

ENGLISH BIMONTHLY ISSUE 110 JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2023

SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living



**Patience is the greatest treasure
of an individual as well as a nation.**

A MAGAZINE FOR THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

This is a current magazine. Its articles are based on sound principles of reason and science with a particular emphasis on the spirit of Islam rather than the form or the ritual. All the articles have been either written by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, translated from his Urdu writings, or based on his writings developed by a team trained and guided by him.

Spirit of Islam bimonthly...

- ▶ Presents Islam, the religion of nature, in the contemporary idiom to help Muslims rediscover Islam from the original sources
- ▶ Explains Creation plan of God for humankind
- ▶ Enlightens people on the subject of global peace
- ▶ Addresses contemporary issues
- ▶ Assists the readers to deal with life's challenges
- ▶ Offers Spirituality to a wider circle of seekers
- ▶ Fosters greater communal harmony through religious understanding

United in prayers
SOI Editorial Committee



SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living

ISSUE 110 JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2023

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GRATITUDE TO PROF FARIDA KHANAM

THE Prophet Muhammad said, “One who does not thank the people, does not thank God. (Sunan Abi-Dawood) Offering thanks to God and being grateful to Him for His munificence and blessings are forms of prayer in Islam. However, Islam teaches that such expressions of gratefulness will go in vain if we fail to realize the great help and guidance offered to us by the people. We take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the supportive and guiding role played by Prof Farida Khanam in bringing out the ***Spirit of Islam***.

The Urdu monthly ***Al-Risala*** has completed four decades, while its English edition ***Spirit of Islam*** has completed a decade. However, one thing has been common in this journey. This is Dr Farida Khanam’s involvement, interest, and utmost care for the magazine as the editor.

She has kept on writing, editing, proofreading, translating, and guiding the ***Spirit of Islam*** editorial team with utmost care and dedication. Hailing from a hamlet with little formal education, she went on to master the English language, receive a Ph.D., and then become a lecturer in one of the most prestigious universities in India.

It is her loving presence that makes our task easy. Maulana had said that she should be considered his alter ego in his absence. After Maulana’s demise, these words have indeed become true.

While discharging her responsibilities as the chairperson of *Centre for Peace and Spirituality International*, she devotes her precious time to this magazine. We wish to mark the magazine’s entry into the second decade by offering our sincerest thanks to Prof Farida Khanam. We are grateful to Almighty God for making her our guide and mentor in this journey. We pray that God showers His choicest blessings on her and bestows her with the well-being of all kinds. □

-Spirit of Islam Editorial Team



*Patience elevates a person from
the rank of ordinary man to an
extraordinary rank.*

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S DESK



Prof Farida Khanam is an author, editor, translator, public speaker and former professor of Islamic Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Among her books are 'A Simple Guide to Islam' and 'A Study of World's Major Religions'. She has translated into English many books authored by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. Currently the chairperson of CPS International, she is a regular contributor of articles to various publications. Prof Khanam has edited Maulana's English translation of the Quran and has also translated his Urdu commentary on the Quran into English. She can be reached at spiritofislamperiodical@gmail.com

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES...

SPIRIT OF ISLAM is not a magazine that provides information or entertainment. It is a movement. It is a textual expression of an intellectual movement. In the initial period, this movement was known as the *Al-Risala* movement. The name was derived from the Urdu monthly *Al-Risala* started by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan in 1976. When Maulana discussed the idea of starting a magazine with a friend, he was dissuaded by saying that nobody reads suggestive magazines and that people preferred informative writings. That the magazine has survived 46 years, and English as well as Hindi editions also come out regularly is a testament to the belief and perseverance of the man who launched it.

The English edition of *Al-Risala* is ***Spirit of Islam*** that you are reading now. It is being published since 1984 under various names. The journey of *Al-Risala* under the name ***Spirit of Islam*** started in January 2013. This issue marks the beginning of the 11th year of the ***Spirit of Islam***.

The objectives of this movement are:

- To help people realize the innumerable blessings of God
- To present the timeless teachings of the Quran and the Prophet in the contemporary idiom

- To guide people to move from the level of material pleasures towards a life that is spiritual and God-oriented
- To help people become duty-conscious instead of becoming right-conscious
- To inculcate the values of peaceful coexistence and communal harmony

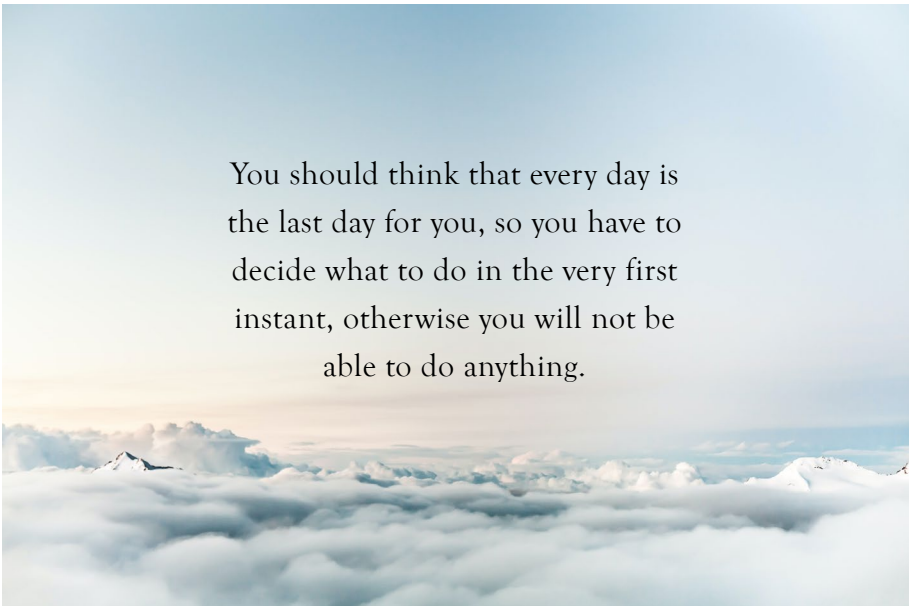
We are now entrusted to pursue these objectives through this publication. We are fortified by the immense reservoir of Maulana's writings at our disposal. The editorial team makes every effort to bring out articles that are current, relevant, and are helpful in the spiritual upliftment of the readers.

We are thankful to our readers. Their kind words and suggestions make us improve **SOI**. We have added some feedback from our readers as a special section in this issue.

May this new year bring you spiritual contentment, intellectual progress, and physical well-being of every kind! ☐

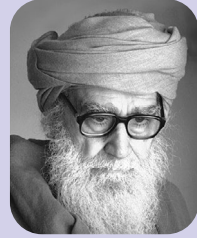


You should think that every day is the last day for you, so you have to decide what to do in the very first instant, otherwise you will not be able to do anything.



IN FOCUS

We bring you two articles every issue under the headings of 'Personal Experiences' and 'Journey towards God-realization' of our mentor and founder of CPS International Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925-2021). Though he is no more with us, we feel the presence of his guiding spirit motivating us through his teachings and his advice.



Maulana, through his study of science, religion, psychology and the experiences of his own life, enlightens about the path to discovery of God through one's journey of life. A discovery of this kind involves pondering on the Word of God, converting one's material experiences into spiritual insights, constant introspection, and contemplating on the numerous phenomena of the universe.

The journey of realization begins with a questing spirit. Seeking is an intellectual journey. If a person is sincere and honest in his discovery of God, if there is no negativity in his thinking, if he is free from prejudices, if he has become a completely complex-free soul, attainment of God-realization is as certain as the dawn of light after the rising of the sun.

The greatest success in this world is to live life in such a manner that you should not have an iota of negative thought against any person. You should depart from this world with a totally positive mindset. This is my last discovery in this world.

-Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925-2021)



DISCOVERING THE PURPOSE OF MY WRITINGS

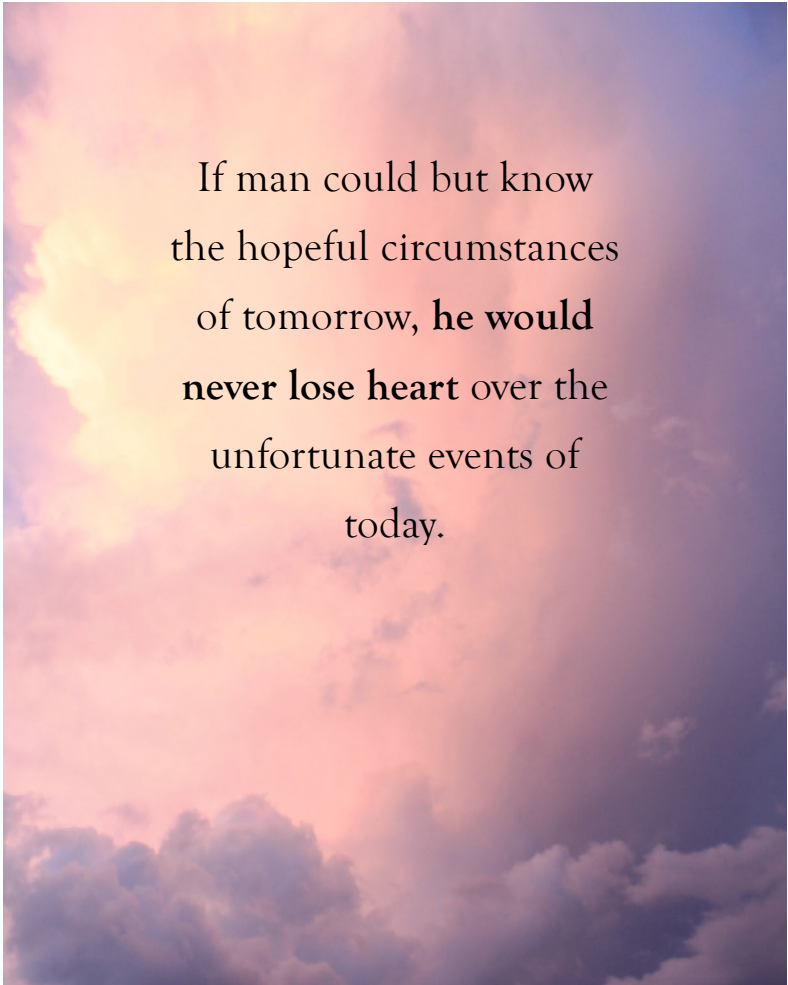
A PERSON once told me, "I am a big fan of your writings." I asked him which of my books he had read. He replied, "I have read and reread every word of your book *The Secret of Success*. I can recall many passages from this book verbatim." Then I asked, "Have you read the commentary of the Quran that I have written?" He replied that he did possess a copy of my commentary of the Quran, but he went through some passages from it once in a while. Similarly, a person once said to me, "I consider you to be the Dale Carnegie of the Muslims."

Many readers make such statements. I think such people have only got the peel of my writings, they have failed to realize the essence of my mission. I have written many books on the art of life. *The Secret of Success* is one of them. These books are important indeed. However, the essential and defining aspect of my work is about developing one's mind towards God-oriented thinking, i.e., developing a person's thinking to such an extent that he can realize God on a conscious level. Spiritual attachment to the Lord of the universe is the treasure comprising of all the achievements of this world and the Hereafter.

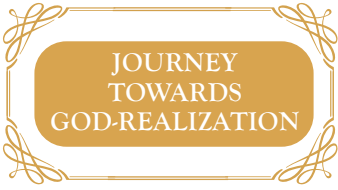
The main purpose of my mission is to call people to God, to present Islamic teachings in the contemporary idiom, to remove the veil of misinterpretation over Islam, to inculcate God-oriented thinking in people, to train people along the path of positive thinking, to introduce in people's thinking a greater realization of God and Hereafter-oriented thinking, to initiate the journey of intellectual development among people. I aim to explain to the readers that in the matters of Islam, the true model to emulate is that of the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions.

The purpose of my mission is to call people to God, to present Islamic teachings in the contemporary idiom, to remove the veil of misinterpretation over Islam, to inculcate God-oriented thinking in people, and to train people along the path of positive thinking.

Those who discover my mission in this way can be said to have truly discovered my mission. As for those who did not discover these things in my mission, they have yet to make this discovery. □



If man could but know
the hopeful circumstances
of tomorrow, **he would**
never lose heart over the
unfortunate events of
today.



FROM SCIENCE TO GOD-REALIZATION

WHAT is science? Science is the name of organized knowledge. Science refers to the knowledge in which the universe is studied in the light of objectively proven principles. In other words, science is the systematized knowledge of nature and the physical world.

Man has always pondered the reality of the universe. He studied the universe first in the light of traditional beliefs, then in the light of philosophical thinking, and finally in the light of accepted principles of science.

In the realm of physical science, we have had three major paradigm shifts in the last four centuries. First, we had the Newtonian hypothesis that matter was the basic building block of the universe. In the early twentieth century, this gave way to the Einsteinian paradigm of energy being the basic building block. And the latest is the David Bohm era when more and more scientists are accepting consciousness to be the basic building block. These shifts have had inevitable consequences for the New Age philosophy, which has moved away from the philosophy of crass materialism to that of spirituality.

The period, known as the age of science, began in Western Europe about five hundred years ago. Gradually, there was a general perception that science was the best means of knowing reality. It was generally accepted that what is proved by science is the truth, and what is not proved by scientific principles is not part of reality.

Mathematical accuracy in the universe is found at such a high standard that one scientist exclaimed that the universe signifies the existence of a mathematical mind.

In the nascent stages of the scientific age, science became synonymous with pure material knowledge. Since religious realities did not appear to be proven on material standards of reasoning, religious realities were declared unscientific. But the river of knowledge continued to move

forward until the time came when science itself became practically synonymous with immaterial knowledge rather than material knowledge. The scientific history of the previous centuries shows that through the evolution of science, for the first time, a scientific basis of reasoning was formed. This became universally accepted scientific reasoning, then it developed further, and eventually, science became knowledge that proved on an accepted rational basis that the universe is the work of higher consciousness. One scientist said: The stuff of the world is mind-stuff.

When it is proved that a great mind is behind the creation of the universe; that there is meaningfulness and flawless design in the universe, then it wonderfully speaks of the existence of a higher mind. There are countless things in the universe, and everything is on its final model. Mathematical accuracy in the universe is found at such a high standard that one scientist exclaimed that the universe signifies the existence of a mathematical mind. When the river of knowledge reaches this stage, the only task left is to name this discovered consciousness or this mind, according to religious terms, and this name is God. □



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TOWARDS GLOBAL PEACE

We often talk of peace in the context of war. But this is a very narrow and restricted notion of peace. Peace is deeply linked with the entirety of human life. Peace is a complete ideology in itself. Peace is the only religion for both—man and the universe. It is the master-key that opens the doors to every success. Peace creates a favourable atmosphere for success in every endeavour. Without peace, no positive action—small or big—is possible.



PROPHETIC WISDOM

THERE are five instances in the Quran where one of the responsibilities of the Prophet Muhammad is mentioned as teaching wisdom to the people. If we search in the dictionary to find out a clear definition of wisdom, we do not find a clear definition. The dictionary will explain wisdom as *the quality of having good judgement*. However, the dictionary fails to answer how a person develops this ability to make a good decision. This prompted some scholars to suggest that wisdom is one of those qualities difficult to define. (www.psychologytoday.com/basics/wisdom)

Although the teaching of wisdom is an attribute of the Prophet of Islam, a literal definition of wisdom in the works of *Hadith* reports could not be found. Another approach is to search for examples of wisdom in his practices. The Prophet Muhammad was a man of wisdom. Therefore, such a search is bound to bear fruit. This approach of developing a definition of wisdom from the practical model of the Prophet did indeed bring a positive result. Now, an academic definition of wisdom can be formulated. This definition is:

Wisdom: It is the ability to discover the relevant by sorting out the irrelevant.

The life of the Prophet is, according to this definition, a perfect example of wisdom. He practised this wisdom throughout his 23 years of prophetic life, and this wisdom was the main reason for his stupendous

success. The Prophet of Islam was truly the Prophet of wisdom. Being a Prophet and a man of wisdom, his practical model became worthy of emulation.

The following is a selection of some of the words as well as deeds of the Prophet that are the hallmarks of wise thinking. The wisdom behind these words and deeds will bear tremendous success to those who inculcate it in their thoughts and actions.

Rethinking Your Strategies

The Prophet started his mission in ancient Makkah. The people of Makkah opposed his message. They even gave him an ultimatum to leave Makkah or stay there to be killed by them. Under these circumstances, he left Makkah, and quietly came to Madinah and settled there. Shortly before the migration, he said to his Companions: I have been ordered to migrate to a town which will swallow (conquer) other towns and is called Yathrib and that is Madinah. (*Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 1871*) According to common practice, a person does not leave his native country easily, he engages in every effort to keep staying there. But the Prophet accepted this decision of the chiefs of ancient Makkah, and quietly settled in Madinah.

In terms of results, this decision was a very wise act. The wisdom behind this act can be described thus: If the first plan does not work, then quietly make a second plan of action by adopting a low-profile method. The Prophet adopted this wisdom and came to Madinah peacefully. He planned his mission all over anew. This method was so successful that within just ten years, first Makkah and then the whole of Arabia came under the fold of Islam.

In antagonistic situations, people usually think with a confrontational mind and adopt a confrontational approach. But the Prophet took the method of replanning instead of confrontation, and history bears witness that his strategy was completely successful.

Positive Thinking in All Circumstances

The Prophet started his mission at Makkah in AD 610. At that time, tribal culture was prevalent in Makkah. The people there treated him badly in every way possible. This persecution went on when thirteen years later, he was forced to leave his homeland. He left Makkah and settled with his Companions in Madinah, about 500 kilometres from Makkah. It was a case of exile in the strongest sense. It is common observation that people in exile engage in a continuous barrage about

the evils of their former countrymen. But the Prophet took a very different approach. He migrated to Madinah and started living there as if nothing had happened to him in Makkah.

The biography of the Prophet by Ibn Hisham mentions the first sermon of the Prophet in Madinah. Anyone who reads this sermon will find it surprising that there is no complaint in this sermon against those who expelled him from the country of his birth. Generally, on such occasions, people in exile incite their new acquaintances to aid them to retaliate against their old compatriots. The Prophet did not say anything like this. The summary of this sermon is as follows: Whoever is able to shield himself from the Fire of Hell, even if it be only by giving a piece of a date in charity, let him do so; and whoever is unable to do so, let him shield himself by saying a good word. (*Biography of the Prophet* by Ibn Hisham, 1/500-1)

These words of the Prophet inform us that while his opponents were trying to push him into the 'fire', his heart was filled with total well-wishing for them. His message to them was to save themselves from the wrath of God. This is prophetic wisdom. The essence of this wisdom can be worded as: Those who become your enemies, become their well-wishers. Those who wrong you, seek good reward from God for them. For those who do not give anything to you, become a giver person for them.

The Issue of Prestige

The Quran mentions that people who are trained in wisdom do not make an issue or a problem a problem of personal prestige. A verse of the Quran was revealed when the Treaty of Hudaibiya was being concluded. This verse describes the mental state of the Companions of the Prophet at that time: While those who deny the truth made it a prestige issue [in their hearts]—the bigotry of the days of ignorance—God sent His tranquillity down onto His Messenger and believers and firmly established in them the principle of righteousness, for they were indeed better entitled to it and more worthy of it. God has full knowledge of all things. (48: 26)

When two groups enter a discussion on a matter on which they disagree, it usually happens that the group which harbours feelings of community pride and prestige turns the issue at hand into a prestige issue. This makes it difficult to arrive at a peaceful resolution to the issue. The wise group is the one that does not allow the issue to escalate into an issue of prestige. By displaying greater moral resolve, it agrees to adopt the

principles of peace and adjustment unilaterally. This is the hallmark of people of wisdom, and such people achieve great success in life.

Solution rather than Complaints

Makkah came under the rule of the Prophet in AD 629. He then left Makkah and headed for the city of Taif accompanied by about 12,000 people. During the journey, they encountered a narrow path lined with rocky mountains. The Prophet asked the name of the path. He was told that the path was called 'the narrow one'. The Prophet said, "It is not a narrow path, it is an easy path."

He then asked the people to pass the passage by making a vertical line. His Companions were earlier spread out horizontally. Thus, by making a line, the whole company crossed the narrow path easily.

This is an example of prophetic wisdom. When a problem is encountered, do not resort to complaining. Instead, adopt the method of finding solutions and planning. This approach will soon present a solution to the problem. Usually, people take things at face value. This method is against wisdom. Every object should be seen according to its real value. In this way, the matter will be easily solved without any further problems.

Avoiding Chain Reaction

The Prophet along with his Companions conquered Makkah in AD 629. When he entered Makkah, he asked it to be announced that whoever returned to their homes and those who surrendered would be provided immunity. After this, the Makkan people gathered in the courtyard of the Kabah. The Prophet asked them, "What do you say now, and what do you think would be done to you?" They replied, "We consider you to be our nephew and the noble and merciful son of our uncle." He said, "I will say today what the Prophet Joseph had said to his brothers: There is no blame on you today, may God forgive you, and He is more merciful than all who show mercy." (*al-Sunan al-Kubra al-Bayhaqi, Hadith No. 18275*)

These were the people who had persecuted the Prophet severely, expelled him from his homeland, and waged wars against him repeatedly. According to the law of the land, they were undoubtedly prisoners of war. However, the Prophet did not take revenge against them. Rather, he let them go unconditionally. It was not a simple decision. By taking this decision, he saved the people of ancient Makkah

from taking retaliatory action ever again. Taking an action of revenge would have given impetus to a chain reaction from the Makkans.

Silence is Action

An advice of the Prophet is mentioned in books of *Hadith*: When the *Imam* (the person leading the prayers) is delivering the *Khutba* (sermon), and you ask your companion to keep quiet and listen, then no doubt you have done an evil act. (*Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 934*) If the *Imam* of the mosque is giving a Friday sermon, and a person speaks at that time, then the listener should silence him with a gesture. If he speaks to silence him, it will be considered an insensible act. Because earlier only one person was speaking, now there are two people speaking. It means the problem had increased twofold. This type of method is undoubtedly imprudent.

The wisdom behind this advice is related not just to the prayer at the mosque, but it is related to our whole life. It happens time and again in collective life that interfering in a matter makes it worse. On such occasions, the wise policy is that a person should adopt the method of silence, he should not interfere and make the matter more complicated. The wise person knows when to act, and when not to act. He knows when to speak, and when to keep quiet; when to move forward, and when to retreat; when to take action, and when to refrain from action to the last extent; when to try to win, and when to give up.

Those who possess this wisdom succeed in this world, and those who are unaware of this wisdom, their only end is to jump into a matter without thinking, and then never find a satisfactory conclusion.

Sustainable Action

The Prophet of Islam said: "The most pleasing deed in the sight of God is that which is durable." (*Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 6464*) Any real success in this world always takes time, so the best course of action is that which is sustainable. Therefore, a result-oriented action in this world is sustainable. Such an action is in accordance with the law of nature. The man should plan his actions before taking an initiative. He should review all related matters. He should make a thorough assessment of his abilities and available resources, as well as the prevailing circumstances. Only then should he start his work according to a well-thought-out plan. Once he starts working at it, he should never leave it in the middle. This is the way to achieve success in life.

Being Aware of the Times

A saying of the Prophet guides us in this manner: 'A wise man must be cognizant of his time.' (*Sahih ibn Hibban, Hadith No. 361*) This saying of the Prophet of Islam explains the perfection of human knowledge. It is not sufficient for a person to be conversant with bookish knowledge and the traditions of the past. Rather he needs to be aware of his times, of the past as well as the present. The importance of knowing the times is both rational and practical. Without this he fails to understand things in the universal context, therefore, an in-depth analysis of reality is not possible. Thus, in practical terms, he is a flawed person. He fails to know how to apply the eternal truths to the conditions of the time. Such a person cannot successfully plan his actions. □



A person should reflect on the fact that he is helpless in every respect, that he cannot survive even for a moment without the life-support system on earth. Even within the life-support system, a virus (e.g. Covid-19) invisible to the naked eye, renders him weak and helpless. These events serve to teach us that man is not the master of the world. The master of this world is God, the Lord of the universe, who is running it. Therefore, it is proper for man to surrender himself before his Creator.

ALARM FOR THE END OF HUMAN HISTORY

Start Preparing

IN the United States, an international think tank is dedicated to the scientific studies of natural phenomena. The name of this organization is Global Footprint Network. One of the functions of the organization is to measure the number of resources we use and contrast it with the resources we possess. The goal of the Global Footprint Network, according to a Wikipedia entry, is to create a future where all humans can live well, within the means of planet Earth.

Global research undertaken by this organization reports that the earth is rapidly becoming uninhabitable for man because the earth's current resources are insufficient for the standard of life that man has adopted since the emergence of modern civilization. The report states:

Humans using resources at an alarming rate

Humanity would need five earths to produce the resources needed if everyone lived as profligately as Americans. We are demanding nature's services—resources and creating CO2 emissions—at a rate 44% faster than what nature can regenerate and reabsorb. That means, it takes the Earth just under 18 months to produce the ecological services, humanity needs in one year. And if humankind continues to use natural resources and produce waste at the current rate, we will require the resources of two planets to meet our demands by the early 2030s, a gluttonous level of ecological spending that may cause a major ecosystem collapse. (*The Times of India*, New Delhi, November 25, 2009, p. 24)

The devastating and annihilating effects of unmindful use of natural resources are a reality. We should be on our guard to face this situation.

The devastating and annihilating effects of unmindful use of natural resources are a reality. We should be on our guard to face this situation. This situation is extremely alarming. The above scientific report is equivalent to the advance notification of Doom's Day. Now is the time that people wake up from their slumber of forgetfulness. It's time that people start making preparations so that they can face this dreadful day. The traits of people who use the resources of the world keeping in mind that these resources are gifts of God and they will be held accountable for how they utilised them are stated in the Quran thus: Eat and drink

but exceed not the bounds: God does not love those who exceed the bounds. (7:31) They are those who are neither extravagant nor niggardly, but keep a balance between the two. (25: 67)

A survey report by the SCAR (Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research) has been published in the media. The survey was conducted by a group of 100 international scientists from 13 countries. The survey states that the melting of glaciers is increasing the water level in the oceans. By the end of the 21st century, this rise in water level will be more than four feet. If these projections come true, most low-lying island nations will be submerged such as the Maldives, Mumbai, Chennai, and Calcutta, etc. (*The Times of India*, New Delhi, December 2009, p. 1)

One of the prophecies of the Day of Resurrection mentioned in *Hadith* reports is that the level of water on the earth will rise. This process of rising water levels seems to have started rapidly. Scientists also believe that stopping this process is beyond human capacity. Now the last time has come for man to repent and mend his ways. The relevant data inform us that the history of man on the present earth is now nearing its end. Although scientists are looking for another Earth-like planet for the survival of the human race, the reality is that there is no other Earth-like planet in vast space. □



*Patience is a kind of training
course that awakens the hidden
potential of a person.*

BITTERNESS LEADS TO FAILURE

Focus on Your Goals

ZAFAR IQBAL is a former Indian field hockey player. He went on to captain the national team of India. He led his team to a host of trophies, including the coveted 1980 Olympic gold. He was recognized as the best outside-left in the game. According to Vijay Lokapally of the *Patriot* newspaper, the secret of Zafar Iqbal's success is that he concentrates on his game at all costs, and does not retaliate to fouls committed by his opponents. Neither does he harbour any bitterness against anyone. Zafar Iqbal explains this—his most vital and telling tactic—by saying: "The day I do so, I would cease to be a sportsman."

What, in Zafar Iqbal's words, is true of sportsmen, is also true of the whole human race. Anyone who bases his life on a policy of retaliation and harbours bitterness and malice against his fellow human beings cannot be called a true human being. Man, in the real sense of the word, is a being who has a purpose in life and who keeps struggling to achieve that purpose regardless of the treatment inflicted upon him by others.

It is unfortunate that this fact, which has been realized on both intellectual and practical levels by a great Muslim "sportsman", has been ignored by great Muslim "men" of the modern age. Muslim leaders in recent times have all conducted a policy aimed at redressing the "wrongs" inflicted upon them by their so-called oppressors. In so doing, they have failed to reach out to their fellow beings with the message of peace and spirituality which Islam stands for.

Anyone who bases his life on a policy of retaliation and harbours bitterness and malice against his fellow human beings cannot be called a true man.

Just as success on the sports field lies in avoiding minor disputes with one's opponents and concentrating on winning the game, success in the field of life in general lies in putting trivial issues and quarrels to one side and devoting oneself wholeheartedly to one's central task. The result will not only be success in the purpose of life, but the side issues which might have distracted one's attention will also recede into insignificance, or be settled to one's advantage.

Success in the field of life in general lies in putting trivial issues and quarrels to one side and devoting oneself wholeheartedly to one's central task.

Zafar Iqbal was serious about executing his duties as a player and captain. He really wanted his team to succeed. That is why he realized the key to success and put it into play on the field. If the Muslims are serious about discharging their responsibilities, both as human beings and as Muslims, they will also take Zafar Iqbal's lead and cast all irrelevant issues and disputes to one side in their determination to succeed. □



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GIVE NATURE ITS DUE

Taking Nature for Granted

HUGE stores of water lie under the surface of the earth. Our stay on the solid surface of the earth can be likened to a small boat floating on the surface of the sea. Just as a sailor's life is all too often at the mercy of the waves, so does the life of land dwellers depend, to a very great extent on subsoil water.

So intricately linked is man with nature that he cannot continue to live on this planet while using the forces of nature without respecting it. One such abuse of nature came to light, in the gradual sinking of Mexico City. The Mexican capital, gigantic and overcrowded and situated 2,000 metres above sea level, is sinking by 9.5 cm per year.

This was detected in 1925, when engineer Roberto Gayol, building the flood gates which regulate the city sewage, observed that his work was sinking.

Upon closer scrutiny, his conclusion broadened: not only were his gates sinking but so was the whole city. The phenomenon had begun long before, probably in the middle of the last century. The main reason for the sinking is a hitherto unsuspected factor: the over-exploitation of the water layer of Mexico City's subsoil, something which is also damaging the whole Mexican valley.

Blissfully unaware of the extent of his dependence, man frequently squanders natural resources to the point of abuse. How dependent is man's existence on nature, and yet, how reckless he is in his neglect of it! ❑

Blissfully unaware of the extent of his dependence, man frequently squanders natural resources to the point of abuse.



Patience creates maturity in a person.

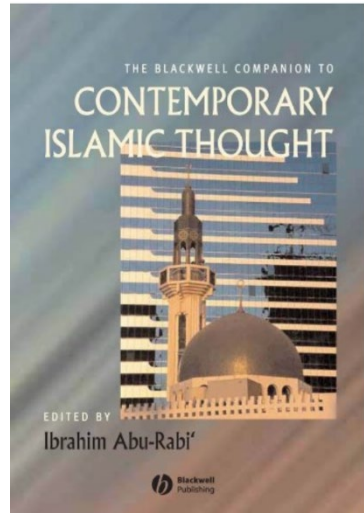
BOOK REVIEW

Name of the Book: The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought

No. of pages: 696

ISBN-13: 978-1405121743

Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell



In this issue of *Spirit of Islam*, we present the book *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought*. The book is a compilation of research papers on various contemporary Muslim intellectuals and Islamic movements. Each paper in the book is penned by different writers and the collection is edited by Mr Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'. In the words of the editor, "*The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought* (presents) the works of those Muslim intellectuals who represent a variety of social and intellectual positions, and in that sense the various articles in this Companion will help us appreciate the core ideas discussed by some of the main intellectuals in the contemporary Muslim world."

Chapter 4 of the book is titled *Islamic Thought in Contemporary India: The Impact of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's Al-Risala Movement*. This paper is written by Mr Irfan A. Omar. He is an Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies at Marquette University. He is co-editor (with Bradford E. Hinze) of *Heirs of Abraham: The Future of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Relations* (Orbis, 2005). He served as guest editor for the special issue of *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* (Birmingham, UK), entitled, "Islam in Dialogue," 15/1 (January 2004), and is currently an associate editor of the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*.

The following is a selection from this paper. For the sake of uniformity, certain spelling changes have been made.

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Introduction

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan has had a rather challenging and, by all standards of scholarly rigour, a productive and stimulating life. His writings continue to fill the pages of the monthly journal *Al-Risala*

(published since 1976 in Urdu and in English since 1984) and many other publications. One thing he does not do is “preach,” in mosques. Because of his stature as a scholar and community leader, he is often invited to give the *khutba*, a sermon that precedes Muslim congregation prayers on Fridays. However, he never accepts such invitations because, as he related to this author, he is not a preacher type.

His long gray hair, flowing beard, and the white traditional Indian outfit, on top of which he wears a rather worn-out greyish white overcoat most times of the year, reveal his Sufistic sympathies. His is a rather monastic look. But there is no monasticism in Islam, as Maulana Khan would say, and so his appearance is perhaps a reflection of his simple taste and pietistic posture.

Maulana Khan combines knowledge of the traditional religious sciences (*ulum al-din*) with the cultural, socio-political, and ethical discourse of his times. He often draws on his knowledge of contemporary events to highlight the moral plight of our times. His familiarity with the foundational literature on science and religion, ethics, and political discourse informs his writings on Islamic moral theology. Widely travelled, he shows exceptional knowledge of and interest in Western as well as modern ethical concerns. His writings display an eagerness to apply the lessons learned from his explorations to critical issues facing Muslim societies both in India and elsewhere.

As founder-president of “The Islamic Centre” established in 1970, (and then Centre for Peace International in 2001) Maulana Khan has presided over a kind of Islamic movement that is fundamentally different from all other movements in contemporary Muslim history. Known as the ‘*Al-Risala* Movement’, and which Maulana Khan calls ‘mission’, it has gradually influenced and shaped Muslim thinking over the last 40 years, a measure of which can be found in the changing attitudes of the Indian Muslim leadership in the late 1990s.

Muslim religious and political leadership for the most part ignored Wahiduddin Khan in the early phase of his mission and dubbed him varyingly as “anti-Muslim,” a “Libyan agent,” and, more recently, the “Hindu agent.” They felt that his conciliatory and self-critical tone was not apropos of Islam’s dignified past status in India. In their view, the solution to Muslims’ problems was to be found in taking a hard-line approach and invoking the law to curb right-wing attacks on Islam and Muslims. Khan, on the other hand, advocated a dialogical approach. By the late 1990s, most of the Muslim leaders had effectively come to realize that their confrontational approach had caused a sharp

increase in the number of problems faced by Muslims. Thus, somewhat cognizant of the social forces at work, they presently have become less confrontational, less law-invoking, and more conciliatory towards people of other faiths.

What distinguishes Wahiduddin Khan from scores of other *ulema* (religious scholars) in the Muslim world in general and in India in particular is his very idea of Islam. He sees Islam as a personal struggle for faith in God and sincere reaching out to God in pursuit of a life of piety. Simply put, he is emphatically opposed to any political understanding of Islam. To him, the political struggles of Muslims around the world cannot and must not be promoted on the basis of Islamic teachings. Islamic lifestyle and culture are decisively separate from any worldly matters that engage Muslims. This does not necessarily imply a dichotomized view of being Muslim in an increasingly secular world. It simply disallows the construction of an artificial connection between Islam's religious calling and Muslims' worldly challenges. Khan does not denounce politics as such, but he argues that politics is a matter of choice whereas Islam is not. One may or may not take up a political cause such as a separatist movement organized in Kashmir but one must not confuse such causes with Islam.

Islam and the Other

Maulana Khan's perception of the world does not include the "other." He is critical of the generally dichotomized view of some Muslim leaders who interpret Islam as an ideology pitted against other, in their view, deviant ideologies, that is, the worldview which sees "us" vs. "them" without regard for the complications that such a worldview may pose in the real world. In fact, the ideologizing of Islam has reached a point where in some Muslim groups the process of identifying "us" is limited to those who subscribe to the narrow interpretations of that group. Thus rhetorically, "us" for such groups may rhetorically mean all Muslims, but in reality, it includes only those who agree with the authoritative voice that speaks on behalf of the group while claiming to speak on behalf of the whole of Islam itself.

Khan deconstructs this ideological worldview presented in the name of faith. He understands "Islam"—an individual's quiet surrender to the will of God—as primarily a personal relationship between the believer and God. This understanding of Islam, he argues, emanates from the Quran and was lived out by Prophet Muhammad as evidenced through a careful study of his life.

The *Al-Risala* Movement today represents a growing number of Muslims, many of whom come from the intellectual and managerial classes. The movement has many followers who work independently and are not dues-paying members. Through his continuous efforts, Maulana Khan aims to transform attitudes by infusing what he calls a “moral spirit” in the practice of Islam, particularly in regard to relations with the so-called “other.” Today Khan’s following includes not only Muslims but also Hindus and people from other faiths whose participation has added a whole new layer of complexity to this unique Islamic movement and has also confirmed his own belief that the moral campaign alone is the heart and soul of Islamic revivalism.

Key Objectives of the *Al-Risala* Movement

As far as one can glean from the collective writings of Maulana Khan, the *Al-Risala* Movement seems to be emphasizing two main principles.

A. Muslims need to exercise greater self-criticism and not be ashamed of the past mistakes of their forebears. They must not be bound to history and should not insist on glorifying it, especially since it is known to contain many less-than-glorious moments. Muslims should engage in *ijtihad* and rethink and articulate anew the core message of Islam in light of modern challenges and its applications. This amounts to reform from within. The key components of this rethinking are nonviolence and reconciliation.

B. Muslims must engage in dialogue with others (with an intention to invite them to learn about Islam) because of the present realities of Indian polity. Muslims thus need to re-orient themselves to living in a pluralistic and multicultural ethos. They must develop intercultural, interreligious, and interethnic relations to cooperate on issues such as providing greater access to education and inculcating moral values. Khan believes that this form of activism, which to him is utterly Islamic, would attract others to Islam and hence allow Muslims to carry out one of their core Islamic duties of calling people to Islam.

The Impact and the Current Focus

Even though Khan primarily wrote on the general issues of Islamic life and ethics as well as Islam’s interrelationship with the modern age, he has also been writing about the life and struggles of Indian Muslims. From the beginning of the movement, his main focus has been reform among Indian Muslims with respect to how they view Islam as a faith and how they live out that faith as a minority group in the midst of others with differing historical perspectives. One major element

of Khan's thought has been his passionate call for the rebuilding of mainstream Indian culture. He projects a bright future for Muslims in India if and only if they become a giving people contributing to the national growth, politics, economy, culture, and to society as a whole. Muslims should become unreservedly involved in nation-building; they should become part of the mainstream. By remaining in their limited spheres of activity, and railing about their problems without regard for those of others, they are viewed as sectarian at best. In addition, an antagonistic response from the right wing has been increasing due to reactionary Muslim politics. Therefore, a different strategy is needed to counter this trend.

Conclusion

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan does not project himself as a reformer. He outlines the nature of his mission in his pioneering book, *Fikr-e-Islami* as *ijtihad*. In his view, reform (*islah*) implies the existence of a faulty ideal requiring reform. Islam, as for many earlier revivalists who have attempted *tajdid* (renewal), still consists of those very ideals that existed at the time of the Prophet Muhammad. There are no changes required insofar as Islam is concerned. It is Muslims who have forgotten how to reinterpret and reapply Islam in every age according to the needs and circumstances of the time. Thus his task is to provide this reinterpretation of Islam for today's Muslims and people of other faiths who are willing to collaborate on building and maintaining a multicultural ethos.

He argues that what is lacking in the Indian Muslim community at large is a coherent vision of the reapplication (by way of *ijtihad*) of Islamic ideals. These ideals in Khan's interpretation are pluralism, tolerance of differences, utilizing peaceful means of activism, and becoming progressive within the scope of the teachings of Islam.

Maulana's view of Islam and the role of Muslims in the twenty-first century is increasingly making sense even to those who did not previously agree with him. Thus it may be said that the future holds positive prospects for the principles enunciated by Maulana Khan. Successive generations will encounter these principles and rationale without any subjective bias against the man. □

*Patience gives a person the strength
to stand on high Islamic morals.*

IMPORTANCE OF CONCENTRATION

A Sure Way to Success

THE Mahabharata is a Sanskrit epic of ancient India. It deals with a dynastic battle for power between the related clans of the Pandavas and their cousins, the Kauravas. There are many stories of one of the Pandava princes Arjuna in the Mahabharata. The book narrates that during his formative years, Arjuna along with his four brothers was learning the art of archery from a guru (master), Dronacharya.

After imparting the lessons for a few days, the guru wanted to test his disciples. He made a clay bird and placed it on top of a tree. Then he told them to aim for the bird's eye. The guru first asked the other brothers, "What do you see above?" The answers included many things such as trees, leaves, branches, sparrows, etc. These answers didn't impress the master. Arjuna's brothers were sent back to their place without being allowed to shoot.

He then asked Arjun to take aim. He asked Arjun what he saw above. Arjun said, "The eye of the bird". The master repeated his question many times, and every time he received the same answer. Thus, Arjun came out with flying colours in the examination. The master imparted some sage advice, he said, "In order to achieve your goal, all your attention should be concentrated on the goal".

This principle is very important for success in achieving any goal. This is called concentration, i.e., the ability of a person to put all his attention and effort on one target, he should stop thinking about other things.

To achieve a goal, a person must put his mental faculties concentrated on the target with total dedication. Without it, no great success can be achieved in this world as well as in the world Hereafter. This is the only price that is needed to be paid to achieve a goal. A person who is not willing to pay this price should not even aspire to achieve the goal. □

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IN SEARCH OF PARADISE

Know God's Creation Plan

IN every person's mind lies the idea of a beautiful world, a world that is perfect and ideal, where all his desires can be fulfilled. This concept is the biggest motivator of every person's action. Every person is engaged in achieving this beautiful world of their dreams. They strive their whole life and spend all their energies in this pursuit. In the end, however, they feel that they have not been able to find the world they had been dreaming of and striving for. Every person starts his life with tremendous courage and high hopes, but every person dies with the feeling that despite all the efforts he has failed to get the world he desired.

Fish find solace and contentment only in water, not outside the water. In the same way, man will find peace, solace, contentment, and fulfilment only in Paradise, not outside it.

This is the story of the whole of humanity. No man or woman is an exception to it. This state of affairs then gives rise to a question that can be truly called humanity's biggest question. Why is it that people start their lives with great hopes and aspirations, but they die with feelings of deprivation? The answer is that the beautiful world that every person dreams about is in fact the world of Paradise. This is in accordance with the creation plan of God. According to this divine plan, this ideal world, i.e. Paradise will be found in the post-death period of human life, not in the pre-death

period. Man wants to find Paradise in the present, but the attainment of Paradise is not possible in the present world.

The example of man and Paradise can be likened to fish and water. Fish find solace and contentment only in water, not outside the water. In the same way, man will find peace, solace, contentment, and fulfilment only in Paradise, not outside it. The search for Paradise is another name for the search for an ideal future. One must realize that the future can be realized only in the future, it cannot be realized in the present. If man discovers this reality, he will consider the present world to be the place of preparation for Paradise. He will also realize that according to the creation plan of God, an ideal world cannot be achieved here. □



ISLAMIC ETHICS

Through the Consciousness of Accountability

Anger Management

Of all the human emotions, the most destructive is anger. It tears apart human relationships, shatters the harmony of the environment, and has the potential to destabilize whole communities. Therefore, it must be recognized as one of the greatest negative forces in society and be kept under strict control.

Alas, it is an emotion that affects all human beings at some time or another, and keeping it under tight rein is often a matter of the greatest difficulty. Fury can be so blinding that it causes a person to forget all norms of human decency, to the point of wishing to humiliate, injure or even kill an opponent. He descends to using vile, harsh language, and even comes to blows, all in an attempt to beat his opponent either verbally or physically. His anger does not allow him to see that in so doing he degrades himself as much as the object of his rage. And it is not just the weak, the egoistic, or the ill-natured who fall prey to such baneful impulses, but even the most morally upright and socially irreproachable members of the community become a victim of anger.

A true believer must cultivate the capacity to rise above negative sentiments in his dealings with people so that his relationships with them remain on a positive basis.

Anger gives a momentary illusion of strength, but in reality, it weakens, degrades, and destroys. An otherwise excellent character is seriously marred by fits of rage, for that is what causes a man to forget all his moral precepts and throw his principles to the winds. It was not without good reason that the Prophet Muhammad said, "A strong man is not one who overwhelms his opponent; a strong man is one who controls himself when he becomes angry."

Here is yet another piece of advice that the Prophet gave to his Companions: "When one of you becomes angry, he should keep quiet." This is the master key to keeping one's anger in check.

Fear of God in a human being is the supreme factor that can prevent an irate person from going beyond the bounds of decency. When awareness of God's greatness is truly lodged in an individual's heart, this enables him to rein himself in so that he does not stray beyond the

limits laid down for him by the Almighty. His consciousness of the fact that God will call him to account for each one of his actions exercises a powerful restraint upon the anger surging within him. Such is the character of one, who fears God, that when he is made angry by a human being, it is God who looms up before him, effectively quelling his anger.

The right path is that of adherence to a certain discipline in life according to which human beings should live as though bound by a contract made with God.

The Quran makes it clear that any such strong, adverse, emotional reaction such as anger does not befit the true believer, and instead cites as a mark of excellence the quality of forgivingness: "(The provision) with God is better and more lasting for those (...) who forgive when they are angry." (42: 37)

A true believer must cultivate the capacity to rise above negative sentiments in his dealings with people so that his relationships with them remain positive. When anger and bitterness well up inside him, he should not give vent to

these feelings but should, instead, contain and suppress them within himself. He should live in the world in the way that the flowers do—giving off a sweet fragrance even to those who give nothing but abuse and remaining unruffled even in the face of violent attack.

Mistake Management

However upright one may be, one cannot help but err from time to time in one's dealings with one's fellow beings. There are bound to be occasions when one fails to give another his due or neglects some responsibility towards him. The Quran tells us that at such times we should right the wrongs we have done by immediately doing good. If we lose no time in doing so, we can effectively cancel out any harmful consequences of our wrongdoing. To this end, the Prophet counselled: "Fear God wherever you are, and follow up a bad deed with a good deed. In so doing, you will right whatever wrong you have done."

This can take various forms. It can mean asking for forgiveness, praying for the one who has been wronged, giving him a present by way of making amends, speaking well of him to others, or generally acting as his well-wisher.

Controlling One's Speech

According to the Quran, Paradise will be free of idle talk and sinful speech. There shall be no lying, no false accusations, and no denigration of others.

(In Paradise) they shall not hear any idle talk, or any untruth: all this will be a recompense, a gift, that will suffice them, from your Lord. (78: 35-36)

In a sublime garden, where they will hear no idle talk. (88: 10-11)

There will be the most sublime feeling of peace and goodwill, for there will be no ridicule, no abuse. In short, no remarks are even to the slightest degree inappropriate. For this to be a reality, only those who are truly superior in character will be ushered through its portals. Paradise is no place for the low in character. It is a place where only the noble shall reside.

It is of the greatest importance then to build a good character while still in this world, for it is only those who are possessed of the highest qualities of character who will be eligible to take up their abode in Paradise. Those who fall below this sublime standard will be discarded like so much rubbish and cast into the pit of Hell, there to suffer eternal punishment for the wickedness of their ways.

It is of the greatest importance then to build up a good character while still in this world, for it is only those who are possessed of the highest qualities of character who will be eligible to take up their abode in Paradise.

Fruitful Organization

Within even the tiniest of seeds, God has concealed the beginnings of a verdant plant. From one tiny kernel can spring forth the loftiest of trees. But this potentiality can be realized only when all of the conditions for its growth are just right—season, soil, temperatures, sunshine, rainfall, all must be exactly what the plant needs, and only then will the seed sprout and produce the most wonderful of foliage, blossoms, and fruits. Suppose we just dropped our seed on a tabletop and left it to its resources, there would be no question of its producing a plant, green or otherwise.

Why should this be so? It is because God has created the correct combination of conditions for growth to take place and has laid down a definite pattern for the functioning of every single thing and every single living creature on this earth. This divine pattern has been ordained for

all time, and there is nothing that can exist without conforming to it. The slightest deviation from this pattern produces bad results, or no results at all, whereas acting in accordance with it causes all of God's creations to thrive and flourish.

The same is true of our human communities. Once they are entrusted with the divine code of life, as enshrined in the Book of God, they need only adhere strictly to it, never deviating from the "straight path", as it is termed in the Quran, to be able to take root and flourish both in this world and the Hereafter.

The right path is that of adherence to a certain discipline in life according to which human beings should live as though bound by a contract made with God. The right path will lead man straight to God.

It is written in the Quran:

God made a covenant with the Children of Israel; and raised among them twelve leaders. God said, 'Surely, I am with you. If you attend to your prayers and pay the alms and believe in My messengers and support them, and give a generous loan to God, I will certainly forgive you your sins and admit you into Gardens through which rivers flow. Whoever among you denies the truth after this shall go astray from the straight path.' (5: 12)

This contract, or covenant, stipulates several religious duties, the first of which is prayer, a way of bowing to God and seeking to be close to Him. Next is *Zakat* (charity), which obliges one to be good in giving to others, and to behave as if they had a basic right to a share in one's earnings. Then there is the duty to spread the Word of God. When one hears the call of truth, one is obliged to commit oneself unstintingly to its support and furtherance and to give one's whole-hearted assistance to those who call humankind to the truth. All of these religious duties taken together are what make up the contract according to which a believer must pattern his life. Those who live their lives in such a manner find themselves close to God and become worthy of His divine assistance. □



*Patience makes a person
possess high human qualities.*

FROM OUR READERS

The Spirit of Islam Editorial Team is blessed to garner motivating words from its readers. We have selected some of these letters and now present them before you.

I have been reading **SOI** since it was published in the name of The Spiritual Message. I find the articles extremely engaging, logical, and convincing. They address contemporary minds very effectively. The language is very simple and easy to understand. The length of the articles (in most cases) is not more than a page, so it is easy to read them in one go.

Moreover, the articles cover not only the contemporary issues common to all humanity but also those issues which a person wants to know and understand about Islam. The articles are quite useful to people of all faiths. They present the discovery of God and the purpose of creation at an intellectual level. The articles are very effective in removing many misconceptions regarding Islam, the Prophet of Islam, and God.

Last but not least is the size of the magazine. It's very handy for those who love to read a hard copy!

May Allah accept the efforts of all due to whom it is possible to get such a great magazine! **-Sajid Anwar, Mumbai**

Spirit of Islam is a magazine that aims to make sure that its reader realizes and understands the creation plan of God, the purpose of life, and the importance of the Hereafter. One who reads **SOI** clearly understands these phenomena.

I am a lifelong learner. I'm passionate about learning. In the journey of learning, I read a number of articles in **SOI**. Here, I would like to talk about two articles that have triggered my mind. After reading these two articles, many of my doubts were cleared. I learned new lessons and came to know the methods of learning.

The first article, which has triggered my mind was published in January 2016 and was titled *The Importance of Reason*. Through this article, I understood the power of reason. In this article, two sentences are highlighted. "Reason cannot be created but it can certainly be developed. Reason is the master key to a better understanding of all human issues."

The second article was published in May 2018 and was titled *The Spirit of Learning*. After going through this article, I came to know the basics of learning. We all know that knowledge is an ocean. But in this article, we come to know the methods of learning such as intellectual exchange, reading books and discussing with other learners, and finally travelling. The sentence that has inspired me a lot is, *The greater the learning, the greater the progress in life*.

I am thankful for **SOI** magazine because it has been continuously helping me in acquiring spiritual knowledge. **-Aysha Yusra, Vishakhapatnam**

Since its inception, the ***Spirit of Islam*** has been striving to convey the message of peace, compassion, and universal brotherhood. No single issue or article is devoid of any of these values. The reader gets a renewed vigour to ponder over the creation plan of God and the purpose of existence. The hallmark of the magazine has been presenting Islam in a simple, practical way, in other words, 'presenting Islam as it is'.

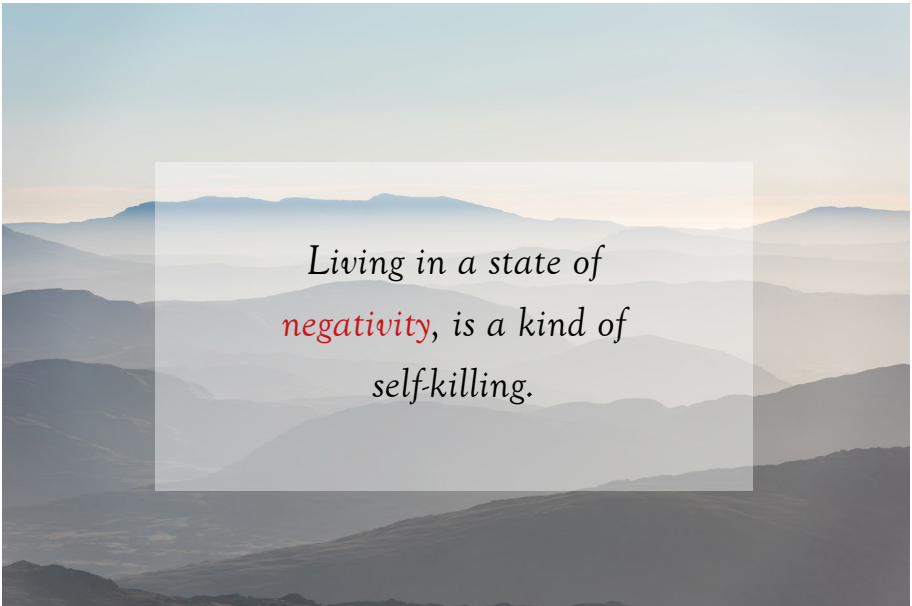
One of the important messages which **SOI** conveys to its readers is POSITIVITY. Looking for positive aspects of the things happening around us, day in and day out, reflecting and drawing lessons from those incidents are a sure way towards a better understanding of life. May God Almighty continue to strengthen the efforts of publishers of **SOI** and may the **SOI** continue to grow and reach every individual!
-Tanveer Ilahi, Chennai

My first introduction to the literature of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan was from the ***Spirit of Islam*** magazine. I remember that when I first picked up a hardcopy of **SOI** at a mosque, it was the introduction to the Creation Plan of God that caught my attention, and following that all the articles were very well organized. This has helped me in my spiritual path of discovering God as almost all of the references that are used here are from the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet. The language used and examples given are of contemporary jargon that help me easily understand the topic being discussed.

My favourite section of **SOI** is the *Your Questions Answered* as it addresses the most basic and honest queries of the readers. This section interests me and gives me the knowledge to answer such questions when I interact with someone wanting to learn more about Islam. May God bless the editorial team of **SOI** for translating the best works of Maulana for English readers like myself and God-willing this journey continues well into the future. **-Imroz Ahmed, Bengaluru**

Economic restraints prevented me from completing even primary education. Having no knowledge of English, I could only read Urdu. Early in the '80s, I was introduced to the Urdu *Al-Risala*. I can say with certainty that *Al-Risala* compensated me for my lack of education. Maulana's writing also inspired me to take up learning all over again. I learned English just to convince myself that I am a learner. Now, my reading includes the ***Spirit of Islam***.

SOI inspires me to keep improving myself. I have come to realize the difference between the relevant and irrelevant. My community-based thinking is now replaced by universal thinking. I no longer think in terms of 'we and they'. I think now in terms of 'we and we'. The Quran has become a source of guidance and spiritual nourishment. The universe is the beautiful and awe-inspiring creation of God and the study of this universe acts as the sure path toward the realization of God. This study of nature, due to lack of education, was unknown to me. ***SOI*** opened my eyes to such grandeur of God that was unimaginable to me before.
-Kaleem Ishaque, Malegaon □



CHILDREN'S CORNER

Name of the book: 365 DAYS WITH THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

Author: Nurdan Damla

Illustrated by: Osman Turhan

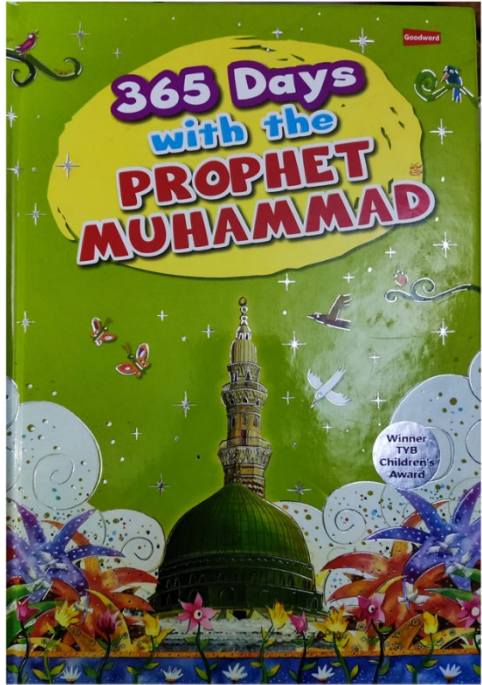
Publisher: Goodword Books, New Delhi

Language: English

ISBN: 978-81-7898-852-8

Pages: 416

365 Days with the Prophet Muhammad is a unique storybook, which takes children on a fun-filled, day-by-day adventure throughout the life and times of the Prophet Muhammad. Every day, children will find in it a new story enshrining the wisdom of the Prophet Muhammad, which they can apply in their daily lives.



Children will love the colourful illustrations and captivating stories, charmingly told in simple language. Along with the 365 stories, there is also a beautifully illustrated map to help children understand in the context of today the importance of the people, places, and events that are mentioned in the stories.

We present Day 245 from this amazing book.

THE JOY OF THE LITTLE GIRL

The Prophet of kindness had gone to the market one day. He had only ten dinars (coins) with him. He paid four dinars and bought himself a shirt. When he returned home, he put on the shirt and went outside again.

While he was walking on the street, he met a poor man. He said, "O Messenger of Allah! Clothe me with a shirt, and, inshallah, Allah, the Almighty, will clothe you in Paradise." The Prophet immediately took off the shirt and gave it to the poor man; then he returned home. He went back to the same shop, and he bought another shirt for four dinars. He was left with just two dinars.

While walking back home, he met a little girl who was crying. He approached her and asked, "Little girl, why are you crying?" "Sir," the little girl said, "I am a slave, my master gave me two dinars to buy some flowers, but I have lost the money." The Prophet gave his remaining last two dinars to the little girl. But the girl did not stop crying. The Prophet asked, "My dear, isn't this what you wanted? You wanted some money, right?"

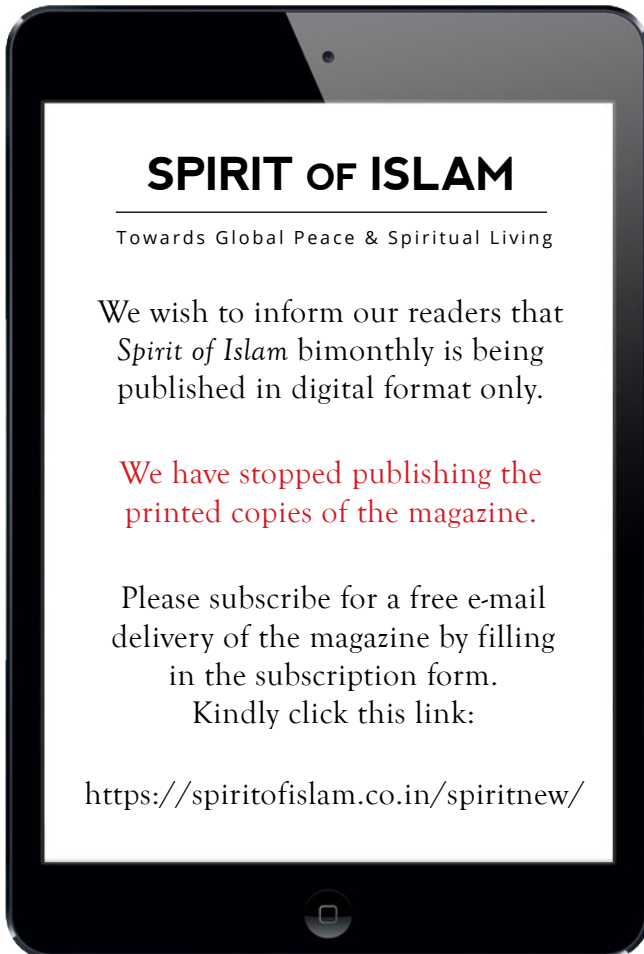
Why are you still crying? The little girl said, "I am afraid because I am late going home. They will be upset with me." Hearing this the Prophet said, "Don't be afraid," and then he held her hand and took her up to her master's door. At the door, he gave his usual greeting, "As-salamu Alaykum." He waited for a while. When he did not get an answer back from inside, he repeated his greeting several times. The people at home did not want to make him wait any longer and greeted him back, "Wa alaykum as-salam. O Messenger of Allah, please come in." He asked, "Did you not hear my greeting the first time?" They said, "Yes, we did. We just wanted to increase the greetings from you. It is a blessing for us. You have honoured us by coming to our house. May we learn the reason for your taking the trouble to come to our home?"

The Prophet explained to them all that had happened to the little girl.

Afterward, he added, "Thinking that you might get angry with her, I have come here to explain things to you. Please don't get upset with her. It was not her fault." After these words of the Messenger, the owner of the house said, "May our lives and properties be sacrificed for your sake, O Messenger of Allah! Since for the sake of this little girl you have visited our house, at this moment, I have freed her. She is no longer a slave. She can live her life in any way she wishes."

Immediately the Prophet and the little girl looked at each other. The little girl's tears had stopped now. Her face was glowing with happiness. She thanked the Prophet many times. From that day on she was going to live a life just like her friends, free and happy.

While returning home, the Prophet said to himself, "My Lord! How blessed You made this money. With that little thing, You have given the poor man and me a shirt and goodness and happiness to a little girl. Many thanks to You." □



SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living

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STUCK IN THE PAST

Misplaced Glorification of Tradition

THE Greek philosopher, Aristotle (BC 384-322), wrote in his treatise *'Physica'* of the circle being a perfect, most beautiful geometrical form. It was echoed by Cicero who wrote in *De Natura Deorum* (On the Nature of the Gods): "Two forms are the most distinctive: of solids, the sphere... and of plane figures, the circle... There is nothing more commensurate than these forms." On the basis of this supposition Aristotle maintained that since all of nature's work follows the standard of perfection, the orbits chosen by nature for the revolution of heavenly bodies could only be circular.

This theory of Aristotle so dominated peoples' minds across the centuries that all the systems of astronomy, for instance, those developed by Ptolemy, Copernicus, and Tycho Brahe, were based on the supposition that the heavenly bodies, i.e. the planets of the solar system, revolved in space in circles.

Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) is the first person known to have thought differently. He made calculations in 1609 to the effect that Mercury's revolution around the sun was not circular but elliptical. He predicted that all other satellites of the sun would be discovered to revolve around it in ellipses. This theory advanced by Kepler is today a fact.

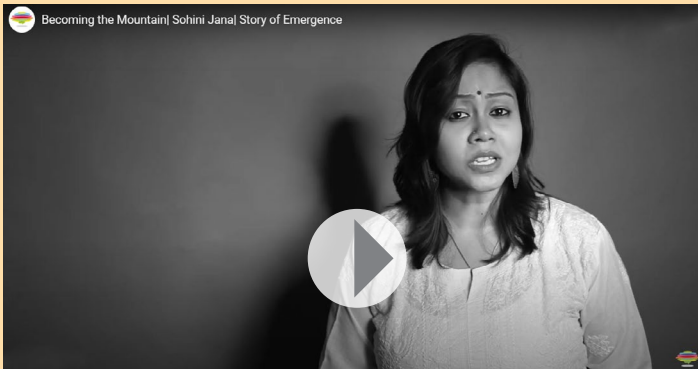
In every epoch, some thoughts so dominated the human intellect that it became impossible for people to think independently. This still happens in both religious and non-religious spheres.

Ancient astronomers remained lost in the concept of the circle for two thousand years. They could not think of any other pattern for the revolution of the planets. The reason was the sanctity attached to this theory of Aristotle. Having unquestioningly accepted this theory as an established fact, their minds were unable to work in any other way.

This reverence for tradition is not peculiar to ancient times. It has been a feature of uncritical thinking throughout the ages. In every epoch, some thoughts so dominated the human intellect that it became impossible for people to think independently. This still happens in both religious and non-religious spheres. It must be conceded that the greatest obstacle to all progress is the mind that remains obstinately closed. □

CPS NEWSLETTER

Miss Sohini Jana, one of the top 250 selected participants for the *Super Speaker Season 2* Reality show is the first peace builder to have made it to this elite list. In the show, each speaker was given the task to share an inspiring personality and their story. Miss Sohini chose to dedicate the 75 seconds allocated to her to share her thoughts about Maulana Wahiduddin Khan and his legacy with thousands of people attending the event live!



Anwar-ul-Haq from Dubai writes...

I'd like to use this chance to share one of my experiences from my EMBA class at SP Jain Business School in Dubai. During the first session, we began the course "Personal Effectiveness EMBA," which is all about leadership roles and has significantly impacted me both personally and professionally.

I used Maulana's article titled *Disadvantage Turned to Advantage: A Piece of Gandhi Ji's Life regarding His Shyness* as an example during class. Everyone appreciated my ability to provide details.

Later, once the session was over, my professor Ms. Lalitha approached me and asked me to share the article. It was a good opportunity for me to introduce CPS mission and literature.

Mr Khurram Murad (CPS Delhi member) met Mr Moosa Kalim in the hotel Holiday International Atrium. A few years ago, Mr Moosa had worked with him on a Quran Distribution Drive at the historically significant Abdul Gafoor mosque in Singapore. It is visited by 5000 tourists every month. He is part of a Dawah group comprising 60-70 individuals working as volunteers.

Mr Sajid Anwar (CPS Mumbai) was in Nigeria recently. There, he met members of *Muslim Professionals in Dawah* (MPD). He introduced to them the CPS mission. They were very keen to work together. He assured them of all possible support of the Quran and Dawah literature. Mr Sajid reports that their stories, especially women are heart-touching. They are the epitome of sacrifice and steadfastness.



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's books are now available in Malayalam, Tamil, and Telugu. Click the links below to download:

<https://cpsglobal.org/books/mwk/malayalam>

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THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENT CONFLICTS

One Party must Show the Way

THERE have been numerous instances of violent conflicts between Hindu and Muslim communities in India. Assuming the form of riots, they have harmed the progress of the country. In order to tackle this issue, ***Spirit of Islam*** regularly publishes articles highlighting the ideological and practical approach to get rid of riots. A regular reader of the magazine once expressed his opinion that he agreed with all of the viewpoints expressed in ***Spirit of Islam***, except for one, and that was holding the Muslims responsible for riots that took place from time to time. He balked at the idea that Muslims started riots. He felt that this ran counter to the facts.

He must have misconstrued the words of the articles. What was actually emphasized was that Muslims were responsible for not preventing riots from taking place. In the above context the Quran's guidance is about maintaining patience and piety in the face of provocative challenges.

If you remain patient and adopt a God-fearing attitude, all kinds of violence can be avoided. The actual problem is not the presence of causes which give rise to riots in the situation but the absence of patience and piety.

That is, if you remain patient and adopt a God-fearing attitude, all kinds of violence can be avoided. The actual problem is not the presence of causes which give rise to riots in the situation but the absence of patience and piety. If riots occur, it is not because of hostile conspiracies, but because of our inability to adopt the path of patience and piety in countering them.

In the society there will always be people who will indulge in activities which injure others' sentiments. The solution to this problem is not to stop others from indulging in such activities, but to control one's own feelings. Anyone who reacts to provocation, their reaction has caused matters to escalate into full-scale riots. But where they have adopted the path of patience and avoidance, rioting has been nipped in the bud.

We must fully grasp the fact that the administration is unable to prevent the outbreak of rioting. Islam guides its adherents that if riots are to be prevented, it will only be by right action on the part of its followers. The only viable strategy therefore for Muslims is to adopt to settle matter

amicably and to exercise patience in the face of unpleasantness. And there is nothing to prevent their seeking police assistance whenever a situation is about to take an ugly turn. This is something which needs to be done at the very outset. If Muslims can accept that this should be their role, the phenomenon of rioting could be banished, once and for all, from this country. □



THE PATH OF REALISM

Patience and Avoidance

IF you happen to be in an open field when it starts to rain, you hasten to find shelter. This is not cowardice, this is realism. Similarly, when there is an earthquake, you immediately leave your home for an open space. This too is not defeatism, but an acknowledgement of the reality of nature. Where some difficulty arises between man and nature, the solution to the problem lies only in acknowledgement, not in confrontation.

The system of rains and earthquakes is part of God's scheme. Man cannot change this scheme. Man only has it in his power to devise strategies to keep him safe from harm. The only way to do so is to adopt the principle of avoidance in order to save him from extinction. That is why in heavy rain you head for a sheltered place, while during an earthquake, you rush for the fields.

Patience and avoidance are not signs of cowardice or a defeatist mentality. They are simply realistic approaches.

Patience and avoidance are not signs of cowardice or a defeatist mentality. They are simply realistic approaches. This is necessary because the Creator has given man freedom for the purpose of putting him to the test. Man sometimes makes the right use, sometimes the wrong use of his freedom. Even if you start fighting everyone, you cannot snatch away their freedom, as this freedom is given them by the very Creator of the universe. Efforts to deprive others of their freedom are futile and will result only in your own suffering.

In such a state of affairs there is only one possible attitude. And that is known as patience. That is, when faced with bitterness and unpleasantness from others, you must continue your life's journey by avoidance.

You should never feel that it is only up to others to practise patience and avoid friction. Patience and avoidance of strife are the social duties of everyone without exception. It should never be forgotten that while patience makes it possible to continue with life's journey, impatience will ultimately prevent you from reaching your chosen destination. □

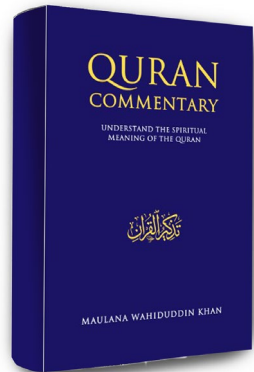


THE WORD OF GOD

From The Scriptures

The Quran is the book of God. It has been preserved in its entirety since its revelation to the Prophet of Islam between CE 610 and 632. It is a book that brings glad tidings to humankind, along with divine admonition, and stresses the importance of man's discovery of the Truth on a spiritual and intellectual level.

Translated from Arabic and commentary by
Maulana Wahiduddin Khan



Everything in the heavens and on the earth belongs to God and so He will requite those who do evil in accordance with their deeds and will reward those left with that which is best, for those who do good. As for those who refrain from committing grave sins and indecent acts, though they may commit minor offences, your Lord is unstinting in His forgiveness. He knows you when He brings you out of the earth, and when you were embryos in the wombs of your mothers; so do not make claims to be pure. He knows best who is truly righteous. Have you [Prophet] considered the man who turned away, who at first gave a little, then later held back? Has he knowledge of the unseen, so that he sees? (53: 31-35)

The universe with its extremely stable system makes manifest the fact that its Creator and Lord is extremely powerful. This suffices to make it clear that He will sooner or later seize hold of man and when He does so, there will be no escaping His grasp.

Man has been created with human weaknesses. So, it is not required that he be as pure as the angels. Almighty God has given full guidance to man as to what he should do and what he should not. However, man may be pardoned in the case of lesser offences (*lamam*), i.e. indulging in some mischief because of fleeting emotion, on the condition that he should immediately realize his lapse and, being ashamed of it, seek pardon of his Lord.

There are many who become inclined towards the Truth but only to a certain extent. Then the compulsions of their interests become too strong for them and they revert to their original position. In order to justify and explain their wrong behaviour, such people devise different

types of engaging 'beliefs'. But this only increases their guilt because this amounts to adding insult to injury.

Has he not been made acquainted with what was written in the scriptures of Moses? And with Abraham who kept his word: that no soul shall bear the burden of another; and that man shall have only that for which he strives; and that [the fruit of] his striving shall soon be seen; and in the end he will be repaid for it in full; that all things in the end shall return to God; that it is He who brings laughter and tears; that it is He who causes death and gives life; and that He Himself created the two sexes: male and female, from an ejected drop of sperm; and that He will bring about the Second Creation; that it is He who gives wealth and possessions; that He is the Lord of Sirius. (53: 36-49)

The sum and substance of the reality revealed by Almighty God through His prophets is that every man has to receive the reward befitting his deeds. Nobody can save himself from fate attending his deeds and nobody else can be his saviour. There is nobody more foolish in this world of God than those who are not affected by this prophetic warning.

Every event in this world arises from supernatural causes and nobody but God is capable of causing them to occur. Happiness and sorrow, life and death, the procreative system, riches, and poverty—all these are the feats of a superpower. Ancient man used to consider the stars as the determining factors in life, while in the present age natural law is considered to govern all happenings. But the fact is that there is a Cause over and above these causes and factors and that is God, the Lord of the universe. Then, how is it legitimate for a man to make anything other than God the centre of his attention? □



All human beings are God's family.

The best of you in the eyes of God

is one who is good to his family.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

The remedy for ignorance is asking questions. (Prophet Muhammad)

The spirit of enquiry is the hallmark of an open society and the above saying of the Prophet aptly illustrates this principle. A culture of curiosity and open-mindedness will foster development in any society by motivating its members to learn enthusiastically and enrich their knowledge. This is because awareness of one's ignorance is half of knowledge, as it becomes a stepping-stone to seeking and finding answers. A questioning mind is like a flowing river that is replenished with fresh thoughts and ideas and continues on its journey.

You hail modern science for highlighting the laws of God. But do you agree that 'modern' education alienates people from God by almost completely excluding Him from the system?

Modern science is neither pro-God nor anti-God. The only concern of modern science is to discover the laws of nature through objective study. It means that science has detached the Creator from His creation. If one studies science and can relate the laws of creation with the Creator then for such a person, science becomes greatly helpful in developing God-consciousness.

Islam talks about tawakkul (trusting), and about surrendering to and relying on God alone. How does one relate this in the context of social problems? Does it mean that we must accept such problems as something God-willed and accept the situation we find ourselves in as divinely mandated?

Problem is only an unpleasant name for a challenge. According to the law of nature, life is based on challenges. Without challenges, there is no development. I agree with Arnold Toynbee on this subject. He has formulated the principle of the challenge-response mechanism. According to this formulation, all problems are challenges, and all challenges are stepping-stones toward progress. Other than death, every problem is positive in nature.

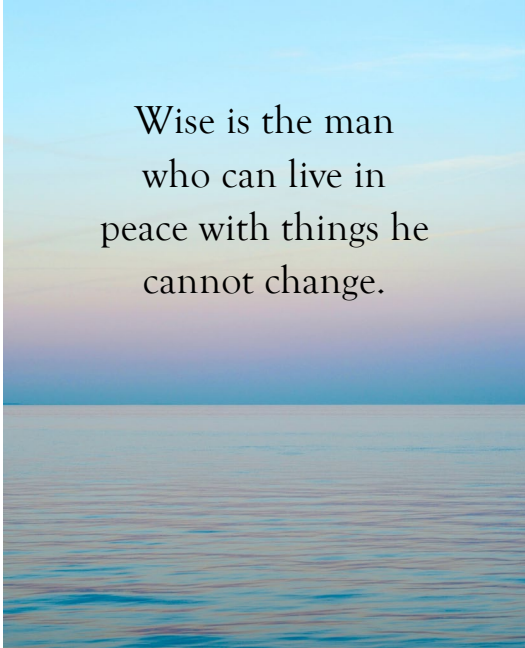
Tawakkul does not mean surrender. *Tawakkul* is to establish confidence in God. *Tawakkul* is trusting in God, it makes you more active because on account of this you believe that if I am on the right path, God will certainly help me.

What, in your view, is the correct Islamic way of solving social problems? In what way can social activists learn from this approach?

Social problems are, in fact, individual problems. Educate individuals, and there will be no social problems. By education, I mean both formal and informal education. My concept of education also includes training the individual, that is, making people positive-minded and realistic. This is the Islamic approach to social problems.

How can individual reform lead to cause social reform? Or does the impact of individual reform remain limited just to that particular individual?

What is society? Society is nothing but a combination of individuals. When individuals are reformed, the whole society as a consequence will be reformed. But if you focus on society, you will fail to address the mind of an individual and your efforts will not yield results. □

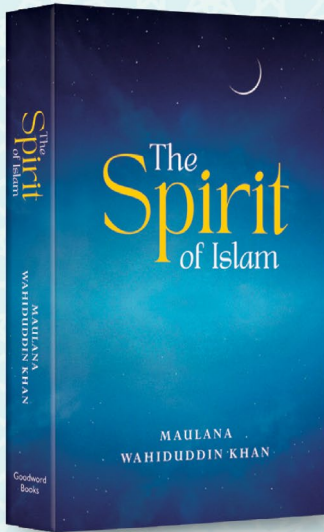


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who can live in
peace with things he
cannot change.

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