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SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living



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

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 112 MAY - JUNE 2023

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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

KNOW GOD'S CREATION PLAN

The World is a Testing Ground

SPAN is a bimonthly general interest e-magazine on India and the United States published in English, Hindi, and Urdu by the Embassy of the United States in New Delhi since November 1960. The caption on its May-June 2021 title page was *Combating the Climate Crisis*.

Most of the articles in this issue dealt with climate related challenges such as eating habits affecting the planet Earth, controlling air pollution, environment-friendly lifestyle, harnessing the strength to deal with climate change.

At present, news about global warming keeps popping up one after another. Industrial development has brought with it the problem of industrial pollution. This pollution has resulted in global warming, i.e., chaotic weather conditions, melting of glaciers, loss of fragile animals, contamination of sea water and deterioration of life-support systems, etc. The root cause of all these disturbances in nature is global warming.

The real cause of global warming is the lifestyle. The current sources of the world only allow humans to use it according to their actual need. However, every person's target today is a luxurious lifestyle. It is this unreal goal of man that has created a serious problem of global warming in the present time. Though the Quran was revealed some 1400 years

Every person's target today is a luxurious lifestyle. It is this unreal goal of man that has created a serious problem of global warming in the present time.

ago, there are many verses in the Quran that discuss future events. Such verses have continued to become more understandable as the events unfold in the world. Climate Change and Global Warming have been described in the Quran thus: Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of the evil which men's hands have done: and so God will make them taste the fruit of some of their doings, so that they may turn back from evil. (30: 41) The verse also provided hope that things can be rectified if we mend our ways.

CLARION CALL FOR CHANGING LIFESTYLE TO SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT

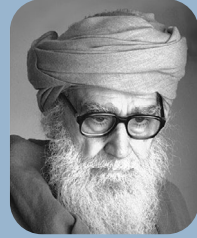
Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi while addressing via video link the World Bank event 'Making it Personal: How Behavioural Change Can Tackle Climate Change' said climate change cannot be fought from conference tables alone as it has to be fought from the dinner tables in every home. He further said "When people become conscious that simple acts in their daily lives are powerful, there will be a very positive impact on the environment." (*Times of India*, April 16, 2023) This is a result-oriented approach to tackle the menace of Climate Change. The Quran guides us towards this methodology. It says that every individual holds accountability for their actions. It gives the formula of the reformation of an individual for the societal transformation. After all a society is a group of individuals.□



*Religiosity is a conscious
act rather than the
observance of a set of
rituals.*

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)



ACROSS THREE CONTINENTS

IMPRESSIONS AND LESSONS

*Travelling is mentioned as an attribute of a believer. (9: 112) Travelling introduces a person to the wonders of God scattered across the earth. It gives perspective, insight and valuable lessons to lead a worthy life. In December 1985, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan represented India in an Islamic Conference held in Bamako, a town in Mali. Setting out from Delhi Palam Airport (now Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi) on December 4, 1985, he reached Bamako via Rome and the Senegalese capital, Dakar. The return journey was undertaken by way of Paris, London, Kuwait, and Dubai. Here are some excerpts from Maulana's account of his impressions and experiences of his one-week journey across three continents. **This is the second part of a two-part series.***

The Conference

The Bamako Islamic Conference was inaugurated on the evening of December 6, 1985. The Malian Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs and Education were present at the opening ceremony along with other dignitaries. The three working languages were Arabic, English and French. The conference was attended by delegates from various parts of the world. As was pointed out by the Kuwaiti delegate: "We have come from the western portions of the earth and from its eastern portions."

Muslim intellectuals from the following countries took part: Canada, Mali, Cyprus, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Maldives, Switzerland, Madagascar, England, North America, Brazil, Sudan, Kenya, India, Turkey, Kuwait, Pakistan, Guyana, Syria, Philippines, Ghana, Gambia, Holland, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Korea, Tunisia, Nigeria, Yemen and Japan.

Learning to Listen

I am more in the habit of listening than of speaking, and, during the conference, I kept up this habit. When one of the participants commented on my not speaking as much as the others, I told him that I

was trying to be a good listener. Most of our groups seem to think that they should talk continuously, even when etiquette requires them to remain silent.

When Islam Ceases to Exist in Its True Form

An official of a certain institute recounted the story of an elderly lady who had come to him, saying that she wanted to perform *Hajj*, but did not have the means to undertake the journey. She asked if the institute could make arrangements for her travelling expenses so that she could do so. She was told that since she lacked the means—from the point of view of the *Shariah*—it was not incumbent upon her to go on the pilgrimage. She answered: “I have been going on *Hajj* every year for the last seventeen years, why should I be deprived of it this year?” This is the kind of misconception which occurs when Islam ceases to exist in its true form.

Building from the Top

An Arab scholar made certain painful observations on the state of present-day Muslims. “I am sorry to say that Muslims commence their works from the top and that is why they achieve nothing. Their works never reach completion, because in order to complete anything, one has to start at the foundations.” It is indeed lamentable that this weakness is found in Muslims the world over.

Muslims commence their works from the top and that is why they achieve nothing. Their works never reach completion, because in order to complete anything, one has to start at the foundations.

The Real Task Ahead

When the conference was over, I returned via Paris and London on December 10. At Paris I found that my onward journey had not been confirmed, so the lady at the desk had to do a good half an hour’s work on the telephone, computer and telex to sort matters out. Even then, no direct flight from Paris to Delhi being available, the route had to be changed, entailing repeated re-calculations of flight schedules. In spite of all this extra work, she became neither exasperated nor annoyed. Finally, she managed to book me on a British Airways Flight from London to Delhi. All this had taken quite a long time and I had to rush to catch the BA Flight. It was not until I had reached the aircraft that I discovered that I had left my collection of books at the airport desk. When I informed the air-stewards of this, they requested me to remain seated, assuring me that they would fetch my books. They then

telephoned from the aircraft itself to the lady at the desk, who sent my package immediately. Just as the plane was about to take off, it was handed over to me.

I was very moved by this whole episode and now cannot find words of praise good enough for the speed, precision and efficiency with which everything was carried out. All the airport systems had to be in working order to produce such excellent results. The fact is the world of today is not in need of any "better order". But to my way of thinking the world has got all the order that it needs. Rather, it is food for the soul which humankind stands in need. The real work for those who seek to call people towards God is that of presenting Islam in the form of spiritual nourishment.

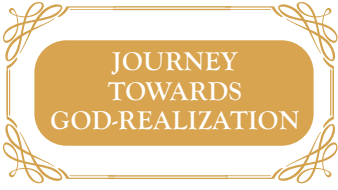
Promotion of One's Own Interests

On the BA flight, the announcements were made first of all in Arabic. Various notices on the aircraft were written in Arabic on top and in English below. We were also told over the loudspeaker that among the stewards on board, there were people who knew English, German, French, Spanish, Arabic, Urdu and Punjabi, and that we could ask for whatever we needed in our native language. Hearing this, I realized that having people on the cabin crew who know the main world languages was not just a way of being more helpful and obliging to passengers, but a way of plying their international trade more profitably. If any venture is to be successful, the requirements of the clientele have to be properly catered for. But when it comes to spreading the Word of God, the urge to be so accommodating has not proved so strong, for nowhere is there an Islamic institute which

The real work for those who seek to call people towards God is that of presenting Islam in the form of spiritual nourishment.

has made arrangements to have a multilingual staff, so that people speaking different languages may have the benefit of Islamic teachings. It seems that, for man, worldly motivation is more potent than that of the next world. □





SOURCES FOR GOD-REALIZATION

INEVITABLY, a high level of realization is achieved only through elevated thinking. Regarding God's words and God's creations, the more one thinks deeply, the more one will attain to deeper realization. The formula for God realization (*Marifah*) is in short —the more profound the thinking, the higher the degree of realization.

Many expressions have been used in the Quran to describe this deep thinking, for instance, *tadabbur* (reflection), *tawassum* (introspection) or *ta'qqul* (reason). All these relate to different aspects of deep thinking, such as reflection, introspection, taking lessons, analysis, etc. In truth, everything in this world, whether great or small, is a source of thinking. If things are not taken in the simple sense, but rather, as subjects of reflection, then on reflecting with seriousness, everything becomes a source of realization. For instance, man walks on the earth daily, but he does not think about it. If he thinks about it, this walking will become a treasure of *Marifah*.

Walking on the ground is apparently a simple thing, but it is an extraordinary event. This incident of walking is a unique miracle of the Creator. This walking is possible only because of the diverse things which are coordinated in our support including the earth's gravity which gives us our balance and the pressure of the air all around our bodies. This pressure of the air is equal to 8 kilograms per square inch on our bodies, and this pressure on the whole body is about ten thousand kilograms. When man walks on the earth, oxygen is being continuously supplied, the sun in the vastness of space, brightens our paths. In this way, there are innumerable factors which directly or indirectly support us. Only with their help it becomes possible for man to walk on the earth and successfully reach his destination. There are many such factors in our world and when we reflect on all these things, it becomes the greatest means to the attainment of high *Marifah* or discovery of God. □



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.



TOLERANCE: A VIRTUE IN ITSELF

"Tolerance is a law of nature stamped on the heart of all men."

NOTHING could be truer than this statement of Voltaire. Tolerance is, indeed, a permanent law of nature. But it is not something which has to be externally imposed, for the human desire for tolerance is limitless. Just as truth and honesty are virtues, so is tolerance a virtue. And just as no one ever needs to ask for how long one should remain truthful and honest, so should one think of tolerance as having an eternal value. The way of tolerance should be unquestioningly adopted at all times as possessing superior merit.

One of the stark realities of life is that divergence of views does exist between man and man, and that it impinges at all levels.

Tolerance is a great virtue. It is the mark of a strong personality. To become enraged at antagonism is surely a sign of weakness. Of course, there are many who do not want to recognize the principle of tolerance as being eternal, for, in conditions of adversity, the temptation to retaliate becomes too strong. The feelings of anger which accompany negative reaction must somehow be vented, and those who think and act in this way are keen to retain the illusion that, in retaliating they are not doing anything unlawful.

Such thinking is quite wrong. In reality, when a man is enraged at anything which goes against his will, practising tolerance becomes paramount. Many men strive to become supermen. But the true superman is one who, in truly trying situations, can demonstrate his super-tolerance. An act of antagonism does not give us the license to be intolerant. Rather, such occasions call for greater tolerance than in normal circumstances. In everyday matter, where there is no stress and strain of opposition, no one has difficulty in being tolerant. It is only in extraordinary situations, fraught with conflict, that the truly tolerant man will prove his mettle.

On January 1, 1995, the United Nations proclaimed 1995 as the “Year of Tolerance”, stating that the ability to be tolerant of the actions, beliefs and opinions of others is a major factor in promoting world peace. The statement issued by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, (UNESCO) on this occasion, emphasizes that amidst the resurgence of ethnic conflicts, discrimination against minorities and xenophobia directed against refugees and asylum-seekers, tolerance is the only way forward. It pointed out that racism and religious fanaticism in many countries had led to many forms of discrimination and the intimidation of those who held contrary views.

Violence against and intimidation of authors, journalists and others who exercise their freedom of expression, were also on the increase along with political movements which seek to make particular groups responsible for social ills such as crime and unemployment. Intolerance is one of the greatest challenges we face on the threshold to the 21st century, said the UNESCO Statement. Intolerance is both an ethnic and political problem. It is a rejection of the differences between individuals and between cultures. When intolerance becomes organized or institutionalized, it destroys democratic principles and poses a threat to world peace. (*The Hindustan Times*, January 1, 1995)

There are many who do not want to recognize the principle of tolerance as being eternal, for, in conditions of adversity, the temptation to retaliate becomes too strong.

This proclamation of the UN draws our attention to the most urgent need of the world today. One of the stark realities of life is that divergence of views does exist between man and man, and that it impinges at all levels. Be it at the level of a family or a society, a community or a

country, differences are bound to exist everywhere. Now the question is how unity can be forged or harmony brought about in the face of human differences.

Some people hold that the removal of all differences is the sine qua non for bringing about unity. But this view is untenable, for the simple reason that, it is not practicable. You may not like the thorns which essentially accompany roses, but it is not possible for you to pluck out all the thorns and destroy them completely. For, if you pluck out one, another will grow in its place. Even if you run a bulldozer over all rosebushes, new plants will grow in their place bearing roses which are ineluctably accompanied by thorns. In the present scheme of things, roses can be had only by tolerating the existence of thorns.

Divergence of views plays an important role in the development of the human psyche. It is only after running the intellectual gauntlet that a developed personality emerges.

Similarly, a peaceful society can be created only by creating and fostering the spirit of tolerance towards diversities. In this world, unity is achievable only by learning to unite *in spite of differences*, rather than insisting on unity without differences. For total eradication of differences is an impossibility. The secret of attaining peace in life is tolerance of disturbance of the peace.

There is nothing wrong in diversity of opinions. In fact, this is a positive quality which has many advantages. The beauty of the garden of life is actually enhanced if the flower of unity is accompanied by the thorn of diversity.

An advantage ensuing from this attitude is that it builds character. If you are well-mannered towards those whose views are similar to yours, you may be said to exhibit a fairly good character. But, if you behave properly with those holding divergent views from you or who criticize you, you deserve to be credited with having an excellent character.

In the same way, a society whose members hold identical views and never have any controversial discussions will soon find itself in the doldrums. The intellectual development of the members of this society will be stunted, because personal evolution takes place only where the interaction of divergent thinking provides the requisite mental stimuli.

The adoption of a policy of tolerance in the midst of controversy and in the face of opposition is not a negative step. It is undoubtedly a positive course of action.

Divergence of views plays an important role in the development of the human psyche. It is only after running the intellectual gauntlet that a developed personality emerges. If, in a human society, this process ceases to operate, the development of character will come to a standstill.

Nobody in this world is perfect. If a man is endowed abundantly with some qualities, he may be lacking in others. This is one of the reasons for differences cropping up between people. But, for life as a whole, this disparateness is actually a great blessing. The good points of one man may compensate for the shortcomings of another, just as one set of talents in one man may complement a different set in another. If people could only learn to tolerate others' differences, their very forbearance would become a great enabling factor in collective human development.

After 1947, when the first government of independent India was formed, two important leaders were included in it. One was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the other was Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel. Pandit Nehru's westernized ideas were in great contrast to the orientalism of Sardar Patel. And this caused frequent differences of opinion between these two leaders. But this proved to be a boon for the nation, because with Pandit Nehru's abilities complementing the traits of Sardar Patel, and vice versa, the end result was one of an efficacious complementarity. This is a good example of the difference between the respective natures and opinions of individuals essential for human development in general.

In this world, unity is achievable only by learning to unite in spite of differences, rather than insisting on unity without differences.

The habit of tolerance prevents a man from wasting his time and talent on unnecessary matters. When negatively affected by another's unpalatable behaviour, your mental equilibrium gets upset. Whereas when emotionally untouched by such behaviour, your mind will fully retain its equilibrium and, without wasting a single moment, you will continue to carry out your duties in the normal way. The policy of tolerance or forbearance enhances your efficacy, while intolerant behaviour reduces it.

Tolerance is not an act of compulsion. It is a positive principle of life, expressing the noble side of a man's character. The existence of tolerant human beings in a society is just like the blooming of flowers in a garden.

Islam: Religion of Tolerance

Islam is an entirely tolerant religion. Islam desires peace to prevail in the world. The Quran calls the way of Islam 'the path of Peace.' (5:16) The state of peace can never prevail in a society if tolerant attitude is lacking in the people. Tolerance is the only foundation for peace; in a society where tolerance is absent, peace will be non-existent.

Peace is the religion of the universe. Peace should, therefore, be the religion of man too, so that, in the words of Bible, the Will of the Lord may be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)

In a similar vein, the Quran tells us that: The sun is not allowed to overtake the moon, nor does the night outpace the day. Each in its own orbit runs. (36: 40)

When God created heaven and the earth, He so ordered things that each part might perform its function peacefully without clashing with any other part.

When God created heaven and the earth, He so ordered things that each part might perform its function peacefully without clashing with any other part. For billions of years, therefore, the entire universe has been fulfilling its function in total harmony with His divine plan.

The universe is following this path of peace—which is known in science as the law of nature. The law of nature is imposed upon universe by God, whereas man has to adopt this path

of peace of his own free will. This has been expressed in the Quran in these words: "Are they seeking a religion other than God's, when every soul in heaven and earth has submitted to Him, willingly or by compulsion? To Him they shall all return." (3: 83)

Peace is no external factor to be artificially imposed upon man. Peace is inherent in nature itself. The system of nature set up by God already rests on the basis of peace. If this system is not disrupted, it will continue to stay the course set for it by the Almighty. But the only way to keep humanity on the path of peace is to rid it of corruption. That is why the Quran enjoins: "And do not corrupt the land after it has been set in order." (7: 85)

In order to preserve peace established by nature from disruption, two important injunctions have been laid down by Islam. One, at the individual level, stresses the exercise of patience, and the other, at the social level, forbids taking the offensive.

1. Negative reaction on the part of the individual is the greatest factor responsible for disrupting peace in daily life. It repeatedly happens that in social life one experiences bitterness on account of others. On such occasions, if one reacts negatively, the matter will escalate to the point of a head-on collision. That is why Islam repeatedly enjoins us to tread the path of patience. The Quran says: Surely the patient will be paid their wages in full without measure. (39: 10)

The reason for the rewards for patience being so great is that patience is the key factor in maintaining the desired system of God. In the words of the Quran the patient man is the helper of God. (61:14)

2. The other injunction, designed to maintain peace in human society, forbids the waging of an offensive war. No one in Islam enjoys the right to wage war against another. There are no grounds on which this could be considered justifiable.

There is only one kind of war permitted in Islam and that is a defensive war. If a nation, by deviating from the principles of nature, wages war against another nation, defence in such circumstances, subject to certain conditions, is temporarily allowed.

To sum up, Islam is a religion of peace. The Arabic root of Islam, '*silm*', means peace. The Quran says: '... and God calls to the home of peace.' (10: 25)

Peace is basic to all religions. Let us all strive then to establish peace in the world, for that is the bedrock on which all human progress rests. □



Islamic teachings can be summed up under two basic headings:

*Believing in God and worshipping Him;
regarding all human beings as equal and
according equal rights to all.*

ARE YOU REALLY NOT ALONE?

The Delusion of Support

WHEN the Prime Minister of India, Mrs Indira Gandhi, was assassinated in the early hours of Wednesday, October 31, 1984, the culprits were the two members of her own bodyguard who fired the lethal shots. Sub-inspector Beant Singh, the elder of the two assassins, was a trusted member of her bodyguard for eight years. Mrs Gandhi had trusted him so much that when—a few months before the murder—a foreign reporter asked her whether she felt safe with Sikhs guarding her, she pointed to the young officer and said: “How could I not trust a man like this?” (*The Muslim Daily*, Islamabad, November 2, 1984). According to *Newsweek* magazine “Beant Singh was so trusted that he regularly was selected to drive Mrs Gandhi’s grandchildren to school.” (November 12, 1984)

***On the Day of
Judgement, all
humankind will have
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Lord of the universe.
Relationships upon
which one depended
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Everyone will be
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own fate***

When such betrayal occurs in the world, everyone stands up in protest and abhorrence. Yet they would be even more shocked were they to realize that every relationship, every attachment, every dependence of one human being upon another, is doomed to end in much the same way. When a crisis occurs affecting one party in the relationship personally then he will forsake the other. If it is a crisis for which he holds the other responsible, he will become the enemy of the other, who till then was his trusted, and trusting, friend.

On the Day of Judgement, all humankind will have to answer for their actions before the Lord of the universe. It will be such a catastrophe that will affect the whole of the human race. Relationships upon which one depended will evaporate. Everyone will be concerned with their own fate.

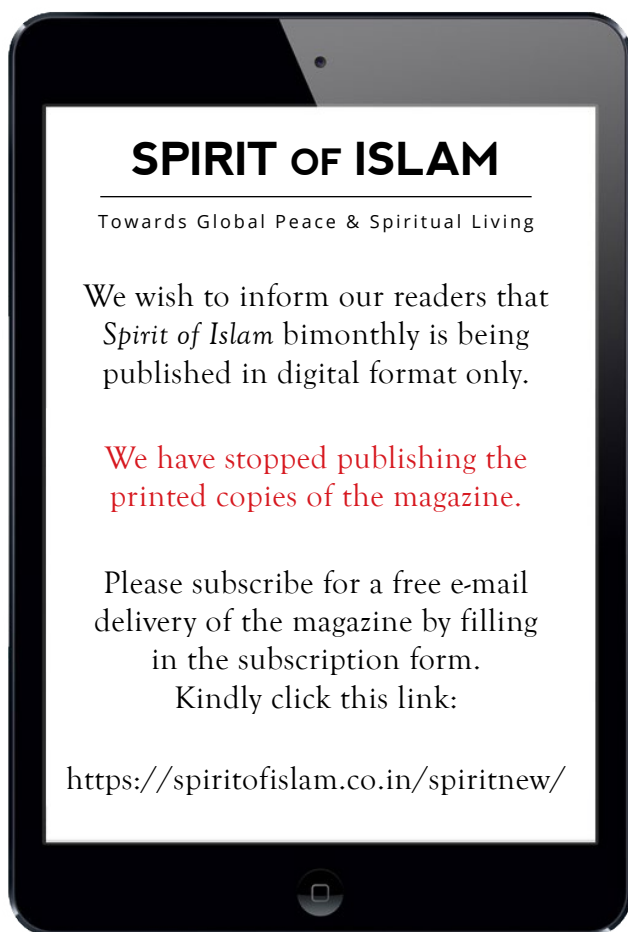
In the words of the Quran:

“When that Day comes, every suckling mother shall forsake her infant and every pregnant woman shall cast her burden and everyone will appear intoxicated, although they are not: the punishment of God will be severe indeed.” (22: 2)

“On that Day a man shall flee from his own brother, his mother, his father, his wife and his sons: on that Day every man among them will have enough concern of his own.” (80: 34-37)

The only relationship to survive the calamity of that day will be one that was based on shared submission to God. Only those who had a mutual concern to please God, and earn redemption in the next world by spending their lives in service of Him, will remain friends on that day:

“On that Day, friends will become each other’s enemies, except the righteous.” (43: 67) □



HISTORY OF HAJJ

Witnessing God's Plan

ACCORDING to the Bible, the Prophet Abraham was born ten generations after the Prophet Noah. God caused a tradition of guidance to ensue from him and chose him for raising a new nation. This nation, it was planned, would be imbued with a spirit of righteousness, and it would assist the Final Prophet in the accomplishment of his mission: When his Lord tested Abraham with certain commands and he fulfilled them, He said, 'I will make you a leader of men.' (2: 124)

The mission of other prophets involved no more than full conveyance of the message entrusted to them. The Prophet with whom the chain of prophethood was to end, however, had to fulfill one more duty: that of establishing the ideological dominance of the true religion on earth: He is the One who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the true religion, so that He may have it prevail over all [other] religions. (48: 28) Only then could the preservation of the last divine Scripture to be revealed to human beings be ensured. The possibility of its being destroyed would be eliminated for all time (48: 28). Other prophets were sent to preach the true religion, but the Final Prophet was enjoined to establish its ideological supremacy as well.

For this purpose, a group of companions was required consisting of people endowed with the highest human qualities, fit to assist the Prophet in implementing the divine scheme. Abraham, in bringing his wife Hagar and son Ishmael to the uncultivated desert town of ancient Makkah and settling there, was laying the foundations for such a community. There, far from civilization, in simple, natural surroundings, a people would emerge from Abraham's progeny who would be imbued with the highest human qualities; who would view things with clear and objective vision; whose actions would conform to their words; who would be ready to lay down their lives and properties for something they knew to be true. A people as firm as the mountains which surrounded them, as boundless as the vast desert in which they roamed. When this "finest community" had been raised from the barrenness of the desert, God sent the Messenger among them for whom Abraham had prayed at the time of the construction of the *Kabah*.

God had willed the birth of a prophet to Abraham's wife Sarah. This prophet-son was born during Abraham's lifetime and was called Isaac. It took two thousand years to realize the prayer of Abraham that a

prophet be sent among Ishmael's progeny. Both prophets were destined to fulfill very different historical functions, hence the difference in the timing of their appearance on earth.

The Final Prophet needed an alert, vital community, fit to play the part allotted to them by God. The formation of this community took over two thousand years. When his people were ready to receive him, the Prophet Muhammad was born amongst them in accordance with the divine scheme. However, the prophetic mission had to continue during this long lapse in time. So, it was arranged that prophets be sent continuously in the house of Jacob. Successive prophets continued to spread the Word of God among human beings until the time of the coming of the Final Prophet approached.

According to this scheme, Abraham left his homeland, Iraq. He settled one wife, Sarah, in Palestine, where she gave birth to Isaac. His second wife, Hagar, and his son Ishmael remained in Makkah where they assisted in the construction of the *Kabah*. The divine scheme for universal guidance was thus divided into two stages: an initial one in Palestine and a final one in Hijaz.

After Abraham, Palestine became the first centre of divine guidance. Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, John, Jesus and many other prophets were born in its vicinity. Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, was also known as Israel, and his progeny were known as the Israelites. Finally, rot set in amongst the Israelites and they failed to mend their ways in spite of repeated solicitations by God's Messengers. Then God deposed them from their position as bearers of divine guidance and the sacred office was transferred to the other branch of the house of Abraham, the Ishmaelites. The decline of the Israelites coincided exactly with the full development, after a process of two thousand years of the Ishmaelites as a people of sufficient energy and dynamism to take on the responsibilities of being God's standard-bearers on earth. As an outward sign of this transference of responsibility, the direction of worship was altered. All prophets after Abraham had prayed towards Jerusalem. Now the Muslims were commanded to face Makkah instead.

Now, the centre of the call of monotheism is Makkah. Prophet Abraham, his wife Hagar and son Ishmael were made to pass many tests here. This place bears testimony to the divine scheme of God that came to pass in the old days. Believers were then commanded in the Quran to visit this place at least once in their lifetime so that they can enact, experience what the Prophet Abraham and his progeny experienced in carrying out the plan of God. 'Perform the *Hajj* and the minor pilgrimage (*umrah*) for the sake of God. (2:196) This is known as *Hajj* or Pilgrimage. □

IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

Formula from the Quran

THE moral character of a person who calls people to God (*dayee*) must be marked by patience. It takes patience to wait for the right opportunities for calling people to God work to arise, and it also takes patience for the right sets of conditions to be created. Those who are unwilling to remain patient in the face of ignorant obduracy and unpleasantness can never fulfill the true calling of *dayee*.

Sir James Jeans, the renowned English scientist, once stated in the foreword to a book he had written on physics and philosophy in 1941, that the scientific study of the universe had led us to the point where it seemed 'to suggest that the door may be unlocked, only if we could find the handle.' (Sir James Jeans, *Physics and Philosophy*, ed. 2009, p. 216)

This notion was put into words by this English scientist at a time when Muslims the world over, provoked at the domination of English, were waging war against them. When the Muslims looked at the English, they saw in them only hateful enemies. Had they displayed patience at their political domination, they would very soon have discovered that the 'handle' the English sought to the door of Reality, was already available to Muslims in the form of the Quran.

Quran informs human beings quite categorically about the limit of their intellectual pursuits. It offers to show the way beyond with complete authenticity.

With this knowledge their entire attitude towards the English would have drastically changed. They would have considered them as their addressees to convey God's message to them and not treated them as rivals. They would have prayed for their well-being. They would have made them aware of the creation plan of God.

Quran informs human beings quite categorically the limit of their intellectual pursuits. It offers to show the way beyond with complete authenticity. Patience is the necessary condition of conveying the message. Just reacting to a situation without a thought of the true state of affairs instead of taking stock of the situation patiently brings more harm in its wake. □

LESSONS FROM THE ROAD TRAFFIC

A Companion of the Prophet Abu Dhar Ghiffari (d. AD 652) said: Even if a bird fluttered its wings in the air, the Prophet would use this occasion to remind us of some lesson. (*Musnad Ahmad*) In other words, it was the habit of the Prophet Muhammad to glean lessons from every event. The fact is that there are many items of learning for human beings in the universe through which a person can realize his Creator and make progress in his intellectual development.

For example, Maulana Farhad Ahmad (b. 1984), an associate of ours, nowadays commutes to the office on a bike. He said that we can learn many lessons for life from traffic rules. For example, when you are riding a bike, speed breakers and red signals come along the way. All these things remind you that this road does not belong to you. Here you have to follow the rules set in motion by the government. You may be fined for violating any of the traffic rules. You or someone else may have an accident. That's why boards are put up along the way: A moment of carelessness results in an accident.

The same is the case with life. There is a 'speed breaker' and 'red light' here as well. These things show that there is a creator of this world. Here you must follow the rules and guidance of the Creator instead of following your wish. You have to live your life while being fully alert all the time. Otherwise, there will be a variety of distractions in the journey of life, which will keep you away from the straight path.

A person driving on the road is focused on the traffic lights all the time so that when there is a red signal, he can stop the vehicle and when there is a green signal, he can move his vehicle forward. That's how we have to drive the vehicle of life. You have to protect yourself as much as possible from living a life of neglect and adopt a patient way to make full use of the opportunities. This is possible only if you live your life while avoiding neglect and distraction. □

You have to protect yourself as much as possible from living a life of neglect and adopt a patient way to make full use of the opportunities. This is possible only if you live your life while avoiding neglect and distraction.

Prof Farida Khanam

A BETTER PERSON

Expected Behaviour

ABU HURAIRA, a Companion of the Prophet says that the Prophet Muhammad stood near an assembly of people and said: 'Shall I not inform you of the best of you from your worst?' He said this three times, then a man said: 'Of course, O Messenger of God! Inform us of the best among us from our worst.' He said: 'The best of you is the one whose goodness is hoped for, and people are safe from his evil. And the worst of you is he whose goodness is not hoped for, and people are not safe from his evil.' (*Sunan al-Tirmidh*)

This *Hadith* (Teachings of the Prophet) tells very clearly who a good person is and who is not. A good person is one about whom one can be sure in advance that whenever he meets that person, he will receive a gift of good from that person. Those who will have practical experience with such a person will have experience of truthful conversation and rightful deeds. Nothing will induce him to deal with people with intention of evil instead of good.

A good person is one about whom one can be sure in advance that whenever he meets that person, he will receive a gift of good from that person.

Undoubtedly, evil is also hidden inside such a person. Because he too, like others, abhors anything that goes against his likes and dislikes. He also gets angry at provocations. He also experiences storm of hatred and enmity. He also suffers from loss and hurt. In spite of all this, he sticks to his principles.

He suffers psychological shocks. He tolerates bitterness and offers sweetness to others. He leaves the incidents of abuse in for God to take care of so that he does not suffer from distraction, and with perfect equanimity, he continues his efforts towards a greater goal. □



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INTERVIEW WITH MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

By Gouran Dhawan Lal

Doordarshan (DD) is an autonomous public service broadcaster founded by the Government of India in 1959. It is one of India's largest broadcasting organisations. DD National is the flagship channel of Doordarshan. Maulana Wahiduddin Khan was interviewed by Gouran Dhawan Lal for DD National. The video is available on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lo20pEZIjBk>). Here are the excerpts:

Hello. Welcome to our programme. Religion for most of us is a construct, a structure of values and beliefs that help us live our lives. But how we view religion is a matter of understanding and of interpretations. The challenge arises when we start stereotyping religion, when we start confusing the belief with the believer. When we start using the believer to try and judge the belief. That is when understanding takes a big hit. Well, today's programme is dedicated to greater understanding because our guest is a repository of wisdom and learning. One of the most eminent scholars of Islam, he has not only dedicated his life to understanding his faith but is also a very keen proponent of the ideology of peace. Please welcome Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. Maulana Saheb, welcome to our show.

Maulana Saheb, you have written a book *The Prophet of Peace*. Why did you decide to write this book?

This book is actually the result of my lifetime of study. I have been a pacifist since childhood. My elder brother, whom I was inspired by, was a great supporter of the Freedom Movement of Mahatma Gandhi. He used to say that the Satyagraha of Mahatma Gandhi is mentioned in the Quran as: (to) exhort one another to hold fast to the Truth, and (to) exhort one another to steadfastness. (103: 3) This reference inspired me to keep reading and thinking on this subject until I discovered that Islam is not something detached from human values. Islam advocates universal values which are present everywhere. My study has allowed me to reach the conclusion that peace is the summum bonum in Islam. In the light of this principle, I read the Quran and the life of the Prophet. All teachings became explainable by following this principle. And all this became explainable to me. Then I wrote this book.

Maulana Saheb, you have addressed important issues and tried to dispel many misunderstandings about Islam in this book. You also mention that Islam is based on the ideology of peace. But why is there so much misunderstanding about Islam?

The misunderstandings do not arise from the scripture. Misunderstandings arise from altered temporal and spatial situations. Scriptures contain eternal teachings.

When Muslims entered the new age and faced challenges from western civilizations and other new powers, they concluded that to face these challenges, they must engage in *jihad*. They started doing *jihad* in the sense of armed struggle, and they interpreted Islam based on it.

In contrast, when I studied this challenge deeply, I realized that the Muslims could have faced this challenge only through peace. There was no need for an armed struggle. In fact, the modern civilization brought new thought, new technology, and new science. It was a completely peaceful civilization. It is my understanding that the modern civilization is based on peace, and not on violence. Muslims wrongly concluded that *jihad* was needed to defeat this civilization. This was the point of derailment of Muslim thought. Through this book, I have tried to bring Muslims back on the right track.

You have used the word jihad. What is the meaning of jihad?

Jihad literally means to strive, to struggle. It means peaceful struggle for a noble cause. That is *jihad*. Because of the misinterpretation of the word *jihad*, people mistakenly understood the meaning of *jihad* as armed warfare. If you consult a dictionary to find meaning of this word, you will find that the meaning of *jihad* is to strive and struggle. In fact, *jihad* of the new age was that Muslims should move forward in education, science, industry, and technology, instead Muslims started engaging in violent activities. This was a derailment from the right path of Islam. I have dedicated my entire life towards bringing this derailment back to the right track.

This means that the daily struggles and efforts we make in our daily life to improve our lives or do constructive work or develop spirituality in ourselves, do you think this is also jihad?

Of course, the Prophet has labelled it as a great *jihad*, i.e., *jihad-e-akbar*. Fighting with your desires, shunning the whims, struggling to protect yourself from negativity, trying to keep yourself on positive thinking, such acts are labelled as the greater *jihad* by the Prophet.

Maulana Saheb, you talked about negativity. Please say a few things on this topic. If we look at our daily life, we find that people of any position, of any age, negativity enters in our lives. How do we face it?

I read the Quran many times to understand this phenomenon. The Quran informs us that human beings have been created by God. God has granted freedom, total freedom, to human beings. This freedom has been granted to me, to you and to everyone. When a person uses his freedom, he will sometimes misuse it as well. The negativity that we see is due to the misuse of freedom. This misuse causes shocks to us, and we turn negative. The Quran says that when a person turns negative, he turns negative against God. A person is misusing freedom because God has given him the freedom to choose between what is right and what is wrong.

God has created the world based on the principle of challenge and competition. Without freedom, the principle of challenge and competition cannot be there. People need to be free to vie with one another, this will create challenge for others. This challenge has to be faced peacefully. Don't give in to negative thoughts. Turning negative means, you are turning negative against God. It is because the creation plan of God is based on challenge and competition. What should be your response then? You cannot change this system. That's why Quran has made a very profound comment on this situation. According to the Quran, don't try to eliminate negativity, but face it with positive thinking. This is the teaching of the Quran. I am following this principle.

Whenever we talk about religion, the concept that is most common in religion is the fear of God, we have been hearing the same concept about God even from childhood to adulthood that fear God, be scared of God. Why do we never think about love for God? Why don't we love God?

I have studied a lot about this. I have found from the Quran that fear is a secondary thing in Islam. The primary focus is indeed love. The first verse of the first chapter of the Quran is: All praise is due to God, the Lord of the universe. This praise arises out of the feelings of gratefulness. Why would one be grateful? One would feel gratefulness because one has received something. The very first sentence of the Quran exhorts a person to thank and acknowledge God. Quran mentions many times that God has given the human beings innumerable bounties, life-support system, the planetary system, the Sun, and the Moon. These are all bounties of God. Therefore, be thankful. Fearing God is secondary. It is not the primary aspect in Islam. Loving God and loving human beings, form the primary teaching of Islam.

Maulana Saheb, when we talk about teachings, be it structured teaching methodology of religion and spirituality, or be it non-structured teaching methodology for those who profess to be atheists, who claim that they do not believe in God. However, there still are some principles and moral values or ideology on the basis of which we live our lives. When we talk about our children, then how can we create an atmosphere where our children grow up with the values of freedom, equality, and mutual understanding?

Regarding children, I have read a statement of the Prophet. He said: No child is born but upon true nature. It is later in life that his nature gets distorted. What is this true nature? This true nature comprises of love, compassion, tolerance, being helpful to others. This is true nature. Every child is born as a positive thinker. His nature changes due to the influence of the environment. I think that the parents should know that it is not their job to give their children orders and commands. Their job is to actualize their potential. They should find out their potential and try to help them to actualize this potential.

I have also understood that God has placed a special quality in every child, so every person is unique. Parents should discover his uniqueness. They should not impose their ideas on their children. This produces reaction from the children. I believe that every child is born on true nature, with positivity. Additionally, every child is born with a unique quality. Discover this quality and help the child realize this quality. This is the job of the parents. They should not force their ideas on their children.

It is said that hope makes the world go round. The world functions on hope. However, hope is also the biggest cause of suffering. How to resolve this dilemma?

This world is indeed a place of hope. From the beginning to the end, it is filled with hope. Let me tell you how. We wish the world to function according to our mind. This can never happen. The world will not function according to our mindset. It has its own laws by which it works. When we face this, when we face problems, we should not consider them as problems, rather we should face them as challenges. The benefit of this approach is manifold. In last analysis, all challenges boil down to difference between human beings. We have to learn the art of difference management. Don't try to eliminate the differences. Without differences, there can be no intellectual development. Because of differences, discussions, dialogues, and exchange of ideas take place. This results in development. Difference is the only way to reach

the goal of intellectual development. Personally, I invite differences. I don't consider differences as problems. I am a hopeful person to the fullest extent. There is no place for disappointments in my life. Any negative situation that comes before me, I try to convert negativity into positivity.

And when disappointment does come, we should put it on the side and move on?

Every state of disappointment carries a challenge along with it for us. If we face this challenge positively, we will see development within us. Our mind gets a new horizon to progress from. This has been my experience throughout my life.

How do we keep ourselves centred? We are all involved in daily life, whether one is a father, brother, worker, son, husband: there are so many roles that a human being plays. We lose track of ourselves in all this rush. How do we find our true selves?

That's the first question? First of all, you have to discover yourself. See what I do? I have a park facing my house. I sit in the park. I contemplate while sitting there. I think that I have more capacity than the tree before me, the sun shining over me cannot speak, while I can speak, I have more power than the birds that are flying. Thus, I discover myself that I am a unique being. Therefore, I never experience negativity. In the entire universe, I consider myself a unique creation. Then what is the use of negativity? The problems that come before us are challenges for our mind, and the challenges are there only to aid in our intellectual development.

The mind, Maulana Saheb, keeps on speaking, it doesn't stay quiet. I am talking to you, but my mind pulls me in many directions. So, this mind is constantly chattering. How do you keep it still? And how do you bring peace to the mind?

Yes, it is a problem. And I call it the problem of distraction. Mind diverts and distracts repeatedly. I think this is the key to successful life that you should not let your mind be distracted. Distraction spoils everything. Our focus is removed, our intellectual development does not take place. The biggest thing that should be done for intellectual development and spiritual development is that you have to save yourself from all kinds of distraction. It is of utmost importance.

So, are there any special ways of saving ourselves from distraction that we can employ in our daily lives?

Activity of the mind is the only approach. See there is no technique to bring about change in man. It is the mind that governs all your activities. Activate your mind. Train your mind. As soon as an event of distraction occurs, your mind should instantly become aware that this is where distraction is taking place. Then quickly return it to the right path. There is no technique. I do not believe in any techniques that are presented in this regard. I believe in activating the mind. Intellectual awakening is the biggest technique.

We are in conversation with eminent scholar of Islam, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Saheb.

Maulana ji! Centre for Peace and Spirituality. What kind of organization is this?

The idea for this organization is not new, I had this idea since 1950. However, I developed it as an organization in January 2001. So, from 1950, it had been in my mind that the biggest thing is peace. I searched for a relevant verse in the Quran. The Quran says: "And God calls to the home of peace." (10: 25) That is, God says build a peaceful society, build a peaceful home, create a peaceful atmosphere.

I attended an exhibition in Azamgarh. I put up a stall there with a big sign board. On the board was written: "And God calls to the home of peace." This is how I started my journey, from 1950. I became an ambassador and an advocate of peace. My call was: O people peace is the greatest thing, peace is the summum bonum, at home, in society, in the environment, on the national and the international level, everywhere. Since then, I have based all my life on peace.

About the centre, i.e., CPS, what do you do at this centre for peace, like seminars?

See the issue at hand is about methodology. People generally think that peace workers should hold meetings, organize stages, organize seminars, etc. I do not believe in this methodology. Peace does not come in the world through stage activism and street activism. I believe in re-engineering of the mind.

Re-engineer the minds of individuals in such a manner that it nurtures peaceful thoughts. You might be aware of the formula of UNESCO, that violence begins from the mind. Violence begins from the mind and from the mind itself peace can be cultivated. I believe in re-engineering

of the mind, changing the mind, changing the thinking. This stage activism, and street activism and public meetings, etc., this is not my approach.

I have written more than 200 books, available in many languages. We have a website. My lectures are conducted regularly and telecast live. We are running this mission throughout the world using modern communication. In almost every country, there are supporters of our mission. But we are going about our mission in a very quiet manner. You will not find crowds here.

What is your mission?

My mission is to train a person to think peacefully. Yesterday, I got a call from a person living in USA. He told me that he was very negative before, i.e., he would get negative thinking about Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan. He would consider America in a bad way. Then, he read my books, like he read this book *The Prophet of Peace*. Now, his mind has changed completely, now he has become a promoter of peace.

Thus, by changing an individual, you gain a volunteer for peace. Through the efforts of this volunteer, a group of similar-minded people is formed. Similar groups then form a society. Thus, my methodology is to start with an individual. Then gradually, peace reaches society. This is our way of working.

There is so much churning happening in society, Progress is happening at such a fast pace. There are so many problems within the world. Some nations very rich, some nations are still struggling. What is the most important issue today?

I think peace is the most important issue today. People have forgotten that you can achieve anything through peaceful means. You cannot achieve anything through violence. Recently, we saw many countries suffer from violence, but nothing could be achieved. People have forgotten the value of peace. They understand the value of power. They understand the value of money. They understand the value of war. They understand the value of bombardment.

However, they do not understand that you have to see the result. My advice to people is to see the result in everything. If the result is good, then that thing is good, otherwise that thing is not good. I believe that the most powerful thing is peace. There is a principle in the Quran that reconciliation is the best. (4: 128) Peace is the most powerful thing you have. If you have peace, you can get everything. There is a unique

Hadith that means “God grants to nonviolence what he does not grant to violence.” The Creator has designed this world in such a manner that you can achieve anything however big through peace. You will not be able to get anything through violence.

In the world, you see that First World War occurred. What was achieved through it? The Second World War occurred. What was achieved through it? Wars keep on occurring, but nothing is achieved. Now see the peaceful method. All the progress that has been made in the world is through peace such as development of science, the advancements of the industry. All these happened through peaceful activities.

So, there is no area or a case where violence can be justified?

Yes, this is my belief. You must manage violence, do not confront it. I repeatedly say that we have to manage violence. I will give an example. The biggest factor for fight is anger. People fight when enraged. This is the case with an individual as well as a nation. When they get angry, they start fighting.

As far as anger is concerned, psychological studies tell us that anger is a matter of 30 seconds. When you are angry, remain silent for 30 seconds. What will happen after 30 seconds is that anger starts to cool down.

We have to count till 30.

Within 30 seconds, cooling process starts. Initially, anger will flare up. You must remain silent for 30 seconds so that the cooling process starts. The anger will go away on its own. I also do the same when I get angry.

Do you get angry?

When I get angry, I become silent. The moment I become silent; anger starts to diminish. I pacify my anger. Anger is part of human nature. You have to manage it. Manage your anger. The biggest formula is that you have to learn the art of anger management.

I am listening to all these things sitting in a quiet environment Maulana Saheb. This talk carries a lot of meaning. When someone is facing or experiencing a situation, and someone says that you try and manage it, as you said that you have to train mind, then how the mind is trained?

What we teach our colleagues is this one formula: always think taking the result into consideration. Whenever anger comes, whenever hate

comes, whenever any negative thought comes, and you want to take an action, think about the result. Always think of the result. As soon as you think about the result, your mind will tell you that there is nothing to be gained from it, manage it peacefully. We advise all our colleagues to follow the formula of always seeing the result. Think of the result first, only then take an action if you have to. Do not take any action before thinking about the result.

There is a question Maulana Saheb on relationships. All of us are bound in different relationships, so how should relationships be managed?

Toleration. See, in relationships there will definitely be something like complaint, there will be some ill behaviour on the part of others. There is no other option except that we tolerate. There is no other option. Every day, morning and evening, we have to tolerate. What people do generally is that when they face some negative experience, they immediately take it seriously. Why take it so seriously? There is a great saying by Bertrand Russell: "The most uneducated person is one who has nothing to forget." So, you should have something to forget. If something happens through someone, forget it. When you face something negative, forget it. It is only by forgetting that we can live peacefully in this world. If you do not forget, there will be tension at all times. So, the formula of a tension-free life that we tell our companions is this: Forget, forget, forget.

Yes, forget all the negative things.

Yes, forget. It is because otherwise there is no escape from negativity. I believe that the rose flower will always carry thorns. Similarly, according to the creation plan of God, there will be challenge, problem, competition will always be there in life. There will be some occurrences that you will not like. Then manage it, tolerate it, forget it. There is no other option.

True!

A question arises again about criticism. When someone criticizes you. Most instances of criticism hurt you. How does one handle criticism?

What is criticism for some people is feedback for me to improve. I've been to USA many times. I once asked a professor there what the secret of USA's development was. He said that we like dissent very much. If someone criticizes you, someone shows dissent against you, you should wholeheartedly accept it because this opens a new door, it brings creativity. What we generally do is that we immediately take dissent in the negative sense. If we take criticism in a positive sense,

it ends all disputes. I tell people that if you look into a mirror and find spot on your face, you do not get angry. Similarly, any critic tells you about some such spot, what is the reason to get provoked then? Take it in a positive sense. Consider him a great well-wisher of yours.

Dissent is the essence of progress. I think not a lot of people believe in it, which is also true.

This is a very philosophical question, and I don't think anyone better than you to answer it, Maulana Saheb! What is the purpose of life?

Do you want to know the purpose of life according to Islam?

Yes, of course.

Look. I have been reading the scriptures of Islam all my life. I have been reading many books. I have studied all religions. What Islam tells is that God created a very beautiful world. This world is Paradise. Now, God needs candidates to settle in this Paradise. Deserving candidates. God created this world because He wants to do selection here for Paradise.

So, you and I are here under God's watch, and God is watching us to determine who is capable of being settled there. And who is the deserving candidate of that Paradise? The most important thing about this is peace.

The Quran says about the people of Paradise that 'only the words of peace and tranquility' (56: 26) will be spoken by them. People of Paradise will live peacefully. No one there will harbour any negative thought. No one will fight with another person. A person who proves in this world that he is the person who lives peacefully in social life, he will be the one selected to enter Paradise. It is such a beautiful purpose of life that we are placed in this world for a limited period which is pre-death period of our life. If we can prove here that we are those people who can live with spirituality, with peace, with love, and we do not harbour hate for anyone, it means we will be selected to settle in Paradise in post-death period. This is the concept of Islam.

What do you think is the purpose of life?

See, I believe that I can say that I love God most, Who created me. I often think alone that my hand, this foot, this mind, this eye, this ear, who gave me all these? I can say with certainty that the mountain, the sea, the sun, the moon, none of them have these. I have these gifts. An ocean of love then flows in my heart for God. I glorify God that He has given me all these things. It's the biggest asset of my life: to love God.

So, does Islam believe that there is only one path or that there can be many paths?

The concept of Islam is that every man is Mr Different. Every woman is Ms Different. That is, no two persons are alike. The whole world is full of Mr Different and Ms Different. If this is the case, there will be differences, people will speak ill about each other. What should be done then. Make these a point of discussion. If this happens that every person in the world is exactly the same, there will be no subject to discuss.

It will be very boring.

Life will be completely boring. Like someone said, "Where all think alike, no one thinks very much." So, if everyone thinks in one way, what will happen? There will be no intellectual development.

No growth. Very true!

So, I take it in the positive sense that there are differences. If there are no differences, how will you move forward? Any development such as spiritual development, intellectual development or even scientific development cannot happen if there are no differences.

If there are differences, will the paths also be different.

Look. As far as path is concerned, no one knows in an absolute sense what is that one path? No one knows this in absolute sense. The path that I like becomes my ideal. Only God knows what is the ideal in the absolute sense. I have been studying all my life. I have studied every religion. I believe that every person has to live in conviction. Every person must live in conviction. How will this conviction take root? I can derive conviction when I am following a path that I have thought over. What I feel is the truth, I follow. The people with differing convictions, I tolerate them. I give right to every person that he should believe in whatever he wants. The formula of Islam I have found is: "To you, your religion; to me, mine." (109:6) It means: Follow one. Respect all.

I give everyone the right to believe in what they think is true with full conviction, because if I did not arrive at conviction in the world, I did not find anything. However, with this conviction, it is necessary to know how to respect others. I can say about myself that I do not hate anyone. I can listen to anyone with an open mind, even if he is speaking against me.

Whenever we talk to someone Maulana ji, in our life, at home, at work, there are two or three people inside us. There is one who sits on the seat of judgement, who makes assessment of things like a filter and a lot of emotions come from it, love, hate, respect, anger, pass, fail. So how to remove this filter so that we are totally accepting?

This is not a desired thing. It is hidden in this wish that you want everything to be normal and there are no differences, everyone should be the same way, there is no difference in emotions, there is no difference in thinking. This is not a desired thing. The difference is the correct thing. A great scholar has said that 'nature abhors uniformity.' Uniformity is not in the scheme of nature. I am least interested in the situation where every person has the same emotion, everyone has the same thinking. I want that there are differences so that I get point of discussion.

Conflict is not bad. How do we resolve conflict and how we take the process as you said, that is very important. And if you get differences, it will lead to growth.

Conflict is not a negative thing. It's a positive thing. I don't take conflict in a negative sense. If there is no conflict, how will you think? How will more and newer ideas come? So, I think that conflict is a very positive phenomenon. It is a steppingstone for further development.

One relationship that we are all spoiling in our own way, is nature's relationship with us. I don't think anyone is behaving responsibly towards the environment. In fact, we are responsible for the destruction of the environment. So, what should be our relationship with nature?

The formula given in the Quran about it is: "Do not spread corruption on the earth after it has been set in order." (7: 56) This verse is about the planet Earth. Everything in the planet Earth is well balanced such as water, air, soil. We need to keep them as they are. We are not supposed to corrupt them. We can make use of them, but we cannot corrupt them. It is not permissible for us to pollute water. It is not permissible for us to pollute air. It is not permissible for us to create noise pollution. For example, you cannot make noise or blow horns on road while driving car. We have not been granted the right to do so. Thus, everything is well balanced, i.e., everything that God has created is well balanced. Don't disturb this balance, rather maintain it.

If human beings follow this principle, water pollution, air pollution, etc., will not take place. The ecological system will function just right.

You talk about balance in nature. Of course, there is a natural beautiful balance. Maulana Saheb, we are not able to bring balance in our lives. Where does need end, and where does greed start? Maulana ji, how do we understand the difference between need and greed in our lives?

I will tell you what my formula is. It is a little formula. It is: "simple living, high thinking." This is my formula. See, peace and solace, these can only be found in simplicity. The more you increase the greed, likewise, increases the tension, problems also increase.

Today, I spoke to a gentleman who told me that he had gone to Ooty. He met a Bengali family there. The family members were very healthy, all men, women as well children, all were very healthy. He wanted to know what the secret of their health was. They said our houses don't have stove. We eat fruits, vegetables, we drink milk, that's all we eat and drink. I am not saying that every person should follow this, but this is a formula for simple life.

What is the benefit of simple life? Simple life saves you from distraction. The biggest thing in life is that you can save yourself from distraction. Without simple life, you cannot save yourself from distraction. When there is simple life, high thinking will come. High quality of life will come. Every aspect of life will find progress.

You said that competition is the basis of this world. Because of the competition as we understand it, we bring many struggles in our life. We don't know where to stop. I want this bungalow, I want this car, then, I want to send my children abroad. Where do we put our need as our target and reach to greed? So, is competition one of the reasons for greed?

Here I would urge people to think what the result is that they are getting from greed. People who live in expectation of more and more, I have found them all to be living in tension. Look at me. I am in late 80s. I get sound sleep. I have seen people from my family and outside who do not sleep.

They take pills for sound sleep.

or take pills for sound sleep. They face so many problems. I have never taken such pills. Why? It is because of simple living. The people keep piling up things, they keep on increasing their greed, but they do not think about the result they get. More greed, more tension; more greed, more stress; more greed, more depression. So, what is the benefit? The real thing is my being. If I lose myself, then what would be the use of the horde of cars and bungalows? The real thing is my being. It is my

experience of a lifetime that if a person wants to lead a tension-free, peaceful life, he should adopt simple life. Simplicity is the best formula.

Maulana Saheb! Please tell us something from your life or some learning you'd like to share with our viewers by which our quality of life can really improve.

See. The very first thing that I would say is you must discover yourself. Discover what special quality your Creator has given you. Develop this special quality, it is very important for you. What people do is focus their attention on something else and are not able to make progress in life. So, that task number one is to know this special quality and then develop it.

Task number two is to lead a simple life. Leading a simple life saves you from wasting time, wasting money. Simple life saves you from distraction. The task number three is to never let negativity come near you. Manage every negativity. Manage negativity and convert it into positivity. The task number four, I would say is that the world is waiting for someone to make a contribution to it, so that the world may accept you.

Without giving anything to the world, you will not get anything from the world. In giving we receive. The fourth Caliph of Islam said that the value of person lies in their excellence. Therefore, become excellent. In other words, this saying can be likened to this: There is always room at the top. If you want to find a place in the world, you have to give something, only then the world will give you something in return. Become a giver. If you become a taker, you will only live in complaints.

If I sum this up, then only two things are basic: peace and spirituality.

What is Peace? Peace is the name of external spirituality. What is Spirituality? Spirituality is the name of inner peace. These two words encompass everything. If we want to bring peace in our thoughts, it becomes spirituality; if we want to bring spirituality in the external world, it becomes peace. This is my experience of a lifetime.

Wonderfully put. That means peace and spirituality they complement each other and that forms totality. Maulana Saheb, it is in giving that we receive. You gave your time, and we received a lot of learning. I would like to thank you. Thank you so much for coming to our programme. We learned so much talking to you, thank you! ☐

THE ESSENCE OF ALL WORSHIP

Remembering God Always

ABDULLAH IBN ABBAS, the Prophet Muhammad's cousin and Companion, once said that to everything that God has prescribed there is a definite limit, which can be waived when one is indisposed. *Dhikr*, or remembrance of God, on the other hand, has no limit; nor can it be excused on account of any disposition. Here are two sayings of the Prophet concerning *dhikr*:

"Shall I tell you what the best action is, that is most pleasing to your Lord, which will raise you up most in His sight?" the Prophet asked. 'Please do, Prophet of God,' the Companions replied. 'Remembrance of the Almighty and Exalted God," the Prophet said.

"A man came to the Prophet and asked which of those who struggle for the divine cause would have the greatest reward. 'The one who remembers God most,' the Prophet replied. He then asked which of those who fast would have the greatest reward. The Prophet answered again: 'The one who remembers God most.'

The man then asked about those who pray, pay the poor-due, perform pilgrimage and give charity. The Prophet gave the same reply to all his questions. 'Those who remember God receive all the rewards.' (*Musnad Ahmad*)

Remembrance of God is the greatest of all forms of worship for the simple reason that it is the essence of all worship. Essentially, *dhikr* is another word for realization of God. *Dhikr* is the state which overcomes a person when he discovers God, when he breaks through the veil of outward forms and penetrates the world of inner meanings. It is only natural that when this happens, he should be mindful of God all the time. When a person discovers God in all His glory and greatness, the effect that it has on him is shattering. His heart and mind are shaken with deep realization of the momentous nature of his discovery. He gives tongue to a litany of praise and adoration.

Dhikr is the state that God's humble servant experiences when he considers God's favours and reflects upon God's perfection. No believing soul can remain unmoved by such an experience. The awareness of God that fills his heart springs spontaneously to his lips

Remembrance of God is the greatest of all forms of worship for the simple reason that it is the essence of all worship.

and manifests itself in the form of divinely inspired words. His thoughts are on how life started, and how it will end—what came before the world and what will come afterwards.

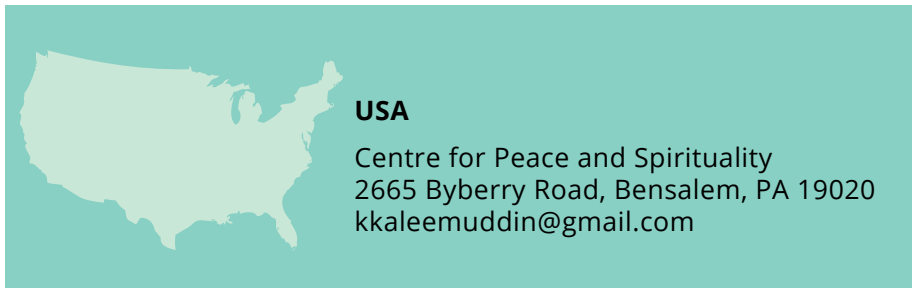
When people hear of man traveling from the earth to the moon, they feel a “thrill”. How is then, that they do not feel thrilled to see the earth and the moon, and the staggering coordination that lies between them?

We cannot think of a sun which refuses to shine, or a computer which has no operator. But when we look at the world, we behold great spectacles which all appear to be of their own fashioning. There is art but no artist, masterpieces but no fashioner, coordination but no coordinator, movement but no mover, life but no life-giver. *Dhikr* is to cross this chasm, to see beyond the world of visible forms to the invisible force that lies beyond; to see the face of the Creator hidden in the veil of His creation. The feelings which he experiences at such a time and the words with which he expresses his feelings are what make up *dhikr*.

The night of July 16, 1969, was one of tremendous action in newspaper offices the world over. The first man on the moon, Neil Armstrong, had made his landing. The news editor of one daily newspaper was sitting back in his chair. A pile of papers lay stacked before him on the desk. When asked about the latest news, he said: “A lot of very thrilling news is coming in.”

When people hear of man traveling from the earth to the moon, they feel a “thrill”. How is then, that they do not feel thrilled to see the earth and the moon, and the staggering coordination that lies between them?

Dhikr is to change the target of one’s vision, to become excited at the work of God, as people normally become excited at the work of man. □



CPS NEWSLETTER

ANNOUNCEMENT

In view of the desire and interest of the readers, ***Al-Risala*** (Urdu) is now going to be published in Hindi (from July 2023). Subscribe to ***Al-Risala*** (Hindi) for your Hindi-speaking loved ones and relatives.

The annual subscription of ***Al-Risala*** Hindi is Rs 400 through registered post. For more information, please contact us at: **8929314207**

अब हिंदी में

माहनामा
अल-रिसाला
सितम्बर - अक्टूबर 2022
मौलाना वहीदुद्दीन खान

मसाइलों के जंगल के पार खुदा की
मआरिफ़त और पॉज़िटिव इस्लामी
शख़्सियत की तामीर के लिए पढ़ें।



BOOKLET is an app designed to offer summaries of bestselling books. Under a section called Tiny Booklet, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's books are also offered on this platform. Here are the links of this app.

iOS link:

<https://apps.apple.com/in/app/booklet-make-india-read/id1119291971>

Android link:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.booklet.app>

AMBASSADORS OF PEACE PROGRAMME

CPS team members from Bengaluru as well as Anantapur teams met for a two-day session at Anantapur (Andhra Pradesh). Post this meet a WhatsApp group was formed. A video or an article of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan is shared in this group daily and the participants discuss this post.

A month later, a workshop was organized in Bengaluru which was attended by 13 members both from Anantapur and Bengaluru.

The Anantapur team has taken a place on rent for storing and managing CPS literature to spread the message of peace. They are also reaching out to people through technology. May God reward them immensely. The workshop concluded with the message of peace and spirituality.



Audio files of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's Urdu as well as English translations have been produced, compiled and uploaded on YouTube. Here are the links:

English Translation of the Quran: <https://youtu.be/Qncnx19vUAg>

Playlist

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLF2EsH0J4kt1Y1KM1A4PDeQ0Qc8Q0f5hc>

Tazkirul Quran: Urdu Commentary

<https://youtu.be/IUY0OQtIgHQ>

Playlist

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLF2EsH0J4kt3ny5Vna8ip7PJe06K8dMKy>

Audiobook of the English translation of The Quran at Spotify:

https://open.spotify.com/show/1lIBPascXiLSvgbzPJSK34?si=VXzdGoyaTNmEr1T_AvLLFw&utm_source=whatsapp

IN THE WAY OF COMMUNAL HARMONY

CPS Nagpur team gifted translation of the Quran and peace literature of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan to the staff of Home Science School in Kamptee.



PROMOTION OF PEACE IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES

Maulana worked tirelessly to spread the message of peace in Muslim societies. In continuation of this legacy, CPS Bengaluru team plans regular distribution and gifting of the translations of the Quran and peace literature in mosques after the Friday prayers every week.

One such visit was on March 9, Mr Syed Ifthikar Ahmed and Mr Naseerullah undertook a journey to Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), Mysore that has a mosque inside its campus. The Imam of the mosque was presented with two Urdu books of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. He appreciated the gifts and announced in the mosque about availability of the Quran translations for all. Many people who did not get the copy contacted later through WhatsApp to receive the copies at their doorsteps.



All praise be to God through whose blessings all good things are accomplished. □

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Name of the Book: **365 Hadith with Stories**

Author: Ali CaraCam

Pages: 382

ISBN: 9788178988771

This book, with its simple yet profound *hadith* and stories, set in the circumstances of our daily existence, expresses the joy and challenges of life. Reading these *hadith* and stories, children will come to know how ordinary incidents and day to day activities can be seen and better understood in the light of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. These charming stories and heart-warming sayings of the Prophet, enlivened by stunning and colourful illustrations, will become a wonderful accompaniment for children on their path to understanding the life and message of the Prophet Muhammad, to appreciating the glory and kindness of Allah, and will bring them closer to their Prophet and Creator.

We present before you a spreadsheet from the book along with a couple of delightful and inspiring entries.





Grandpa Salih was sitting next to Anas at the table. He patted the boy's head and said, "my handsome grandson, there isn't any other worship as good as learning things. Because, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: 'Learning knowledge is better than worship.' With this *hadith* he told us that studying and getting knowledge is, in fact, worship, too."

After what his grandfather said, Anas felt even more excited. Anas really couldn't wait to go to school. He finished his breakfast. He kissed his grandfather's and grandmother's hands and got their blessings. Then, he left the house with his father to go to school.

58. Sweet Granny's Wonderful Pastry

Hadith Time

"Shall I show you something that, if you did, you would love each other? Spread salam between yourself."

(Sahih Muslim)

That day, Anas came home from school. He entered the door and nice smells met his nose. In the kitchen, his grandmother and his mother, Amina, were making something.

Immediately, Anas put his school bag in his room and went to the kitchen. He hugged his grandmother and said, "Grandma, have you made my favourite pastry?"

"Yes, my little one, how did you know?"

"Every time I smell this delicious smell, I know that it was made by your hands, my sweet granny!" Grandma Fatma liked it very much when her grandson Anas called her "sweet granny."



32

"My dear grandson!" she said. She hugged him and showed her love. Amina said: "My son, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said in one of his *hadiths*: 'Shall I show you something that, if you did, you would love each other? Spread salam between yourself.' You called your grandmother 'sweet granny' and made her happy. Well done, my little one!"

59. Life Experience

Hadith Time

"The one who is consulted is the one who is trusted."

(Al-Tirmidhi)

Later in the afternoon, Anas and his family were drinking tea and chatting. Ahmad said to Grandpa Salih, "Dad, I want to consult you about something. I want to open one more store and increase my business. What do you think?"

"Oh, my son, you know better about your business."

"Dad, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: 'The one who is consulted is the one who is trusted.' I trust you. You are my father and also my elder. You really have a lot of life experience. Your advice will be always useful to me."

Anas also got something good from this conversation. After all, he had learned a *hadith*. And Grandpa Salih had given his opinion to his son, Ahmad.



33

DAY 109

Each One Teach One

The teacher, Miss Hasna, was talking about the importance of religion. Manal raised her hand and said, "Miss, there is a man in our neighbourhood. My father is trying to teach him the Quran sometimes."

"Yes, children, there is nothing more important than learning and knowing your own religion. We should know our own religion, so that we can live according to it. Also, the Prophet Muhammad said: Having knowledge of religion is the inalienable right of every Muslim."

Anas asked the teacher for permission, and said, "Miss, we should give thanks to Allah. He has given this right to us. We are learners of our religion. It could have happened that we didn't know Him." Miss Hasna thanked Anas for his speech and continued to explain the subject.

Hadith Time

Having knowledge of religion is the inalienable right of every Muslim.

DAY 110

Partners in a Reward

This Saturday, Anas went to the Suleymaniye Mosque with his grandfather. They looked at the Istanbul scenery from the mosque's courtyard. Then they went into the mosque to wait for the mid-afternoon prayer time.

The place was crowded with people. They sat down. A man was giving a speech to a small crowd. He was older than Anas' grandfather. Anas and his grandfather got closer and listened too.

Anas liked the man's nice talk very much. He was speaking in a soft, quiet voice. Then, the adhan was called. The old man told them, "The Prophet Muhammad said: Those who say 'Aameen' are partners with those who pray. Now let's offer a good prayer. While the adhan is being recited, prayers won't be rejected." He said a short but good prayer. Anas and his grandfather also said 'Aameen' to this prayer and became partners in this reward. And then they started to say their mid-afternoon prayers.

Hadith Time

Those who say 'Aameen' are partners with those who pray. □

Pray

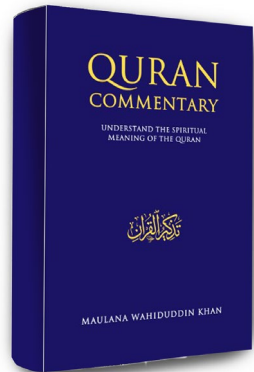
NOT BECAUSE YOU NEED
SOMETHING BUT BECAUSE YOU
HAVE A LOT TO THANK GOD FOR

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



We assigned to Abraham the site of the House, saying, 'Do not associate with Me anything and purify My House for those who circumambulate [the Kabah] and those who stand upright, and those who bow and prostrate themselves.' (22: 26)

The history of Abraham dates back four thousand years. During the period in which he lived polytheism was prevalent throughout the known and inhabited world and had thus come to be a permanent feature of life, continuing from one generation to the next, without any break. Ultimately, the stage was reached when no new-born child could learn anything other than polytheism from its surroundings.

Abraham was born in Iraq. God commanded him to leave the populated areas of Iraq, Syria and Egypt and go to the uninhabited area of Hijaz and settle his progeny in Arabia. The idea behind settling in a desert area was that here, in an isolated place, a new generation could be brought up, cut off from the influence of polytheism prevalent in the inhabited world of the time. In accordance with this plan of God, Abraham settled his progeny in a place known at present as Makkah, but which was totally unpopulated in those days. At that time, Abraham built a mosque (*the Kabah*) which was to be the centre of worship for the one God by the new generation, and finally by the whole world.


Call mankind to the Pilgrimage. They will come to you, on foot, and on every kind of lean camel, by every distant track so that they may witness its benefit for them and, on the appointed days may utter the name of God over the cattle He has provided for them. Then eat their flesh and feed the distressed and the needy—then let the

pilgrims purify themselves and fulfil their vows and perform the circumambulation of the Ancient House. (22: 27-29)

The initial purpose in the constructing of the *Kabah* was to provide a centre of worship for those who were at 'walking' distance from that place. But ultimately, it was to become a centre of worship of the one God for the whole world. And this purpose was fully achieved. The rites and customs which a pilgrim is required to perform after reaching here have been briefly described in the Quran, while full details are given in the teachings (*Hadith*) of the Prophet Muhammad.

'They may witness its benefits for them' means that they may actually see here the benefits of belief in a practical sense which they had so far been aware of solely as matters of faith.

Great historical importance is attached to the places a pilgrim visits during *Hajj*. Quite naturally, visiting these places and seeing them melts one's heart. Muslims of the whole world gather there, making the great international stature of Islam a visible reality. The annual gathering of *Hajj* promotes collectivism on a universal scale in Islam, and even the journey entailed affords the pilgrim many worldly and religious experiences which are helpful in the formation of his future life. □



Contentment
is the secret of happiness.

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.

How can a person maintain positivity always?

My simple formula is: when I get a negative thought, feel offended or angry, I begin to think who will suffer out of the manifestation of my negative thinking? Every time, I realize that I will be the sufferer and not the other person. So, if I will be the sufferer then why should I harm myself? All negative thoughts only make us suffer. So why should we indulge in it? This idea keeps my positive thinking alive.

Often, we are surrounded by negative people. This sometimes derails us. How can we save ourselves from derailment and stay positive?

You should think that it is a great blessing of God that you have been saved. If you eventually stay positive while being surrounded by negative people, it is an occasion of being grateful to God, as He saved you from becoming thankless. When I see a thorn, I think God could have made me a thorn, but He did not make me a thorn or a mosquito! He made me a human being and a positive thinker. Occasions to thank God for are so numerous that one should remain grateful to God and should be immersed in positivity. This is a matter of developing the right way of thinking.

How can we develop our mind and learn to respond positively in delicate situations?

Developing one's mind is both easy and difficult. It is easy if one introspects, but if one does not introspect, then it becomes difficult. If one realizes that situation is not in one's control and would be subject to some external factors, this mindset will inculcate patience in him, and

he will be able to tackle the situation in a positive manner. However, to do so, one must stay alert and save oneself from negative reaction.

Negative experiences will keep happening to a person till his death and there will always be traces of negativity. How shall such a person qualify for Paradise?

The goal to become positive is full of struggle and this struggle deals with negative situations and happenings. This is what a spiritual struggle is all about. This is why negative items provide support to us in our journey to become spiritual. If there were no spiritual struggle with negative thoughts, a positive mind would not be formed in the first place. If there is no struggle, life will stagnate.

Is there a positive aspect of the phenomenon of death?

Yes, the positive aspect of death is the sense of urgency that it creates in a person. That is, the thought of death makes a person realize that whatever needs to be done should be done now. Whether or not a person believes in religion, the concept of death would still instil a sense of urgency in him. □

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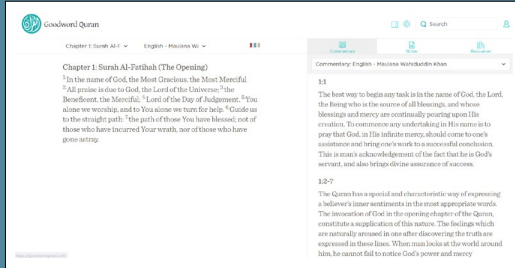
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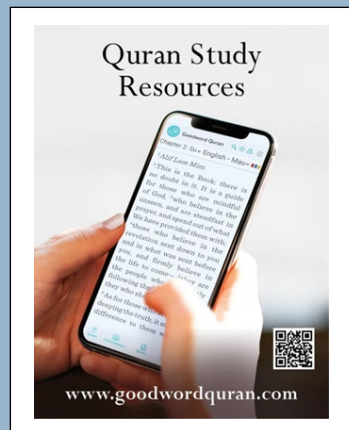
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They are also aiming to make the translations accessible to all. Please visit www.cpsquran.com to peruse through the Quran translations in 32 languages.

On the other hand, www.goodwordquran.com makes the study of the Quran in the English language quite easy with its easy navigation, excellent search engine and additional resources.



FEAR OF GOD SOFTENS A PERSON'S HEART.



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