

Reflections 1st Ramadan by Jeewan Chanicka

Today is an end, as much as it is a beginning. Almost one year has gone in your life- what have you done? How have you grown?

I didn't know if you would see Ramadan again but now, it is on the horizon. Today when I look in the mirror, I see you but I am not so sure what exactly I see anymore. This year that has gone by was filled with many tests and challenges. Each time, you came up for a breath, it felt like the tidal wave of life had submerged you again and pushed you away from your intended destination. Where were all those friends again- the ones who said they would be there, no matter what?

What do we do now? In the mirror, I see your past, filled with the faults that no one knows and the faults I made so public. Carried on your shoulders are the scales of judgement of others on you and the guilt you harbour inside. I feel badly, but it seems like I can't let it go.

Then I look around at the behaviour of the people who are supposedly better than me and see so many contradictions. I see systems filled with imperfections where forgiveness has disappeared, those with less power are left out or humiliated, our environment is being destroyed, religion is being sanctioned to kill the innocent and silence voices and our children are being swallowed up by consumerism. My heart seems to be breaking as I look out and think where do I fit in, in the midst of all this madness?

Tears seem futile now like floods down barren slopes but I know your heart longs to find it's meaning again and it's connection to it's Creator.

We are on the eve of Ramadan once again. Perhaps it's time for renewal and a chance to rediscover, what our relationship with God is supposed to be? Self, perhaps the reason we have been given the chance to see Ramadan again is to get rid of all the baggage that we have carried for so long- have you thought about that? To shed the illusions we've created of ourselves, the prisons we've imposed on ourselves and be who we truly are destined to be. To let go of all the "shame", the voices that have held us down, accepting our imperfections but never letting go of the goal to be the best that we can be.

I think that this month will not be about eating or drinking; instead, it will really be about communion between yourself and your Creator; to try and understand life and where we fit within this universe.

Self, I think we need to pause for a moment and reflect on our purpose; our presence; our ability to change; the things that are in our control; dependence on the Creator; living our lives meaningfully; the imperfection of creation but the beauty that is alive within.

Let us plan to minimize as much of the worldly distractions as we can this month, mute the noises of our tv's, ipods, phones, shopping, idle talk, wasting time, elaborate iftars, hours upon hours of shopping for eid and ramadan during the month. Let us stop all the outside noises and voices for a while and give ourselves the chance, to see what we discover, to remove the chains that keep us back and to open our hearts to true freedom- in whatever way that may come. This Ramadan, let us walk together on a journey of self-discovery and re-new our connection with the One, in Whose Hands lies our soul.

I know sometimes you doubt yourself but you are a beautiful being...after all you were created by God- weren't you?

God created you in this world and wants the best for you. Your design was not by mistake so you reflect the light of perfection yet as a creation, it is true that you are imperfect. Sometimes though, when I listen, it seems like you have forgotten that no creation is free from making mistakes. Today though instead of seeking to remove the doubts by improving yourself you are becoming arrogant.

You've become distracted by all the "noise" around you and telling yourself "it's all about me! Its about what I want and what makes me happy!"

Is it really though? While you are a reflection of God's love and mercy, have you closed your eyes and heart towards understanding your place on this earth?

Open your windows; slow down on your run in life's ever-hectic rat race; turn off your blackberry, ipod and iphone, shut off your computers, take off your tv and simply OBSERVE, just for a moment: If you do, you will realize that YOU are a speck of dust in the realm of the universe. One dot, in a place, in a country, on a planet, in a universe, in a multi-verse. A creation of the Lord of the Worlds.

In truth, You- Self, are one cell within the bloodstream of life. Arrogance makes you think that the world revolves around you, but observe: When a wave is about to crash on the shore, or a leaf falls to the ground can you stop it? Did you enter into this world on your own? When you were a baby, did you care for yourself? If you stop and think just a little, you will realize that while God wants you happy, life is NOT just about you- because you function as part of a bigger picture! That is not to take away from the power that lies within you, because one cell still has the power to change a body. Yet, it has to remember to function within that body to keep everything in balance. So while it is ok to be happy and to think about what you want, it's also important to think about the others around you and the fact that your actions do NOT only affect you. Self, remember that arrogance is the path to destruction.

So lose the arrogant attitude Self. Let this month, be one of humility. Today as we begin, let us work to improve ourselves and do our best to find where we fit within the fabric of life.