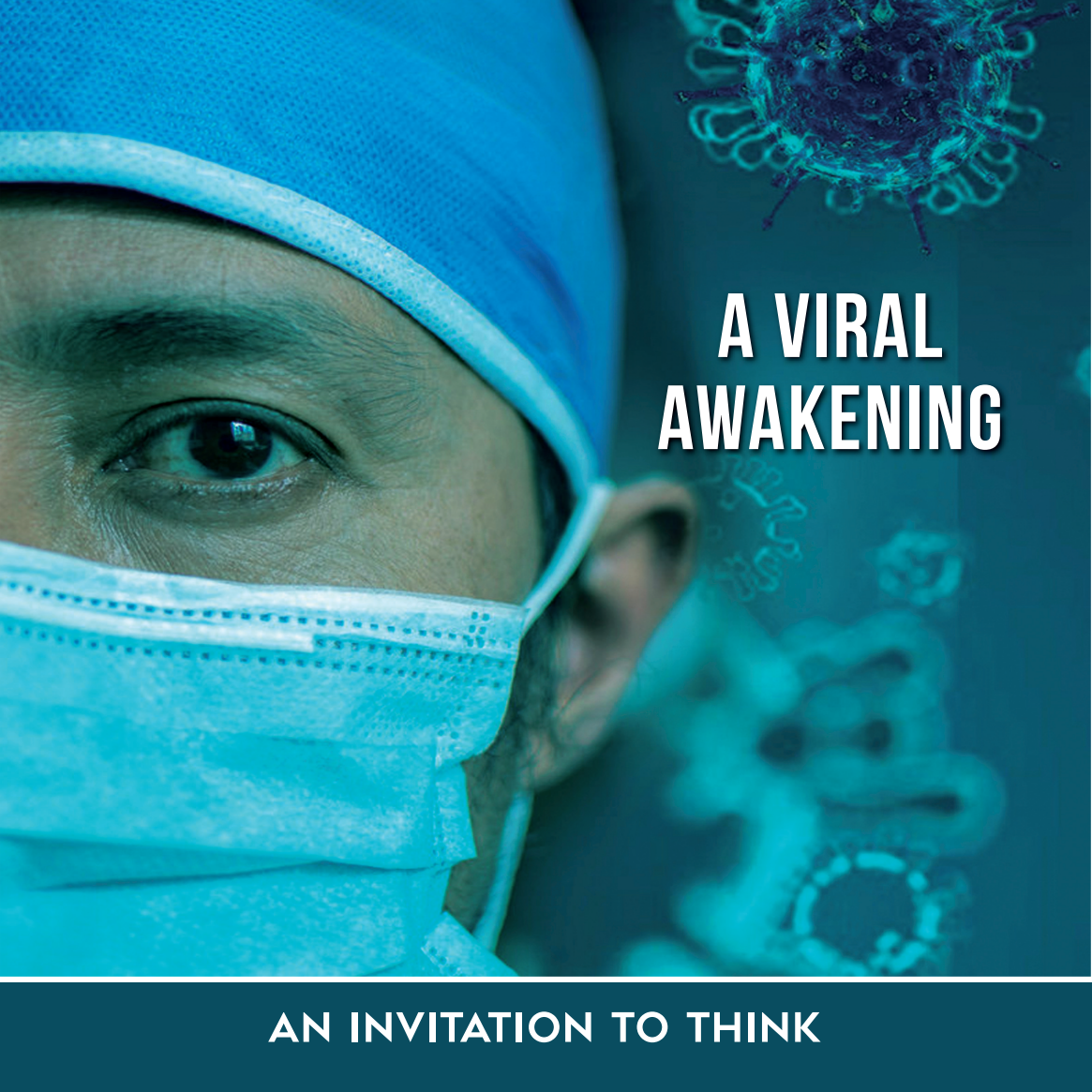




A VIRAL AWAKENING

AN INVITATION TO THINK

We are in the midst of a global pandemic. No amount of money and power in the world can reverse what has happened. It has conquered almost every country and city in the world wave after wave in severity. We pray that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy.

Fear, anxiety, and instability have dominated our day to day lives and normal social routines have been dismantled. Circumstances are compelling to accept the 'new norm' of this decade.

Even in these uncertain times, coronavirus can be the means for an **INTELLECTUAL** and **SPIRITUAL** awakening. We are concerned and committed to your wellbeing; it is in this spirit we write this message. What follows are some key points for you to consider.

DOES **CORONAVIRUS** EXIST?

Many of us have never directly observed a virus. Even though it is visible only under a powerful electron microscope, we do perceive and feel the effects of the virus. Many of us rely on scientific textbooks and images and what the experts tell us. This is enough for anyone to conclude that the virus does exist (ask the survivors). Thus, we take preventive measures.

If we could apply this same analogy to a Creator, we can certainly perceive and feel the effects of His reality within us and around us at every instant. We live in an amazing universe with billions of stars, galaxies and planets, all co-existing in harmony, in obedience to The Creator.



Our planet earth with over 8 million species and over 6000 languages as we know it, are all among the other signs of His existence, grandeur, and magnificence. The universal laws and the fundamental physical constants are all testimonies of His existence, and if altered, would have prevented the emergence of conscious, sentient life as we know it.

This pandemic should initiate us to open our hearts and eyes, to reflect without prejudice.

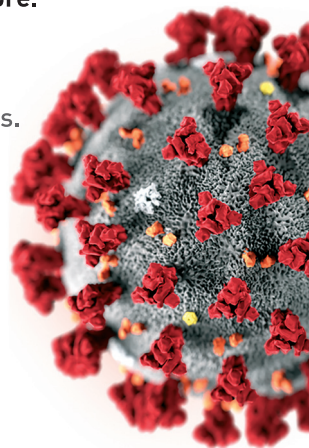
ARE WE SELF-SUFFICIENT?

The whole world has been brought to a near halt over a single **strand of RNA**, which cannot even be seen with our naked eye. This unseen virus has factually exposed our limitations and our compelling dependency on various things. If we have not acknowledged this reality yet, we may become complacent to the insights and truths that this pandemic has exposed us to.

Our very existence and our ability to function is dependent on an infinite number of things; when we were born, we could not feed, clothe or clean ourselves, we were dependent on our parents. We also need a public health system, hospitals, doctors, nurses, farms, farmers, animals, plants, family, friends, economic system, banks, ideal environment, oxygen, water, food, buildings, construction companies, builders, and much more. The list is endless!

We can thus irrefutably concede that we cannot sustain ourselves. In fact, all the creations within us and around us are ultimately and solely dependent on A Creator, The One True God. One of the biggest barriers to Divine guidance and mercy is the delusion of self-sufficiency, which is ultimately based on ego and arrogance.

This pandemic should teach us primarily an important lesson – HUMILITY.



Is Life just a game or IS there a **PURPOSE?**

Think about it. Would a game exist without a purpose? They have set rules and guidelines as any sport or board game, which would end with winners or losers! All of us have an instinctive drive and zeal to be winners, provided we follow the rules of the game!

Everything that exists has a purpose- be it a trivial toilet paper! From brushing our teeth to buying a car, we do these things for a purpose, yet some of us are in denial of a purpose for our own existence. Logically, this may seem absurd and counter intuitive. Without an ultimate purpose, we have no real reason to exist and lack a profound meaning to our temporary lives.

Attributing some 'made-up purpose' to our lives by following desires is, by definition, self-delusion. It is no different from children who pretend to play doctors and nurses, cops and robbers or mummies and daddies, grow up to face the reality that life is not just a game or a drama.

Islam's view on the purpose of our lives is intuitive and empowering. It elevates our existence from products of matter and time, to conscious beings who choose to recognise a relationship with a Creator, seeking His guidance to direct our purpose, by being obedient, grateful and patient.

Life in this world is transient and our attachments to this worldly life will ultimately cease to exist. It is an arena of trials and tribulations, a mechanism to **cultivate virtue**, to evaluate those who choose to be obedient and follow the guidance, to be justly deserving an everlasting success and happiness in the Afterlife.



IS THIS OUR FAULT

This pandemic is not a random accident. Our individual and collective actions are responsible for what happens on our planet. This pandemic should make each of us reflect and ponder over what we have done, or not done, that may have caused this contagion. Given our dependency on God and our inter-connectedness to other things, including our environment and other people, we should consider that our corruption and injustice could also have contributed to this pandemic.

The condition of our planet is such that it is on the verge of being destroyed from all fronts: be it levels of pollution, injustice, oppression, or war. Millions of our fellow human beings have become refugees, widows, orphans, killed in ongoing conflicts, while others do not have access to clean water and basic life amenities. This pandemic can be a pointer, A Divine Insignia, to stop injustice, exploitation, racism and corruption at all levels on the earth and learn to coexist in harmony to serve our fellow beings and the environment.

We, as one humanity are the caretakers of the earth, to share and use from its richness. Are we the true custodians on the earth? We are confronted with some choices: to follow God's guidance which will reset the balance and order, or otherwise risk the consequences.

CAN WE **TRUST** THE EXPERTS?

This global pandemic has kept us glued to our screens & radios waiting for the next update and guidance from the experts in the field and other people of authority. We trust what they have to say and follow their instructions, as many of us in fact have no way of assessing the truth of their statements. We do not have the academic background nor the expertise. Given our limitations as human beings, we simply cannot know everything. Thus, relying on other people's testimony is an inevitable and essential part of pursuing information in life.

Since we DO trust some people's testimony, what about the testimony of a man who is The Most Trustworthy, well-known to even his staunch enemies by the title Al-Amin (The Trustworthy)?

Prophet Muhammad (peace & blessings of God be upon him) was the last and final chosen Messenger of God for the rest of humanity, over 1400 years ago. All the Messengers of the past like Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus (peace be upon them all) came with a simple profound message, calling to the unity of humanity by asserting the Oneness of God.

He (pbuh) was Divinely inspired with God's Final Revelation over a period of 23 years: The Qur'an- the living miracle for all humanity until the end of times. His exemplary lifestyle was the Qur'an. He was **AN OUTSTANDING ROLE MODEL FOR MANKIND.**¹

In light of the above, it would be reasonable to cross examine this fool-proof guidance AND simply shadow his exemplary lifestyle to profit from the ultimate expert advice and guidance.

IS THIS A WAKE UP CALL?

This pandemic can be a prospect to reflect on all the favours we have been conferred with (like the air we breathe or water we drink etc) and be grateful rather than take them for granted. Since God created everything that exists - including us and things that matter to us, He is the Owner and Master of them all. Hence, obedience is owed to Him exclusively and be indebted with a sense of awe and gratitude towards Him, even though He is in NO Need and Self Sufficient. It is our individual choice to acknowledge or reject this truth.

“BE GRATEFUL TO GOD.” AND WHOEVER IS GRATEFUL, IS GRATEFUL FOR THE BENEFIT OF ONESELF. AND WHOEVER DENIES - THEN INDEED, GOD IS FREE OF NEED AND PRAISEWORTHY. ²

This pandemic should inculcate **an intellectual and spiritual awakening**. It is our free choice- accept the fact that God is the Only deity worthy of obedience, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is His final messenger, who followed the final guidance for humanity (The Qur'an), Or reject the truth and risk the consequences. Now is the time to believe and be mindful of God Almighty.

“AND WHOEVER IS MINDFUL OF GOD, HE WILL MAKE A WAY OUT FOR HIM, AND PROVIDE FOR THEM FROM SOURCES THEY COULD NEVER IMAGINE” ³

¹ The 100- Michael H Hart; The Qur'an (Chapter & Verses): ² 31:12; ³ 65:2-3; ⁴ 49:13

“O Mankind, Indeed We have created you from a single (pair) of male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may recognise one another (not despise). Verily, the most noble amongst you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. Indeed, God is All-Knowing and All-Aware”⁴



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