

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

All praise and thanks to Allah (SWT) who honours humanity with a system of guidance that nurtures the holistic human being. A guidance wholly available to all who desires it and forms the structural basis on which humanity evolves on this level of existence.

So innately natural is the message that the true believer is constantly and gently reminded to place himself under this Divine guidance in a way that is not alien to him and is satiated at once by the realisation that this is his true nature.

This guidance is the Deen of Islam. The Mu'mien realizes that this path of protection of the self, invites humanity to a life of absolute trust in Allah (SWT). The following words should give us pause:

"There 31million 530 thousand seconds in a year , a thousand milli-seconds in a second, a million micro seconds, a billion nano seconds , and the one constant connecting nano seconds to years , is change.

The universe, from atom to galaxy is in a perpetual state of flux.

But we humans don't like change. We fight it.

It scares us.

So we create the illusion of stasis. We want to believe in a world at rest.

The world of right now. Yet our great paradox remains the same.

The moment we grasp the now, that now is gone.

We cling to snapshots, but life is moving pictures,

Each nano second different than the last.

Time forces us to grow, to adapt. Because every time we blink our eyes the world shifts beneath our feet."

Do we realize that our inability to change, to evolve is a sign of mistrust in Allah (SWT)? Everything that is haadith will change and evolve and eventually expire. The pillars on which this sacred communiqué rests, transmits an essential truth.

The shahadah allows for constant reevaluation and excavates that essential truth within that is innate. And that is, trust in Allah (SWT) with sincerity. What fosters this better than an ongoing gathering of knowledge through education and research. We are at once reminded to: "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave...even in China"

T.S Eliot says: " We shall not cease from exploration. And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started. And know the place for the first time"

The salah is the sacred manner in the next level of development in our engagement with Almighty Allah (SWT). Further nurturing the policy of trust ignited with the shahadah, in Allah (SWT).

For years travellers and caravans journeying through the desert found their way by looking to the stars to guide their way. They were worshipped as gods during the time of the *jahilliyah*.

It was at this time that this ayah was revealed:

"And that Allah is the Rab of Sirius (a star that the pagan Arabs used to worship)".53:49

Stars and indeed all created things are *haadith*; things that have a beginning and therefore an end. But Allah (SWT) is QADEEM; has no beginning, and therefore has no end, and is All Knowing and Ever Generous, and has sent to us the salah as a spiritual compass and the Prophet (SAW) as a conduit.

Allah called on those early believers to believe in the message conveyed to them, and said in Surah 53: 1-4:

"By the star when it goes down (or vanishes).Your companion (Muhammad) has neither gone astray nor has erred. Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is only a revelation revealed"

Already we see the symbiotic relationship between the first two arkaans; the shahadah and the salaah. The correctness of the salaah depends on the internalization of the shahadah.

Ultimately Saum promotes taqwa and eemaan in those who believe. It seeks to break down the social barriers between rich and poor, in that the fortunate are made to feel empathy for the less so.

Where the salah teaches structure in all actions (salah at appointed times), fasting promotes self control.

The process of Zakah discourages hoarding, and with that, greed and materialism, vices that play on human weakness and desires. Through this putting aside of portions for another of lesser circumstance, one is prompted to realize your place and therewith responsibility in encouraging financial, as well as spiritual growth within one's family unit (2:215), one's community and the global ummah. Zakah holds us to ransom, each accountable for each other financially and spiritually.

Then, the sacred journey that is the Gadj is the indicator of the level of commitment, development and progress of the global ummah on *journey* to al-ihsan. And as the pilgrims circumbulate the kaaba they align themselves with the natural order inherent in all things created, the natural way that is Islam. Will the global ummah, upon their return to all corners of the globe rejuvenate their respective communities or aid in its stagnation?

Dr Hussain and Ali Ashraf reports in their book, Crisis in Muslim Education (1979. P20-21):

"In a society passing through a psychological and moral crisis, produced by a hysterical wave of materialism, where wealth and not morality is the standard of honour and respect, no educational system, however developed and widespread, can fructify and give rise to a spiritual- moral society"

"...the products of our universities and higher seats of learning nowadays find themselves swept away by the general current of the time, unmindful of everything else except a better and prosperous future for themselves. They are all suffering from a common disease we can call careerism"

These words were uttered in 1979. Today we can all testify that not only are they still true today, but the condition of the ummah has deteriorated even further consumed by the malaise of society.

The authors go on to say that the only perceived remedy is: "...the widest possible dissemination of the Islamic Dawah..."

Has Allah (SWT) not provided us with such an 'arrangement' over 1433 years ago? The Nabi Muhammad (SAW) had said:

"Take from me how to perform the Gadj"

This annual migration of humanity is thus part of the human fitra, moving physically and spiritually towards the truth, toward the siraatal mustaqeem.

This movement is to reaffirm our sincere belief in Allah (SWT) expounded by true and sincere submission in our Rab. The antithesis of such movement is alienation from the truth consciously or unconsciously.

The Nabi (SAW) says:

"Modesty is a part of Faith"

Which means that Islam invites humanity to honesty, integrity and with it modesty. Not moral degradation.

And as Allah (SWT) says:

"Allah (SWT) is the One who sent Allah(SWT)'s messenger on the basis of guidance and the system/ structure of truth to which no other system can be compared, and it is sufficient that Allah (SWT) is the witness bearer that verily Mohammad (SAW) is the messenger of Allah (SWT)"

As the ayah points out. The system the Nabi Muhammad (SAW) was ordered to present to humanity is a system of positive guidance and truth.

And gadj, therefore its litmus test for progress. And assessment period to arrive at realizations and conclusions, with ways forward to remedy the modus operandi to again align with the truth.

Here is a poignant quote:

*“There are 3 million species of animals living in tropical rain forests and one of them, the red fire ant is underground under constant threat of annihilation from flash floods.
When the floods come fire ants hold onto each other creating a living raft that can float until the water recedes. For months if necessary. So how does a species figure something like that out? Instinct? Trail and error?
What if you were the one who knew what needed to be done, but you had no words.
How do you make the others understand?”*

Human beings are not the strongest species on the planet. The one advantage we have is our ability to cooperate, to reason. To help each other out. We recognize ourselves in each other. And we are programmed for compassion, for heroism, for love. And those things make us stronger, faster and smarter.”

*“Everyday, every moment, every nano second the world changes.
Electrons bump into each other, and react. People collide and alter each others paths.
Change isn’t easy.
More often than not it’s retching and difficult.
But maybe that’s a good thing. Because its change that makes us grow. Keeps us resilient.*

And teaches us to evolve.”

May Allah (SWT) with our sincere commitment and effort afford us the opportunity to recognise and steer clear of unnatural dealings and actions and towards true holistic growth.

And may we be granted that vision and goal directed action to realize our true journey on this dhunya is in the way of the siratal mustaqeem. Allah (SWT) knows best.

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