

Good News

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

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Coronavirus and the Birth of a *Spiritual* New World Order

Ebrahim Mohamed

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus, life in many parts of the world as we know it has not been the same. However, one cannot help but conclude that the problem is far greater than the physical trauma the virus is causing.

If one looks further than the physical, one sees an even more urgent need for a global, moral and spiritual *healing*. This pandemic has indeed heightened the need for serious introspection and spiritual transformation of all nations. For, let's face it, 21st Century moral standards across all spectra of life, secular as well as religious; have dropped so low that it was just a matter of time for some social implosion to occur that would evoke a much needed spiritual awakening across all borders. That time, it

would seem, has arrived! Or, at least, has appeared on the horizon. Many, for good reasons, see this as a blessing as it bodes the only guaranteed path to a lasting peace on earth.

Man, it is clear from his history, has not learnt much from past trials and tribulations. Since the very first industrial revolution, man's race for pelf and power – the creation of a dominant World Order of Materialism - has accelerated enormously to the extent that a kind of 'survival of the fittest' culture has today become the accepted norm of most political and social structures in the world. Already the mad race for power has led to two World Wars which unleashed such 'man on man' savagery that have caused the gruesome deaths of millions. The 'hot' wars were hardly over when it was replaced with equally destructive 'cold' trade wars, sanctions, and civil unrests, instigated by ideologues of the so called 'exceptional' super empire, Mammon, to oust non-conformists. These are but some of the nefarious means powerful nations use with impunity to gain access to the

rich natural resources of weaker nations. In addition to this, ruthless profiteering and over industrialization are the pernicious economic viruses created by modern man. To give an example; the gross behaviour of large pharmaceutical and food producing companies in favour of a few ultra rich has resulted in a stranglehold on the poor middle class whose suffering under these economic strains seems to never end. Those made to suffer under these unfavourable conditions often wonder when the rich and powerful will learn that this life is merely transient and that nothing lasts forever? The rhetorical question that naturally flashes through the minds of those truly concerned about the wellbeing of humankind is, 'Has man not learnt anything from the natural disasters; the floods, the earthquakes, the hurricanes, and the plagues that have already visited our planet?'

This is the unfortunate situation prevalent in the world today despite the fact that most religious scriptures are replete with narratives that point to the fact that whenever man's humanity had degenerated into savagery as a result of his lost faith in a Higher Power and his resultant greed for material wealth, trials and tribulations have been God's way of bringing him back to his senses.

If we consider that according to God's natural Law, every 'cause' has an

'effect' and that the predominant nature of God Almighty that we observe from Nature, is that He is *Beneficent* and *Merciful*, it should come as no surprise to us that man's misery is self-inflicted.

Now there might be a lot of speculation as to what caused the coronavirus outbreak, however, what is certain though is the devastating effect it has had on all facets of human life thus far. While still out of control, the virus is the cause that all activities including secular and religious across the world have been curtailed for safety reasons. Indeed a hard lesson for man to once again learn, that without divinely inspired qualities of humanity, morality, and spirituality; there is just no hope for the survival of humankind.

That an urgent shift from the prevailing grossly 'immoral' paradigm foolishly regarded by the many delusional members of society as a 'social norm' back to a state of complete subservience and accountability to Almighty God, the Possessor and Controller of the heavens and earth, is indeed now no longer a matter of debate. If man will not bring about a change, God Almighty in the interests of the survival of His creation will enforce a change. Thus we find that as events unfold before our eyes, daily, it seems more and more as if the Creator had pressed a 'reset button' to show man the way back to his

original ‘Garden’ that he had strayed so far from. And thus we ask, ‘Is this the long awaited “spiritual awakening” gone viral (no pun intended) that’s finally on almost everyone’s minds and lips?’ Is this the beckoning of the New World Order of Spirituality that will overtake the forces of materialism? Thus we find, after mentioning the collapse of the old order, the Holy Quran promises:

‘And certainly We wrote in the Book after the reminder that My righteous (God-fearing) servants will inherit the land.’ – 21:105

The Holy Quran warns man not to become too pre-occupied in materialism to the detriment of their souls:

‘Say: Shall We inform you who are the greatest losers in respect of deeds?

Those whose effort goes astray in this world’s life and **they think that they are making good manufactures.**

Those are they who disbelieve in the messages of their Lord and meeting with Him, **so their works are vain.** Nor shall We set up a balance for them on the day of Resurrection – (18:103 – 105)

Like never before, gigantic money spinning industries and institutions of commerce, trade, entertainment, tourism, and sports across the world have come to a

virtual standstill, literally, overnight as a result of a miniscule virus. Who, just a while ago, would have thought that bustling cities such as New York, Paris, Milan, Madrid etc. that ‘never slept’ would become virtual ghost towns in comparison with its erstwhile ‘proud’ vibrant status; with no one around to worship their ‘neon gods’ and party and relish in such debauchery that makes Sodom and Gomorrah look like a Sunday School in comparison.

With this global lockdown, we cannot but help wonder, is this perhaps God’s way of taking back control? Thus on a positive note, we have seen many blessings emerging amid the unfortunate trauma caused by the virus. For example, as a result of the significant slowdown on pollution-generating traffic and industries, someone observed that one can now experience rare clear, blue skies in China. A recent clip on BBC showed how crystal clear the waters in Venice have become, so much so, that for once one can actually *see* the fish! We have already also seen acts of *compassion* and *empathy* spread across the globe like never before. Hostilities seem to have been wisely suspended – we can only pray that it will stay like this forever.

Thus on a spiritual level we might ask, is this perhaps the collective ‘stillness’ our souls need for its own healing? A breakaway from the never-ending

wheeling and dealing that have overwhelmed our bodies, minds and souls for too long? It is an ideal time to savour the quiet moments for introspection, for connecting with our loved ones, and recharging our *humane* batteries.

The words of the prophets might not be written ‘on the subway walls’ anymore, but perhaps now is a good time for all faith communities to revisit the words of wisdom of Confucius, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad; time to give prominence to the laws of God and seriously consider transformation of our lifestyles so that it become more in tune with the universe and the needs and rights of all fellow human-beings that we share this earth with.

In the context of the current viral attack on our personal safety, perhaps a good place to start would be to highlight the importance of practising hygiene and healthy diets as recommended by all health experts and as commanded by God Almighty in His Scriptures.

Basic Hygiene

If we probe the Holy Quran, the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the Bible, we find that God in His Infinite Wisdom and Mercy has provided man with the ways and means to a clean and healthy lifestyle. If we reflect on it, we realize, in the light of what is

happening in the world, that God has done this for a very good reason – a reason that is often ignored or taken for granted or even scoffed at by foolish sceptics, until something like ‘corona’ comes along and shakes them all to the core so that even something as basic as ‘washing of the hands’ has become the repeated frantic call of the day. Thus addressing the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Almighty Allah says:

‘O thou who wrap thyself up, arise and warn and thy Lord do magnify, and thy garments *do purify and uncleanness do shun.*’ – (74: 1 -5)

This command is in line with a Muslim’s obligation to perform an **ablution** before the obligatory five daily prayers as commanded by God in the Holy Quran:

‘O you, who believe, when you rise up for prayer, **wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows and your feet up to the ankles.**’ – 5:6.

Although the ablution is intended to elevate the mind to a state of readiness for prayer, medical science affirms its enormous physical benefits in the prevention of the spread of diseases such as the highly contagious coronavirus, which the majority of scientific experts, amidst many conspiracy theories to the

contrary, agree is due to poor hygienic and dietary practices.

The Holy Quran also calls for bathing after sexual intercourse and the use of water to clean oneself when using the toilet. Only if one finds oneself in a part of the country where there is no water, pure earth should be used. – (5:6)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him) also emphasised the *washing of hands* before and after a meal. He is reported to have said:

‘The blessing of food is the **washing of hands** before it, and the **washing of hands** after it’ – (Tirmidhi, Mishkat).

The Importance of Following, a Clean, Healthy Diet

The Holy Quran prescribes clean, healthy diets. The first overriding condition is that all foods must be lawful (*halaal*) and good (*tayyib*: **i.e. it must be clean, nutritious and wholesome at all times**):

‘O men eat the lawful and **good** (*tayyib*) things from what are in the earth.’ – (2:168)

This excludes everything that is harmful for human consumption such as rodents, bats, and snakes that are treated as

a delicacy among some Asians said to have been the cause of the deadly virus.

The Holy Quran¹ also strictly prohibits the consumption of impure, decaying meat of animals that:

- Died of itself,
- Were strangled to death
- Were beaten to death
- Were killed by a fall
- Were gored to death with a horn
- Were partly eaten by wild beasts

These animals which include fowl, lamb, sheep, goats, bulls, cows, camels that are healthy and properly slaughtered in a manner that ensures all the blood flows out of it to rid it of all toxicity, are lawful (*halaal*) and good for human consumption.

The other items that are also strictly forbidden for consumption are:

- Blood *and the*
- The flesh of swine.

The flesh of swine is also forbidden by the Law of Moses that states:

‘And the pig, though it has a divided hoof, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. You must not eat their meat nor touch their carcasses; they

¹ Holy Quran 5:3; 2:173; 6:145; 16:115

are unclean for you.’—
(Leviticus 11:7)

Jesus Christ, a faithful Jew, declared:

‘Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.’— (Matthew 5:17)

The obvious conclusion one draws from this is that Jesus observed the dietary laws as prescribed by the Prophet Moses with regard to the prohibition of eating pork in fulfillment of the Law.

The Holy Qur’an speaks of the first three forbidden foods, i.e. the decaying flesh of dead animals, blood and pork, as *unclean things*, detrimental to man’s physical and moral well-being. It then adds a fourth prohibition that affects the spiritual well-being of man. These refer to those animals on which a name other than that of Almighty Allah was mentioned and those offerings made to idols. The reason for this is not far to seek if one considers that *the* fundamental pillar on which Islam is based is pure monotheism. Islam prohibits all forms of idolatry as *unclean* and *immoral* - harmful to the unfoldment and growth of the human soul to perfection.

In the light of the current pandemic, those who are still silly enough

to scoff at these basic hygienic practices, as prescribed in divine scripture, should think again.

Will there be a cure for the disease?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:

‘Allah has sent down both the disease and the cure, and He has appointed a cure for every disease, so treat yourselves medically, but use nothing unlawful.’—

(Sunan Abi Dawud 3874)

Indeed, it is just a matter of time that man will find the cure that will arrest ‘corona’ and bring it under his control. The Holy Quran also says:

‘He has made subservient to you (mankind) whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth, all, from Himself. Surely there are *signs* in this for a people who reflect.’— (45:13)

It is now up to the medical scientists and other experts in the field to pursue and study the *signs* and unlock the mystery surrounding this virus and render it subservient, meaning it can be made to serve a useful purpose as a vaccine, for example, or rendered completely impotent.

Refrain from evil; Seek God's Forgiveness and Pray for Help

There is indeed a general consensus, even from hardened sceptics, that we cannot fight off this virus without the help of Almighty God. But first we need to commit to a life of complete obedience to His Will and His Laws. We should not be too proud to ask for His forgiveness for our sins and shortcomings. And when He delivers us from this evil, we must continue to show gratitude for His Mercy by serving Him through good deeds and forbidding evil.

It will not harm humankind to use this opportunity to reconnect with that Higher Power of *Love, Compassion* and *Mercy*, Whose Spirit resides in all of us, regardless of race, religion, colour or creed.

We humbly beseech Almighty God to forgive and have mercy on His creation and weaken the strain of the coronavirus and rapidly stop its spread in the world.

May He protect us all, Amen!



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Editor : Ebrahim Mohamed

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

Email:: emuhamed@mweb.co.za

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Reg. P.B.O. 930050262