

Good News

And give good news to those who do good (to others) – Holy Quran 22:37

January 2020 Volume 11 No. 01

Will '2020' Bring the Much Needed Balance We All Yearn For?

Ebrahim Mohamed

Numerology gurus tell us that 2020 emits an energy that embraces pragmatism, conscientiousness, teamwork, relationships, diplomacy, and a focus on building a secure foundation for the future. Sounds good to me though I must admit I have never had too much interest in the art or, as some put it, the science of numerology.

Numerology aside, **2020** somehow seems to denote a 'scale of balance', of 'equilibrium', 'fairness', 'calm level-headedness', 'justice' – characteristics we don't often come across in our societies these days. It thus reminds me of the fact that without a proper sense of balance in our lives we expose ourselves to potential mishaps, chaos and even disasters whether on a personal, societal or environmental level.

The Holy Quran draws our attention to the importance of living a balanced life in the following verse:

'O you who believe, forbid not the good things which Allah has made lawful for you and *exceed not the limits.*' – 5:87

Now it is a known fact that excesses, extravagances, extremities etc. of all sorts are potentially harmful and often fatal. And thus we are further told:

'Surely Allah loves not *those who exceed the limits.*' -5:87

For example, if we do not control our diets we expose ourselves to all sorts of sicknesses such as diabetes, heart disease etc. We are told if we eat too much it is not good and we if we eat too little it is also not good. A balanced diet of healthy, wholesome food is often recommended.

However, a proper balanced lifestyle applies to all aspects of our lives and not just to our diets.

Many view religious excesses and austerity, for example, as a show of piety. However, because such behaviour, despite its good intentions, in most cases gives rise to insincerity and hypocrisy, it has no premise in scripture. Man is a social being not meant to devote all his time to worship alone. Engaging with society to do good is as much a form of worship. Religious practices, too, are not meant to be onerous and stoic as if punitive to appease an angered God. Thus it is stated in the Holy Quran:

‘And as for monasticism they innovated it – We did not prescribe it to them.’ – 57:27

About the ‘Makers of the Law’, Jesus says:

‘They devour widows’ houses and for a show *make lengthy prayers.*’
– Mark 12:40

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him) himself taught that religion does not consist of burdensome religious exercises but rather in living a humane life in which due regard is paid to the rights of others.

Reported by his companion Abu Hurairah, he is on record as saying:

‘Religion is easy, and no one exerts himself too much in religion but it overpowers him; **so act aright and keep to the mean and be of good cheer** and ask for (Divine) help at morning and evening and during a part of the night.’ - (Bukhari)

‘Jabir ibn Samurah reported: I was praying with the Messenger of God, (peace and blessings of God be upon him), and his prayer was of moderate length and his sermon was of moderate length. - (Sahi Muslim)

Even fasting in the month of Ramadan, is meant for physical and spiritual well-being and not intended to impose undue hardship. Thus the sick, the travellers, pregnant women, etc. are precluded from fasting because:

‘Allah desires ease for you and He desires not hardship for you.’ – 2:185

Many medical experts now prescribe *intermittent fasting* for the over-indulgent because of the health benefits associated with it.

The Dangers of Imbalances in the Human Psyche

Ibn Manzūr writes in his classical Arabic dictionary, *Lisan al- Arab* 15/209:

‘Every praiseworthy characteristic has two blameworthy poles. Generosity is the middle between miserliness and extravagance. Courage is the middle between cowardice and recklessness. Humanity has been commanded to avoid every such blameworthy trait.’

We are all too familiar with the dangers excesses in human traits such as *lust*, *greed* and *anger* bode for us. *Lust*, *greed* and *anger* are the core motive traits in us essential for our survival as a species and should not be done away with; rather, it should be refined and controlled in order for it to be effective and not harmful. For example when each of us transform and refine our *lust* into *love*, *compassion* and *empathy*, our *greed* into *inventiveness*, *innovation*, and *enthusiasm* and our *anger* into *courage*, *bravery*, and *boldness* then these raw traits lose their ‘toxic’ nature.

Needless to say though, even these refined traits need to be executed with a due sense of balance, at the right time and in the right manner, in order to achieve the

ultimate degree of effectiveness and not to cause harm. For example to extend excessive love and compassion repeatedly to a hardened, unrepentant criminal might not be the most effective way to bring about a change for the better and we might well find that some form of harsher disciplinary action might have to be resorted to in order to bring about the desired results.

In the end success depends on the choices and ‘balanced’ decisions we make and it has been proven over and over, that calm, rational, level-headed approaches are more effective than reckless, over-hasty actions, driven by emotion. How often, even in recent times, have we not seen nations go to war with devastating results because of such reckless, lop-sided decisions made by over-blown, bombastic egotists in charge?

Almighty God, our Creator, the All-Knower thus commands us in the Holy Quran: ‘O you who believe, be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice, and **let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably.**’ – 5:8; because: ‘We have made you *ummataw wassatam* - a nation that is just and equitable that **does not incline to extremes**’ – 2:143. Muslims in particular should thus beware that all forms of injustices brought about by

extremism, fanaticism and all the other equally ugly ‘isms’ that go with it have absolutely no home in the Holy Quran and thus in Islam.

It would, therefore, be advisable, I truly believe, that we not allow the imbalances of the 21st Century overtake our humanity completely AS A MATTER OF URGENCY!.

The fact that we are *overfed* but remain *undernourished*; are *over-informed* but remain *ill-informed*; are either *far left* (too liberal) or *far right* (too conservative), should not stop us from keep reaching out for the Divine *balance* and *measure* that keep order in the universe, and use the same Divine principles to bring stability in our own lives.

In order to achieve this, we need to stay in harmony with the universe and not in conflict with it for, if we do, we will continue to suffer the consequences as ‘Mother Earth’ responds with earthquakes, floods, fires; plagues – ‘her’ only means of telling us to *please stop!* Stop the exploitation and abuse that come with over-industrialization, reckless fracking and the devastating effect of weapons of mass destruction, indiscriminately unleashed on her.

These words penned by a famous 60/70’s lyricist describe this cruelty poignantly:

‘What have they done to the Earth?

What have they done to our Fair Sister?

Ravaged and Plundered, Fenced her up,

And stuck her with knives in the side of the Dawn.’

The Holy Quran, thus, very appropriately, warns:

‘And the heavens, He raised it high, and He set up the *measure*,

That you *may not exceed the measure*,

And keep up *the balance* with equity.’ – 55:7-9

We hope and pray that these words of the Almighty will resonate well with all those who are serious about the welfare of humankind and that space we occupy in the universe we affectionately call ‘Mother Earth’.

If ‘measure’ and ‘balance’ are what ‘2020’ means to you, may it be put to good use in all aspects of your lives,

relationships, religions, professions, and
NOT BE IGNORED!

**Gems of Wisdom from the pen of
Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (Founder
of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam)**

‘That religion is no religion which does not inculcate broad sympathy, nor does a person deserve to be called human who does not have a sympathetic soul within him.’

‘Our God has not withheld His bounty from any people. The powers and faculties which He bestowed on the ancient peoples of India have also been bestowed on the Arabs, the Persians, the Syrians, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Europeans and the Americans. For all of them, the earth of God serves as a floor, and for all of them His sun, moon, and stars give light, and also perform other functions. All of them derive a benefit from the air, water, fire, earth and other things created by God, and all of them use the produce of the earth, its corn and its herbs, its flowers and its fruits. These liberal ways of God teach us that we also should do good to all mankind, and should not be narrow-minded, nor limit our

sympathy (to certain peoples only). The Holy Quran opens with the very verse which teaches this broad doctrine: ‘Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.’ (1:1) All the 'worlds' include all the different peoples, different ages, and different countries.’ – *Message of Peace*



We strongly condemn all forms of human rights and environmental abuse. We especially condemn the ruthless killings of all innocent parties in the name of Religion or State!

The Good News

Editor : Ebrahim Mohamed

Contact Details: P.O. Box 13744
Goodwood, Cape Town, South Africa
7463

Email: emuhamed@mweb.co.za

Publications: Ahmadiyya Anjuman
Isha'at Islam Lahore (South Africa)

Reg. P.B.O. 930050262