

THE PATH OF NATURAL GROWTH

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IDENTIFYING WITH ONE ANOTHER

God demands that you move out horizontally and that your horizontal movement strengthens the movement towards God. If you keep moving only one way, you are going to stop growing. Unless you recognize that God intends for you to move outward, you will not grow that way.

We pray with one another because that means that we have identified with each other's problems and that we have common needs. In praying together as a group, we move out horizontally. We begin to grow towards each other, expand, combine to form a bigger body.

COMBINATION OF PILLARS

Hajj completes the pillars of Islam because it combines worship of Allah, prayer, charity and fasting in an arch. Each of these is growing but it continues to contain and not lose each other. There is a little charity in prayer, more charity in charity itself and a little charity in fasting and Hajj. Charity strengthens prayer and moves on to the other pillars, not losing anything.

In Hajj we have nearness to Allah along with the other pillars and that's the purpose of the journey. Muslims say that when they make the Hajj, they are going to visit Allah, but they are not actually going to visit Allah physically. When Muslims make the Hajj, they are taking physical steps that will bring them closer to Allah

spiritually. We see all of the pillars of Islam shining in the fifth pillar because the Hajj incorporates all of the pillars. This outward movement enables the true Muslim really to move along the vertical line towards God.

PILLARS AND MOVEMENT

A Muslim who prays has more movement and knows more about the relationship and distance between himself and Allah (God) than the Muslim who does not pray and only admits that there is a God. The Muslim who prays and also gives charity has still more progress along the line between himself and his Maker, the Muslim who fasts progresses even more and the Muslim who wants to make Hajj progresses still more. But the Christian putting emphasis on Jesus and man having faith in God, stretches the vertical line. In stretching one line of growth - horizontal or vertical - the other one stops growing and it gets short.

SYMBOLS IN RELIGION

Life needs movement to manifest and it needs direction to complete its growth, and as scientists in the Nation of Islam, we deal with specifics. Zakat means to grow or to make an increase and salat means to purify. The Arabic word "soom" means to restrain or to deny natural urges to refine the appetite, but in this word also is a message of growth and purification.

In order to speak we need symbols which we get from our environment. People who study the

history or evolution of what they call religion in society identify symbols as meanings instead of as symbols. So they would say that early religious people worshipped the sun or fire, which was not necessarily the case. Early religious people used symbols to convey the meanings that they wanted to communicate. The sun, for example, is a symbol of God, of His purity, righteousness and wisdom among many other attributes.

PURIFICATION THROUGH PRAYER

Salat in prayer means to purify through a heating or burning. We know that heating or burning changes and purifies the form of physical materials. Men discovered fire and used it to cook their meats, because it made the meats more agreeable to their appetites and safer to their health. Prayer enables us to get a spiritual relationship to God that is nearer to our appetite for this kind of relationship. As prayer purifies our appetite, it gets out those things that are hurting our relationship with God.

The Nation of Islam offers you the opportunity to learn how to grow yourself towards God and that which He has planned for human beings, His highest creation. Islam is the religion that will provide you with the necessary knowledge for that growth.

Thank you for honoring us with your time to read these few words.

Your Brother,
W.D. Muhammad