

1st May, 2015

Dear Mustafa,

Four times a week a twin engine turbo-prop takes off from Karachi airport for a one hour flight to what the locals call the 'Mound of the Dead' - Mohenjo-Daro. 4,500 years ago this city of the Indus Valley civilisation ranked on a par with Thebes in Egypt, Nineveh in Mesopotamia and Knossos in Crete.

Mohenjo-Daro, an urban colossus of 40,000 people, was more advanced, with street lights, standardised weight measures, flushing lavatories and a city-wide sewage system. There were no palaces or lavish tombs, or evidence of military activity; trade and artisanship were the main activities of the populace. The reason for its decline seems to have been a change in the course of the Indus river which left the city stranded without its main source of sustenance. Even with the highest level of human ingenuity in the world, the city was trumped by the loss of its energy.

What do these magnificent ruins tell us about about the modern day? Energy....Our sophisticated civilisation is based on our capacity to harness, convert and build on energy. We gain 'energy leverage' through our use of fossil fuels, moving from wood to coal to oil. Modern civilisation has successfully

**Mustafa Zaidi**  
**Clarmond House**  
**1 Holbein Place**  
**London, SW1W 8NS**



exploited each fuel source with each fuel being more energy dense than the previous one.

However, for the first time in our Fossil Fuel Age, we are moving to a less dense, but cleaner source of energy; natural gas. This does not give the same energy 'bang for its buck', but it has the benefit of being more climate friendly. If we consider newer energy sources, like alternative fuels, these are even less energy dense, providing even less 'energy leverage'.

An 'Energy Deleverage' is in front of us, with tremendous consequences for our urban civilisation. As I return to the bustling metropolis of 20 million Karachiites, arriving back at the Sind Club, my sanctuary from the hubbub, the dusty streets of Mohenjo-Daro linger in my mind. I wonder if our mega-cities shall also one day have another name.

See you soon back in London.

Chris