collapse of the economic fabric following the cessation of activity in most sectors. The interference between the two has led us to respond with various defence mechanisms such as anxiety or panic. "We are still in the observation phase and we do not yet know all the after-effects that this ordeal will leave on each of us. Several issues remain unresolved, including bereavement for the families of the victims", explains Ms. Cherkaoui.



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At the family level, containment has led each member to make rearrangements dictated by unusual proximity. Over time, this poses a problem of psychological balance because each member has to mobilize a lot of energy to accommodate the constant presence of other members. In order to cohabit, the family must therefore adopt a different balance within the couple, and in the parent/child relationship. "We all have a great capacity to adapt and it only takes a personal effort to restore this balance within the family unit", says Dr. Tyal.

For their part, the teenagers experienced this confinement in pain because of their constant need to share with others of their age. "Many adolescents express their fears and anxieties about the omnipresence of death on the outside world through platforms of accompaniment and psychological support", says Ms. Cherkaoui. There has also been an increase in violence against women, an estimated 6 million of whom are in vulnerable situations. Within the family, each member will therefore react differently to the psychological aggression caused by the Covid-19, and transfer their suffering to other members.

What psychological toll will this pandemic leave? "Any change in mentality takes place over the long term. But it is possible that we may start to focus on being rather than appearing and take the time to take care of ourselves. However, in countries that have implemented deconfinement, old reflexes, such as long queues at the doors of commercial stores, are returning." "In any case, the paradigm shift will depend on whether or not a vaccine is discovered in the coming months. If the Covid-19 vaccine is launched, we will probably see the old reflexes return. If not, we will be forced to fundamentally rethink our lifestyle and priorities", conclude the speakers.

On the sidelines of this fascinating discussion, the panelists commented on the drawings made by the young beneficiaries of the "Academy of Arts" program of the Attijariwafa bank Foundation, who participated in the #Ibda3Mendarek contest to express their perception of the Covid-19 crisis.

Through this new format of conferences and its various citizen actions, the Attijariwafa bank Foundation demonstrates, once again, its willingness to promote proximity with all citizens, while supporting a constructive debate around current issues that concern the future of our country.

Youtube link to invite Internet users to view the entire conference: <https://youtu.be/kSK05X5yud8>

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