



Druze Theology of the Forest

Humans and the Environment

Monotheism is the religious title of the Druze community in Lebanon and its surrounding areas. In the monotheistic creed we decree that God created all creatures perfectly and subjected them to humanity so that we can rise through worship and our intellect, towards the glory of humanity – and since humanity is the topmost honoured reflection of God's image (Be He Exalted) that means towards the glory of God.

We are God's successors on earth: the guardians who have to maintain its system. Those who manage it well benefit from its riches and those who mismanage and abuse it incur its harm and wrath.

Humanity is called to be inspired by the wisdom of divine dispensation through our minds and to have the significance of all wisdom reflected through our practical behavior within the external and internal nature of our physical existence. This leads us to delve into the essence of creation and into the need for human existence to be in conformity with this essence. As a result, it is impossible for the monotheist to agree with the idea of dominating nature and utilizing it by destroying the environment and causing damage to the natural balance of things, and consequently producing environmental problems that are not easy to handle, overcome or resolve completely!

On the contrary, the monotheist looks upon existence as a whole unity and considers us to be respon the harmony of its elements.

Any abuse or toying with these elements leads to disorder and disequilibrium in life's system and this determine the extent.

Druze and Conservation

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Forests and natural reserves are sites conducive to worship, meditation and going beyond yourself and does this happen through misuse, avarice and destruction of the forests? Of course not. It happens because through the forests – of the divine grace and wisdom in ordering the universe and placing the mind as what could be beneficial and what is an impermissible violation. This is exactly as in our daily lives both society where it is possible for us to transform suffering into joy, emotion into blessing and nature into worship.

In nature we meet God without obstacles.

We thus look with an eye of regard and speculation; we listen without clamour or pretence; we savour the fragrance of the universe and taste its riches without cunning or corruption; we experience the creeping of holy life into our veins without distortion. We should learn to rise in our prayer with every grain of dust, or breath of air, or drop of water, with a green leaflet, or colourful flower or dainty fruit, with an insect moving, or a bird singing or an animal seeking its food and that of its young ones, or a farmer plowing, planting and reaping the earth's riches.

Hermits and believers – here as in every place and at every time – have sought to live within the beauty and solitude of nature. The Druze places of worship are all named “heritages” or *khalawat* since they are constructed very simply and are far from places of human habitation and noise.

Here, the monotheist is secluded with The Lord in the heart of the trees, the water, the birds and the rocks. Here the monotheist cultivates food and lives in harmony with all inanimate creatures and fauna and flora. Here he experiences spirituality more than in any other place marked by corruption and unbalanced elements.

In Conclusion

Consequently, we are responsible individually and collectively. That is, through our personal and teamwork of environmental associations, religious authorities and organizations and nations we are conception of nature's rights and considered actions in order to benefit from and maintain nature's importance of [this meeting with ARC](#), the Church of Sweden and the Jinja Honcho, which has brought together at one table: here we think together, pray together, and together we are united for the welfare

A Druze Prayer about the Forests

In the name of God the most merciful , the most compassionate,

My Lord, I raise my prayer to Thee from nature's bosom, from where Thy greatness manifests itself a



My Lord, my soul reaches towards Thy splendour, as the mountains and oases stretch, and my prayer rises, along with the uprise of lofty trees and the flow of rivers, with the chants of birds and the whispers of the breeze, and with the succession of night and day and the sequence of the seasons.

My Lord, love is Thine and to Thee prayer is offered with every new dawn, with every soft murmur of light, every repose of darkness, every gust of warmth and every bite of cold; whenever a crescent moon emerges and a wind whistles, a sea surges, a crop grows and a tongue makes an utterance.

My Lord, Thou gavest us the whole of existence: of every kind, race, colour and measure – a splendid creation and an utmost innovation. So make us reverent and inspire us by thy wisdom that is visible in all that thou innovatest. And maintain Thy glory in ourselves, in our societies, in our world and in all Thou created!



My Lord, help us to have integrity and agree upon that which is right for the sake of humanity's wellbeing worship Thee through knowing the secrets of Thy creatures and through the genuine belief that Thou that existence itself is one of the various ways through which Thou bringest us close to Thee by mear and kindness.

My Lord, by obeying Thee and by being at one with Thy system of creation we worship Thee truly and we implore Thee every now and then to help us and to bless our alliance. To Thee is Supreme power and to Thee is Praise and Glorification.

Authored by Sheikh Sami Abilmona, the Secretary General of the Druze IRFAN schools in Lebanon. He presented this statement at the Visby Faith and Forestry Gathering in August 2007.



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