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The Need for Spirituality in our Lives

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Ever since man started to exist in this world, there has been an innate nature in him to reconnect to the source from which he originated. This instinct to know the Ultimate source of all creations is naturally found in people from time immemorial till today regardless of whether they come from the East or West.

Human beings feel that life is incomplete without binding a good relationship with their Creator. Driven by this natural instinct (*fitrah*), though unspoken by words, man subconsciously displays a hunger and thirst to understand God/Allah. As a result of this, for a very long time, perhaps since many centuries ago a section of humanity is constantly in search of God.

In our observation on what has been happening around the globe, despite the push for modernisation and progress, people in the East have maintained their old traditions, value systems,

Renaissance movement, secularism and other philosophies that came later, people in the West, drifted far away from God, religion, revelation, etc. The gap between man and God in the West which started in the past has been widening as the Western world goes through new development in the areas of science and technology, plus the coming age of globalisation.

The fact that science and technology were able to unravel the mysteries found in the human creation, cosmology, flora and fauna; provided modern means of transportation and communication, breakthrough discoveries in medicine, robotic engineering, etc. gave people the confidence that they can handle everything on their own without any divine intervention.

Their infatuation and over-glorification of science and technology took people away from God. At one point, the over veneration of science and technology reached a stage whereby people assumed that the two were their new found “gods” replacing their “Father in Heaven”.

In Search of God

As stated earlier on, at times those who are interested in God and seeking His nearness for the solace and tranquility of their souls sometimes venture too far into what they are seeking. They go to the extent of isolating themselves in the hope of getting the right frequency to communicate with God.

They also believe that having a public life and having a family can be a hindrance in getting God’s attention. There are others who take up celibacy and monastic life, devoting full-time to be at service to God. Yet others abstain from eating meat all together. Some extreme followers in certain religious sects fast without breaking it for an inordinate period of time.

Besides that, there exists a small group of enlightenment seekers, who isolate themselves from the masses by choosing to spend a long time living high up at the snowcapped mountains without proper food and clothing. All this and more are done in the hope of purifying their souls and in trying to understand God.

world, married and involved in worldly affairs, yet at the same time can be a good servant of God and enjoy a good relationship with Him. In the Qur'an, there are many references stating that through the act of kindness towards others, one can gain the pleasure of Allah.

As such, even a city dweller can have a great career and the same time can be a pious Muslim who likes to chip in to help those who are in need. Moreover, from the Islamic perspective, happiness in this world, salvation and everlasting felicity sought in the hereafter for all is better than just for oneself. Moreover, if celibacy is seen as the highest form of devotion to God, then it defeats the purpose of procreation which forms one of God's plans in the creation of man.

The following will be some of the references from the Qur'an and Sunnah to support our arguments thus far:

1. "Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire!" (Al-Baqarah: 201)
2. "But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget thy portion in this world: but do thou good, as Allah has been good to thee, and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief."(Al-Qasas:77)
3. "Allah intends for you ease, and does not want to make things difficult for you" (Surah Al Baqara: 185]
4. "Allah does not want to place you in difficulty" (Surah Al Maidah: 06)
5. "O you who believe! Make not unlawful the good things Allah has made lawful to you. But commit no excess, for Allah does not like those given to excess. Eat of the things which Allah has provided you, lawful and good, but fear Allah, in whom you believe" (Surah Al Maidah: 87-88)
6. "Do not do that. Fast, as well as, eat and drink. Stand in prayer, as well as, sleep. This is because your body has a right upon you, your eyes have a right upon you, your wife has a right upon you, and your guest has a right upon you." (Al-Bukhari, 127)

does not have to isolate or go on a long term religious seclusion, but calls for an active participation in communal life – a life divided between personal needs and the welfare of the family and community.

In looking back into the biography of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), one would discover that although he was a prophet, during his time in the city of Madinah, he was actively involved in building the Islamic state. He was in the mosque giving sermons, distributing charity, commanding an army at the frontier, being a judge in religious matters, receiving delegates, sending ambassadors of peace to neighbouring empires, etc. Simply put, the Prophet's life explains to the Muslims, people of the book (Jews and Christians) and others that it is needless to go and search for God, as God finds us wherever we are.

Benefits in the Belief of God

There are many benefits in the belief of God. Without the presence of God in one's life, he/she would not be able to understand the purpose for which one has been created. It can be metaphorically said that God is the central piece of the jigsaw puzzle of life. Without that piece one would not be able to see the total picture for which one has been created.

From the Islamic perspective, God manifested His existence, power and magnificent through the revelations in all heavenly books sent through His prophets; the last of which is the Qur'an. Through the revelations, He explained His attributes and how He created the world of creations (cosmology).

Besides that, He also manifested His powers through the Sunnatullah (Allah's grand design) in the universe. In the intricate and precise calculated orbiting of the planets and the wonders one observes in the flora and fauna, God shows His qualities of being an intelligent, creative and innovative Creator.

Apart from that, God also draws our attention to ponder over the soul entity which He has given us. This soul entity in man is the 'Divine Spark' of God in us. We can feel its existence but we cannot touch it. By looking into the revelation, universe and what lies within our bosoms (the human soul), we would be able to

the benefits enjoyed by people who believe in God:

1. It gives meaning to one's life.
2. Motivates one to improve his/her moral behavior.
3. Reminds one to practice a high level of patience, perseverance and persistence.
4. One would be able to ward off evil thoughts.
5. One is able to cope with stress, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, etc.
6. One is motivated in life to do good deeds like charity to help others.
7. Faith in God encourages one to build a good relation with other (Muslims and non-Muslims).
8. One builds a good relationship with the flora and fauna.
9. Belief in God eradicates racism, hatred, prejudice, violence, extremism, tyranny, war etc.
10. Promotes universal brotherhood, world peace, interfaith dialogues, etc. in the hope of creating a better world.

Conclusion

It can be safely said that a life with God is more meaningful, interesting and blissful to live with. Paradoxically, the absence of God in our lives can lead us to a chaotic, meaningless life and a poor state of mental health. Belief in God can be potent in the eradication of evils such as perverted sexuality, moral decadence, environmental degradation, alcoholism, substance abusive, etc.

In realising the benefits of God and religion, people who have left the two should ponder to return back as they would be able to regain the lost peace of mind and meaning of their lives. In secular countries of the world, governments there should think of introducing religious studies within the school curriculum.

Lastly, regardless in the East or West, for peaceful co-existence, interfaith dialogues should be encouraged in multi-religious countries.***

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