



As the first warm waft of spring floats through the windows, there's every reason to believe that the fleeting English summer may be on its way before long. It's not in my character to be too reflective about the changing seasons, but it's hard not to become a bit ruminative as one cycle ends and another begins. Although most of us are separated from the agrarian lifestyle by several generations of time, there's an argument to be made for becoming more conscious of the natural world around us.

I don't know if our heedlessness of nature's rhythms has anything to do with our technologically dense and cyber-connected lives (instant messages first thing in the morning and tweets last thing at night), but something's definitely been lost along the way and indeed it's no coincidence to find that the great thinkers of the past were in the habit of pursuing quiet, secluded time communing with nature.

Allah in the Qur'an directed us to reflect upon the sky and earth around us. Hence, the scholars of Ahl-us-Sunnah often urged their followers to reflect upon the natural world, its content and characteristics, as a means of achieving higher spiritual goals. Remember the crucial tenet of Islamic belief: All ah, the Exalted, is necessarily unlike every part of creation in His Reality and in His Attributes. By simple observation of the world around them, the students of the Sunni tradition reinforced their deeply held convictions in the status of All

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h, Creator of all. At the cost of nothing more than a wander in the woods with a clear mind, that's wisdom we would all do well to harness.