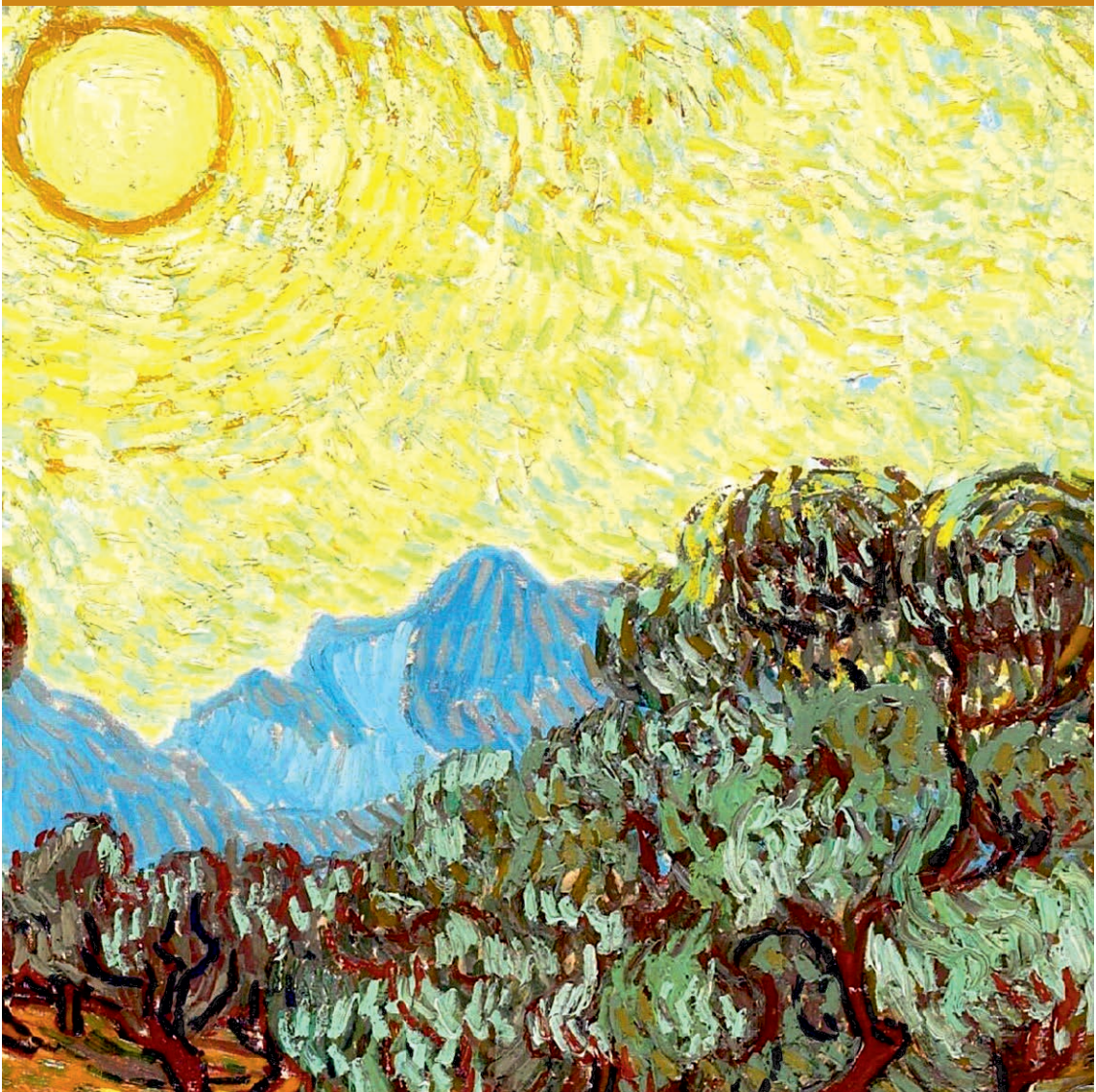


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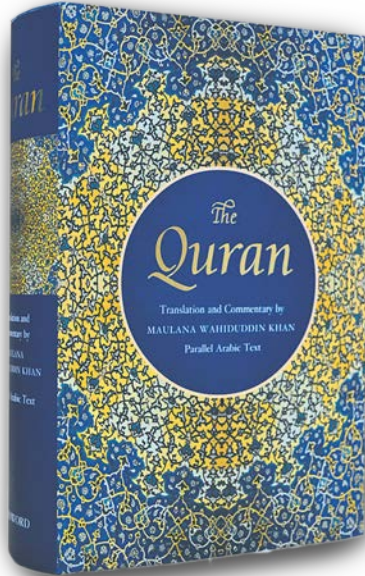


Allowing emotion to govern one's actions
brings failure.

The Quran

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MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN
PARALLEL ARABIC TEXT

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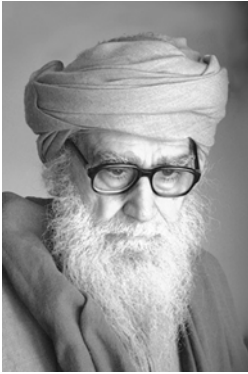
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FROM MAULANA'S DESK



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, born in 1925, in Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh, is an Islamic spiritual scholar who is well-versed in both classical Islamic learning and modern disciplines. The mission of his life has been the establishment of worldwide peace. He has received the Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian honour in India, and the Demiurgus Peace International Award. He has been called 'Islam's spiritual ambassador to the world' and is recognised as one of its most influential Muslims¹. His books have been translated into sixteen languages and are part of university curricula in six countries. He is the founder of the Centre for Peace and Spirituality based in New Delhi.

A NEW AGE DAWNS OVER KASHMIR

ON September 10, 2014, *The Times of India* carried a front-page report titled: "In Kashmir, 'occupation force' hailed as saviour." The report said that from being perceived by many in the Kashmir valley as an "occupation force" in the 1990s, the Army is now seen as a "humanitarian agency". The Army has certainly come a long way in this militancy-hit state, having rescued upwards of 100,000 people.

A crisis reveals a person's friends and enemies.

To my surprise, the same morning I received a much-awaited call from our Kashmir team member who told the same story. He affirmed that after the great havoc wreaked by the floods, normalcy was slowly being restored. He attributed this entirely to the efforts of the Indian Army, and said that there was a new thinking emerging among the people of Kashmir about the armed forces. In his own words, he said: "*Jis army ko hamne patthar mara tha, wahi aaj apne kandhon par utha kar logon ko flood se bacha rahe hain.*" (The same army which was pelted with stones is now rescuing people from the flood on their shoulders).

Sometimes blessings come in disguise. The recent flood crisis in Kashmir is an example of this old saying. The whole state of Jammu and

1. The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims 2012, Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, Jordan.

Kashmir was almost under water. A massive rescue and relief operation by the Indian armed forces is on in the state. It was this same Indian Army which was subjected to stone-throwing that is now dropping food packets, saving the lives of people and extending all possible help.

For a very long time, Kashmir had been a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity. A large number of Hindus used to visit the Sufi shrines in Kashmir. There was an ideal relationship between the Hindu Pandits' and the Muslim Kashmiris. In the whole state of Jammu and Kashmir, Hindus and Muslims lived with brotherly relations and cooperated with each other in every field. Kashmir was in an ideal state of communal harmony. There was absolutely no problem between the Kashmiris and the Hindus.

**Perceived by many in the Kashmir valley as an
“occupation force” in the 1990s, the Indian Army
is now seen as a “humanitarian agency”.**

But, due to misguidance from rabble-rousers, the Kashmiri people temporarily became negative towards India. This kind of negativity was totally against the spirit of Kashmir.

Now, nature, through this calamity and the help provided by India, is giving a strong message to Kashmiris: ‘See the realities and change your mindset.’ This “change” is not merely a change—it is a return to their own past.

Under the influence of their so-called leaders, Kashmiris had become negative towards India. However, India is the only country which has rushed to their rescue. A crisis reveals a person's friends and enemies. This calamity has clearly shown that the Indian Army is a true friend and well-wisher of the Kashmiri people. This was a new experience in the recent history of Kashmir. According to my assessment, it was a message from nature. Nature is telling them: ‘Discover your real friends.’

The fact remains that, after Independence, there was a great chance for Kashmiris to develop and build a great future for themselves. But, because of misguidance from some leaders, they were living in a state of indecisiveness. In this natural calamity there is a lesson to the Kashmiri people: ‘Decide your future without delay, so that your

journey towards the future continues without any hurdles and your youth can avail of all modern opportunities.'

This event should remove any kind of suspicion and indecisiveness from the minds of the Kashmiris. After 1947, India had been continuously providing support to Kashmir. But due to their negative mindset induced by their so-called leaders, Kashmiris were not in a position to properly utilize India's help and were instead engaged in activities against India such as demonstrations, protests, boycotts and shutdowns.

Now, the time has come to make a U-turn and put a complete stop to these activities, so that they can fully utilize the support provided by India and develop in the same way that other Indian states are developing. A developed state will open up opportunities for the Kashmiri youth to have an education and take up jobs in their home state instead of going to other states.

Now, the time has come to make a U-turn and abandon their separatist tendencies, so that they can fully utilize the support provided by India and develop in the same way that other Indian states are developing.

In the neighbouring state of Punjab, there emerged a separatist movement in the early 1970s, which is a good example for the Kashmiris. The Punjabis very soon discovered that separation from India was not good for them, so they abandoned this movement. Now, everyone knows that Punjab is a very developed state of India. Kashmiris must take a lesson from this and completely abandon their separatist tendencies, in order that they may develop themselves on the same lines and avail of the enormous potential that exists in their state.

Kashmiris must read the writing on the wall. They must accept the realities. They have lost their first chance, now they cannot afford to lose the second chance. Kashmiris must take a decision before they are told that it is too late. □

Maulana Wahiddudin Khan
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HAJJ: FIFTH PILLAR OF ISLAM

A Superior Worship

IT is said that Imam Abu Hanifa (d. 767 A.D.) was not clear as to which *ibadat* (form of worship) was *afzal* (superior) in Islam. However, after performing Hajj he said he had discovered that Hajj is the *afzal ibadat* of Islam.

Hajj is an annual worship. Muslims from all over the world gather at Makkah and perform the Hajj in the last month of the Hijri calendar. The Quran tells the purpose of Hajj in these words:

So that they may witness its benefit for them.

THE QURAN 22: 28

Here, the word “benefit” is not meant in the material sense, rather it is meant in the historical sense.

The fact is that in Makkah and its adjoining areas, there are monuments and memories associated with the great history of the divine mission, which originated from Prophet Abraham, Hajira and Prophet Ishmael. Later, the Prophet of Islam and his Companions emerged at the culmination of this history. It was they who played a revolutionary role in establishing the historical authenticity of Islam.

The places and rituals of Hajj remind one of the great histories of the prophetic mission.

Kabah and its surrounding areas remind one of the great prophetic histories of this divine mission. The place is special in that it serves as a source of inspiration for believers. The purpose of Hajj is to draw inspiration from this historical region and carry out the mission of spreading the message of Islam with greater strength and vigour.

All those practices called the rites of Hajj are only a symbolic repetition of the previous practices of the prophets and their followers. Among these are rituals such as *tawaf* (circumambulation), *say'ee* (the ritual run between Safa and Marwah), *ramy jamar* (stone-throwing at Mina), the sacrifice, etc. The aim of Hajj is to inculcate in the believer the spirit of these observances, so that he can continue to revive the history behind them.

Before setting out for Hajj, pilgrims generally memorize certain *duas* (supplications) or prayers and read about various issues regarding the rituals of Hajj. This is important. However, what holds more importance for the pilgrim is to keep in mind the history that began with Hajira and her son Ishmael and culminated with the Prophet of Islam and his Companions. If pilgrims read this history, they will know the historical background of the worship they perform. In this way, their Hajj will become a living Hajj. Observing the rites of Hajj would become a deep spiritual experience for them. Every pilgrim would return as a new individual after performing Hajj.

The true emphasis during Hajj is on the spirit and not on its forms.

One of the Companions of the Prophet asked him about the sacrifice of the animal at Hajj. The Prophet answered: "It is a tradition of your father, Abraham." (Mishkat al-Masabih). This *Hadith* is not only true for the sacrifice performed at Hajj, but it is true for all the rituals of Hajj. The rituals of Hajj are a symbolic re-enactment of the various stages of the life of the Prophet Abraham in a short period of time. This is done so that the believer repeats the lessons from this history in his own life, and qualifies himself to receive the great reward for it from God.

The real importance in Hajj is of the spirit and not the form. At the time of *Hajjat al-Wida* (The Farewell Pilgrimage), many people who had newly embraced Islam committed mistakes in performing certain rituals. For example, some performed the *say'ee* before the *tawaf*, and so on. These people would come to the Prophet and tell him about their mistakes. The Prophet gave the same reply to all: "There is no harm in committing these mistakes. But, real wrongdoing is in dishonouring a person." (Abu Dawud). This shows that the true emphasis during Hajj is on the spirit and not on its forms. This reality has been mentioned in the Quran in the following words:

The Hajj is in the appointed months. Whoever intends to perform it during them must abstain from indecent speech, from all wicked conduct, and from quarrelling while on the Hajj.

THE QURAN 2: 197 ◻

THE GREATNESS OF GOD

Discover His Glory

DISCOVERY of God is the basis of faith and Islam. The higher the discovery, the higher is the faith. The culmination of this discovery is the discovery of God with all His glory.

When a person discovers God with all His greatness, he is in a state of awe which the Quran has described in the following words:

True believers are those whose hearts tremble
with awe at the mention of God.

THE QURAN 8: 2

Modern astronomy has a positive contribution in this matter as it has provided a framework to discover the unimaginable greatness and glory of the Creator. With the help of this framework, a man can bring into his imagination the concept of God's indescribable greatness.

Modern science has studied astronomy for many centuries. In 1508, the telescope was invented. For the first time, in 1609 the Italian scientist Galileo observed space through a telescope. This astronomical observation progressed continuously. Earlier, large astronomical telescopes were set up on some remote mountaintops taking advantage of the clear skies and the lack of atmospheric and light pollution.

**Scientific discoveries have truly enlarged the
canvas of God realization.**

Today is the age of 'space science'. Now man has established space observatories and telescopes. With this technology, it has become possible to observe distant planets and galaxies in the far reaches of the universe. Such observations have established that the universe is constantly expanding at an increasing rate.

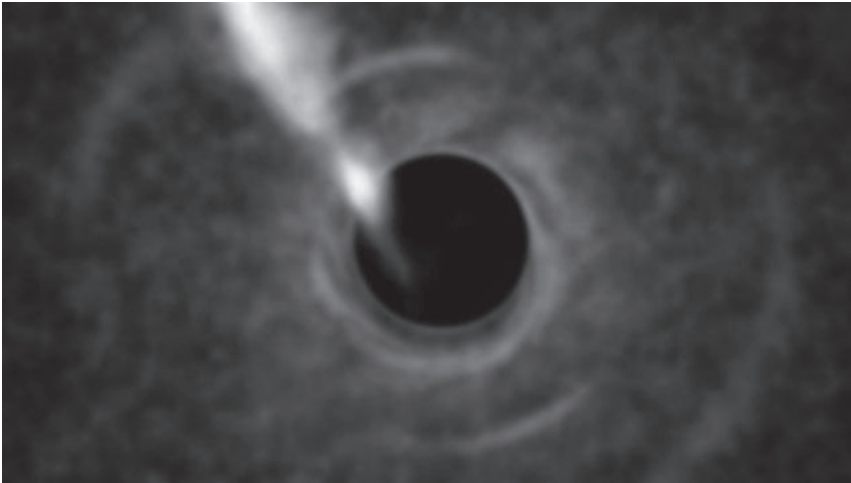
These discoveries present a new horizon in the knowledge of man that conceptualizes the Greatness and Glory of God. Scientific discoveries have truly enlarged the canvas of God realization.

In this regard, a few years ago, astronomers discovered what they say is the biggest ever black hole which weighs the same as 6.8 billion

suns and could swallow our entire solar system. Speaking about the discovery, one of the astronomers said: "This black hole could swallow our solar system whole."

To ponder on such discoveries reveals a treasure trove provided by the universe to attain a higher realization of God.

According to the scientists, the black hole, and the galaxy hosting it—a huge blob of stars known as M87—is as large as the orbit of Neptune and by far the largest and most distant galaxy in the nearby universe. As a point of comparison, the black hole at the centre of the Milky Way is 1,000 times smaller than this one which has been observed some 50 million light years away.



A black hole is a region of space from which nothing, not even light, can escape. It is the result of the deformation of spacetime caused by a very compact mass.

When such facts as these come to light, they serve as great treasure troves for God realization. These events tell us of the greatness of God's power to an unimaginable extent. To the one who thinks seriously about these scientific discoveries, his heart will tremble at the glory of God and the hairs on his body will stand on their ends.

These facts remind man of his state of extreme helplessness and the state of Omnipotence of God. When pondered upon, such discoveries reveal a treasure trove provided by the universe to attain a higher realization of God.

Realization of God is that man acknowledges his limitations while he discovers the limitlessness of God.

Realization of God, on one hand, is that, man acknowledges his limitations while, on the other hand, he discovers the limitlessness of God. The thrilling state which is produced within man as a result of this discovery is called, realization of God.

Whoever attains this realization of God, for him it is as if the gates of blissfulness have been opened in this world as well as in the Hereafter. Fortunate is the man of whom it will be said in the Hereafter:

Enter Paradise from whichever of the gates you like.
After today there is neither fear for you nor any grief. □



Vicissitudes of Life

What is required from man is that when he is granted power he should not suffer from the psychology of pride and arrogance.

And when man finds himself in a state of subjugation he should not fall prey to negative psychology.

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

Prepare Yourself

IN the present world man believes in God on the basis of argument. In the Hereafter, he will believe in God on the basis of God's might and power, for God will be visible to all.

It is as if in the present world argument is the representative of God. On the other hand, in the Hereafter, God will appear before men in all His glory. Then there will be no choice but to believe in Him.

**The more fearless of God a man has become,
the more fearful is the moment which awaits him!**

The true believers are those who believe in God on the basis of argument, who bow to truth while there is no other incentive at work.

On the contrary, the deniers are those who fail to believe in truth for the sake of truth, who believe in truth only when they have no choice. A truth bereft of power and glory fails to impress itself upon the people. Such men, who accept as their object of worship visible might and power, and not the invisible God, are not true believers.

God wants to test whether or not people truly believe in the sphere of the unseen, but people want to prove their belief in terms of what can be seen. Thus the true believer is one who sees the world of eternity within the present world. He lives as if the realities of the next, unseen world were present before him.

Unbelievers will also see the next world, but this will only be when all veils have been torn asunder by the shrill noise of the trumpet announcing the resurrection of man. Then, all unseen realities will be visible to man. Man's vision will not profit him then on that day. It will be a time of retribution, not a time to give evidence of one's faith in God.

Here man can pretend to be great, but it will not be long before his real position is exposed. On that day many who have honour in this world will be debased, and many who claim to be friends of justice and humanity will be exposed as enemies of the very causes they

ostensibly espoused; many who are acclaimed amongst the brave will be condemned as cowards; many who denied bowing to the truth will be exposed as shams; many who thought that they had reserved heaven for themselves will find themselves at the gates of hell.

**The true believers are those who believe in God
on the basis of argument, who bow to truth
while there is no other incentive at work.**

The more fearless of God a man has become, the more fearful is the moment which awaits him! □



***Accept, Introspect,
Make Amends.***

*There are different kinds of bad deeds, but no matter
what kind of bad deed you have committed,
after each one you should feel repentant
and try to erase the effects of your
bad deed by doing a good deed.*

*The fact is that every bad deed you
commit can pollute your soul.
Cleanse it by your tears, or
by some other kind of
penitent behaviour.*

THE MESSAGE AND MEANING OF HAJJ

God-oriented Life

THE significance and message of the pilgrimage is for man to turn towards God, making God the central focus of his life. Although the Hajj lasts for just a few days, the lessons it provides have a much broader significance. Hajj is a comprehensive guide for the entirety of one's life.

When we take leave of our homes and families and set off for Hajj, we feel as if we are journeying towards God. It feels like we have left our world and are entering the world of God. We feel we are heading towards the House of God, to the abode and place of experience of God's Prophet and his companions—to the historically significant places of people who had devoted their entire lives for the sake of God, and who gave their lives in God's path. With this, the pilgrim also realizes the fact that he is setting off for that place which God specially chose to reveal his final guidance to humankind.

The significance and message of the pilgrimage—is for man to turn towards God, making God the central focus of his life.

In this manner, Hajj leads to the pilgrim becoming a God-oriented person. He recalls and remembers God. His mind is filled with thoughts of God. If earlier he used to think principally about himself, now he thinks mainly or wholly of God.

A man's psyche is moulded in accordance with his thoughts. If we think about and act only for ourselves, we become self-centred. But when we set off towards God, our mind turns towards Him. We begin to think of God. We now remember that it was God who created us; that it is God who gave us so many different opportunities; that it was He who made us capable of doing many things in this world; that it was because of His blessings that we are able to journey towards His house; that, finally, the day will dawn when we will die, after which we will have to directly appear in His court. All this makes the pilgrim's journey into a truly spiritual one. Although, the Hajj is in the form of a physical journey, due to its internal spirit it becomes a meaningful one that leads the pilgrim to a lofty stage.

As the *Haji* reaches a particular place close to the place of pilgrimage he calls out the following words:

God is the Greatest! God is the Greatest! There is none worthy
of worship other than Him! And God is the Greatest!
God is the Greatest! And all praise is for Him!

By constantly repeating these words, a consciousness develops in a *Haji* (Hajj pilgrim) that all greatness is for God alone. In comparison to God, everything else pales into complete insignificance. The greatness of everything else is only so that it can be drowned or surrendered in this greatest of all glory—the glory of God. This is the real secret of social consciousness. You cannot have unity and harmonious collective living where every person thinks that he or she is greater than the others. On the other hand, when everyone surrenders their sense of individual greatness, you will find unity and harmony. People can live harmoniously together only when everyone surrenders their sense of greatness before a single being.

When people from different parts of the world arrive close to the place of pilgrimage, they remove their distinctive dress and don the same sort of simple, unstitched white clothes—a uniform known as *ihram*. This symbolizes that they have now entered a new world. By removing their national costume or personal dress, it is as if they are shedding the lifestyles that they had been conditioned into. They are now stirred by a powerful God-consciousness, being dyed in the hue of God.

**As we set off for Hajj, we feel that we are journeying
towards God. It is as if we have left our world
and are entering the world of God.**

Putting divine clothes on their bodies, the pilgrims begin to utter divine words. *Labbaik! Allahuma Labbaik!* 'Here I am at Your service! Here I am at Your service!', they cry out, as if God had called them and they are rushing towards Him. The cries of *Labbaik! Labbaik!* 'Here I am at Your service! Here I am at Your service!' resound continuously from the pilgrims all around. When the pilgrim cries, *Labbaik!* 'Here I am!', he doesn't mean to say that he has come to settle in Makkah. It isn't a declaration of his having left his homeland and arriving in Makkah. Rather, it is a declaration of having left his previous conduct or behaviour. It is an announcement to say that, 'I am here with a

complete willingness to obey You (God), and do whatever You (God) command. To submit my life and soul to Your command.' Although the pilgrim declares, *Labbaik*, 'Here I am at Your service!' at the place of Hajj; he must stand by this declaration in practice in his personal life on his return from Hajj, too.

On reaching Makkah, the first thing that the pilgrim does is to circumambulate the Kabah. This is an important ritual of Hajj known as the *tawaf*. The Kabah is a historical structure originally built by Prophet Abraham in the centre of a large courtyard also called the House of God. In the courtyard, the pilgrims go around the Kabah seven times, symbolizing their willingness to have God as the centre of their lives. They affirm that they will consider God as the focus around which their lives will revolve. It is as if scattered bits of iron are being pulled towards a divine magnet.

**Disunity is a result of the distribution of greatness
and unity is a result of the acknowledgement
of a single greatness.**

The *tawaf* is symbolic of making all of one's efforts constrained to a single focus. This is akin to our solar system, where all the planets revolve around a single sun, the axis around which they whirl. In the same way, Hajj teaches us to lead God-centric lives; to make God the focus of every aspect of our lives and to spend our lives according to His will. This is the same with all the other rituals of Hajj. Thus, in different ways, all rituals of Hajj have the same symbolic significance of a God-conscious life.

Believers all over the world turn towards the Kabah every day, offering their five daily prayers. Ordinarily, this is just a notion in the minds of people, but when they gather together during the Hajj, it becomes an astounding reality. When believers from all over the world pray together facing the Kabah, they experience an amazing sense of unity when they realize that they are facing the same Kabah of the believers of the whole world.

During the *tawaf*, the orderly circumambulation of the Kabah provides the pilgrims another invaluable lesson—of working together, of doing things together and in harmony. Here, differences between rulers and subjects are wiped off completely, as are ethnic differences. It is as if

every single person has just one status: as a servant of the one God. At this time, they have no other status but this.

After the *tawaf*, the pilgrim runs seven times between the hillocks of Safa and Marwah. This too, is a symbolic declaration—an expression of the pilgrim's determination to devote all of himself to God's path. This running between the two hillocks is not simply a mere physical act. Rather, in the form of repetition of a historical act, it stands for the pilgrim's willingness to spend his whole life running in God's path. It is symbolic of making all activities throughout one's life to be contained within certain boundaries. If our activities are not bounded or regulated in this manner, it would lead to chaos. Such regulation is necessary for a well-ordered life.

One of the most important acts of worship during Hajj is the heading to and staying in the plain of Arafat. This presents a truly astonishing sight. Vast numbers of people, from across the world, assemble here, wearing the same simple clothes and uttering the same words, 'Here I am at Thy service O Lord, here I am.' It is a worldly rehearsal of the Day of Judgment, when all people will be brought before God. It is a reminder of the great truth that one day we will all have to stand before God, accountable for all our actions.

**People can live harmoniously together only
when everyone surrenders their sense of
greatness before a single being.**

If one realizes this significance of the assembly at Arafat, one's life can be totally transformed. It is as if all the differences among human beings have suddenly vanished, and that, setting aside all their conflicts, they have surrendered themselves to the one God. It is as if they have all become one, just as their God is one. Despite their differences of language, colour, status and gender, they have become identical and one. Different nationalities, it appears, have all turned into one single nation or community. Hajj is a glorious and unparalleled expression of human unity and collectiveness. One cannot find anything similar elsewhere in the world.

Another part of the rituals of Hajj is the collection of pebbles for stoning of the *Jamarat*. It symbolizes preparation for warding off the evil whispers of the devil. By stoning the *Jamarat*, the pilgrim refreshes

his determination to repel evil and cause the devil to flee from him. He announces his enmity against, and opposition to, the devil. If one converts this symbolic act into actual practice, one can truly expel all evil and negativity from oneself.

Following this, the pilgrim sacrifices an animal in God's path. In the Quran it is included in the divine symbols. Sacrificing an animal stands for sacrificing one's own self. By sacrificing an animal, the pilgrim symbolizes his willingness to sacrifice everything in God's path, including even his own life if need be. He expresses, thereby, his commitment to offer his everything for God's sake.

Hajj teaches us to lead God-centric lives; to make God the focus of every aspect of our lives and to spend our lives according to His will.

Although the rituals of Hajj are completed in Makkah, many pilgrims go to Madinah after finishing their Hajj. The ancient name for Madinah is Yathrib. Towards the end of his life, the Prophet of Islam made it his centre, and that is why it came to be known as *Madinat ul-Nabi* or 'The City of the Prophet'. Madinah is a short form of this term.

In Madinah is a mosque built by the Prophet, where his grave is also located. Here also one finds the footprints of his prophetic life. When *Hajis* arrive in Madinah, they are reminded once again of the collective unity of mankind despite its diversity. The mosque of the Prophet reminds them that their one true guide is the same Prophet. They return from here with the feeling that despite their geographical or national differences, they have to follow the same path, the one shown by the Prophet. This is another powerful symbol of their unity. They return from Madinah inspired by the understanding that no matter what their differences—of nation, ethnicity and so on—they must all walk on the path of their same prophet, that they must take as their guide the same blessed figure, and that their God is the One God. □



RELIGIOUS STATE VERSUS DEMOCRATIC STATE

Social Affairs by Consensus

SOME people believe that Islam advocates for a religious state. But, this is not true. The Islamic concept of state is almost the same as what is termed the democratic state today. The Islamic concept of state is mentioned in the Quran in these words:

Their affairs are conducted by mutual consultation.

THE QURAN 42: 38

This is a general principle. It covers non-political institutions as well as the political state. It means that as far as social affairs are concerned, there are no dogmatic principles in Islam. Social affairs will be decided through consensus of opinion. The well-known principle, 'Government of the people' is not a principle of democracy; it is a principle of nature.

Every believer must adopt his personal conduct on ideal principles, but as far as social affairs or social institutions are concerned, they will be managed by way of *shura*, or democratic consultation.

If you read the Quran, you will find that it does not speak of any well-defined political system. In the Quran there are verses like:

Establish your prayers.

THE QURAN 2: 43

But, there is no such verse in the entire Quran that says: Establish the rule of Islam. Also, in the history of Islam, there has been no particular political system. For example, the four Caliphs of the early period of Islam were elected through four different methods. After the *Khilafat-e-Rashida*, dynasties were formed throughout Muslim history. Muslim scholars accepted this pattern of government without any objection.

In a political system, there are only two options: the first is insistence of a preordained pattern of governance. This kind of pattern is bound to create eternal confrontation, even violence. The history of theocratic

states is enough to prove this point. In fact, this option is not a peaceful option. The second option in this regard is the same as what is called democracy in modern times. Democracy means the rule of majority. It is a form of government in which all citizens participate equally. In democracy, there are no dogmatic or permanent principles.

**The well-known principle, 'Government of the people'
is not just a principle of democracy;
it is a principle of nature.**

Islam differentiates between two aspects of life: the individual aspect and the social aspect. In individual matters like belief, worship and moral values, Islam advocates idealism. Every believer must model his personal conduct on ideal principles, but as far as social affairs or social institutions are concerned, they will be managed by way of *shura*, or democracy.

This differentiation is the only method that ensures peace in society. And, as we have learned, peace is a must for all kinds of development, both religious and secular. □



Mutual Consultation

*Consultation is not an isolated habit.
The willingness to engage in it
results directly from qualities
like modesty, sincerity,
caution and the
spirit of learning.*

*Without these qualities, no one
can engage sincerely
in consultation.*

THE 'ISLAMIC STATE OF IS' IS NOT AN ISLAMIC STATE

Against True Islam

ON June 29, 2014, an extremist leader from Iraq, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, announced the establishment of a government and declared himself its caliph. He named it the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). This event led to the creation of sensational news all over the world. On September 11, 2014, a report appeared in the media according to which ten Arab countries have agreed to help the United States in its fight against the extremist group, Islamic State (IS). After talks with US Secretary of State, John Kerry in Jeddah, the Arab nations pledged to provide military support and humanitarian aid, and to halt the flow of funds and foreign fighters to IS. (*BBC*)

The above news has great significance in this regard. It means that the majority of the present Muslim world has disowned the 'Islamic State of Iraq and Syria'. In fact, this so-called State is neither a state nor is it Islamic: it is not a state because the United Nations has not recognized it as such, and it is un-Islamic because the majority of Muslims have disowned its claims. In Islam there is no concept of an "Islamic State". The term 'Islamic State' itself has been invented, as this phenomenon was not found in the early period of Islam, which is considered to be the authentic period of Islam.

The political leader in Islam is decided not through appointment, but by election.

How did the ISIS come into existence? It is a known fact that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is a self-proclaimed caliph. It is said that the Prophet of Islam established a state in Madinah after the *Hijrath*, or emigration to Madinah. However, the Prophet never proclaimed that he was the *khalifa* of Madinah, or the ruler of Madinah. According to books of the Prophet's biography, people of Madinah themselves gave this position to the Prophet at the time of *Hijrath*.

History tells us that when the Prophet, accompanied by his Companion Abu Bakr, reached Madinah after migrating from Makkah, the people of Madinah welcomed him with these words: 'You are our leader. We are ready to obey you.' (Musnad Ahmad)

This is the way in which a state came into existence in Madinah at the time of the Prophet.

The political leader in Islam is decided not through appointment, but by election. There is a well-known verse in the Quran in this regard:

Their affairs are decided by mutual consultation.

THE QURAN 42: 38

It means that political leaders in Islam are elected through the democratic process.

It is said that Madinah was the first Islamic state under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad himself. But, the Prophet or his Companions never called it "Islamic State of Madinah." There was no such term used at the time. Practically speaking, it was Madinah Administration, rather than the Islamic State of Madinah.

If we read the Quran, we will not find any commandment such as, 'Establish an Islamic State'. Why is a commandment of this kind lacking in the Quran? The reason for this is given in the *Hadith* in these words: 'As you are, so shall be your rulers.' (Mishkat al-Masabih) According to the Islamic concept, government emerges from the society; it is not imposed on the society from outside.

The ISIS not a state because the United Nations has not recognized it as such, and it is un-Islamic because the majority of Muslims have disowned its claims.

Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (d. AD 634) was the first political head in Islam. But, he was referred to as '*amir al-mominin*', or leader of Muslims, rather than '*khalifah al-muslimin*'. What was the method through which Abu Bakr reached this position? According to the history of early Islam, after the death of the Prophet, the Companions of the Prophet assembled in an open place called Saqifa Bani Saidah in Madinah. At this place all the people came together and open consultation took place between the Companions. Through the consensus of the Companions, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq became the head of the state of Madinah.

According to available information, ISIS is a Sunni extremist group in the Middle East. In its self-proclaimed status as a caliphate, it claims

religious authority over all Muslims across the world and aspires to bring most of the Muslim-inhabited regions of the world under its political control beginning with Iraq, Syria and other territories in the Levant region which include Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Cyprus and part of southern Turkey. In June 2014, it had at least 4,000 fighters in its ranks in Iraq. The number of fighters in the group had increased to 50,000 in Syria and 30,000 in Iraq. It has claimed responsibility for attacks on government and military targets and for attacks that killed thousands of civilians.

According to the Islamic concepts, a government emerges from society; it is not imposed on the society from outside.

This kind of a state has no place in Islam, because it has no sanction in the Quran and Sunnah. Such a state is totally against the Islamic spirit. According to the Quran and Sunnah, no person or group has the right to proclaim their sovereignty. To declare someone as sovereign is the domain of the people, and not that of any particular individual. The case of ISIS is certainly a case of illegal coup, rather than a lawful act of Islam. □

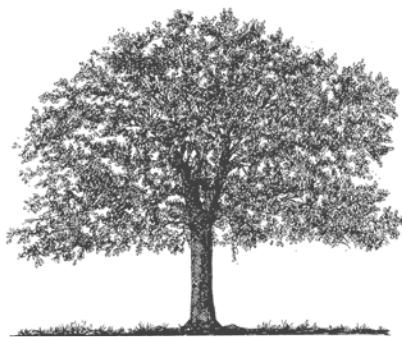


Prove Yourself

*Those who want to find a place in Paradise
have to prove in this world that they
were peace-loving individuals
and who followed tolerance
even in the face of
provocation.*

FROM THE SPIRITUAL TREE

There is a tree beside my house. I call it the 'Spiritual Tree'. I derive spiritual inspiration from it. A tree is an ever-growing being that was initially a seed possessing the potential of becoming a full-grown tree. A seed takes food from the universe around it and then grows into a tree. The same is true with spirituality, the desire for which is intrinsic to, and an integral part of, the very nature of, every human being. To realize this spirituality, Man must derive spiritual food from the universe around him. A tree converts carbon-dioxide into oxygen; a spiritual person is one who can take positive lessons from negative situations. From this perspective, a tree is an embodiment of a spiritual personality. — Maulana Wahiduddin Khan



DIVINE FOOD

THE Quran (20: 131) refers to a provision from God in these words: "Do not regard with envy the worldly benefits We have given some of them, for with these We seek only to test them. The provision of your Lord is better and more lasting."

It is this provision from God that was given to Mary. The Quran has referred to this fact in these words:

Every time Zachariah visited her in her chamber he found some provision with her. He asked, 'Mary, where did this provision come from?' She replied, This is from God. God provides for whoever He wills without measure.

THE QURAN 3: 37

The "food" given to Mary was not material food; it was divine food or spiritual food. Without receiving this food, a person cannot develop his or her personality. Jesus Christ has mentioned this fact in this well-known saying:

Man cannot live by bread alone.

Matthew 4: 4

The fact is that in this world everything has two components: material and spiritual. You have to develop your mind to such an extent that you are able to extract the spiritual content from material things. Then you will be able to receive spiritual or divine food. If material food maintains your physical health, then divine content of material things develops your personality on spiritual lines. Physical food gives you physical health, while spiritual food makes the non-physical part of your personality healthy.

For example, let us consider a glass of water. When you hold a glass of water in your hand, the material content that you extract from this observation is that water is a combination of two gases—hydrogen and oxygen. The spiritual content of this observation is to ponder over the fact that in the external world water is a combination of two material elements, but when water enters the human body it becomes a part of it and helps in maintaining its functions.

Discoveries of the spiritual kind from various material events will give you unlimited solace and contentment.

When you discover this compatibility between water and your body, you will be able to discover spiritual food for your thinking. Because, this discovery will lead to the realization and appreciation of God's wisdom, in that He created water in such a way that it is completely compatible with our body. Discoveries of this kind from various material events around will give you unlimited solace and contentment.

If you want to live as a spiritual person, learn the art of extraction. You have to extract the spiritual content from material things. This will give you spiritual food, and in this way you will be able to develop yourself as a spiritual person. □



Be Silent

Silence at the time of anger, shifts the direction of your thinking from negativity to positivity.

HAJJ—LIFE'S FULFILMENT

Training for Life

MUSLIMS from all over the world gather at a particular time, in Makkah, where the history of the prophets is imprinted. Here the believers meet in an atmosphere of worship. They are introduced to one another in a special spiritual ambience.

These believers come from different countries. They speak different languages. They belong to different cultural traditions. Despite these differences, they perform the rites of Hajj worship unitedly. They circumambulate the Kabah all together.

Hajj is not only a superior form of worship, but is rather, a complete course of life's training.

Hajj affords the greatest opportunity for the creation of universal unity among the Muslim *ummah*. This annual worship of Hajj plays the greatest role in inculcating the feeling of oneness among Muslims. Believers scattered all over the world act in unison, and this boosts their conviction that they are a part of a universal religion.

Hajj has a number of benefits, one of these being a sense of equality. We find no greater example of human equality than that which is displayed on the occasion of Hajj. Similarly, Hajj is a great training course which, despite differences and disagreements, teaches us to live together as one community. In this way Hajj arouses the will to make sacrifices for the sake of religion.

The extraordinary appeal of Hajj sites is a great means of awakening spirituality among the pilgrims. The experiences they have and the observations they make during the performance of Hajj have a great effect that moves their hearts and minds. Their hearts become filled with the thoughts of God. The eyes experience God's proximity by their shedding of tears. Hajj is not only a superior form of worship, but is rather, a complete course of life's training. Without Hajj one's life has not been totally fulfilled. □



THE CULTURE OF PEACE — Part IV

Teachings of Islam

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

1. Greater Provision

The Quran explains a fact of life in the following words:

Do not regard with envy the worldly benefits We have given some of them, for with these We seek only to test them.
The provision of your Lord is better and more lasting.

THE QURAN 20: 131

THERE are two ways you can lead your life. One way is to make the material world your target or objective, and seek your success in worldly acquisitions and power. There are always differences between people as far as these things are concerned. People constantly fight with each other over these material things. And that is why materialistically-minded people always feel that their rights have been trampled upon by others and that they have been deprived. These emotions are repeatedly expressed in the form of endemic jealousy, revenge and violence.

The modern secular state provides all its citizens the guarantee that they can follow, preach and propagate the religion of their choice.

Another way of leading your life is to focus on your achievements. A person who lives in this way is content with himself. He seeks whatever he wants within himself, and this saves him from resenting or hating others and inflicting violence on them. He obtains the sustenance of the Lord—which means that he has acquired firm faith that he has found the Truth, and he has discovered that the existence that God has bestowed on him is far more valuable than all the treasures of gold and silver. He lives with such an awakened mind that the entire cosmos becomes for him an intellectual and spiritual feast. Such a person who

receives the sustenance of the Lord in this way has risen so high that such things as power and wealth appear to him to be very paltry. His mindset automatically makes him a lover of peace. He comes to regard hatred and violence as so utterly meaningless that he simply has no time at all to hate or to make plans of inflicting violence upon anyone. Why would someone who has gained an invaluable treasure run after paltry baubles?

2. Peace, the Means for Security

The Quran relates that the Prophet Shu'ayb was addressed by his people thus:

They replied, 'Shu'ayb, we do not understand much of what you say. In fact, we see that you are powerless among us. Were it not for your clan, we would have stoned you, for you are not strong against us.'

THE QURAN 11: 91

This verse refers to the protection provided by members of Prophet Shu'ayb's clan, who, despite not being true believers, protected him on the basis of tribal custom. This same phenomenon is expressed in a *Hadith* report in the *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad, according to which God has sent every prophet along with the protecting power of his community. In the olden days, long before the rise of modern forms of governance, people were protected by fellow members of their respective tribes. According to tribal custom and tradition, it was the duty of the tribe to protect its members against other tribes.

The Prophet of Islam ushered in a revolution that made it possible for humanity to avoid confrontation and war and nurture a peaceful society.

In those days, this served as a protecting power for the prophets, too. Thus, the Prophet Muhammad received such protection by Abu Talib, head of the Banu Hashim clan. Even though Abu Talib did not accept Islam, in accordance with tribal tradition he continued to protect the Prophet from his opponents.

In the present age, the tribal system has, of course, disappeared. But the role of protective power that it once performed is now played by the secular system based on the modern conception of the state. This system now provides believers—including those engaged in inviting

people to God's path—the same sort of protection. The modern secular state provides all its citizens the guarantee that they can follow, preach and propagate the religion of their choice. No one can obstruct them from doing so, provided, of course, they do not engage in violence.

The Prophet gave peace the status of a complete and comprehensive way of life.

The protective shield that guarded the prophets in the past was based on the tribal system. It was a tribal protection mechanism, and not a specifically Islamic one. Yet, despite this, the prophets accepted it. Likewise, in today's world, the protection that Muslims enjoy is a secular one, and not a specifically Islamic one. So, in accordance with the practice or *Sunnah* of the prophets, Muslims must accept this protective mechanism and engage in peaceful activities. However, Muslim 'leaders' of the entire world have branded Secularism as 'irreligiousness' and have unleashed a verbal as well as physical war against it. In this way, they have unnecessarily turned into enemies of Secularism. Thereby, they left the valuable protection that the secular system provided them unused.

3. Mercy for Humanity

Addressing the Prophet Muhammad, God says in the Quran:

We have sent you forth as a mercy to all mankind.

THE QURAN 21:107

The advent of the Prophet was an expression of God's mercy for the whole of humankind. Through him, God informed us about the principles on the basis of which human beings can come to inhabit what the Quran (10: 25) refers to as *dar us-salam* or 'the Home of Peace', an abode of peace and security for its inhabitants. Through the Prophet, God conveyed to us teachings that can make for a peaceful society. The Prophet presented humankind with a complete ideology of peace. He provided us with a formula that can enable us to abstain from hatred and violence and lead a healthy life. He ushered in a revolution that made it possible for humanity to avoid confrontation and war and nurture a peaceful society.

Because of certain compelling circumstances, the Prophet had to fight some battles, but these were so minor that they can be more appropriately called skirmishes, rather than wars. The great revolution

that the Prophet wrought can, therefore, definitely be termed as a bloodless revolution.

The Prophet gave peace the status of a complete and comprehensive way of life. He taught us that violence leads to destruction, while peace leads to construction. He termed patience as the highest form of worship, which means remaining fully established on the way of peace. He termed strife, the disrupting of the peaceful system of Nature, as the biggest crime. He gave complete importance to peace in accordance with the Quranic teaching that equated the killing of a single individual with the slaying of the whole of mankind.

**The Prophet termed patience as the highest form of
worship, which means remaining fully established
on the way of peace.**

The Prophet taught us to greet each other with the greeting *Assalamu Alaikum* or 'May peace be upon you!' This means that our relationships with each other should be based on peace and security. He taught us that success in the Hereafter is the real goal of human activity and struggle in this world. In this way, he uprooted the false belief that the target of our life is worldly progress, which is the basis of all forms of confrontation and violence. He gave humanity this beautiful formula: Become someone who benefits others. And if you cannot benefit others, then at least become harmless as far as they are concerned.

He taught us not to consider anyone as our enemy. From him we learnt, too, that if we behave in a good way with our opponents, we will realise that hidden deep within every person we think of as our foe is a potential friend.

4. *Jihad*, a Peaceful Activity

Every word has both a literal as well as a conventional meaning—one that is related to how the word is conventionally used and understood. This is the case with the word '*jihad*', too. The word '*jihad*' comes from the root *juhd* or *jahd*. The literal connotation of this is exertion with much effort. The word '*jihad*' is conventionally used for various sorts of exertion or struggle, one of which is war.

However, it is used only for a particular and exceptional sort of war, one which is fought in the cause of God to end religious persecution.

A war that is pursued for wealth and power will not be called a *Jihad*. The Quran says:

Perform *jihad* with this most strenuously.
(Here 'this' refers to the Quran)

THE QURAN 25: 52

The Quran is not a sword or a gun. It is a book of ideology. In such a case, performing *jihad* with the Quran would mean an ideological struggle to convey the peaceful message of Islam to people. In the light of this verse of the Quran, *jihad* in actual fact is another name for peaceful activism or non-violent activism.

The Prophet taught us that violence leads to destruction, while peace leads to construction.

The Quran uses two different words in this regard: *jihad* and *qital*. Where the reference is to a peaceful struggle or exertion, the Quran uses the word *jihad*. For instance, the Quran (25: 52) refers to a peaceful *jihad* of inviting others to the faith through the Quran. And when the reference is to physical war, the Quran uses the word *qital* (as for instance, Quran 3: 121). But in the later period, after the demise of the Prophet, the word *jihad* began being often used as synonymous with *qital*, or war.

However, even if this usage of the term *jihad* is regarded as proper, still, it would be only an expanded usage of the term. In terms of the actual or essential meaning of the word, *jihad* is a term for a peaceful action, not a violent one. It is undertaken to enlighten people intellectually and spiritually; not to kill them.

Thus, *Jihad* if understood correctly is an entirely peaceful action. At the individual level, to engage in *jihad* is to refuse to deviate from the path of God despite the desires of one's baser self and the difficult environment one confronts. It is to face the challenges that stand in one's path and remain steadfast on the path of Truth. At the collective level, *jihad* can be called a peaceful struggle.

At the very basis of this struggle is an intellectual awakening among people, leading them to positive and constructive action and refining their character. *Jihad*, understood in this sense, inspires people to seek to become beneficial to others, and to be concerned about their welfare. The weapon deployed in true *jihad* is love, not hatred and violence.

5. Salvation in Silence

Hadith reports relate, in different ways, the importance of silence. According to one report (contained in the collections by at-Tirmidhi, al-Darimi and Ahmad) the Prophet said that the person who keeps silent has attained salvation. This does not mean that people should stop speaking and become totally silent. Rather, what it actually means is that one should become silent and think and only then should he speak. We should properly train ourselves and develop the habit of speaking less and keeping silent more, and of speaking only after we have properly thought what we are going to speak. This we can do by developing the habit of consciously engaging in this practice in our ordinary, everyday conversations. If we can develop this habit in our everyday conversations, then we will respond in the same way when we are faced with extraordinary or challenging situations.

Ordinarily, what most people do is that when they are faced with a situation, they react immediately and unthinkingly, blurting out whatever comes to their mind at that moment. This is not at all a proper way to react. Rather, one must first think, and, only after that, begin to speak. If you respond in this way, you can save yourself from having to later repent about what you had said, because once you say something, you can never take it back.

If people only think before speaking, and speak while keeping their emotions under control, most conflicts and strife will die out even before they are born.

It generally happens that when one is faced with an unfavourable situation, one flares up and speaks in an unpleasant manner. A simple way to save oneself from this is to develop in one's daily conversations the habit of first thinking and only then speaking. Once you become used to thinking and only then speaking in ordinary, day-to-day conversations, then, because of this habit, you will do just the same when you are confronted with difficult situations. Your habit of controlling yourself in ordinary, everyday conversations will make you able to speak in the same way while keeping yourself under control—to speak with mental discipline—in emergency situations, too.

Much of the chaos and conflict in this world has to do with words. Some words provoke hatred and violence. Other words nourish a climate of

peace and humaneness. If people only do this one thing—of thinking before speaking, and speaking while keeping their emotions under control—most conflicts and strife will die even before they are born. To be able to keep oneself under control and speak is a very great thing.

An exalted person is one who even in the face of violence thinks of peace, and who in the midst of war makes plans for reconciliation.

Only those people possess this lofty attribute who keep examining themselves and constantly introspect and take account of their words and deeds. When you hear something, you should not answer or react immediately. Instead, you should pause for a while, ponder on what you have heard, and think of what your ideal response should be. This will guarantee that you reply in a proper manner to what you have heard. Instead of reacting to stones with stones, you will find yourself responding with flowers and thereby you will achieve success! ❏

.....to be continued.

This article is in continuation of a series entitled 'The Culture of Peace' that commenced from Issue 19 (July 2014).



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TUNNEL STRATEGY VERSUS SURFACE STRATEGY

Choose Success Over Failure

IN one of its verses the Quran refers to a human character before whom a high divine choice was present, but he preferred his own baser desires instead. The Quranic verse is:

If it had been Our will, We could have used these signs
to exalt him, but instead he clung to the earth
and followed his own desires.

THE QURAN 7: 176

This Quranic verse was revealed in the first quarter of the seventh century. At that time there were some applications of this verse. Now, in the twenty-first century people have developed certain new forms of this trait. One such form is the tunnel strategy. Some Muslims have secretly dug tunnels between their country and another country, only to continue their militancy through underground passages. According to available news these places are said to be in Palestine, Kashmir and Xinjiang. Those who are involved in this strategy are Muslims.

Why do you prefer the underground tunnel, when the whole world is open to you!

The twenty-first century has opened up the whole world for peacefully conveying of the message of God. Through the surface route, sea route and air route, Muslims can travel and interact freely and successfully with others. Moreover, we are living in the age of electronics. Electronic devices provide us with new instant tools of communication to spread the word of God throughout the world.

However, those Muslims who are involved in clandestine work have no interest in these peaceful surface activities. In their ignorance, they are engaged in underground and violent activities. By all accounts, one can say with certainty that the peaceful surface strategy is a highly successful method of work, while the tunnel strategy, is not only against the principles of Islam, but is also doomed to failure.

Why have these Muslims abandoned peaceful surface interaction and

opted for underground militancy? This is because they are unaware of the great value of intellectual exchange. Peaceful exchange has the capacity to conquer the whole world. Through peace and harmony Muslims can achieve everything they need for their advancement. But they are full of hatred and negativity and due to this obsession they are unable to understand the uselessness of their activities. They prefer suicide while the option for life is quite open to them.

Human beings have always lived in one or the other obsession. If a person's obsession is positive, he will opt for a positive goal, however if his obsession is negative, he will set for himself a negative goal. The first goal is achievable and is also a life-giving choice. On the contrary, the second is an unachievable goal. Those who opt for the second goal will gain nothing in the end except for frustration and failure.

**Through peace and harmony Muslims can achieve
everything they need for their advancement.**

According to a *Hadith*: 'Love for something makes you blind.' (Abu Dawud) Here, "love" means obsession. Those Muslims who are engaged in the tunnel strategy are the worst case of this *Hadith*. They have set a negative goal for themselves. For some reason, this goal has become their obsession, and this obsession has made them blind.

Muslims, free yourself of this obsession. Why do you prefer the underground tunnel, when the whole world is open to you? □



Anathema to Progress

*Psychological studies show that situations always
being propitious kills the spirit of struggle.
The history of progress tells us that
no individual or nation has ever
made progress in favourable
conditions.*

A COMMON HUMAN WEAKNESS

Jealousy

JEALOUSY is a common weakness of human character. In the words of the Quran: “Do they envy others because of what God has granted them out of His bounty.” (4: 54)

This shows that jealousy appears when one human being is loath to accept the excellence or pre-eminence of another.

Man’s greatest weakness is his reluctance to accept the superiority of another.

Generally, no one takes notice when some charge is brought against an insignificant person, of no standing in society; it is only when someone of note is charged with misconduct that people’s attention is aroused. Without looking into the authenticity of what is being said, they accept without questioning the truth of every adverse comment concerning those who excel them in some way. One has no trouble making people believe stories about the wicked ways in which a person has accumulated wealth or the dishonourable conduct of one who has reached a respectable position in society. If one concocts scandalous stories concerning those in authority, people will immediately take note of what one says: their authority will be undermined; while by bringing them into disrepute, one will instantly become a focus of attraction and popularity.

The reason for this is that man’s greatest weakness is his reluctance to accept the superiority of another. He does not wish to see anyone, save himself, in a position of prominence. Consequently, those who stand out from others in a society become the target of jealousy—either open or concealed—on the part of their fellows. Everyone would like to see them robbed of their position. So when a person says something which achieves this end, people take his words to heart, using them as ammunition to fire against one whose superiority they were so loath to accept.

While in this world, people take great relish in this pastime, they are in fact following in footsteps of Satan, who was cursed because of his refusal to accept the superiority of Adam over himself. Those who refuse to accept the superiority of another will soon learn that their own fate is no different from that of Satan, their precursor. □

A MATTER OF WISDOM

Never Despair

THE Prophet Ayyub (Job) described in the Quran in brief, and in the Bible in detail, was born several hundred years before Jesus Christ in the plains stretching from Syria to Palestine. In the Bible, his place of birth is called the land of Uz.

According to the Bible 'he possessed seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she-asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the East.'

After some time, such misfortunes befell him as left him impoverished yet Job was the epitome of patience. In the words of the Bible, (Job 1: 20-21) "...Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped. And said, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return to thither: the Lord gave, and Lord hath taken; blessed be the name of the Lord!'"

God, being All-Merciful, has devised the system of this world in such a way that here no loss or deprivation is final.

The circumstances changed after some years. Job again came to possess all kinds of wealth and resources, even more than he had before. According to Bible, (Job 42: 12) "The Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand she-asses". The Quran ended the tale with:

We restored his family to him, doubling their number as an act of grace from Us, and as a reminder to all who are endowed with insight.

THE QURAN 38: 43

Although given a very brief mention in the Quran, this account gives the very important lesson that one should never despair when afflicted by misfortune or loss in life. God, being All-Merciful, has devised the system of this world in such a way that here no loss or deprivation is final. Here, one can always overcome any misfortunes and be the gainer once again, provided one remains patient and perseveres in one's struggles, never losing hope of God's succour. □

PEACE AND JUSTICE

Differentiate Between Them

IT is generally held that peace and justice are interrelated, that is, peace is dependent on justice. According to this assumption, where there is peace there is justice, and where there is justice there is peace. This oft-repeated formula has never been realized in society. This negative result proves that this formula, although grammatically and theoretically correct, is practically not possible. Peace and justice are not interconnected. In fact, both are quite different subjects.

According to the law of nature, one must try to establish peace at any cost, even at the cost of justice. Peace is a desirable goal in itself. Peace will then open the doors of opportunities. And, by availing these opportunities, one should work towards achieving justice or one's rights.

Everything is possible in this world. The only condition is that a person should discover the law of nature and plan his goal accordingly. If you put the horse before the cart, you will certainly reach the destination. But, if you put the cart before the horse, you will never be able to reach your destination.

Peace will open the doors of opportunities. And, by availing these opportunities, one can then achieve justice.

Our world is controlled by the law of nature, not by our wishes and desires. Don't simply follow your desires. Discover the law of nature and set your plans accordingly. You will certainly achieve success this way.

The fact is that the world we live in was not created by us. It was created by the Creator. We can achieve what we want to achieve only by following the laws set by the Creator. Going against this fact will only lead to disaster. ❏



THE SPIRIT OF HAJJ

Personality Changing

THE personality that should emerge after performing Hajj is one in which a two-fold activity is set in motion, one form being external and the other internal.

'External activity' here refers to the peaceful mission of the Prophets—conveying the message of God to mankind—which a person undertakes after having seen the places where Prophet Abraham, Ishmael and Prophet Muhammad and his companions spent much of their lives in this mission. Until then, the pilgrim had just heard about these places, but when he physically goes to those places, he receives a great inspiration to continue this prophetic mission.

Hajj removes one from one's worldly environment so that one can concentrate completely on God.

By 'internal activity' is here meant a heightened sensitivity towards and awareness of piety, self-control, avoidance of violence and aggression and the need to lead life devoted to God, instead of to self-glorification. In other words, during and after Hajj, the *Haji* undergoes continuous process of deconditioning.

Lesson of Piety

In a verse about Hajj, the Quran says:

The pilgrimage is in the appointed months. Whoever intends to perform it during them must abstain from indecent speech, from all wicked conduct, and from quarrelling while on the pilgrimage. Whatever good you may do, God is aware of it. Make provision for yourselves—but surely, the best of all provision is God-consciousness. Always be mindful of Me, you that are endowed with understanding.

THE QURAN 2: 197

Hajj, for the Arabs, was an ethnic festival, not an expression of the worship of the one God. In pre-Islamic times, Hajj was associated with all sorts of practices that are characteristic of tribal or ethnic festivals. Islam put an end to these. In this context, the Quran, as the above verse tells us, forbade things like indecent speech, wicked conduct

and quarreling during Hajj, things that are forbidden even in ordinary circumstances but which are to be avoided with particular care during Hajj. One major reason for this is that because when an occasion demands travel and a large number of people coming together, the chances of such misbehaviour are greater. If a person is not fully conscious of such matters, it is possible that he may indulge in such activities, willingly or unwillingly. Since Hajj involves travel and a large gathering, such misbehaviour is clearly and explicitly forbidden.

One of the most dangerous things that constantly threaten to undermine collective harmonious living is one's tongue.

A true believer is one whose life is driven not by lust, but, rather, by a higher purpose. He takes every care not to disobey God in any of his dealings. He abstains from conflict with others. This is how a true believer should always behave, but during Hajj when a person exemplifies these traits, he shows himself to be a true *Haji*. If he has really imbibed these values of piety that he should possess during Hajj, he will desist from the sort of misdemeanour that above-quoted verse of the Quran refers to. These things destroy piety.

Additional Precautions

Things that are forbidden during Hajj are also forbidden at other times, too. They are to be especially particularly carefully abstained from during Hajj, but they must be avoided at other times as well. By stressing that we should be particularly careful about avoiding them during Hajj, it is so that we are more conscious of such activities and develop the special capability to abstain from them at other times also. When we are in our homes or in our workplaces, we are deeply engrossed in our personal affairs. We forget the realities that exist beyond these levels. That is why people are encouraged to go to mosques every day to pray—so that for at least some time they come out of their personal environments, free their minds from irrelevant affairs, and focus, with deep concentration, on God. Travelling for Hajj is also like this. During Hajj, one is taken out of one's limited environment and is taken to various places of prominence in Islam over a period of several days. In this way, Hajj removes one completely from one's worldly environment so that one can completely concentrate on God.

There are several religious traditions associated with Arabia. The

Kabah is in Saudi Arabia—and a great many religious traditions, accumulated over several thousand years, are associated with it. Stories of the sacrifices of prophets have been written here. Here are memorials testifying to the divine blessings received by pious servants of God. Here are also signs of the lives of God's last prophet and his companions.

Historical connections of this sort have given the places associated with Hajj a unique sanctity and respect. As soon as one enters this area, an entire religious history comes to life in one's mind and one's religious spirit is enkindled. One begins to abide by one's religious duties with greater seriousness and commitment. Because of the special historical importance of this area, God selected it to be an arena where people come to rehearse the true and peaceful Islamic way of life, so that when they go back to where they came from they can be better equipped and inspired to lead God-oriented lives.

The *ihram* worn in Hajj is a practical expression of the Islamic principle of human equality.

Among the things that are forbidden while on Hajj are hurting anyone through one's tongue and killing or wounding any animal. One is also to abstain from certain comforts and indulgences, such as wearing stitched clothes, using perfume and engaging in sexual relations.

Being Careful While Speaking

One of the most dangerous things that constantly threatens to undermine harmonious collective living is one's tongue. The greatest hurt you can do to someone is through your tongue. Vast numbers of people gather together on the occasion of Hajj, and hence many situations where the possibility that people may lose control over their tongues and use them to hurt others. So, the training and instruction of being especially watchful of what one says is given emphasis to by people during Hajj. Although not hurting others in words is an Islamic value during all times, during the Hajj it made a mandatory condition. It is made into a necessary part of an Islamic act of worship, although being careful not to hurt others through one's speech is a general Islamic teaching that applies at other times, too. The Prophet said that he who performs Hajj in such a way that others are safe from his tongue and hands will have all the sins that he has committed till then forgiven.

If we say something indecent, it can hurt others. This is also true when we say bad and disrespectful things about others. It isn't good to speak harshly, too. All these things are totally forbidden while on Hajj. In this way, people will appreciate the need to abstain from such speech at other times as well, when they return to their homes after Hajj.

Abstaining From Violence and Aggression

After donning the *ihram*, it is forbidden for pilgrims to hunt animals. Also forbidden for the pilgrim are accepting as a gift the meat of animals that have been hunted, plucking the feathers of birds, assisting others in hunting, giving someone a knife to slaughter an animal that has been hunted and so on. All these are forbidden.

A true believer is one whose life is driven not by lust but rather by a higher purpose.

During Hajj, one can kill a pest or an animal such as a snake, and also the sacrificial animal that is part of the Hajj rituals. But besides these, it is strictly forbidden for the pilgrim not only to kill but also to hurt any animal. Hunting animals under normal conditions is allowed, however during Hajj this is completely forbidden.

This, in actual fact, is a reiteration, in a stronger sense, of a general commandment of the Islamic law. Humans are expected not to kill fellow humans or to torment animals. These are general *Shariah* laws that every Muslim is expected to follow at all times. But during Hajj, these laws are expanded to include a ban on hunting. In this way, the pilgrim experiences a heightened awareness of these laws, and so when he returns to his home after Hajj he will be more mindful in observing them. He will also become more mindful at all times not to oppress others.

A Life of Self-Control

A concise way of describing the Islamic way of life is to say that it is a life of self-control. The various controls and the code of discipline that one is expected to observe during Hajj can be seen as a training for such a way of life. This is reflected in the *Hadith* report that we earlier quoted, in which the Prophet said that he who performs the Hajj in a way that Muslims are safe from his tongue and his hands, will have all his earlier sins forgiven.

So, while performing Hajj the pilgrim must be very careful not to hurt anyone by his words and deeds. In this way, his earlier sins can be forgiven.

Avoiding Self-Importance

During Hajj, luxuries and indulgences are discouraged. Hajj begins with the donning of the *ihram*—which is a very simple white dress. Every pilgrim must wear the *ihram*. It is, in a sense, a dress that denotes humility and simplicity. It is an announcement, in a way, through which God teaches His servants that all of them are equal. Outwardly or external things, on the basis of which people claim superiority or inferiority vis-à-vis others, are all hollow and false in the eyes of God.

God sees everyone with the same eyes. It is like during Hajj, when vast numbers of people, wearing the same sort of dress, appear to be identical to each other. It is as if the *ihram* worn in Hajj is a practical expression of the Islamic principle of human equality. Those who truly want to become dutiful servants of God must remove every other ‘dress’ and, instead, don the same divine ‘dress’.

The Prophet said that he who performs Hajj in such a way that others are safe from his tongue and his hands will have all the sins that he has committed till then forgiven.

The Prophet was asked who a *Haji* is, and to this he replied, ‘Unkempt hair, dusty clothing.’ These words describe a true pilgrim. Unkempt hair and dusty clothing are symbolic of a man with purpose. When a person devotes himself with total seriousness to a certain cause, he will have no time for lavish grooming and beautification. During Hajj, voluntarily abstaining from such activities is an instruction in leading a purposeful life. This means that we should immerse ourselves so deeply in the Divine cause that we lose all concern with the temptations of the external world and forget all temporary enjoyments. In seeking higher purposes, we should forget our own personal desires and demands. While referring to Hajj, the Quran says:

Make provision for yourselves—but surely, the best of all provision is God-consciousness. Always be mindful of Me, you that are endowed with understanding.

THE QURAN 2: 197

In pre-Islamic Arabia it was thought that making material provision for Hajj reflected a materialistic outlook. If a person did not make such arrangements and set out for Hajj, it was thought that he was very pious. Such a person would say about himself that he relied only on God. But the Quran does not consider this sort of external or exhibitionist religiosity as true piety.

Religiosity has to do with the heart and mind, not with external demonstrations of this sort. True piety is not the mere lack of material provision; it is a cleansing of the mind and heart of the fear of everything and everyone other than God. □



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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 traditions (*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.

Such is God's commandment. Whoever honours that which is declared sacred by God may be sure that it counts for good in the sight of his Lord. Livestock is lawful for you, except that which has already been explicitly forbidden. Then shun the abomination of the deities and shun all falsehood. 22: 30

What is permitted (*halal*) and what is prohibited (*haram*); what is sacred and what is not; which way of worship are proper and which improper—all these matters have been made absolutely clear by God through His prophets. Any changes in these matters are not permissible. Any change made in these things is highly wrong, in the eyes of God. Therefore, it is necessary for man to follow the Prophet's instructions. He should in no case increase or decrease what is prescribed by the Prophet.

These are matters the reality of which is known only to God. When a man on his own says something on this subject, he virtually claims, in effect, to have knowledge about things of which he has no knowledge. Obviously, what wrong can be greater than this? □

Glossary

Abraham also Ibrahim; prophet and patriarch of Islam, Christianity and Judaism.

Abu Bakr Siddiq died 632 AD; a close companion of the Prophet; also the first Muslim Caliph.

Abu Dawud (817-889); Abu Dawud as-Sijistani; Persian Islamic scholar and compiler of Hadith.

Amir al-mominin Leader of the Believers.

Assalamu Alaikum Peace be upon you; greeting often used by Muslims.

Ayyub Prophet Job who was born several hundred years before Jesus Christ.

Dar us Salaam 'Home of Peace'; referred to as Paradise.

Hadith sayings and deeds of the Prophet of Islam.

Hajj Pilgrimage

Haji Hajj pilgrim.

Hajira also Hagar; wife of prophet Abraham who bore his first son Ismael.

Hajjat al-Wida The last or farewell pilgrimage of the Prophet.

Hijrath also Hijra; the migration of prophet Muhammad and his followers from Makkah to Medina in 622 AD.

Hijri The Muslim lunar calendar (AH) whose first year is fixed to the Hijrath.

Imam Abu Hanifa (699-767 AD) renowned Islamic scholar of jurisprudence.

Imam Ahmad Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855); Islamic scholar and theologian; famous for Hadith collection known as Musnad Ahmad.

ISIS (ISIL) Islamic State of Iraq and

Syria (Levant); an unrecognised state and extremist group active in Iraq, Syria and Middle East.

Ismael; Ishmael firstborn son of Abraham, born to him from his wife Hajira (Hagar). Ismael was also a Prophet and ancestor of Muhammad, the last prophet of Islam.

jamarat three walls in the city of Mina that are symbolically stoned as a part of the rituals of Hajj.

Jihad struggle in the way of God.

Kabah the sacred house of God built originally by prophets Abraham and Ishmael in Makkah.

Khalifa ruler

khalifa al-muslimin ruler of Muslims.

Khilafat-e-Rashida also Rashidun Caliphate or "Rightly Guided" caliphs (632-661 AD) is the collective term comprising the first four caliphs in Islamic history (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali); founded after Prophet Muhammad's death.

Safa and **Marwah** Two small hillocks in Makkah between which *Hajis* run back and forth as a part of the Hajj rituals.

Mina a small neighbouring city of Makkah.

Mishkat al-Masabih secondary text of Hadith collection by Hadith scholar Khatib al-Tabrizi (d. 1340 AD).

Shariah moral code and religious law of Islam.

shura council for mutual consultation.

Sunnah; Sunnath practice and teachings of Prophet Muhammad

Ummah religious community; followers of a prophet.

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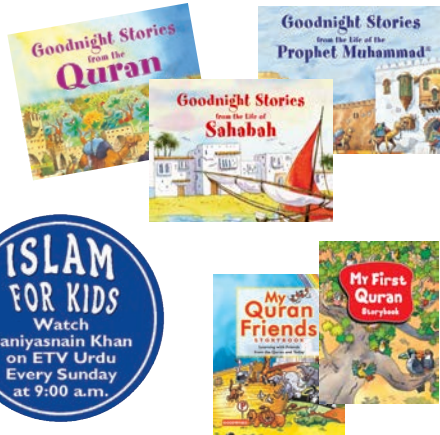
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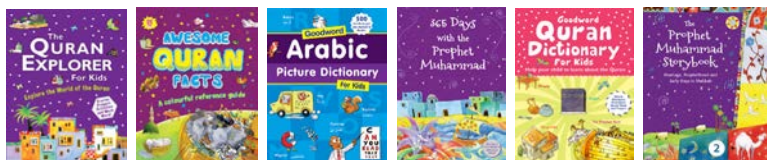


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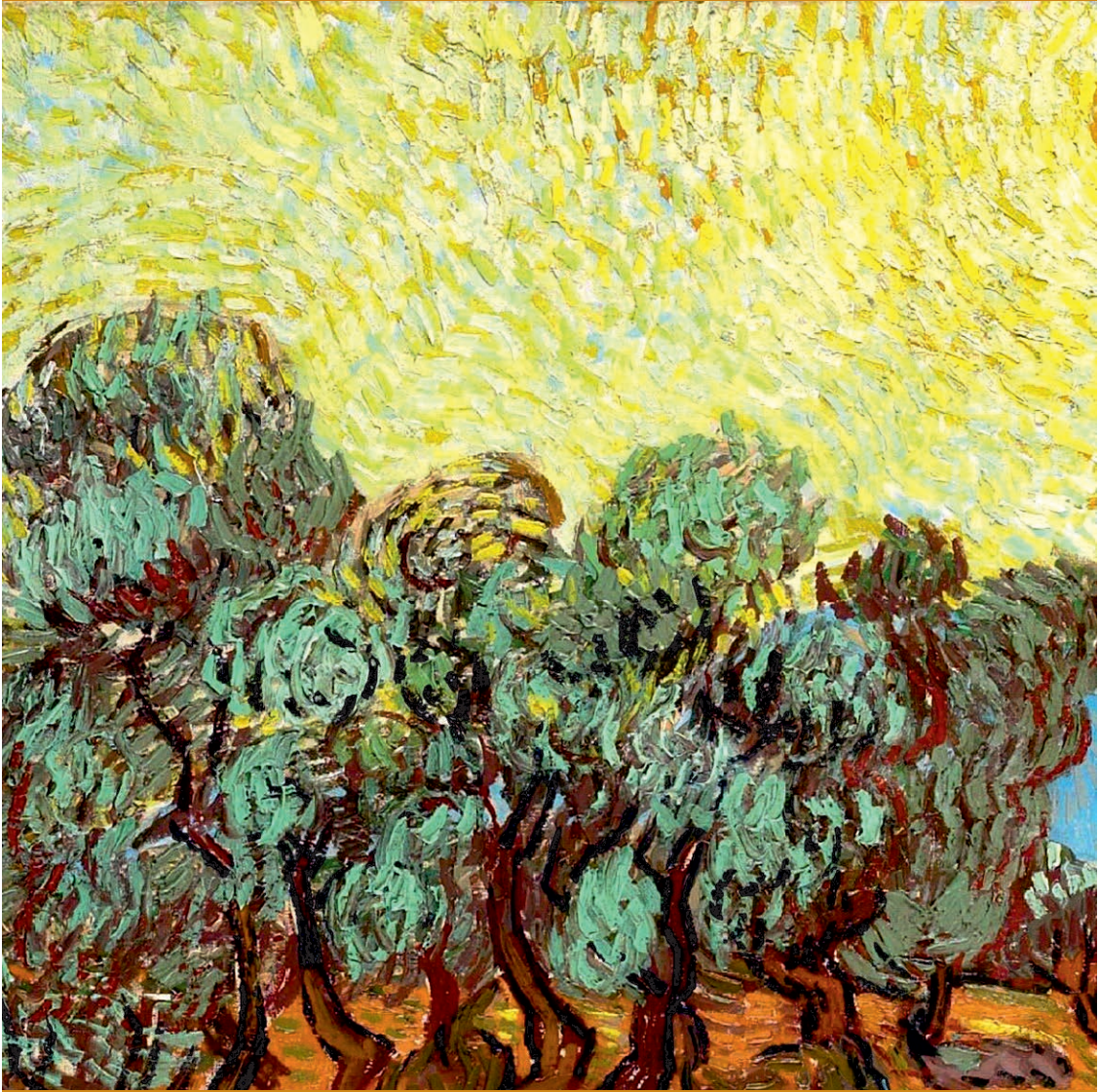
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