

# The Depressions of a Faithless Society

H A R U N   Y A H Y A

God declares in the Qur'an that He has created mankind according to a certain disposition in the verse: **"So set you your face steadily and truly to the Faith: (establish) God's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind."** (Surat al-Room, 30). The disposition of mankind relies on being a servant to God and having faith in Him. Since man is unable to meet his unlimited wishes and needs by himself, he naturally needs to humble himself before God and turn to Him.

If the individual lives in accordance with this disposition, he attains true confidence, peace, happiness and salvation. If he denies this disposition and turns away from God, he spends his life in distress, fear, anxiety and grief.

This rule, which is true for man, also holds true for societies. If a society is comprised of people who believe in God, it becomes a just, peaceful, happy and wise society. Unquestionably, the opposite also holds true. If a society is unaware of God, then the order of such a community is basically ruined, corrupt and primitive.

When societies that have turned away from God are examined, this fact is readily seen. One of the most important results of irreligious thought is the abolishment of the concept of morality and the development of completely corrupt societies. Transgressing religious and moral bounds, and catering exclusively to the satisfaction of human wishes, this culture is a system of oppression in the fullest sense of the word. In such a system, all sorts of degeneracies from sexual perversion to drug addiction are encouraged. Eventually, societies that are devoid of human love and are egoistic, ignorant, shallow and nonsensical have grown up.

In a society where people live only for the satisfaction of their own desires, it surely is not possible to maintain peace, love and amity. In such a society, human relations depend on mutual interests. An extreme feeling of distrust prevails. When there is no reason for one to be sincere, honest, reliable or well-behaved, nothing stands in the way of dissimulation, falsehood, or betrayal. The members of such societies have **"cast God away behind their backs (with contempt)"** (Surah Hud, 92) and thus never acknowledged the fear of God. Since they cannot "make a just estimate of God", they are unmindful of the day of judgement and the day of account. For them, hell is nothing more than an idea appearing in religious books. None of them think that they shall have to give an account of themselves in the presence of God after their death for all the sins they have committed during their lives in this world, or that they may ultimately be doomed to an eternal life of torment in hell. Even if they do think about it, they suppose that they will enter paradise after they "pay for their sins", as it is expressed in this verse:

**This because they say 'The Fire shall not touch us but for a few numbered days': For their forgeries deceive them as to their own religion. (Surat Al-e-Imran, 24)**

Thus they are led to spend their lives doing their best to satisfy their own desires and needs.

This situation naturally brings on the ethical degeneration and moral collapse that we see in many societies today. In their own reasoning they suppose "we have come into this world but once and will live for only 50-60 years and then die, so let us get the best of things here". The thought system based on this erroneous reasoning may bring with it all kinds of injustice, prostitution, theft, crime and immorality. One subscribing to it may become involved in all kinds of crime, homicide, or fraud. When every individual thinks of nothing but the satisfaction of his own needs and desires, everyone else—including his family and friends—have secondary importance. Other individuals in society have no importance whatsoever.

In a social structure that rests on interest relations to a large degree, the mutual distrust of people hinders the formation of peace both at the social and individual level and it causes people to live permanently in a state of doubt, unease and irresolution. Not knowing by whom, when or how misdeeds will be committed in such a society, people live spiritually in a condition of great fear and distress. General distrust and suspicion cause them to lead very unhappy lives. In a society where all kinds of moral values are disregarded, the outlook of people on notions such as family, honesty and chastity is quite alarming, for they have no fear of God.

In such societies, the lives of people do not rely on mutual love and respect. Its members feel no need to show respect to each other. They do not display a caring attitude to each other without a good cause. Actually, they are quite right, in terms of their ignorant reasoning, in behaving this way. They are taught throughout their lives that

they have evolved from animals and that their souls will be lost forever upon their death. They therefore deem it meaningless to respect a body of ape origin that will rot under the earth and that they will never see again. In their corrupt logic, "all the others as well as themselves are to die and be buried under the earth, their bodies will decay and their souls will vanish. So why would they bother to do good to other people, and be self-sacrificing?" Indeed, these thoughts permeate the subconscious of everyone who has no belief in God or, therefore, in the hereafter. In societies with no belief in God, there is no basis for peace, happiness, or confidence.

The purpose of all we have said is not to suggest that "degeneration occurs in societies where there is no belief in God, therefore there must be belief in God." God must be believed in because God exists and whoever denies Him commits a great sin before Him. Our intention in noting that societies where belief in God does not exist become corrupt is to emphasise that the fundamental viewpoints of these societies are wrong. Wrong viewpoints lead to ill consequences. A society that commits the biggest sin of denying God, is sure to suffer the worst outcomes. These outcomes are worthy of attention because they show how mistaken this society is.

The common characteristic of such societies is their being deceived as a whole. As stated in the verse, **"Were you to follow the common run of those on earth, they will lead you away from the way of God."** (Surat al-Anaam, 116), that most of society share a common character creates a "mass" psychology that reinforces the already-existing disbelief. God describes such societies that are unmindful of Him and the hereafter as "ignorant" in the Qur'an. Even though the members of this society may study physics, history, biology or similar sciences, they do not have the sense and conscience to acknowledge the power and might of God. And they are ignorant in that sense.

Because the members of an ignorant society are not devoted to God, they go astray from His path in different ways. They follow people who are incompetent servants of God just like themselves, taking them as examples and adhering to their ideas as absolute truths. Ultimately an ignorant society ends up a closed society that increasingly blinds itself, becoming further and further divorced from reason and conscience. As we have stated at the beginning, the most notable aspect of this system is that members of such a society act in consonance with anti-religious indoctrination.

God describes in the Qur'an with a striking parable how such a life, resting upon a vain and corrupt basis, is destined to be ruined:

**Which then is best? He that lays his foundation on piety to God and His good pleasure? Or he that lays his foundation on an undermined sand-cliff ready to crumble to pieces? And it does crumble to pieces with him, into the fire of hell. And God does not guide people that do wrong. (Surat at-Tawba, 109)**

There is yet another point to be remembered: every society and every person has the opportunity to be rid of the indoctrination, way of life and philosophy of ignorance. God sends them messengers who warn them and inform them of the existence of God and the hereafter and who tell them the real meaning of life. And along with His messengers He sends righteous books that answer all the questions that are derived from the very conscience of people. This is the law of God that has existed since eternity. In our day, the guide of all people is the Qur'an, which shows the right way and leads people from darkness to light. People will be judged according to their own preferences. The messenger who brought the book to people thus called out to them:

**Say: "O you men! Now Truth has reached you from your Lord! Those who receive guidance, do so for the good of their own souls; those who stray, do so to their own loss: and I am not (set) over you to arrange your affairs. (Surah Yunus, 1**