

Facing the Day of Decision

We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in mere idle play. We created them all for nothing other than a true purpose, but most of them do not understand. The Day of Decision is the time appointed for all of them. It is a day when no friend shall be of the least avail to his friend, and when none shall receive support except those upon whom God will have bestowed His grace and mercy. He alone is the Almighty, the Ever-Merciful.”

(Smoke: Al-Dukhan: 44: 38-42)

The surah speaks of the people of Arabia at the start of the Islamic message. They used to deny the resurrection and life after death. The surah reminds them of the fate of the people of Tubba, who lived in southern Arabia. The surah makes only a very brief reference to them, giving no details of what they did or how they transgressed.

What is of interest is only their fate, and it must have been well known to the Arabs who were the first to be addressed by the Qur'an. It was enough only to mention them in order to revive feelings of dread among the Arabs.

As this reminder makes them shudder, they are called upon to reflect on the perfect design of the heavens and earth, and how the universe is finely balanced and well planned, indicating that it is deliberately made in this way for a particular purpose: “We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in mere idle play.

We created them all for nothing other than a true purpose, but most of them do not understand.” There is a fine and delicate relation between the creation of the heavens, the earth and all that is in between them on the one hand and the question of resurrection and accountability on the other. Human nature can easily understand this when attention is drawn to it in the way described here.

Such reflection should take into account the creation of the universe, what it points to of elaborate planning, wise purpose, perfect balance and harmony, the creation of everything in accurate measure and quantity, placing it thus in harmony with everything around it.

Such reflection undoubtedly leads to the conclusion that everything is created on purpose.

No coincidence or carelessness is allowed in any aspect, major or trivial, of the design of the huge celestial bodies or the small, fine creatures living on them. Thus, we realize that the universe is created for a purpose, which means that nothing of it is the result of idle play; and that it is based on the truth, which means that no falsehood is allowed to infiltrate it.

We further realize that it must have an end, which does not occur at the point of death after a short journey on earth. Logically speaking, a second life, when reward and punishment are administered, is inevitable, so that good and evil come to their natural ends.

Man has been so created as to be susceptible to both tendencies of good and evil. It is through his will and effort that he chooses one or the other, making himself liable to ultimately receive its reward or punishment, as the case may be.

That man is so created, with both tendencies, and that God's action cannot be mere idle play, means that man will have a specific fate which he meets after his journey on earth is over. This is the essence of the hereafter. Hence, it is mentioned after attention has been drawn to the wise purpose that lies beyond the creation of the universe: "The Day of Decision is the time appointed for all of them.

It is a day when no friend shall be of the least avail to his friend, and when none shall receive support except those upon whom God will have bestowed His grace and mercy. He alone is the Almighty, the Ever-Merciful."

This statement comes naturally at this point, closely related as it is to what went before it. It is absolute wisdom that requires that creatures should have a day when judgment is made between those who follow true guidance and those who go astray; when goodness is rewarded and evil humiliated; when people have no support, bond or relation. They will return to their Creator as individuals, just like He created them, to be requited for what they did in life.

No one will support them or offer a gesture of mercy, except for those on whom God bestows His grace.

It is from God's hand that they came out to work in life, and to His hand they will return to receive what their actions deserve. In between, they have a chance to act, just as they are being tested.

Attachment to Morality

Al-Shams (The Sun) - Chapter 91: Verses 7-10

"By the soul, and That which shaped it and inspired it to lewdness and godfearing! Prosperous is he who purifies it, and failed has he who seduces it."

Morality, reference to good and evil, is a central domain of Islamic teaching. Admittedly, permission comes first, but there are things that one does not do and does not

allow to be done: social, political and economic liberties must be exercised in accordance with respect for certain rules. To say that there is morality and rules is tantamount to attesting to the freedom of each person.

Moral tension partakes of human nature. **Peace of the heart or its agitation testify to the ways taken, but the choice always remains within the hands of human beings.** From freedom arises responsibility: one must give account of our attachment to morality.

This is for ourselves, in our hearts, in the silence and solitude of our intimacy, as in our relations with our parents, brothers, friends, enemies, the stranger, the colleague, the employee, the old, the handicapped, the poor or the exiled; as also with nature, trees, forests, the air, sea and all the elements; as also, lastly, with the totality of the animal world.

Presence of Allah

We should feel the presence of Allah in any action so that such action may take its share of perfection. This is why the Prophet, peace be upon him, when Jibrail asked him about the meaning of *ihsan* said: "***Ihsan* (perfection) is to worship Allah as if you were seeing Him, for although you see Him not, He does see you.**"

Perfection is a prerequisite in any action, be it worldly actions or actions of a religious nature as seeking perfection in work is a *faridah* (obligation) on every Muslim.

Allah has prescribed perfection in everything, and nothing should make a man seek perfection more than his feeling that Allah sees and hears him and knows all that he does.

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ٧

فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ٨

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا ٩

وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ١٠

