

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

All praise and thanks to Allah (SWT) who has endowed the human being with an innate manner in order to live a life of dignity and respect.

Allah (SWT) reminds us in Surah Ar-Rum:

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ
اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا
بُدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ
الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

“ And so, set your face steadfastly toward the [one] ever-true faith, turning away from all that is false, in accordance with the natural disposition [fitra] which Allah (SWT) has instilled into man, [for] not to allow any change to corrupt what Allah (SWT) has thus created- this is the purpose of the ever-true faith, but most people know it not.”

30:30

Here Allah (SWT) tells us to “surrender our whole being” (face) to the one true faith. The term fitra, rendered here as “natural disposition”, connotes in this context man’s inborn, intuitive ability to discern between right and wrong, true and false, and, thus, to sense Allah (SWT) existence and Oneness. Man has an instinctive cognition of Allah (SWT). Similarly the Nabi (SAW) has reiterated:

“Each child is born in this natural disposition; It is his “parents” that later turn him into a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian”.

[The term parents here has the wider meaning of “social influences” or “environment”]

But man, has the *capacity or power to go against his naturally good nature*. Allah says in Surah Al-Alaq:

الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾
عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾
كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنَّاظٍ ﴿٦﴾
أَنْ رَأَاهُ اسْتَعْجَلَّ ﴿٧﴾
إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَىٰ ﴿٨﴾

“...Allah (SWT) has taught man that which he knew not. Nay!, Verily, man does transgress [in disbelief and evil deed]. Because he considers himself self sufficient. Surely, to your Rab is your return.”

96:5-8

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ
 ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى
 أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى
 شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
 إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

“... Allah calls upon them to bear witness about themselves: Am I not your Sustainer? – to which they answer: Indeed, we do bear witness!”

7:172

According to the Quran, the ability to perceive the existence of an Allah is inborn in human nature (fitra); and it is this instinctive cognition- which may or may not subsequently be blurred by self-indulgence or adverse environmental influences- that makes every sane human being “bear witness about himself” before Allah (SWT).

This rampant foolishness and *narrow-mindedness is expressed in pride, selfishness, hatred* and the like. This in turn gives rise to greed, plunder, destruction, war and countless other forms of injustice. This is why we are witness to such malaise in our immediate society. The fazaad that is so prevalent is indicative of this ‘unnatural’ state in which we find ourselves, and are content to languish in.

There are countless studies and statistics that show that never before has the gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots” been so insurmountable. A despicable ‘achievement’ in a civilized society. The numbers are ever more frightening at a global scale where war and the plundering of resources are rife.

Abdul Wahid Hamid (1990) says this in his book: “Islam the natural way”:

“If we look at the human condition, you cannot fail to be moved by the indescribable pain and suffering which people undergo throughout the world. It is a dead conscience that will not be filled with anguish at the sight of starved and shriveled bodies, or at the sight of innocent children disfigured and maimed by chemical weapons, or the sight of people who fight for a patch of pavement on which to rest their heads at night” [p153]

The Deen of Islam gifted to us, is a natural way of living. A system so effective that it will [if correctly and sincerely implemented] alleviate the financial hardships of the less privileged in society through the sharing of wealth, build a society of higher moral and spiritual values, and check the baser instincts of greed, miserliness and selfishness that can lead to materialism. But we are heedless.

We have ‘declared war’ on human existence as it pertains to dignity, respect and security. How far have we strayed from the dictum of the Nabi (SAW) who advises humanity to move towards, and develop in a sustainable manner for true holistic advancement?

“None of you truly places their trust in Allah (SWT), until that which he wishes for his brother, he wishes for himself”

And the Nabi (SAW) also warns us:

“If you feel no shame. Then do as you wish”

Allah (SWT) says in Surah Hud:

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً
 وَاحِدَةً وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾

“...your Rab could surely have made all mankind one single community: but they continue to hold divergent views...”

11:118

This unceasing differentiation in men's views and ideas is not incidental but is a basic factor of human existence. If Allah (SWT) had willed that all human beings should be of one persuasion, all intellectual progress would have been ruled out, and "they would have been similar in their social life to the bees and the ants, while in their spiritual life they would have been like the malaikah, by their nature - true- that is to say devoid of free will which enables man to choose between right and wrong- and is distinct from all other sentient beings.

And Allah says:

قُلْ إِنِّ هُدَى
اللَّهُ هُوَ الْهُدَى وَأَمْرًا لِنُسْلِمَ

"Say: Allah's guidance is the only guidance and we have been directed/instructed/commanded to submit to the Rab of existence..."

لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧١﴾

"And thus to establish regular prayers, and to build ever increasing devoutness and consciousness of Allah, for it is to Allah we shall be gathered."

وَأَنْ أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَهُوَ
الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

A poet said:

وماذا سيكون الحياة على هذه الدنيا، إذا التواضع يجب أن تختفي

"And what will be the life of this dhunya, if modesty should disappear?"

Hence the mu'mien contemplates his mantle as overseer on this Allah (SWT)'s dhunya and realises the schism that exists between righteousness and despicability. But Allah (SWT) does advise us hence:

"Unto every one of you Allah (SWT) has appointed a law and way of life. And if Allah (SWT) had willed, would surely have made you one single Ummah: but in order to test you ...do good works, Unto Allah (SWT) you must return; and then you will understand all that on which you were wont to differ..."

5:48

Is this not why we have progressed from the institute of Saum to the institute of Haj? So that we may shift our focus from the reaffirming of the individual identity to the collective identity? Is it not essential that we wake from this self made slumber and focus wholeheartedly on the pitfalls and destructive practices permeating the ummah today?

Will we let the pristine guidance of the Quran and Sunnah steer our course or remain heedless? Should we choose the latter, the warning is clear:

وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا
هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا

“And [on that day] the Rasool (SAW) will say: O! my Rab, some of my ummah have come to regard this Holy Quran as something to be discarded...”

25:30

Allah says in the Quran:

“To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way”. - 5:48

It is narrated by Ibn Umar: that Allah (SWT)'s Messenger said: *Islam is based on five principles:*

To bear witness/testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah(SWT) , to perform the salah at prescribed times ,to observe saum/fasting, to pay Zakah , and to perform haj.

As we examine these principles and the significance thereof individually we will begin to understand how they are in fact each a rung on a ladder, pillars supporting an essential framework, a DNA sequence at the very crux of a human being.

DNA is the building blocks of all living things, formed from a particular number of atoms, coming together in a certain way with enzymes that work in harmony; carrying out complex processes. These building blocks are encoded with a storehouse of information that is present at the conception of a baby. All characteristics determined by Allah, and woven into its essence which is contained in the nucleus of a single cell.

This framework is essential for the optimum growth of the human organism at a cellular level. So to does the siraatal mustakiem aid our growth in the natural way that is Islam.

What we will begin to discover is how they influence and steer the very consciousness of every Muslim.

What we fail to realize is that this world we reside in is *our* test of faith, and we cannot veto our responsibility to this world. If you truly understand the significance of the arkaans of Islam we will realize that as a true Muslim we have a responsibility to the ummah. And how can you truly serve Allah by neglecting your family, your community ,your ummah?

A baby cannot return to the womb of its mother because it is safe.

One cannot return to a state of ignorance once enlightened. So we must move ahead to the unseen trials with the siraatal musta kiem as our lantern.

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.

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