

Water makes you Run

By

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When you want to pass water, you run to the bathroom, but when the water passes Laudium and goes to Erasmia, you run even faster to the fire hydrant!

As I sit with my hands on my laptop and my eyes glued on the tap, now dry for six days, I realize how habits can change in so little time. Previously, when awakening, we would reach for the toothpaste and toothbrush, now it's the breath freshener. Instead of taking the trouble of bathing with a bucket and scoop, we just reach for the perfume and spray until the cat starts sneezing; and who smells your socks anyway, just wear yesterday's! Worst affected by the crises, of course, are all those crooks who used to fill tap water into fake Valpre and Nestlé bottles and wholesale them in the townships. They are suddenly out of business!!

If this is not funny enough, the Masjids are suddenly full for all the prayers, just like Ramadaan! On a Saturday for Asr salaah, the parking lot only becomes full if there is a marriage taking place in the Masjid, but nowadays it's for the queue for the bathroom! Instead of people going straight home after work, they'll pop in to the Masjid to freshen up. I hope this routine continues after the water situation normalizes, though. For those whose water stopped for over a week, don't expect to see a pro-rata reduction in your bill at the end of the month. The Council doesn't read your meter when there is water, why should it bother when there is no water?

Lessons of this Crises:

There is always a lesson in every adversity, no matter how temporary it is. Our Lord knows exactly what to give you
, big or small, to help you return to Him. All events in society are purposeful, appropriate and

non-random. Thus, t

he first lesson to learn in this water shortage is that man thinks that he is technically and technologically advanced, but he is not. Man has created tools of mass communication like the mobile phone and the internet, tools of mass destruction like F-18 Fighter Jets (the outdated F-16s are sold to governments for double the price of the F-16) with laser (mis)-guided missiles, as well as luxury food items like Ferrero and Lindt chocolate, but all these are not essential to human existence. In fact, too much Ferrero will give you diabetes and over-surfing the net will give you Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD), which basically means that you become a psychological nut case.

Man has advanced so much that he has become "over-advanced." Instead of trying to create air and water to alleviate the crises that we are experiencing in the world nowadays, he has created the atom bomb to actually destroy our air and water. Man has created a fake web, but not the real spider web. He has created a fake apple, but not the real one, a fake stallion, but not the real one. In fact, man cannot even create a fly or an egg of a fly, a small ant or its home, or even a decent drink like milk and honey such that we have to drink poison in the form of Coke, or acid in the form of Juice.

No one will die if there is no Lindt, but if there is no water, millions will. So, our first lesson of this short-lived crises is to recognize the Genius and Absolute Power of the Almighty. Man cannot create the basics of his own existence. We often think that if we have wealth and power, we are independent of Him, but we are in need of His permission for every gulp of water we take. Never forget this.

The second lesson of this crisis is that, like death, calamities are very sudden. There are no warning signs for destruction, and no one can ever be adequately prepared for it. Even if a two-week warning is given of an earthquake that will lay your land to absolute waste, how does one make a new life for himself elsewhere in such a short span of time? Does everyone have the means for it? A man can go to sleep as a king, and awake as a pauper. He can be fit as a fiddle now, but in a moment, he can be so sick that he needs an oxygen tank to survive. Life is unpredictable, and the bubble of our comfortable lives can burst at any time.

Our Noble Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him) sought refuge from a sudden death, or sudden calamities. It's very unsettling to embark upon a short journey without any preparation. One needs to check the motor vehicle, be in a presentable condition, and also take provisions for the destination, so what about the eternal journey? Life can change or end at any time, are we ready for it? People hooked on luxuries and comfort will find it very difficult to adapt to difficult situations, and may become even suicidal. A motor vehicle accident can either result in your death or an injury that will affect your life forever. You need to be in a state of acceptance for both, even before it affects you. Will love of life and your luxuries allow you to make this adjustment or transition without pain, if the situation so demands?

Again, our Noble Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him) said that there are two things disliked by the sons of Adam. One of them is death, whereas it is better for him than sinning; the second is scarcity of money, whereas its account will be easier for him in the afterlife.

The third lesson, or rather observation, is that disaster either brings a community together or splits it further apart. The people of Erasmia opened their hearts and homes for the people of Laudium, allowing them to take water from their homes and have showers too. Many volunteers assisted in filling up the tankers, manning the fire-hydrants and distributing water at the various points and Masjids. It was heart-warming to see strangers make new friends in the queues and youngsters carrying the buckets for the elderly. The community was brought together by force, and it was patient with each other until the crises came to an end.

However, we also had those who exploited the situation for their selfish ends. Such people, mostly greedy and wealthy shopkeepers, raised the price of water by upto 60%. Instead of helping those in desperation by dropping the price, they raised it. This is nothing short of disgusting. Whilst the Muslims are calling for boycotting products such as Coke and stores such

as DisChem and Woolworths for their part in contributing to the carnage in Palestine, we also have Muslims who profit from the misery of their fellow neighbours – those same neighbours who made them so rich! Yet, such people do give charity on other occasions, but charity without character or for show is nothing but cruelty.

Lastly, calamities force us to appreciate what we have; those bounties that we have been taking for granted all along like water and clean air. Who thought that you would one day wake and there would be no water in the tap; yet, if we do not appreciate this great bounty which was temporarily snatched away, it could be snatched away permanently if we do not mend our ways and turn to the Almighty. Barely a few hundred meters from Laudium we have the Itereleng Informal settlement where there are absolutely no taps in the shacks. Daily, the people need to place buckets on their heads and fill water from a communal point. What about the rural areas of eMalahleni and Eastern Cape where the nearest borehole is sometimes ten kms away, or the refugees of Syria and Palestine where due to routine water shortages, people are forced to drink contaminated or muddy water.

“Use water sparingly, even if be at the bank of a flowing river,” said our Noble Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him). It was his noble practice to use only a *mudd*

(a measurement, about 750 mls) of water for his ablution, and one saa’ (about four *mudds*, about three

litres) for his bath. On average, we normally use up to 40 litres for one ablution, and if we are in a habit of singing under the shower, we will not stop until the entire geyser becomes empty of hot water. This is about 150 liters, about 45 times more than what we are supposed to use. This is clear abuse of this precious and scarce resource.

Finally, water is not only the origin of life, but a priceless gift from the Almighty. About 71% of the earth is covered in it, as well as 67% of our body. However, a shortage or imbalance of it

can serve as a punishments for us, and the Almighty has threatened us with this possibility, so take heed: “*And we send down water from the sky (rain) in (due) measure, and We gave it lodging in the earth, and verily, We are able to take it away.*”

(Qur'an 23:18)