

ENGLISH BIMONTHLY ISSUE 108 SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2022

SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living



Love of God, the Lord of the universe, brings a revolution in one's personality producing positive thinking and well-wishing for all.

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

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SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living

ISSUE 108 SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2022

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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

CALAMITIES AND AFFLICTIONS

THE last few years have seen a tremendous rise in the number and gravity of natural and man-made disasters. Swine flu, Covid-19, and now Monkey-Pox have changed how we live and interact with people. Climate change has become a reality. Desert areas that would see rain rarely are now being flooded due to incessant rain, and the areas known to harbour cold conditions throughout the year are experiencing heat waves. Armed confrontations between countries in many parts of the world have severely impacted the world population while at the same time displacing millions of people from their homes.

Historical records show that throughout human history, natural disasters and calamities have been affecting the human population in different parts of the world. Here, we will examine such events in the light of the Scriptures.

The book of Exodus in the Old Testament describes the ten disasters inflicted on Egypt by God. These disasters are known as the Plagues of Egypt. They serve as signs and marvels given by God so that the rebellious people of Egypt and their head, the Pharaoh, might realize the greatness and glory of Almighty God. The Bible says: When I raise my mighty hand and bring out the Israelites, the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord". (Exodus 7:5)

The Plagues of Egypt are mentioned in the Quran thus: We afflicted Pharaoh's people with shortages of food and famine so that they might take heed. (7: 130)

We cannot attribute calamities and afflictions to mere chance. There is a divine plan behind them. Such calamities arise from human beings' misuse of freedom granted to them by God.

It becomes clear that we cannot attribute calamities and afflictions to mere chance. There is a divine plan behind them. Such calamities arise from human beings' misuse of freedom granted to them by God. Human beings consider this temporary and limited freedom absolute and without consequence. They forget that they are accountable for every deed they do. Moreover, they forget their Creator and fail to acknowledge His blessings.

Thus, there are two lessons that we need to learn from such adverse events. First, these calamities may arise due to our deviations

while using God-granted freedom and natural resources. Additionally, these test our faith in God. In adverse situations, we are compelled to review and scrutinize our mode of living and our beliefs. This is mentioned in the Quran:

And most surely, We will make them taste a lesser punishment before the greater punishment so that perhaps they may return to Us in repentance. (32: 21)

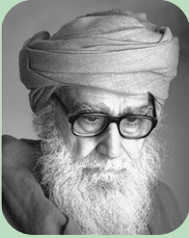
Do they not see that they are tried every year once or twice? Yet they do not repent, nor would they be admonished. (9: 126)

The calamities serve the signal purpose of waking us up from our slumber of forgetfulness. We would have learnt our lesson well if we mended our ways, removed all negativity from our hearts, cultivated well-wishing for all, and acknowledged the bounties and blessings God has bestowed on us. □

Prof Farida Khanam



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)



GOOD CHARACTER CONQUERS ALL

GOOD deeds never go unrewarded or unnoticed. The people who at first appear to be antagonistic turn out to be friendly and appreciative sheerly owing to the force of excellent moral behavior.

At a meeting on February 19, 1990, Dr Abu Bakr of Mumbai told me that there had been a large religious gathering of *Tablighi Jamaat* (an Islamic reformation movement) planned at a place in Maharashtra. The police reached there to review the situation and keep order.

Good character conquers all. The reason is that human beings are endowed with moral sense as a matter of birthright. Consequently, no man can witness a truly moral act without being deeply influenced by it.

At the end of the meeting, when the congregation had dispersed, Dr Abu Bakr met the Police Officer in charge of the party and had a talk with him. The latter explained to him that they had come there to keep a sharp look-out for any unruly behaviour, but after seeing and hearing all that had passed during this meeting, he felt that if other people could only be like the people associated with this organization, there would never be any need for police surveillance.

The Police Officer added that he had not formed this opinion by just listening to the speeches delivered on this occasion, but rather by watching how the people behaved. He said that, for instance, a member of the congregation forgot to pick up his watch after performing his ablutions.

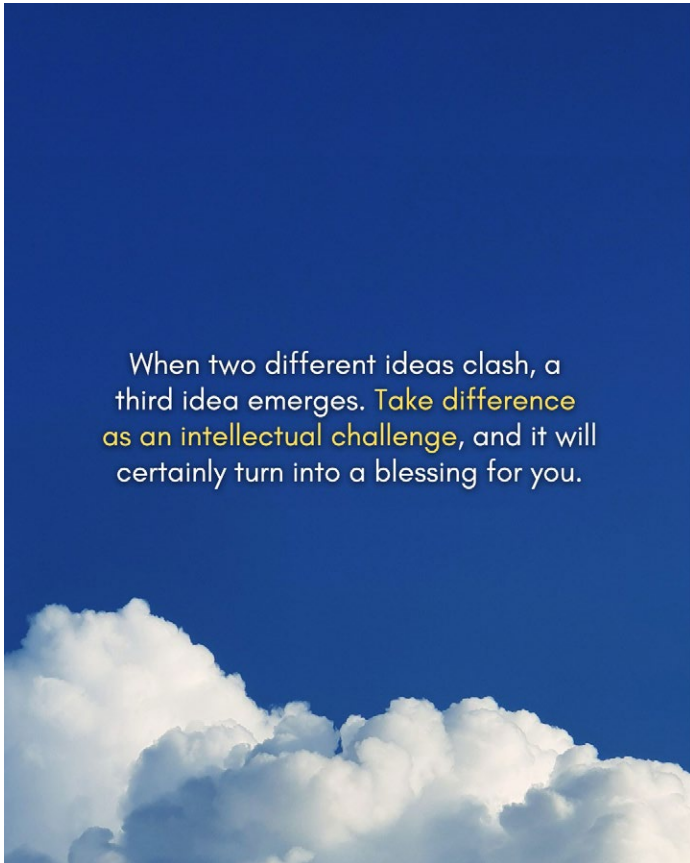
The Officer waited quietly nearby to see what would happen. Other people soon arrived to perform their ablutions and one of them, spotting the watch, picked it up and made off. The officer then followed him at a discreet distance until he reached a tent set up as a temporary office for lost property. The man handed over the watch without a moment's hesitation, then he went away to say his prayers.

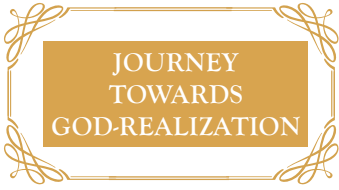
The police officer said to him that people these days were generally only too pleased to make off with other people's possessions. Here were people who had no wish at all to keep other's possession even when they fell right into their hands. Not only that, they made sure the lost property reached its rightful owner.

Good character conquers all. The reason is that human beings are endowed with moral sense as a matter of birthright. Consequently, no man can witness a truly moral act without being deeply influenced by it. □



When two different ideas clash, a third idea emerges. **Take difference as an intellectual challenge**, and it will certainly turn into a blessing for you.





GIFT OR TEST?

Know the Divine Scheme

NO misfortune can affect the earth or your own selves without its first having been recorded in a book, before We bring it into being. That is easy for God to do; so that you may not grieve for what has escaped you, nor be exultant over what you have gained. God loves neither the conceited nor the boastful, nor those who, being miserly themselves, urge others to be miserly. (57: 22-24)

These words of the Quran tell us a law of nature. For those who have learned this law, loss becomes as meaningful as gain.

Man must react with moderation. Apparent success should give him food for thought and apparent failure should increase his spirituality.

This world—in which everyone is free—has been devised by God for the purpose of testing humankind. Here, everyone is passed through different situations, favourable as well as unfavourable, so that he can be tested from every aspect, and so that his reactions and performance may be seen in different sets of circumstances. It must be borne in mind that the ups and downs of circumstances are a law of nature, which never changes for anyone.

One will face in this world both kinds of experience—of loss as well as gain; at the individual as well as at the national level. However, neither is gain a success in this world nor is loss a deprivation. Both situations serve the purpose of the divine test. Man should, therefore, not lose heart at his losses. He should not take them as deprivation. Similarly, his gains should never make him proud and arrogant. He should not take them as matters of honour and prestige.

Man must in both sets of situations react with moderation. Apparent success should give him food for thought and apparent failure should increase his spirituality. None of these happenings should disturb his mind in such a way as to render him incapable of positive thinking. This approach is exemplified in the words of the Prophet Solomon mentioned in the Quran: 'This is by the grace of my Lord, to test whether I am grateful or ungrateful. (27: 40) □

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.



HUDAIBIYAH CULTURE

THE Treaty of Hudaibiyah was not a mere agreement in the ordinary sense of the term. Through this treaty a great wisdom was disclosed to man—the wisdom of the method for success in social life.

At the time of the Prophet, in the year AD 624 the Battle of Badr took place. In this battle, the believers scored a comprehensive victory. But just a year later, in the Battle of Uhud, their opponents were the victorious, killing 70 believers. Their opponents were driven by the psyche of revenge. The Battle of Badr was victory for the Muslims and revenge for their opponents.

From this incident one learns that war is not the solution to any problem. War can become a solution for conflict only if the opponent accepts the defeat. But, almost always, the defeated refuse to accept defeat and are instead, fired with the desire for revenge. Thus, war can never lead to a solution to any problem.

Hence, in line with God's guidance, the Prophet of Islam adopted a new method to solve the problem. This method could be called the 'Wisdom of Hudaibiyah'. The Treaty of Hudaibiyah was a no-war pact that came into effect after the Prophet unilaterally accepted the conditions insisted upon by the opponents.

After signing the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, the Prophet of Islam started on the journey back towards Madinah. The Chapter *Al-Fath* (Victory) was

revealed to him during the journey. Many Companions of the Prophet were not happy with the terms of the treaty. When the Prophet recited the Chapter *Al-Fath* to the Companions, some of them expressed their misgivings. Umar Farooq exclaimed in surprise, 'O Prophet of God, is this a victory?' The Prophet responded saying, 'Yes, I swear by the Lord who has power over my soul, this is a certain victory.' Another Companion said, 'This cannot be a victory', to which the Prophet replied, 'It is a victory, a victory greater than all other victories.' (*Tafseer Qurtubi*)

Why does the Quran refer to the Treaty of Hudaibiyah as a 'clear victory'? Why did the Prophet call it a 'great victory' when there was no event to indicate a 'victory' at the time of the revelation of this verse? The truth is that, the description did not refer to a political victory, it was referring to the supremacy gained by the believers over their opponents as a result of the treaty. The believers were now in an advantageous position over their opponents.

The benefit of the Hudaibiyah policy was not restricted to the success of Islam through a brief and bloodless revolution in Arabia. This revolution that happened in Arabia by virtue of the Hudaibiyah policy, set off for the first time ever, a new process in human history.

At the time of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, the rival camp had only the power of the sword. This treaty compelled them to renounce their swords against the believers. Consequently, they were rendered powerless. But the believers had another power that their opponents did not possess—the ideology of *tawheed*. This ideological strength was fully available. The Treaty of Hudaibiyah, had practically rendered the opponents powerless. In contrast, as peace had been established, the believers got the opportunity to use all their strength and engage in the propagation of their ideology.

And this is exactly what happened. On the one hand, the opponents were obliged not to use their swords against the believers. And on the other, in the climate of peace that now prevailed, the believers were active in communicating and spreading the ideology of *tawheed*. They conveyed the message of *tawheed* to people across Arabia, and even to the people and nations beyond. A result of this wisdom of Hudaibiyah was that in just two years, almost the whole of Arabia entered the fold of Islam.

The benefit of the Hudaibiyah policy was not restricted to the success of Islam through a brief and bloodless revolution in seventh century

Arabia. Another great benefit was that this revolution that happened in Arabia by virtue of the Hudaibiyah policy, set off for the first time ever, a new process in human history. Passing through several stages, this process reached the present age. In this sense, the present age can be called the culmination of the 'Hudaibiyah process'.

What exactly was the 'Wisdom of Hudaibiyah'? Briefly, it was, putting an end to military confrontation to establish a climate of peace, and then through peaceful efforts conveying the natural message of Islam to the people. Following the changes that have taken place in human relations, the same 'Hudaibiyah Culture' now prevails throughout the world with the unanimous consent of all nations. The present age can thus be called the Age of Hudaibiyah. In the past, 'Hudaibiyah Culture' was limited and localized, but now, the 'Hudaibiyah Culture' has been established at the global level, without having to make any sacrifices for it.

Establishment of the United Nations

The United Nations (UN) was set up in 1945. The main purpose of this organization was the establishment of world peace. All the countries of the world have become its members. The UN is headquartered in New York. With the unanimous consent of member-countries, an agreement was adopted, which is called the Charter of the United Nations. Under this Charter and with the agreement of all members, a resolution was passed, and included as Article 2, Clause 4 in the Charter, which says:

All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

This clause of the UN Charter is, in essence, the same as that agreed upon at the time of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah. In the seventh century CE, at the time of this treaty, the conditions of the opponents had to be unilaterally accepted by the Muslims, but in the 20th century, all the countries of the world on their own accord, have annulled these conditions. In accordance with the UN Charter and the changed global situation, believers can now enjoy global peace. Besides, today, the doors are open to every possible opportunity required for the global mission of calling people to God. For example, religious freedom, a climate of openness, global communications, international travel, advanced printing technology, the internet, etc.

Chapter *Al-Fath* (Victory) that was revealed after the Treaty of Hudaibiyah describes in allegorical language a grand historical reality—the Treaty of Hudaibiyah that took place in 628, was not a limited localized event, it was the beginning of a grand process in history that would culminate in a global revolution. This revolution passing through many phases reached its zenith in the 20th century.

This global revolution is what has been referred to as the Age of Hudaibiyah. To summarize, the Treaty of Hudaibiyah is the establishment of peace by unilaterally accepting the conditions of the opponents and then to use the available opportunities to call people to God. The opportunities that had emerged in the past through the sacrifices of the Prophet and his Companions have now become available on a much larger scale as a result of the demands of the times.

The Treaty of Hudaibiyah is the establishment of peace by unilaterally accepting the conditions of the opponents and then to use the available opportunities to call people to God.

These opportunities and favourable circumstances that are now available are the result of many factors such as Western civilization, democracy, the establishment of UN, etc. These were all ostensibly secular revolutions, but God made them a means for the support of the religion (*deen*).

Summary

The beneficial results that emerged from the Treaty of Hudaibiyah in the seventh century CE, is described in the Quran (48: 1) as 'a clear victory'. This treaty was not any mysterious event; it was an acknowledged and wise policy. In the seventh century, this policy could be used only to a limited extent. Besides, the Prophet and his Companions had to endure and unilaterally accept the conditions of their opponents, so much so that the phrase '*Rasul Allah*' (Messenger of God) had to be removed from the text of the treaty. But later, when condition changed with the help of God, the Hudaibiyah Revolution has become a global revolution.

Through the Hudaibiyah Treaty the conditions that were agreed upon for a period of only 10 years, now have acquired the status of an everlasting and universal conditions.

The opportunities available to the believers after the Treaty of Hudaibiyah are now available on a much larger scale. These opportunities now only need to be discovered and utilized wisely. □

FOR THE THINKING SOUL

Finding the Purpose of Existence

LIFE and the universe pose certain questions to the thinking individual, and how he answers them depends largely on his pattern of thinking. What, in the first place, establishes this pattern? It is quite simply, the urge to worship. But to worship whom, or what?

A man either worships God, or some entity other than God. His whole way of thinking is then governed by his choice. All his trust and devotion are centred in that Being or thing; that is what becomes the most important force in his life, for his actions flow from his faith and his urge to worship. That, in effect, is what makes up his religion.

Islam, a preserved religion, teaches us that behind this world, the will of an all-powerful Creator and Master is at work. One day, everyone will be brought before Him to be judged and on that fateful day, His judgement will be the final word on human success or failure.

The discovery of this reality is of much greater importance than the discovery of a mere mathematical formula. It is to recognize that one is nothing, has nothing, that God is everything, has everything in His power, is Lord of all creation. With this realization comes the desire to become a servant of the Almighty. One then becomes, quite naturally, a completely altered human being, for his life is then bathed in a divine light; his heart and mind are completely captivated. When he hears and sees, it is with the hearing and vision of his Maker. The darkness in which his ideas and thinking had formerly been plunged, is banished by the discovery of God; every fibre of his being is lit up by this discovery, just as if a new sun had climbed into the sky. The discovery of God takes place in the human mind, but a man feels its effect throughout his entire being.

The bimonthly ***Spirit of Islam*** helps its readers towards the journey of God-realization. Through the pages of this magazine, we strive to provide answers to the existential questions in the light of the teachings of the prophets and the Scripture that God sent through the Prophet Muhammad. These teachings are based on sound principles of reason and rationality. □



INDIAN MUSLIMS: A HISTORICAL REVIEW

Finding the Cause of Their Backwardness

THE British put an end to the Muslim rule over India in 1857, dealing a death blow to the political and cultural supremacy of Muslims. Japan witnessed a similar turn of events in 1945 when America, having completely destroyed its industrial and military power by dropping two atom bombs, succeeded in establishing its total domination over Japan.

During the past one and a half centuries after the fall of political power, the Indian Muslims launched a number of movements for their reconstruction at the cost of great sacrifices. Right from the revolt of 1857 to the demolition of the Babri Mosque in 1992, the sacrifices made by Indian Muslims of the subcontinent are tremendous. If an appraisal is made of these sacrifices in material terms, it will come to a Himalayan magnitude. But all these sacrifices proved to be fruitless and of no avail to Muslims from any respect.

Despite incurring huge losses, Muslim leaders and thinkers are still not able to come out mentally of collision course. They are completely unaware of any other approach. In this path, they are welcomed only by deprivation and defeat.

Let us now look at the Japanese nation. After the defeat in 1945, they started their struggle for reconstruction, and within a short span of forty years they not only made up for the loss suffered in the Second World War, but also managed to occupy a far more honourable position in the world.

What is the reason of this difference between the Muslim and Japanese? There is only one reason and that is traceable to the different strategies of action adopted by the two towards the solution of their problems. The Muslims led by their incompetent leaders opted to destroy their opponents. On the contrary, Japan led by their wise leaders resorted to the policy of self-construction.

It is this difference of their approach, which accounts for the sharp difference between the states of the two communities.

In the mid-nineteenth century when the British grabbed political power from the Muslims the initial reaction of the Muslim leaders was to recapture their lost power by resorting to violence. Muslim leaders,

therefore, embarked upon a battle against the British though they were ill-equipped and insufficiently prepared. This aggravated their ruination a hundred fold. However, Muslim leaders, ignorant of any other strategy, held others responsible for their ruin and continued their collision course with the British.

Despite incurring huge losses, Muslim leaders and thinkers are still not able to come out mentally of this collision course. They are completely unaware of any other approach except that of agitation and encounter. Consequently, whether it is the revolt of 1857 or the confrontation over the Babri Mosque, this confrontation-loving leadership has set Muslims, on all occasions, to the path of conflict. In this path, they are welcomed only by deprivation and defeat.

All this does not mean to suggest that leaders with vision and wisdom were never born in the Muslim community. Nature has always been generous to every community in this respect. Wise and competent leaders have therefore always been born in the Muslim community. Unfortunately though, the Muslims did not pay any heed to the advice of their competent and worthy leaders. The basic reason is that a wise leader always addresses his people in low-profile. Due to certain reasons, the present Muslim psychology attaches importance only to high profile oratorical skills of their leadership, however baseless and meaningless they might be as regards reality.

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) provides one notable example in this connection. Being an eye witness to the turmoil of 1857, and then after a critical assessment of the situation, he realized that the Muslims were not in a position to make an advance, but they needed to undergo a stage of preparation. He thus offered to Muslims the same suggestion offered by the 124th Emperor Hirohito of Japan in 1945. Hirohito told his people that although America had destroyed their cities, its army had captured their territory, yet, he said that a sphere of action was still lying wide open for them. It was the field of knowledge. Admitting that the American domination over Japan was undoubtedly an insufferable tragedy that they had to suffer in order that they could set the next generation on the path of knowledge and progress. After a little hesitation, the Japanese community finally wholeheartedly accepted Hirohito's advice. Subsequently, the entire world witnessed Japan's history taking a new turn through the efforts of only one generation.

Exactly the same suggestion was made by Sir Sayyid in the wake of 1857 revolt, to the Muslims of the subcontinent. He asked Muslims to accept the British domination, and to avoid any political encounter

with their rulers as it was not going to serve their purpose. He tried to convince the Muslims that bright opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge were lying open for them, outside the sphere of the political dominance of the British. He tried to impress upon them that if they could devote their energies to the field of knowledge, their history would itself begin to change.

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* gives the following description of Sir Sayyid's mission:

The supreme interest of Sayyid's life was, however, education—in its widest sense. (...) (He) advised the Muslims against joining active politics and to concentrate instead on education (1/369).

By availing the existing opportunities one enables oneself to solve other problems as well, whereas one who is entangled in the problems not only loses out on the existing opportunities but also fails to solve the problems.

While Hirohito's people accepted their leaders' advice, Sir Sayyid's people rejected their leader's advice castigating him as a British agent. The difference in the result of respective responses is for all to see. Japan today occupies the top rung of the ladder of the world's developed nations. On the contrary, the Muslims are today engaged in putting pressure upon the Indian government to declare Muslims a backward class so that they may avail of the privileges mandated for such reserved communities.

It is the verdict of history that a community which fails in the test of prudent action can never compensate for its loss through agitational campaigns and charter of demands, even if their poets, orators and writers all join together in support of this demand.

Far from observing the whims and fancies of any group, this world strictly adheres to the immutable laws of nature. Every individual and collective achievement in this world can be gained only by conforming to the laws of nature. Those who follow their own desire will receive nothing in this world.

The Indian Muslims have to start their history anew from the point where they had left Sir Sayyid. They will have to learn to starve the problems and feed the opportunities already at hand. By availing the existing opportunities one enables oneself to solve other problems as well, whereas one who is entangled in the problems not only loses out on the existing opportunities but also fails to solve the problems. □

A PERFECT WORLD

Not in this Worldly Life

UNTIL recently, people in heavily industrialized areas of the world considered the smoke pouring from their factory chimneys as a sign of prosperity. They saw in it the solution to their problems, and security for the future.

The problem of pollution first reared its head in the 1960s. At that time the Germans tried to deal with it by building colossal chimney stacks, which, it was hoped, would serve to protect the environment. It turned out, however, that this measure only succeeded in spreading pollution farther afield.

Now the destructive properties of the smoke, which used to be considered a sign of prosperity are becoming fully apparent. This smoke contains a high quantity of sulfur dioxide, which is transformed into sulfuric acid in the atmosphere. This sulfuric acid then mixes with the rainfall, and falls to the ground in the form of acid rain.

Acid rain is causing immense damage to the environment. A report published by the National Academy of Sciences in America states that in eastern Canada and the north-eastern part of the United States, some lakes and streams have been stripped of aquatic life. Scientists are also concerned that acid rain may lead to great releases of soil heavy metals to surrounding ecosystem, posing a potential threat to drinking water supplies.

The damage is heaviest where industrialization is heaviest. In Germany, for instance, 300,000 acres of trees in Bavaria alone are reported to be suffering from the effects of acid rain. More trees died in Germany in 2020 than in any other previous year. A record 1.7% of the trees under observation died between 2019 and 2020—almost 10 times the average. Vast measures are being proposed to meet this threat, but all of them are either scientifically impractical or economically unfeasible.

What hopes man associated with industrial civilization but how savagely those hopes have been dashed! He thought that industrial civilization would provide the perfect world he longs for, but it has only provided him with more affliction.

The perfect world that man desires is destined for another world; only if we seek it there can our dreams be fulfilled. But man's misfortune is that he seeks perfection in this ephemeral world where experience shows that it cannot be obtained.

Man has been given everything he requires in this world: he feels hungry and he has been given food to satisfy his hunger; he feels thirsty and has been given water to quench his thirst; he feels tired and he has been given sleep to replenish and restore him. There is one thing the man has not been given, and that is the perfect world that he longs for more than anything. The means required for such a perfect world are present in this world, but every time it seems to be within man's reach, worldly limitations prevent him from achieving it. One can only conclude that the perfect world that man desires is destined for another world; only if we seek it there can our dreams be fulfilled. But man's misfortune is that he seeks perfection in this ephemeral world where experience shows that it cannot be obtained. □



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A logo for the CPS Ladies Group featuring a row of eight colorful circles (green, orange, yellow, green, red, purple, teal, blue) above a blue rectangular box containing the group's name and contact information.

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A PRACTICAL SOLUTION

Keeping One's Ego under Control

AN eminent psychologist once observed, "When one's ego is touched, it turns into superego, and the result is breakdown." Much the same thing was said some fourteen centuries back by Umair ibn Habib ibn Hamashah, a Companion of the Prophet Muhammad. During his last days, he gave some advice to his grandson, Abu Jaafar al-Khatmi, part of which was about patience: "One who does not bear with small harm from a foolish person will have to bear with great harm".

The gist of both these remarks is the same, namely that the only way to avoid being harmed by others is to keep out of their firing line as much as possible, to keep as far away as one can from those who show themselves to be potentially harmful.

Every human being is born with an 'ego'. More often than not, that ego is dormant. It is better to leave it sleeping for the ego can be like a snake which, when aroused, will harm all within its reach.

It is a commonplace in any society for one to be put out, and even aggrieved, as a result of someone else's foolishness or willful malice. Usually, the best way of avoiding great harm from mischief-makers is to put up with initial hurt, for, if one does not, one will set off a chain reaction in which things will go from bad to worse. Instead of having to bear a relatively small hurt, one will be subjected to much greater suffering. And if one has not been able to bear a pelting with stones, how will one fare when great rocks descend upon one's head? □

The best way of avoiding great harm from mischief-makers is to put up with initial hurt, for, if one does not, one will set off a chain reaction in which things will go from bad to worse.



*Over-confidence is a common flaw
in the character of those who are
lacking in humility.*

A REALISTIC STEP

Find Your Sphere of Action

ACCORDING to the Russian writer, Maxim Gorky (1868-1936), labour is the foundation of a culture. He further says that “if everyone labours hard on his own small piece of land, this world will become a wonderful place”.

What he says is absolutely right. Everyone has a sphere in which it is possible for him to work, and if he works hard, he will be found to achieve his full potential within that sphere. Then, if everyone in the world were to set about achieving the optimum results within his own limitations, the general changes would be startling. With everyone striving their utmost to complete their tasks, progress would be visible on every side.

A humble start is far better than talk of achieving great goals. There is something within everyone's reach that he can achieve, but if he clamours for 'the whole', this may be counterproductive.

But man is not content to work his own small piece of land. He targets the “bigger piece of land” that belongs to others. Instead of discharging his own practical responsibilities, he demands that others do this for him.

Such a course of action is nothing short of destructive. If it is followed by large numbers of individuals, this will create the kind of society where the air will be filled with hollow utterances, and where the whole field of action will remain barren. The ocean is made of drops. The whole is made up of its parts. Similarly, society is made up of many different individuals. Only if every individual gives his best in terms of proper behaviour and hard work that the collective results of such activity can have its impact on the quality of society as a whole. Without individual integrity, there can be no societal progress.

A humble start is far better than talk of achieving great goals. There is something within everyone's reach that he can achieve, but if he clamours for ‘the whole’, this may be counterproductive. The programme has to be realistic. And if it is not so, it is no programme. □



CORRECT STARTING POINT

Assurance of Success

IN December 1941, during WWII, the top naval base of USA, Pearl Harbour located on the Pacific island of Hawaii, was attacked without prior warning by the Japanese. So severe was the bombardment that, of the hundred odd naval vessels anchored there, only a handful survived. This had the immediate effect of bringing America into the war as one of the Allied Powers. Up till that point, USA had no direct involvement in hostilities save as a supplier of armaments to the enemies of Japan. The Japanese attack was uncalled-for and ill-considered. They did not realize the magnitude of their error until 1945, when America finally took its revenge by dropping the first-ever atom bombs on two of Japan's major industrial centres, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan was utterly annihilated as a military power.

The Americans then kept a tight military and political hold over Japan. But the latter country, astonishingly, recuperated from the horror of large-scale atomic devastation, and proceeded to adapt itself to an entirely new set of circumstances. Before the World War II, it had relied on the 'power of weapons'. But after witnessing the destruction these caused, it relinquished their use and set about reconstructing the country along entirely peaceful lines. Having once adopted this course, the Japanese showed great versatility, resilience and assiduity, and their success has been such that Japan is now considered the second greatest industrial power in the entire world today. Its trade surplus in 2020 was 5.86 billion USD.

In the field of industry, the victors have been subjugated by the vanquished. Simply by accepting the fact that aggression could not pay dividends and then channelizing its potential in the field of industry, Japan has managed quite miraculously to supersede all the other nations of the world.

The Americans are greatly upset at this state of affairs and refer to the present 'invasion' of Japanese goods as an Economic Pearl Harbour. A book written by Ezra F Vogel under the title of *Japan as Number One*, became a best-seller when it was published (1979). It clearly shows that

Simply by accepting the fact that aggression could not pay dividends and then channelizing its potential in the field of industry, Japan has managed quite miraculously to supersede all the other nations of the world.

Japan has far outrun the US and Britain in business. So far as foreign exchange is concerned, Japan is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, its foreign exchange reserves count to 1,311,254 US dollars in 2022. This ranks Japan as second only to China.

We must never lose sight of the fact that we are not lone travellers on this earth. There are always others who are trying to race ahead of us in this world of competition.

How did Japan turn its military defeat into economic conquest? By encouraging patience and perseverance and avoiding provocation, it concentrated its energies on peaceful (and, of course, remunerative) fields, rather than indulging in retaliatory violence. It initially accepted the military and political supremacy of other nations. It quickly adapted itself to new scales of values, then set about to the economic rehabilitation of the country without wasting a single moment on bewailing lost opportunities.

It didn't blame others for its misfortunes or on pointless nostalgia. Rather than committing further mistakes, Pearl Harbour being the greatest, it concentrated its attention on seizing existing opportunities. In short, Japan accepted the blame for its own destruction, and, once having done so, was able earnestly to launch itself on its own economic uplift.

This episode projects a very important lesson for us. We must never lose sight of the fact that we are not lone travellers on this earth. There are always others who are trying to race ahead of us in this world of competition. The resulting situation can be approached in two entirely different ways. One is to collide with anything which obstructs our path. The other is to circumvent obstacles and then to go on our way.

Clearly, the first is self-destructive, while the second, of avoiding confrontations, is much more likely to prove advantageous. A ship which sails straight at a rock or an iceberg is doomed to disaster. It is the ship which veers temporarily off its course to avoid the reefs which will eventually sail safely into harbour. Similarly, Japan, by giving up ideas of military supremacy, has reached a much more worthwhile objective – economic supremacy.

It is worth remembering that Hiroshima and Nagasaki, once symbols of Japan's total annihilation as a military power, are now symbols, seven decades later, of Japan's stunning economic success. □

INDIA: A SPIRITUAL SUPERPOWER

August 15, 2022, marks the beginning of the 75th year of Independence of India. The Government of India celebrated the 75 years of Independence of India with great excitement. These celebrations were marked under the name 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan believed that India can show the way to the world toward peaceful and spiritually-elevated existence. To mark this momentous occasion, we reproduce here Maulana's message to the people of India.

I have always maintained that India is a potential spiritual superpower. As a matter of ancient tradition, India may be called a land of spirituality. Here, I recall an event pertaining to Swami Vivekanand. During a visit of his to America, he was walking along a street in Chicago, and according to the Swami tradition, he was clad in just two pieces of untailed cloth. An American lady, seeing him in these clothes, found this very strange. She whispered to her husband: "I don't think that person is a gentleman". Swamiji overheard this. He went up to her and said, "Excuse me, madam, in your country a tailor makes a man a gentleman. But in the country from which I come, character makes a man a gentleman".

Here, I would like to add a very relevant story. Mother Teresa was born in Europe. She visited India and was so fascinated with this land of spirituality that she decided to settle here. She dedicated her entire life to social upliftment. In recognition of her services, she was awarded the prestigious Nobel Prize. On this occasion, she was invited to the USA to address an American audience there. She began her address with these historic words: "I have come from a rich country to a poor country". She was indeed referring to the spiritual wealth of this country.

It is a fact that India has a long tradition of spirituality and moral values. In other words, potentially, India is a spiritual powerhouse. This is the true spirit of India. We only need to revive ancient Indian traditions in our lives, for India to emerge as a spiritual superpower in the world. It will be able to conquer the world with its spiritual power. But turning this Indian potential into reality would need a long and sincere effort.

First of all, we have to rebuild good traditions in individual minds. We have to bring about a change in people's thinking, so that we may build a society based on sound ethical principles. This again requires a nonviolent struggle, in the complete sense of the phrase.

Then, we need to build a nation reinforced by these principles—a nation, that knows the difference between peace and violence, a nation that knows the difference between the spiritual and the non-spiritual. Individuals are the social constituents that make a nation. And a nation armed with the spiritual power of its individuals is in a position to inculcate spirituality in international life. India, by revitalizing, can change the whole world. Let us work for this noble cause.

Spirituality is the whole identity of our country. For centuries, the lofty Himalayas have served as an abode of spirituality. Its message flows eternally in the water of the Ganga and the Jamuna, while tall green trees provide spiritual solace, and beautiful birds warble the song of peace.

In the age of the culture of peace, the entire world craves peace. It is here that India has a chance to play an important role. India can show the world the path to peace and spirituality and thus emerge as a spiritual superpower.

Swami Vivekanand was a great soul of India. I think he was quite right in predicting that, after independence, India would emerge as a spiritual leader of the world. Despite all the material progress that has been made, the world is in search of spirituality. Here, I would like to refer to a very telling incident. I once saw a youth from the West, simply clad, walking along an Indian street. He looked very happy and contented. I struck up a conversation with him and learnt that he belonged to an affluent western country, namely Canada. I asked him why he had left his country and come to India. He quietly replied: "There, I was comfortable

physically; here, I am comfortable spiritually".

Indeed, spirituality is the whole identity of our country. For centuries, the lofty Himalayas have served as an abode of spirituality. Its message flows eternally in the water of the Ganga and the Jamuna, while tall green trees provide spiritual solace, and beautiful birds warble the song of peace. This rare combination of spiritual greatness is to be found only in India. This is what makes it a spiritual superpower. It is in this sense that I say that India is potentially a superpower, and as such, we need to produce a spiritual renaissance. Herein lies the secret of attaining global leadership for India. □

THE MAJORITY-MINORITY EQUATION

Finding a Law of Nature

ACCORDING to the law of nature laid down in the Quran in the chapter *Al-Baqarah* (The Heifer), 'minority' and 'majority' are relative terms. It is not quantity that matters but quality. The Quran says, "Many a small group, by God's permission has prevailed against a large group. God is indeed with the steadfast. (2: 249) That the minority should prevail over the majority is not a mysterious belief. It is merely an accepted sequence of events which is based on the law of nature—attributed in the above verse to divine 'permission'.

In reality, it is the result of a process arising out of life's inherent challenges and competition. This conforms to a natural law which inevitably sets in motion a process between the two groups, which may continue over several generations. This process works in parallel, on the one hand among the majority and on the other among the minority, and that is what is mainly responsible for bringing about that ultimate miracle of the minority being able to prevail over the majority.

The majority feels, consciously or unconsciously, that it enjoys the favourable conditions that stem from being in an advantageous position as compared to other groups. On the other hand, the minority feels, consciously or unconsciously, that it is on the defensive: it has no option but to work harder than the other group. It is a double process that activates both the communities, in different ways. The psyche of contentment in the majority group decreases its creativity. In contrast, the minority group develops a kind of defensive psychology. It feels that if it wants to stand up to the majority, it has to work harder than the other group. This feeling of discontent yields a positive result in that it constantly increases the creativity of minority.

According to this law, referred to in the above Quranic verse, a natural process is always in progress among the different groups of societies, although in opposite ways. This law of nature tells us not to resort to lodging complaints or protests. In a situation where the minority faces discrimination, it must not react. Its leader must tell the community to

When the minority faces discrimination, it must not react. Its leader must tell the community to take it as a challenge rather than as discrimination, and to attribute it to the law of nature rather than to the majority community.

take it as a challenge rather than as discrimination, and to attribute it to the law of nature rather than to the attitudes and actions of the majority community.

The basic requirement in such a situation is for the minority community to save itself from being a victim of frustration and despair. It should take the situation as being full of opportunities. It should maintain its positivity at any cost. If a minority group has this mentality, it will emerge as a creative force. □



*The virtue of modesty makes
you a realist—a person who
is cut down to size.*



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*If you encounter any issue regarding the
presentation of content on the Spirit of
Islam website (www.spiritofislam.co.in),
please mail in your suggestions or
questions to usman_888@yahoo.com.*

THE GOAL OF A BELIEVER

Passing over the Ephemera of the World

ALI, the fourth Caliph was married to Fatima, who was a daughter of the Prophet Muhammad. He relates how his wife had to do all the housework herself. Her hands used to become blistered from working a millstone, her clothes became dirty from sweeping the floor, and having to bring water from outside in a large leather bag had left a mark on her neck. On one occasion when the Prophet had had an influx of servants, Ali suggested to Fatima that she go and request her father to give her one of them to help her in her work. She duly went to see him, but there were many people gathered at his house, and she returned home, without meeting her father.

The next day the Prophet came to the house of Ali and Fatima and asked what it was she had wanted to discuss with him, but Fatima remained silent. Then Ali told the Prophet the whole story. The Prophet did not, however, accede to their request for a servant. "Fear God," he said, "and fulfill your duty to the Lord. Continue to do your housework and, when you go to bed at night, glorify God 33 times, praise Him the same number of times and exalt him 34 times. This makes mentioning and extolling God's name 100 times altogether. That will do more good than a servant will".

This was Prophet's way of reminding people that instead of looking to ease worldly life, one should pay utmost attention towards making the world of Hereafter an easy place. The hardships and afflictions of this world are bound to perish, but the pain and suffering of the Hereafter shall remain forever. A true believer, therefore, should strive his utmost to become worthy of the blessings of the Hereafter. □

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FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Fundamental and Sacred

FREEDOM of expression is one of the fundamental rights of human beings. Governmental as well as non-governmental organizations have taken it upon themselves to make sure to cultivate such environment where it is conducive and safe to exercise the right to freedom of expression.

Amnesty International mentions this on its website:

You have the right to say what you think, share information and demand a better world. You also have the right to agree or disagree with those in power, and to express these opinions in peaceful protests.

Exercising these rights, without fear or unlawful interference, is central to living in an open and fair society; one in which people can access justice and enjoy their human rights.

In Islam, freedom of expression is allowed in the last degree possible. Only one thing is taboo, and that is physical harm. Otherwise you are free. If you use only words, and you are expressing your differences in harsh terms, it is allowed, unless you use harm. What is forbidden in Islam is physical harm. Freedom of expression is allowed, there is no restriction at all.

In Islam, freedom of expression is allowed in the last degree possible. Only one thing is taboo, and that is physical harm.

There is a very interesting reference in the Quran in this regard. When God Almighty created Man, at that time there were two creatures, *jinn*s and angels. So God Almighty ordered that those two, the *jinn*s and angels, must bow before Adam, before Man. 'When your Lord said to the angels, 'I am putting a successor on earth,' they said, 'Will You place someone there who will cause corruption on it and shed blood, while we glorify You with Your praise and extol Your holiness?' (2: 30)

It was clearly a dissent. The angels showed dissent, and God allowed that dissent. God justified his act by showing the basic wisdom behind God's creating a new creature. He never said that you have no right to differ from my reason. In this way, God Himself has established a precedent that everyone has the right to freedom of expression. □

NEGLIGENCE: A MORAL DEFICIENCY

Take Action before It's Too Late

IT is hard to believe that any animal could be more dangerous or terrifying than the man-eating tiger. But it is not the tiger or the bear which is the most dangerous enemy of man. In truth, the most dangerous of our enemies are the bacteria and viruses which are so tiny that they remain invisible to the naked eye. Small they may be, but these micro-organisms breed at such a furious rate that, given favourable conditions, one of their number can reproduce itself 10,000 times over within a mere matter of ten hours. While a bear or a lion only occasionally eats a man alive, man is the constant focus of deadly bacteria.

Their species run into thousands. We are fortunate, however, in that 99 percent are either beneficial or harmless.

Though only one percent is harmful, its deadliness is such that it can claim the life of a man within a matter of seconds. All fatal diseases, according to medical science, are produced by such micro-organisms. Their very lack of bulk makes it possible for them to enter the human system in ways against which man has no natural system of defence.

People are usually aware of big and obvious dangers, and imagine they must be responsible for all their misfortunes. But, if the truth were told, the harm done to us by these tiny living organisms far surpasses any havoc our bigger enemies can wreak. Yet, when we come to think of it, the greatest damage of all is done by those seemingly insignificant and often short-lived moments of neglect, moments when timely action was our duty, when approval needed to be given or withheld, when advice or help or self-appraisal was needed, and we let the occasion slip by, heedless of the consequences. Easy-going negligence can creep into our souls, like bacteria into the body, and, if not pulled up short, can become an ingrained attitude, leading to moral corrosion.

A negligent attitude permits people to fritter away their time, day after day, with no thought for the future. Similarly, they squander substantial portions of their income. This wasted time and pointless expenditure may seem a trivial matter. If it is just a question of one day, a few hours and a few rupees, they don't seem to add up to much. But if one were to calculate the time and money thus wasted in one year and then in a whole lifetime, it would become clear that fully fifty percent of one's life and earnings had been squandered in vain pursuits. Take the total wastage of a whole nation and the loss assumes such enormous proportions that it quite goes beyond the imagination. □

PRIDE AND GRATITUDE

Two Opposite Human Feelings

ONCE, an educated Muslim told me confidently, "I can proudly and gratefully say that God caused me to be born in an environment steeped in religious fervour, and He granted me the opportunity to get educated and trained in a reputed institution".

This is not a statement of just one person. This kind of thing is what many people say in their own way. These words seem to be very captivating, but these words are devoid of any true meaning. The truth of the matter is that pride and gratitude are two entirely different emotions. Where there is pride, there will be no gratitude; and where there is gratitude, there will be no pride. Those who still speak such words may possess the element of pride, but the sentiment of true gratefulness can never find a place in their hearts.

What is gratitude? Gratitude is, in reality, the acknowledgement of the blessings of God Almighty. Acknowledgement of the blessings of God immediately produces a feeling of utter helplessness. Once a person feels this helplessness, he cannot carry the feeling of pride in

Gratitude is the acknowledgement of the blessings of God Almighty. This acknowledgement immediately produces a feeling of utter helplessness. Once a person feels this helplessness, he cannot carry the feeling of pride in his bosom.

his bosom. After a person has truly realized his helplessness, he will find himself as 'nothing' and he will find God as everything. For a man who has this realization of truth, the word 'pride' will become meaningless to him. Forgetting all, he will take on the hue of expressing gratitude to God. He will find in his bosom no place for personal glory and pride. A person can show true gratitude only when he is truly modest and humble. A person who lacks the divine quality of complete modesty can never experience the bliss of gratitude.

To speak the words of pride along with words of gratitude makes the person eligible for, to use an academic term, minus marking. A person saying both words together proves that he is unaware of the real truth of both

words. He knows neither the psychology of pride nor the psychology of gratitude. If he were aware of both of them, he would not have spoken the contradictory words of pride and gratitude together. Gratitude grows when pride is negated. Gratitude cannot be nurtured where pride has taken root. □

LESSER GRATITUDE, GREATER GRATITUDE

Path to God-realization

THE Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said, "One who does not show gratitude for lesser things, will not express gratitude for greater things as well." (*Musnad Ahmed, Hadith No. 18449*) This saying illustrates a law of nature. This law is: By recalling minor incidents, a person brings alive the memories of major events.

Studies in psychology indicate that the human brain contains many different files. For example, love file, hate file, acknowledgement file, oppression file, etc. The mind keeps on putting separately all the experiences and observations of the human being. When a person is affected by a particular incident, this triggers his mind, and then it is as if the file of this type opens up and all the events of this type come to the fore.

This law of nature plays an important role in matters of gratitude and acknowledgement. For example, you received a mobile phone today. You spoke to a distant person. Then, you thought about the difficulty of contacting another person just a couple of decades ago. This realization produced a deep sense of gratitude and you expressed the bounties of God. This process will immediately trigger your mind. At this time, the file of the brain will open all the items of gratitude under this system of nature. Your brain will refresh all such incidences from your life. Thus, a small event of gratitude becomes a cause of greater gratitude. This feeling is increased to such an extent that the person feels that a fountain of gratitude has started flowing in his heart. The feeling of gratitude continues to enhance a person's relationship with God, till he reaches the highest level of God-realization. □

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AN INTERVIEW WITH DR RAJAT MALHOTRA



Dr Rajat Malhotra, a CPS International member and a proponent of interfaith dialogue and peace-building, has received his doctorate in “A Study of the Arabian Society after the Advent of Islam with Specific reference to the Life of Prophet Muhammad”. He has been associated with CPS International, New Delhi since its very inception. Besides being the CPS International Education Programme Global Coordinator, he is a regular contributor of articles on Islam and modernity like peace, democracy, jihad,

and more to various journals. He is a regular participant and organizer of interfaith and Islamic programmes.

*His academic interest in Islam in relation to modernity, peace, and interfaith dialogue is applied through his efforts at the Centre for Peace and Spirituality’s national and international initiatives toward dialogue and peace-building efforts with different faiths. His objective understanding of Islam is reflected in his words at a programme at IIC, New Delhi covered by Life Positive magazine: **“Do not judge Islam based on the actions of Muslims. Evaluate the actions of Muslims using Islamic tenets”.***

How were you introduced to Maulana Wahiduddin Khan? Kindly describe your first meeting.

It was in the year 2001, probably the month of February when I first visited Maulana Wahiduddin Khan at his residence. The meeting was organized by Mr Khalid Ansari whom I had met through Ms Priya Malik during a business interaction. Since we three had a spiritual interest, Khalid suggested that we meet Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Saheb. He introduced Maulana as someone who addressed the modern mind on spiritual matters. I was reluctant to meet Maulana as I had never liked Muslims. Khalid was the first Muslim I got comfortable with due to his friendly behaviour. So, I agreed to meet Maulana upon his insistence. My decision to meet him was also influenced by my long-burning desire for getting answers to my troubling existential questions.

I remember my first interaction with Maulana Saheb. It was quite the opposite of what I had expected. Maulana turned out to be so warm and rational in his approach that I felt the strong urge to meet him

again. That day I felt much at ease as if my soul was urging me on to interact with him again. I believe that it was God's intervention to make me listen to my inner voice of meeting him again. I had a happy and peaceful sleep that night.

What did you think of Islam before you met Maulana?

Islam, for me, was a religion of violence. I grew up thinking that it is a very complex and difficult religion to understand. I consciously never made any Muslim friends during my school, graduation, or post-graduation days because I didn't like Muslims and particularly Islam. It was also due to childhood conditioning. I always felt that the world would be a better place without Muslims and Islam.

My opinion about Islam had developed looking at Muslim's actions around the world and seeing them at the forefront of all negative news. Additionally, my grandparents and parents had to leave their place of birth Pakistan during Partition. I had heard stories of horror, terror, loss and pain from them since childhood. My parents still have their passports with 'Undivided India' as their place of birth. Naturally, my hatred and negative impression of Islam were a result of all these factors.

Kindly provide some information about your family and education.

I come from an educated family. My mother was a lecturer in college before her marriage and her brother was a principal of an engineering college in Madhya Pradesh. My father's family had a flourishing export business which he left to work in a PSU. I did my Economics Hons. from Kirori Mal College, Delhi University and then my MBA and a few other finance certifications. Inspired by Maulana Saheb, I did MA and PhD in Islamic Studies. My elder brother works in the Middle East heading a company and my wife Stuti Malhotra had worked earlier with American Express and has just finished her PhD. She is my strength and partner in God's work.

What inspires you to devote yourself wholly to the mission?

After meeting Maulana and discovering God through him, my mindset changed from narrow thinking to universal thinking. The fact that there are innumerable people like me waiting to discover the creation plan of God and that our task of conveying God's message will give us the unfathomable reward of living closest to our Creator. This is enough reason to dedicate myself to this mission.

All this thinking is due to Maulana's personal attention and training. He unfolded the real world (the Hereafter) to the CPS members. For me, God, His angels and Hereafter are more real than this world. Once you discover this reality, there is no reason for focusing on anything else. When I read the life of the Prophet and his Companions and look at how Maulana lived and sacrificed his life, it inspires me to the core that I should follow in the same footsteps and not create new ones. I also realize my helplessness and lacking in all aspects, but then the Greatness and Mercifulness of God Almighty make me very hopeful.

What tasks are you shouldering after Maulana Saheb's demise?

When Maulana was alive, my primary task was to manage all his programmes globally. It was also my responsibility to look after CPS-related coordination and correspondence on his behalf with individuals and institutions. Post his demise, I am involved in daily correspondence of CPS with all those involved in the mission. I am part of decision making, networking, continuing weekly Sunday sessions and playing the role of CPS Trustee.

Maulana's central teaching was about being connected to God. Kindly share the most inspiring teaching of Maulana in this regard.

His entire focus was on conveying the glory of God to humankind. Once he said that in the Hereafter, there would be seats reserved for pious people from human history. Most of these seats have been filled in except one. This seat, he explained, is the seat for those who dedicate themselves to the Love of God. Maulana said that this was his aim to instil the love of God in a sincere seeker. To my mind, this is the most beautiful thing to aspire for in one's life. The love of God is everything. It is this love of God which not only fills a person with God-realization, but it would also become the reason to qualify for God's neighbourhood. Earning this 'Seat of Love of God' not only is great hope for all of us, but at the same time, it gives us lifelong purpose to aspire for that seat.

How did the CPS spiritual sessions start and develop? What is their significance?

It started in 2001 when three of us, i.e., Priya Malik, Khalid Ansari and I met Maulana Saheb. The first interaction was so warm and nice that we asked Maulana if we could come again and then there was no looking back. The group kept getting bigger and bigger, and regular Saturday and Sunday classes began. Soon the word spread and we began to have the classes at CPS Hall.

A breakthrough also came with Sunday classes being streamed live globally. This made people aware of the spiritual classes being conducted by Maulana. We started recording and organizing these lectures with the help of Dr Saniyasnain Khan, Naghma aapa and Mr Navdeep Kapur. Later, these classes got amplified by Facebook Live sessions. Maulana's emphasis was to churn from this group sincere CPS workers who would carry the mission after him.

That is why he used to say that his task is to create programme-makers who would be able to manage their emotions and situations all by themselves and come up with ideas and implement them with "I will do it" spirit. So, there was a two-fold significance of these classes, firstly to create a team of programme-makers globally and secondly, a call was being given by Maulana to the whole world that Islam is the voice of human nature and a religion of peace. Islam is not a religion of violence, rather Islam gives man all the answers to his spiritual quest.

How would you describe your companionship with Maulana?

Maulana was the biggest blessing of God for me. Before I met him, though I was doing well professionally, on my spiritual front, I had so many troubling questions which remained unanswered. Due to this, I felt deep emptiness from inside. After meeting him, there was no looking back and with each subsequent interaction, he became the most important person in my life.

I got so attached to him that I could not think of a day without him in my life. I always dreaded the day of separation. Though this separation was a certainty. This certainty, I always pushed back in my mind and tried to forget. I thought maybe he would live as long and as many years as God has destined for me. I prayed



and hoped my companionship with him will enter into the Hereafter from this world without any amount of time being spent alone.

I realized in his companionship that after discovering God, there is no work more important than conveying the Creation Plan of God to

humanity. I miss him every single day and he is in my thoughts always. He asked me once, "How would you handle things and CPS once I am gone?" I replied with a heavy heart that I will try to think about what he would have done in such a situation. He smiled and said, "Good, then you won't go wrong".

But this meant a great sense of responsibility and to be forgiving, having a big heart, not getting offended and above all, not losing focus on the primary task of collectively taking CPS into its culminating role. I am looking forward to meeting him again and never being separated ever.

You have travelled extensively with Maulana. What are your experiences with Maulana during these travels?

I travelled with him to different parts of India and the world like the USA, Canada, Israel, Qatar, Poland, Cyprus, Dubai, Turkey, and Switzerland. Every experience was precious as I got to witness his simplicity, his wise handling of interactions and his burning desire of working towards God's cause disregarding the limitations of his very old age.

Once at Khaja Kaleemuddin Saheb's (CPS USA Chapter head) place in the US, a big container of translations of the Quran and Islamic books arrived while we were still around. We all were pushing the heavy load towards Kaleem Saheb's storage room and to our disbelief, Maulana himself started pushing it as he didn't want to be left behind even in that task. Such was his enthusiasm and love for God's work.

I saw that he kept good care of his health. I would say that he justified every single organ of his body that God gifted him. While on travel, he never bothered about food, accommodation, or inconvenience as his focus was always on the travel objective, i.e., to talk about God's glory and instil in people the accountability of our actions in the Hereafter. I saw him as a man of mission who did not want to waste a single second. His time management, disciplined approach, well-wishing attitude and sensitive heart showcased him as a '**well-wisher of humanity**'.

You have had the opportunity to be with Maulana in his later years. Would you like to share some pieces of advice that Maulana imparted to you?

In his last few days, Maulana shared a few things with me in confidentiality. One of the things that I would like to share which he repeated in his last days was that whenever you find yourself at the crossroads facing difficulties doing CPS work, then be steadfast and

supplicate to God and in no time God's angels will rush for the help. He also said that if there arises a group who questions CPS, then you and CPS members should not falter or give up, rather keep praying to God, stay positive and work till you meet your Lord.

One thing Maulana said clearly was that, he considers only those people his disciples who will manage their differences and do not leave the CPS group. He said, to go against the mission of communicating the message of the Quran to people, whatever the reason, will not be accepted by God. One should stay united inspite of the differences.

Maulana further said that in spite of being misunderstood, if a person continues to be in the mission and does not leave, and this he does for the sake of God, his action will be highly rewardable in the Hereafter.

While we were having this conversation, Maulana began to cry and said, "If you follow this advice, then mark my words, you will witness that on the day of Judgement, angels will announce that here is the team which managed differences on their own." He then said that there will be a great welcome for such a group.

To my mind, this is the biggest reason for us staying together till we play our roles. He never focused on quantity but on individuals. This is the reason he was able to prepare a team so strong which has only firmed up its resolve to carry his legacy forward after his demise. Had he focused on quantity, the CPS mission would have been history by now.

What is the CPS Peace Mission?

The CPS Peace mission is a mission of hope for humanity. There is so much negativity, sadness, hate, feeling of hopelessness, jealousy, and temptations in the world. All these are due to the people not understanding why this world was created in the first place. What is the Creation Plan of God? How can we discover our Creator? This unawareness has led people to do whatever it takes to fulfil their unlimited desires. This becomes the trigger to misusing one's freedom whether at an individual level or at the level of a nation.

The CPS mission has answered all the above questions in the contemporary idiom. The CPS mission is based on the ideology presented by Maulana who derived the principles of spirituality and peace from the Quran, the practical model of the Prophet Muhammad and sound principles of reason.

It is important to state here that the CPS mission is not the Delhi Team's responsibility but the responsibility of all CPS members worldwide as it is a common platform to convey God's message to our fellow beings.

To think of CPS as a brick-and-mortar office managed by a few core people will be a grave mistake. To keep its purpose in sight and alive is the responsibility of all those who identify themselves as members of CPS wherever they reside or work. The onus is on every sincere and serious CPS member whom Maulana trained for this mission. May we fulfil Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Saheb's mission. I pray to God to unite us with Maulana in Paradise! Amen. □

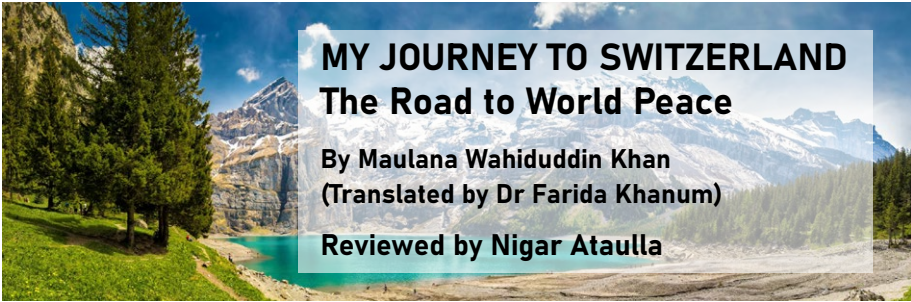


Kindly click on this link to watch Dr Rajat Malhotra introduce the universal message of the Quran:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrU1fnrhajs>



BOOK REVIEW



MY JOURNEY TO SWITZERLAND **The Road to World Peace**

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan
(Translated by Dr Farida Khanum)

Reviewed by Nigar Ataula

THIS is a little book, just about 80-pages long, but full of interesting anecdotes and valuable lessons. It is a travelogue based on the author's journey to Switzerland in October 2002. This was the late Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's third trip to that country, this time on the invitation of the Nuclear Disarmament Forum, a wing of an organization called "Peace International".

A central theme of the book is to present the ideology of peace to the world. "This book is a gift to the new generation from a peace-loving person to find inner peace and become contributors to world peace," says the Maulana. He describes Switzerland as a model of peace.

The book holds readers' interest as the author shares his personal feelings about his journey, some of the people whom he met at the conference for which he had visited the country and even some minute details about the in-flight magazine he read on the Swiss Air flight!

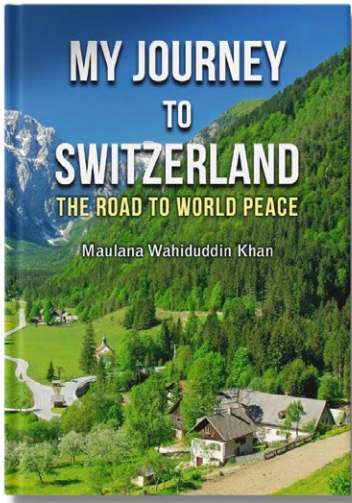
One of the best chapters I liked was "Lessons From Switzerland". I observed that the Mualana was so grounded despite being in a foreign country and meeting so many different delegates that he often remembered God.

While this visit of the Maulana's to Switzerland was way back in 2002, the views on peace which he presented at the conference there are still very relevant today and the need of the hour. With the world today going upside down with all kinds of turmoil and trials, the Maulana's book on his journey to Switzerland brings hope. Positive thinking had been an integral part of the Maulana's lifestyle till his end and this book, which highlights the need for positive thinking, is a precious gift to the world. □

CPS NEWSLETTER

My Journey to Switzerland, a new book by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan launched.

NEW RELEASE



The central theme of the book is to give practical guidelines to establish world peace like unilateral nuclear disarmament and solution to Muslim militancy from Islamic sources.

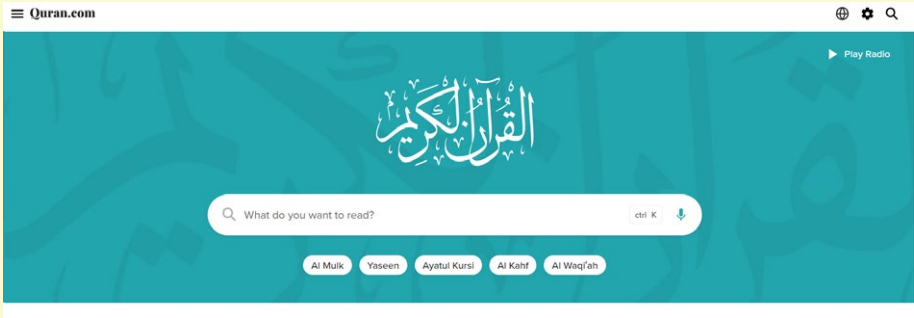


DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE COPY AT
www.cpsglobal.org/books/mwk/english

This book takes its readers through the historical journey of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan to Switzerland where he discussed the idea of unilateralism, Nuclear Disarmament, the Palestine and Kashmir issue and most importantly Islam as a religion of peace and not violence.

Download:

<https://cpsglobal.org/books/my-journey-switzerland>



Through the efforts of CPS USA team, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's Urdu and English translations along with the commentary of the Quran are now available on widely used android and iOS mobile application Islam 360 and the website quran.com.

Here are the links:

Android Link: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.islam360>

iOS Link: <https://apps.apple.com/in/app/islam-360/id1006098149>

Website Link: <https://quran.com/1?startingVerse=1&translations=823%2C819>



On the occasion of Gur Purab of Guru Har Krishan ji, *The Economic Times* carried an article by CPS International, New Delhi member Ms Stuti Malhotra. https://m.economictimes.com/opinion/speaking-tree/the-guru-who-cared-for-all/amp_articleshow/93038190.cms

**The Quran Mission of the CPS International,
New Delhi requests the readers to help find
translators for the following languages:**

English to Vietnamese

English to Bahasa Malayu

English to Spanish

English to Maori

English to Portuguese

**Kindly mail your communication to
usman_888@yahoo.com**

Download Al-Risala Hindi, May-June 2022 issue:

<https://cpsglobal.org/book/al-risala-hindi-2022>

**Please follow Maulana Wahiduddin Khan for your daily
dose of wisdom:**

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/maulanawahiduddinkhan/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/wahiduddinkhan>

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Quora: <https://www.quora.com/profile/Maulana-Wahiduddin-Khan-1>

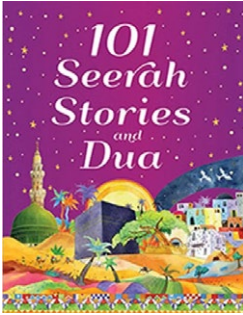
WhatsApp: <https://wa.me/919999944118>

Telegram Channel: <https://t.me/maulanawahiduddinkhan>

Bimonthly English Magazine: www.spiritofislam.co.in

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Goodword Books is an award-winning publishing company with a splendid range of Islamic Books in many languages. It offers innovative products for children, including Quran stories, moral stories, craft and activity books, gift packs, Islamic games, Arabic and Islamic readers for home and school.



Name of the Book: **101 Seerah Stories and Dua**

Author: Saniyasnain Khan

ISBN: 9789351790242

Pages: 208

Binding: Hardbound

Availability: www.goodwordbooks.com

Dear kids,

101 Seerah Stories and Dua is a richly illustrated collection of 101 great stories told in simple language that children will easily understand and relate to. Each story comes with delightful illustrations and a beautiful prayer. It's a unique experience the whole family will cherish and revisit again and again! We reproduce here one story from the book.

Saniyasnain Khan is a children's author, with over 100 children's books to his credit. His books have been translated into Arabic, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Danish, Polish, Swedish, Bosnian, Russian, Turkish, Malay, Thai, Urdu, Malayalam, and other languages. He hopes that his books will be a true companion on the path of spiritual development, and will help children to know the true purpose and meaning of life. The author can be reached at: skhan@goodwordbooks.com

Miracle of Birds

Abraha's massive army approached Makkah. Abraha was confident that he would demolish the Kabah without any resistance from the people of Makkah. But, all of a sudden, the elephants who had been trumpeting in the most frightening way, stopped moving. The mahouts, who were driving the elephants, pierced, pricked and stabbed them with sharp,

pointed instruments. But this had no effect on the elephants. They stood stock still.

Besides that, flocks of birds flew over the army, carrying pebbles in their beaks and claws. They showered the pebbles on Abraha's army. Due to this, the whole army was afflicted with a strange disease. The soldiers were terrified and took flight. The elephants then went berserk and began to trample over them. There was complete disorder and confusion in the army.

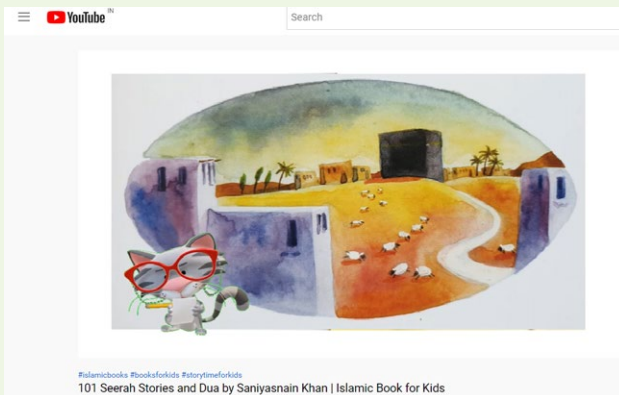
Seeing this chaos, Abraha at once decided to order his army to return. So, instead of marching forward and entering Makkah, the army turned and fled towards Yemen.

In this miraculous way, Allah saved the Kabah from the evil intentions of Abraha. On the way back to Yemen, many soldiers, horses and elephants began to die. By the time they reached Sana in Yemen, most of the strong army men had died on the way. Abraha himself fell sick and passed away soon after arriving at his home in Yemen.

The strong man is not the one who is good at wrestling but the one who controls himself in a fit of rage. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*)

Our Lord has encompassed all things in knowledge. Upon Allah we have relied. Our Lord, decide between us and our people in truth, and You are the best of those who give decision. (*Al-Araf 7.89*) □

**Find an excellent video introduction of the book
by Ms Shabana Loya on her YouTube channel
WordWise Books through this link:**



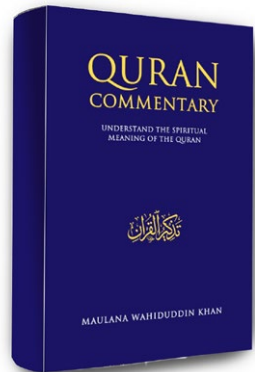
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZZ6K1b3Buk>

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



THE BURSTING OPEN

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

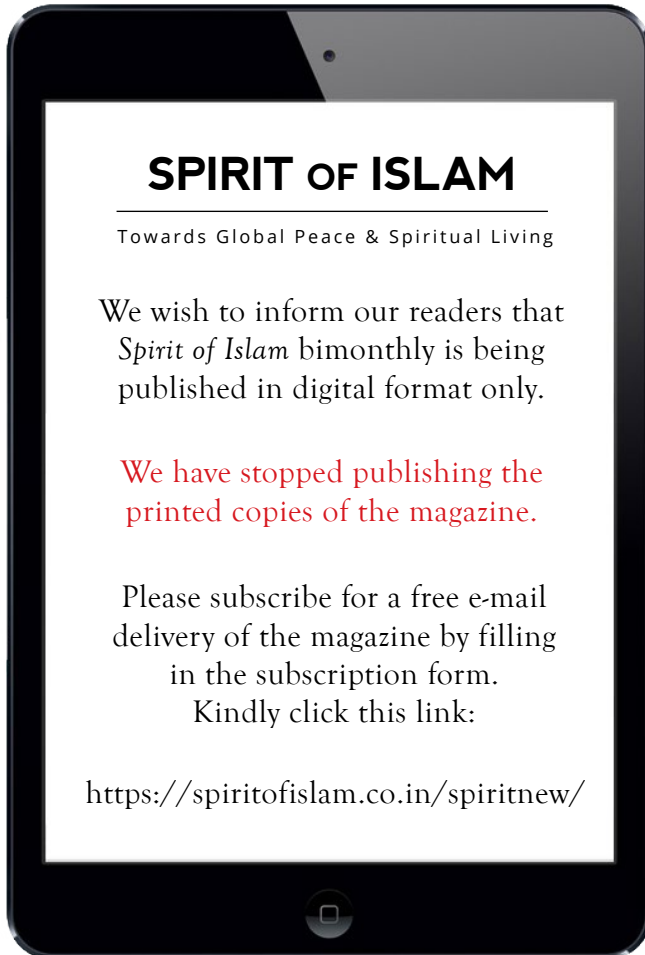
When the sky bursts open, and obeys its Lord as it must, when the earth flattens out, and casts out all that is within it and becomes empty; and obeys its Lord as it must, O man, having striven hard towards your Lord, you shall meet Him: he who is given his record in his right hand shall have an easy reckoning and he shall return to his people, joyfully, but as for him whose record shall be given to him from behind his back, he will pray for utter destruction and he will enter the blazing flame. He used to be happy with his own people; for he never thought that he would have to return [to God]. But he will indeed! His Lord was ever watching him. (84: 1-13)

Whatever is related here about Doomsday refers apparently to an unknown world. However, such evidence exists as points to its veracity. An example of this is the present world itself. The very existence of the world proves that another similar or different world may come into existence. Furthermore, certain extraordinary aspects of the Quran prove that it is the Book of God. (For details see *The Quran: An Abiding Wonder* and *The Call of the Quran* by the commentator).

I swear by the glow of sunset, by the night and what it covers, and the moon when it grows full, you will progress from stage to stage. What is wrong with them that they do not believe? When the Quran is read to them, why do they not fall to their knees? Indeed, those who are bent on denying the truth reject it—God is quite aware of what they are storing in their hearts. Therefore, give them the

news of a painful punishment. But for those who believe and do good works; for them there shall be a never-ending reward.

In spite of such clear indications, there are those who do not believe in the Hereafter and live out their lives without ever taking it into account. Such individuals are certainly committing a crime which is deserving of the punishment mentioned above. ❑



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.

What is the essence of the religion of Islam?

The realization of God is the essence of the religion of Islam. The realization of God is the beginning as well as the end of religion. The Arabic word for this realization is *Marifah*.

What role does Marifah or God-realization play in a believer's life?

The position of *Marifah* in God's religion is that of the seed. Just as a seed grows gradually into a full tree, similarly *Marifah* shapes the entire personality of a person. Without *Marifah*, religion is reduced to a spiritless form. With *Marifah*, religion is like a lush green tree. Without God-realization, religion becomes like a dried-up tree. If religion is the body, *Marifah* is its spirit.

What is the first step in this journey of God-realization?

The journey of realization begins with a questing spirit. Seeking is an intellectual journey. Sincerity, positivity and being complex-free are the qualities required on this journey.

What experiences will one go through when one realizes God?

One who attains *Marifah* will experience an intellectual and spiritual explosion. He will believe in God through both reason and intuition. It will be as if he is seeing God. He comes emotionally close to God.

Is there any other condition for the attainment of the realization of God?

Yes, there is another necessary condition for the attainment of realization, and that is supplication (*Dua*). Realization is a two-way

process. A person's position is one of finding or receiving it, while God is the giver. An individual cannot receive realization without the help of God. All of one's efforts will remain fruitless unless God comes to his assistance.

What kind of supplication should one do to attain this objective?

Supplication is not a mere repetition of certain words. It is, in fact, another name for the heart's tempest. There is no religion without *Marifah*, and there is no *Marifah* without true prayer.

What is the methodology to attain God-realization?

We need to understand from the very outset that God-realization is not akin to ecstasy, and one will not have glimpses of God's glory in the world of imagination. It is an enhanced state of consciousness that can be achieved solely by the contemplation of the divine creation.

How does the Quran describe Marifah?

According to the Quran, *Marifah* can be defined as a servant of God discovering God, the Lord of the worlds in all His majesty and Glory to the extent that He becomes a centre of his love (2:165); all his feelings of fear are associated with Him alone. (9:18)

Kindly explain how love and fear go together.

Love and fear are interconnected. When a servant of God engages in contemplation and discovers the Creator of the universe in all His glory, in his heart he comes to acknowledge God to a limitless extent. Moreover, when he discovers the reality that the giver is God and that no one else can give anything to him, his heart becomes filled with fear that if he is deprived of God's blessings, nowhere on the earth or in the heavens will he find any other refuge.

What other things are bestowed to man to assist him in the journey of God-realization?

God has created man in the best of moulds (95:4). Man has been granted all the intellectual capabilities by which he may achieve *Marifah* of the Lord of the Worlds. Besides this, in the external world, i.e., nature, all those elements are hidden which may assist him in this journey. Now it is man's task to discover these elements in nature and experience such an elevated level as will enable him to develop a divine personality. □



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