

ENGLISH BIMONTHLY ISSUE 114 SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2023

SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living



What is adjustment? Adjustment is to live with a normal mind in an unwanted situation.

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 114 SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2023

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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S DESK



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

CODE OF ETHICS

THE Prophet of Islam said: "I have been sent to perfect the code of high ethics." Islam attaches such great importance to moral values that, according to Islamic belief, only worshipping God is not enough to make one a perfect believer. In addition to this, it is necessary for the believer in dealing with others, to observe all the norms of a sublime moral character. That is, in all circumstances, he should adhere to the highest standard of ethical values. We learn of this high standard from the following teachings of the Prophet and the Quran.

In the Quran the Prophet Muhammad is described as possessing a "sublime character". Here is a saying of the Prophet, which throws light on what constitutes this "sublime character".

"Never debase your character by saying that if people treat you well, you will treat them well, and if they harm you, then you will do worse to them. Rather, become accustomed to being good to those who are good to you, and not wronging those who harm you."

The sublime character described here was displayed in its noblest form by the Prophet himself. With the Prophet such a character was a basic requisite, while for the ordinary Muslim it is an ideal he should strive for.

There are two types of character, the ordinary and the extraordinary. An ordinary character is based on the principle: 'Do as you have been done by.' This might be termed a "Knee-jerk character." Since it offers only reflex responses to treatment by others. People of such a character break with those who break with them, wrong those who wrong them, and harm those who harm them.

However, those who are of a high character are reconciliatory, even re-establishing relations with those who break with them. They are compassionate, even to those who seek to harm them. They are forbearing, even towards those who wrong them.

Adopting a high code of ethics means practising what one preaches; treating the weak with the same courtesy and deference as one shows to the strong; setting the same standards for oneself as one sets for others; never budging from one's principles; maintaining a high moral bearing, even when others stoop to the depths of degradation. From this point of view, the Prophet of Islam stood at the highest pinnacle of human ethics, never abandoning the lofty standards that he preached. □

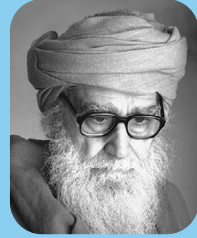


Every person has to struggle
to build his life. The way of
moderation and realism is
the way of success, while the
opposite is the way of failure

MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

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)



MUMBAI DIARIES

This an account of a journey undertaken by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan to Mumbai in August 1986 to participate in Conference on Communal Harmony. It is reproduced here because the lessons and impressions are so relevant and meaningful today. Mumbai was then known as Bombay.

Bombay-Venue of Conference on Communal Harmony

I arrived in Bombay on August 22 and stayed for two nights at Land's End Guest House on Malabar Hill. It was appropriate that a Conference on Communal Harmony should be held in Bombay for, besides being the seventh most populous city in the world and the commercial capital of India, Bombay is truly a cosmopolitan city. People belonging to every religion live here. Hindus make up more than half of the population, while Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, Parsis and Jews constitute the remainder. Here, every language of India is spoken and even some foreign languages are in evidence. The most commonly spoken language, however is Marathi.

The Conference Opens

The Conference began on the morning of August 23, at 10 a.m. On reaching the Dr Alma Latifi Hall, I noticed that the place was swarming with men in uniform. Some armed guards were stationed on the roof. I was told that the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Mr S. B. Chavan, was to open the Conference, and a number of other central and state ministers would be present along with him on the stage. Before 1947, our leaders told us that it was only foreign rulers who required security arrangements. It was said that when India became free and representatives of the people took over the reins of power, there would be no further need for police and paramilitary forces to provide security, and the nation would be spared the undue burden of paying for such precautions. However, it appears that the need for security is greater now than ever before. As one police officer put it, "Nowadays, work in the field of crime detection is negligible. All our efforts are channelled into providing security".

A message from Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was read out, in which he said that communalism posed the greatest threat to our country. The same theme was taken up by various participants in their speeches. One speaker said that it was in this month of August, here in the city of Bombay, that the cry "Quit India," was first raised. Now, in this very same city, it was for us to utter another cry: "Communalism, quit India." Everyone condemned communalism and violence.

It is interesting to note that the spread of communalism, violence and discrimination has become an object of universal condemnation. It is quite another matter that people may or may not be sincere in their condemnation and may have no positive remedy to offer. Because of the pressure of international institutions, no one will stand up and advocate communalism today, but in days gone by, this was not the case. This goes to show that if one adopts a tactful approach and a large-hearted attitude, there is no reason why any community should not be able to live with honour in this country.

Addresses to the Conference

I delivered two addresses in the Conference, one half-way through the proceedings, and one at the closure. In addition to the fifteen minutes allotted to every speaker, a further period was allotted to me one evening, from 6 p.m. onwards, so that I could elaborate further upon how communal harmony was to be achieved. In this session, I was the sole speaker, and it lasted one hour. It was well attended by people, most of whom expressed their agreement and approval.

In my fifteen-minute talk during the course of the Conference, I mentioned that, the greatest irony of modern Indian history was that a country which had won its independence through nonviolence should adopt the path of violence once independence had been gained.

The history of the freedom struggle began in 1857. When Gandhiji entered politics in 1919, he decided that the freedom movement should be conducted on a nonviolent basis. There is an amusing story that highlights the difficulties posed by this policy. A certain District Collector, baffled as to what measures could be taken to counter nonviolence, wired the following message to the Secretariat: "Kindly

If one adopts a tactful approach and a large-hearted attitude, there is no reason why any community should not be able to live with honour in this country.

wire instructions how to kill a tiger non-violently". In fact, by adopting a policy of nonviolence, Mahatma Gandhi made it indefensible for the British to suppress the freedom movement using force. Governing India had been easy for them up till then, for it had been a matter of suppressing force with force. There was no such weapon in their arsenal, however, with which to combat nonviolence.

There must be love instead of hate, nonviolence in place of violence. Rather than being suspicious of one another, we must cultivate an atmosphere of mutual trust.

What we need now in India is a "reverse course" policy, similar to that adopted in post-war times by Japan. Until the Second World War, Japan was set on a course of violence. After the end of the War, however, it changed course and began advancing by leaps and bounds on the course of nonviolence, with the result that Japan's destiny has undergone a complete change in just four decades.

After giving other examples from modern history on how people have changed course from violent confrontation to nonviolent

construction, and with highly successful results, I pointed out that it was the Prophet of Islam who first showed the world the effectiveness of such a policy. In the context of the conditions prevailing in Arabia at the time, the peace treaty of Hudaibiyah amounted to just such a "reverse course" policy on the part of the Prophet, he being the first to formulate a policy of this nature. All we have to do is follow in his footsteps, a much easier task than having to chalk out an unknown path of our own.

We must adopt this reverse course. There must be love instead of hate, nonviolence in place of violence. Rather than being suspicious of one another, we must cultivate an atmosphere of mutual trust. Confrontation must be set aside, leaving us free to take on the task of peaceful reconstruction. This reverse course, as soon as it is adopted, will lead us on the path to prosperity. Today we have lost our way and are a long way adrift from our true destination, so that whichever community first takes the initiative in adopting a reverse course will be the one to take the lead over other communities in every walk of life in the days to come.

The Secular and Non-secular Approach

During an evening meal, I was interviewed by the newspaper *Blitz*. It is my experience that people commit the fallacy of putting human

beings into two different categories: those in agreement and those in opposition. On the one hand, there is their 'own' group, while the others are regarded as outsiders. In addressing the former group, they adopt a moderate tone, but with people whom they consider antagonists; they lose all sense of balance in their manner of address.

People who are secular in their outlook, on the other hand, adopt quite a different approach. They do not place other people in separate compartments in their minds and for this reason they maintain their equanimity interacting with others.

Blitz is counted amongst our country's secular newspapers. My interview by its correspondents took place therefore in a very cordial atmosphere. Questions and answers were exchanged in a balanced and moderate tone.

Their final question was: "Could you give us a summary of your opinion on the Muslims of today?" I answered: "The Muslims have lost all sense of forbearance. Unless one learns to put up with things which are not to one's liking, one will be unable to regain any position in this world. If one loses this capacity, one loses everything. If the Muslims can only learn to take the rough with the smooth, they will surely regain all that they have lost."

Unless one learns to put up with things which are not to one's liking, one will be unable to regain any position in this world. If one loses this capacity, one loses everything.

A Recording Session with Bombay Radio

While I was in Bombay, the local radio-station recorded a talk of mine, which was broadcast at a later date. The subject of the talk "The Universal Principles of Islam" was chosen by the radio authorities and as I had been informed of the programme in advance, I had ample time to prepare a fifteen-minute talk on this subject.

A Lesson from a Taxi Driver

One memorable experience in Bombay concerned a taxi-driver named Heera Lal, with whom I travelled on one occasion. As we drove along, I put a few questions to him about his profession. When I asked him how he avoided accidents in this busy metropolis, he gave me an answer which exuded sheer practical wisdom. "We have to make allowances for the mistakes of others," he said, explaining that the streets are full of reckless drivers who show scant respect for the rules of driving. "If we were to drive like them, sooner or later we would surely be involved

in an accident. So, what others fail to do, we have to do for them. That is, when they make a mistake, we have to cancel out their mistake by taking evasive action.”

It is not worth a driver’s while to stop and argue with everyone who crosses his path as to who is in the right and who is in the wrong. By doing so, he is only putting himself in a vulnerable position. So, instead of adopting a rigid approach, he is pragmatic in his approach. Instead of arguing about the rights and wrongs of some untoward incidents, he concentrates on saving himself from the dire consequences of other’s mistakes. By unilateral action, he rectifies the mistakes committed by others. He does not even wave an accusing finger at them. Conciliatory action of this nature is called ‘avoidance’ in the Quran, which stresses that people should adopt this policy on the highways of life.

And this was the thought that dominated my mind after my conversation with Heera Lal. What he said about driving on roads, I thought, is true also of life. The tactics adopted by a taxi driver as he goes on his way along the roads of a busy city should be adopted by all individuals as they proceed on the road of life. In other words, we have to make allowances for the mistakes made by others. That is how a taxi-driver avoids accidents and, in the same way, we can avoid clashes in our dealings with others. How extraordinary it is that a taxi driver

We should seek to resolve problems by diplomatic means and by constructive strengthening of our position. Complaining about our situation and protesting over our lot in life will do us no good whatsoever.

realizes this secret of life, which eludes most people, who are in control of the steering-wheel of the community. Perhaps leaders are not as serious in the performance of the task entrusted to them—the guidance of the community on its course through life —as a taxi driver is in the steering of his vehicle. A taxi driver really feels for his car and for this reason he knows, without being told, exactly how he should look after it, while one who does not share such feelings cannot understand, even after being told, how he should go about looking after that which has been entrusted to his care.

Final Address to the Conference

In accordance with a previously arranged programme, I delivered an address at the end of the Conference. This talk lasted for one hour and I began it with these words:

“What is success? To live in accordance with realities.

What is failure? To defy them.”

I gave a number of examples from the Quran and *Hadith*, aimed at illustrating the pattern on which the world has been created. Here, human beings are constantly involved in rivalry and competition with their fellows. Some emerge as winners in the race of life, while others lag behind; some come out victors, while others taste the bitterness of defeat. This is a fact of life, one which is in exact accordance with the laws of creation. It is a situation which will be with us until the end of time. Accordingly, we should seek to resolve problems by diplomatic means and by constructive strengthening of our position. Complaining about our situation and protesting over our lot in life will do us no good whatsoever. □

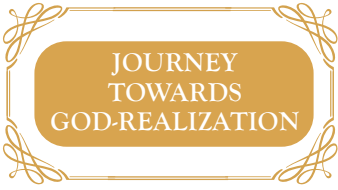
GOD ALMIGHTY HAS FORBIDDEN YOU:

- ① to be undutiful to your mother
- ② to hold back what you should give
- ③ to demand what you don't deserve
- ④ to bury your daughters alive

AND GOD ALMIGHTY DISLIKES THAT

- ① you talk too much about others
- ② you ask too many questions
- ③ you waste your wealth

S A H I H A L - B U K H A R I



ONE SERIOUS FALLACY

PEOPLE use reason extensively in their worldly matters. They think a lot and make thorough plans, but in the matter of religion they take a totally different path. Here, they think: let us go to some saint, ask him to pray for us, visit some elder or holy person, count some words on the rosary, do some ritual; and then they imagine they will have discharged their religious obligations. But this applying of double standards is wholly unsubstantial. One is not going to benefit from any of these courses of action in any way. The truth is that, just as a person uses his reason in worldly matters so also shall he have to use his reason in matters of religion. He shall have to be entirely logical, without which no one can be a religious person in the real sense or be held deserving of Paradise.

The process of becoming a God-oriented person in the full sense is a conscious act. For every person it is necessary to discover religion at a conscious level. A person should make his religious life a life of awareness just as he has made his worldly life a conscious experience. There is absolutely no exception to this rule. The greatest things that God has given a human being are his reason and his awareness. Those who do not find religion at this level and do not adopt religion in this sense will be held to be irreligious in the eyes of God, whether or not they are religious at the ritual level, that is whether or not they perform all the necessary rituals. Religiosity is a conscious act rather than the observance of a set of rituals. □

It is necessary to discover religion at a conscious level. A person should make his religious life a life of awareness just as he has made his worldly life a conscious experience.



A MODEST REPLY

Traits of a Believer

THE second Caliph Umar bin Khattab arrived in Palestine along with his companions. He had a shirt made of patched, coarse cotton cloth. This shirt had become worn out during the arduous journey to Palestine which he had accomplished on a camel. Recognizing the need for repair, Umar entrusted his shirt to Asqaf, a companion of his. However, Asqaf went beyond his duty by not only fixing the torn shirt but also presenting the Caliph with another shirt made of finer cloth as a gift. Umar asked him what he had brought. "Your shirt," Asqaf replied, "I have washed it and patched; and I have brought you another shirt as a gift." Umar looked at it, touched it, then put on his own shirt and gave the other one back to Asqaf. "This one absorbs sweat better," he explained.

The incident of Umar and Asqaf highlights the beautiful character of Umar and serves as a profound lesson in humility, contentment, and gratitude. Umar was known for his simplicity and modesty. Despite holding such a high position, he remained unaffected by worldly possessions and material wealth. He acknowledged Asqaf's effort and examined the gifted shirt, feeling its texture and recognizing its superior quality. Yet, Umar did not give in to the temptation of keeping the better shirt for himself. Instead, he chose to remain content with what he had and returned the gifted shirt to Asqaf, explaining that his original shirt absorbed sweat better.

Regardless of our position, wealth, or status, it is essential to remain humble and grounded, recognizing that all blessings come from God.

This incident shows importance of humility and modesty in a Muslim's character. Regardless of our position, wealth, or status, it is essential to remain humble and grounded, recognizing that all blessings come from God. The Prophet Muhammad said, "Whoever humbles himself for the sake of God, God will raise his status." (*Sahih Muslim*) Umar's humility and simplicity reflected his deep faith and understanding of this principle. □



THE LESSONS OF OLD AGE

A Reminder of Truth

THE Quran reminds us of the significance of old age: Did We not make your life long enough to take warning if you were going to? (35: 37) This message is reinforced by various *Hadith* narrations, including one in Ibn Hajar's *Fath al-Bari* which pertains to those who reach the age of sixty years.

Old age marks a significant phase in a person's life journey, following childhood and youth, and preceding the final stage of death. During this period, the body's organs gradually weaken, and some may cease to function.

Old age is a crucial juncture in life, signalling the approach of death and prompting introspection. It serves as a potent reminder of the Hereafter.

These occurrences serve as powerful reminders of mortality, signalling the proximity of death. Old age compels individuals to confront the reality of standing on the brink of the grave. An alert mind, upon reaching old age, will start contemplating the nearing end and their impending accountability before God. Experiencing old age acts as a poignant reminder of the Hereafter, urging one to reflect on their journey in this world.

Reaching old age without drawing meaningful lessons from it is indeed an unfortunate outcome, as it denies the opportunity to gain profound insights into life's purpose and the need for spiritual preparation for the afterlife.

In conclusion, old age is a crucial juncture in life, signalling the approach of death and prompting introspection. It serves as a potent reminder of the Hereafter and the importance of awakening the mind to seek spiritual growth and divine understanding. Embracing the lessons of old age enriches one's perspective on the journey from this world to the next, preparing them to face the divine judgement with mindfulness and wisdom. □



EXTRACTING WISDOM FROM OLD AGE

Positive Aspects

OLD AGE, a natural phase of human life, should not be regarded as undesirable. Instead, it offers an opportunity for valuable insights. As beautifully expressed in chapter *The Creator* of the Quran: Did We not make your life long enough to take warning if you were going to? (35: 37)

Human existence in this world is limited, and from the moment of birth, a countdown begins. The trajectory of life rises for approximately 35 years before descending. Middle age, old age, and eventually death form part of life's cycle, accompanied by various trials like illness, accidents, and challenges.

During this journey, life seems to strip away different aspects, such as youth, health, and tranquillity, leaving behind only the essence of one's being: the ego. The experience of death is profound, signifying that everything earned in the pre-death phase is eventually taken away. This shift in focus turns towards the afterlife, where the significance lies in righteous deeds sent ahead, as highlighted in the chapter *Banishment*: "Believers! Fear God, and let every soul look to what it lays up for the future. Fear God: God is aware of what you do." (59: 18)

In essence, old age provides an opportunity for learning, not lamenting. It invites contemplation, reflection, and the pursuit of inner wisdom. By embracing this perspective, individuals can make the most of their life's journey, preparing for the eternal afterlife through righteous deeds and consciousness of God. Instead of grieving over the passage of temporal aspects of life, old age serves as a gateway to deeper understanding and spiritual growth. □



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JUSTICE AND BROTHERHOOD

Resolving Social Disputes

THE *Ansar*, also known as the Helpers, were a crucial group of early Muslim who played a significant role in the early history of Islam. The term "*Ansar*" means "supporters" or "helpers." They were inhabitants of Madinah. Once, two of these noble souls approached the Prophet Muhammad, burdened by a longstanding inheritance dispute. Each party lacked witnesses to validate their claims.

With profound humility, they placed their predicament before the Prophet, seeking his wisdom to resolve their impasse. In his benevolent manner, the Prophet addressed them with grace and empathy, "Present your disputes to me, and in the absence of proper evidence, I shall judge according to my own discernment. However, I must warn you that my judgement, based on incomplete evidence, might grant favour to one party while depriving the other of their rightful share. In such a case, the one in whose favour the verdict is passed should not accept what is apportioned, for it would be akin to embracing a fiery burden that, on the Day of Resurrection, shall weigh heavily upon one's soul."

Upon hearing these poignant words, both *Ansar* were moved to tears. With deep sincerity, they implored, "O Prophet of God! Let him have my rightful share!"

Witnessing the transformation of hearts before him, the Prophet recognized the change within them and, in response, advised, "Go forth and, seeking what is just and right, divide the inheritance into two equal parts. Then, through the drawing of lots, determine who shall receive which share. In this manner, each will be content with the portion they receive, as it would bear the other's heartfelt approval."

This decision of the Prophet not only resolved the immediate dispute but also left an indelible mark on the hearts of those involved. The *Ansar*, moved by his wisdom and the spirit of fairness, found solace in equitable resolution and rekindled bonds of brotherhood.

In reflecting on this story, we find echoes of the Quran and *Hadith*, wherein the principles of justice, mercy, and empathy resonate. The Quran guides us, saying: "And when you judge between people, judge with justice." (4: 58) Additionally, the *Hadith* emphasizes: "Whoever has been given the authority to rule over people and he fails to do justice, God will clothe him on the Day of Resurrection with a garment of disgrace." (*Sahih Al-Bukhari*) □

SETTING THE RIGHT PRECEDENT

Learn from the Mistake

THE American War of Independence was fought from 1775 to 1783. Having seen its consequences some of America's leaders subsequently began to advocate peaceful methods of gaining political ends instead of violence. One of them was the second American President, John Adams, who came to be known as a non-political politician.

When Britain under the Treaty of Paris granted US its freedom in 1783, its history radically altered course. Now the maximum importance began to be given to education, scientific research, industry, city planning and character-building of the new generations.

The same happened in the case of Japan. Up to the end of World War II, Japan had followed the path of violence. But the aftermath of war led it to change its priorities. Now armed warfare was totally abandoned. Instead, all attention was diverted to the field of education, with progress in science and technology as its target. As a result of adopting this reverse course, as they called it, the Japanese saw dramatic changes within a period of forty years.

This stage of taking the reverse course comes to every nation. They become successful who show the ability to adapt themselves to changing sets of circumstances. Those who fail to adapt are doomed to failure. The US and Japan both provide examples of the benefits of adopting this reverse course. India, on the contrary, sets the opposite example. After independence, Mahatma Gandhi wanted India to follow this reverse course, but it failed to do so, hence the delay in its emergence as a developed country.

They become successful who show the ability to adapt themselves to changing sets of circumstances. Those who fail to adapt are doomed to failure.

For the Muslims too this hour has come. Because of continuing to bear grudges against others they had futilely adopted a policy of confrontation over a long period. But now it is high time to abandon externally directed policy and focus instead on internal matters. That is, they must first admit their own shortcomings and then direct their full attention towards their own construction. This being the only solution to the problems faced by the Muslims, they ought to adopt this policy wholeheartedly. □

SILENCE FOR SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Aligning with the Language of Nature

ERNEST PSICHARI (1883-1914), a French writer, began his journey as a free-thinker and an atheist during his youth. However, as time passed, he underwent a profound transformation and returned to religion. Notably, he was the grandson of the renowned historian, Ernest Renan, and like his grandfather, Psichari played a significant role in fostering a spiritual awakening in France during the turn of the twentieth century.

One of Psichari's profound sayings has been eloquently rendered in English: Silence is a bit of heaven that comes down to earth.

Silence is the language of nature. These simple words encapsulate the essence of the power of silence.

Silence holds a mystical quality, for it allows individuals to connect with the natural world in a profound way. When one embraces silence, a sense of harmony with nature emerges, transcending the mundane realities of life. In this state of silence, the human soul finds its highest plane of existence, unburdened by worldly distractions.

When one embraces silence, a sense of harmony with nature emerges, transcending the mundane realities of life.

However, complete and absolute silence is not possible for human beings in their interactions with others. The external silence is a gateway to converse with one's internal world. It is an introspective state where one can delve into the depths of the self, fostering self-awareness and contemplation.

Observing silence is a noble act that redirects one's attention from earthly matters to more spiritual concerns. In this serene state, one's focus turns to matters of the soul and the divine, attuning oneself to the whispers of angels rather than the clamour of worldly affairs. The superficiality of everyday life recedes, making way for a connection with profound and authentic realities.

In the presence of silence, human limitations seem to dissolve, and the individual becomes part of the boundless vastness of the world. While speaking confines us to a limited domain, silence expands our consciousness and opens us up to the limitless expanse of existence. By embracing silence, one can tap into the spiritual essence that lies within, connecting with nature, the self, and the divine, ultimately fostering a deeper understanding of existence itself. □

SUCCESS AND THE SUBCONSCIOUS

When Dreaming Helps

LOCATED in Asaf Ali Road in New Delhi, Kapsons is a refrigerator and air-conditioner business enterprise run by Mr Ram Ratan Kapila. Needing a catchy name for his firm, he advertised for one in the newspapers, promising a handsome reward for the best slogan. In spite of repeatedly advertising, no apt slogan was forthcoming. He kept racking his brain day in and day out but could not hit on anything that sounded just right.

Six whole years came and went, then one night, Mr Kapila dreamt he was in a beautiful garden, with birds chirruping in perfect weather. Delighted with his surroundings, he exclaimed, "What a wonderful weather!" It had taken him six years, but he had found the right catchphrase at last:

Kapsons: The Weather Masters

Those who really wish to achieve something, who invest their every thought towards fulfilling their goals, they are aided in their endeavor by their dreams. The dream is an activity which goes on in the sleeping state inside the mind. Unformed thoughts and unfulfilled desires materialize in dreams. Often what has been going on during the day appears in dreams at nights. History abounds in tales of discoveries which have been made through dreams, and problems, which had apparently been insoluble, being happily solved on waking from an illuminating dream sequence. An inventor's mind, when totally engrossed in his invention, continues to project the ins and outs of the problems even when he is asleep. It is not unusual that answers to seemingly impossible questions appear in the course of dreams. But this only happens as a result of total intellectual association with any given subject. Success is the result of devotion and assiduity, and is never the result of some unasked-for miracle. □

Those who really wish to achieve something, who invest their every thought towards fulfilling their goals, they are aided in their endeavor by their dreams.



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.



IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan wrote extensively about peace, spirituality, self-help and personal improvement. Through his literature, he aimed to re-engineer minds towards peace and to network for global peace and unity.

THE above words describe the CPS mission. Through literature means through education. If we need to usher in an era of peace, what we need to promote is to educate the humankind.

The field of education, covering ethics, religion, skills and general knowledge, is a very broad and very vital one. The importance of learning in enabling the individual to put his potentials to optimal use is self-evident. Without education, the training of the human minds is incomplete. No individual is a human being in the proper sense until he has been educated.

Education makes man a right thinker and a correct decision-maker. It achieves this by bringing him knowledge from the external world, teaching him to reason, and acquainting him with past history, so that he may be a better judge of the present. Without education, man, as it were, is shut up in a windowless room. With education, he finds himself in a room with all its windows open to the outside world.

This is why Islam attaches such great importance to knowledge and education. The Quran, it should be noted repeatedly, asks us to observe the earth and heavens. This instils in man the desire to learn natural science. When the Quran began to be revealed, the first word of its first verse was "Iqra" that is 'Read'. Education is thus the starting point of every successful human activity.

All the books of *Hadith* have a chapter on knowledge. In *Sahih al-Bukhari*, there is a chapter entitled. "The virtue of one who acquires learning and imparts it to others". In one *Hadith*, the scholar is accorded great respect. According to one teaching, the ink of a scholar's pen is considered very precious, as he builds individuals and nations along positive lines. In this way, he bestows upon the world a real-life treasure.

The very great importance attached to learning in Islam is illustrated by an event in the life of the Prophet. At the battle of Badr, in which the Prophet was victorious, seventy prisoners of war who were all literate people were given the task of teaching the children from Madinah to read and write. This would serve as ransom, and they would be set free. Thus, this was the first school in the history of Islam, established by the Prophet himself. It was of no matter to him that all its teachers were followers of other faith, all were prisoners of war, and all were likely to create problems for Islam and Muslims once they were released. This practice of the Prophet showed that whatever the risk involved, education was paramount.

The connection between education and peace is that whenever there are conflicts of any kind in society which are bound to happen, then educated people will resort to conflict resolution and peace building by an intellectual discussion across the table. They will use their best arguments in an atmosphere of mutual respect and sound knowledge of the issue. Once sound reasoning has been presented, the opposite party will accept it in the light of facts.

On the contrary those who lack education will resort to violence to get what they think is their right. They might be influenced by their emotions, ego and pride in their assumption that it is their right. Violence results in disruption of the social system, causing huge losses in terms of lives and property.

Islam accords importance to both secular as well as religious education. Secular education prepares one for a career for our economic life and religious education for our moral life in society. An individual who is busy in moulding himself for both these roles will have neither the time nor the inclination to indulge in not just violence, but also in any ordinary futile activity. □

Islam accords importance to both secular as well as religious education. Secular education prepares one for a career for our economic life and religious education for our moral life in society.

SURMOUNTING THE BARRICADES

Be Realistic in Your Planning

THE writings of Anne Bronte (1820-49), an English novelist, reflect realism. One of her sayings is: 'There is always a 'but' in this imperfect world.'

This is a wise saying. The present world is devised for the purpose of human trial. That is why the ideal state is not achievable here. Different kinds of limitations mark this worldly existence. Here, man being free in his speech and actions, there are repeated clashes of interest. That is why no one is able to achieve a friction-free life. Here one is always faced with a 'but' in one's way. It is therefore essential for man to take ground realities into account in planning his activities. If he fails to do so, he will be a miserable failure.

There are barricades of 'buts' everywhere in this world. One must acknowledge that such barricades exist and plan one's actions accordingly.

You are free to drive your vehicle at top speed on the street. However, you do not have it in your power to free the street of all the vehicles heading towards you from the opposite direction. You are free to make a bid to stop an oncoming procession, but you do not have it in your power to keep the armed police from interfering. You can hold rallies and processions for any issue concerning your own community, but it is impossible for you to stop counter-reactions among the rival group. On the issue of denial of your rights,

you can launch fiery movements in protest, but you do not have the means to change the law of the world that man can receive only that which is commensurate with his abilities.

There are barricades of 'buts' everywhere in this world. One must acknowledge that such barricades exist and plan one's actions accordingly. If you overlook this factor, then nothing but destruction will await you. □

A man who does not fulfill his
promises is a man without faith

PROPHET MUHAMMAD ﷺ

THE SIGNS OF DOOMSDAY

Be Ready before It's Too Late

A NUMBER of *Hadith* narrations informs us that as Doomsday approaches, many signs will appear. The report of the climate change shows that all the signs have already appeared. These signs are multifarious, but we shall describe only a few of them here.

1. According to a *Hadith*, "When the Doomsday approaches, the sun will come closer to man." (*Musnad Ahmad*) As a result of this, great heat will be generated on earth. This *Hadith* tells us exactly what we have been told through science. The sun coming closer does not mean that the distance of the sun and the earth will become less, for in such a case life on earth would immediately come to an end. This coming closer, in fact, is symbolic of the heat of the sun becoming more intense, thereby raising the temperature.

2. What will happen to man when the sun's heat increases? This has been expressed thus in the *Hadith*: "The people will be sweating. Some will sweat till their ankles; some till their knees, others till their waist and yet others till their faces." (*Mishkat al Masabih*) The Arabic word *araq* in this *Hadith*, which is used to mean sweat, literally means 'squeezed water'. Sweat is called *araq* because it squeezes [or oozes] out of the human body.

This *Hadith*, in fact, symbolically tells us that during the Last Days, when the sun's heat will increase and the glaciers of ice and the ice sheets at the polar caps of the Arctic and Antarctica will start melting, then the sea level will rise. As a result, the coastal settlements will be submerged in sea water. Some areas will be totally submerged, while others will be less affected, depending upon the altitude of the land mass affected.

According to an ongoing temperature analysis led by scientists at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS), the average global temperature on Earth has increased by at least 1.1° Celsius since 1880.

3. Similarly according to a *Hadith*, 'Smoke will rise before Doomsday which will fill the east and the west.' (*Al-Qurtubi*) This *Hadith* clearly refers to the modern phenomenon of smog produced by air pollution. This kind of air pollution did not exist in ancient times. No one could even conceive of such a thing. This *Hadith* surely is a prediction of this modern phenomenon which is a product of industrial activity.

The burning of fossil fuels, emissions from transport, and the environmental impact of intensive farming have all contributed to high

levels of CO₂ in our atmosphere. And scientists say this is the fastest and largest increase in CO₂ the world has ever seen.

The UN has warned that marine life faces irreparable damage from the millions of tonnes of plastic waste that ends up in the oceans every year.

Half of the world's coral reefs have died in the last 30 years, and two thirds of the Great Barrier Reef have been damaged by coral bleaching—this happens when the sea temperature is too high.

The Quran says: 'The Hour of Resurrection will certainly come. There is no doubt about it.' (40: 59)

There is no doubt about the coming of the *Qiamah*. The signs tell us that now the time has come very close. Now it is the last hour when man may seek forgiveness from God and rush to seek refuge in God's mercy.

Ignoring the Signs

A verse of the Quran reads: "Many are the signs in heaven and on earth, yet they pass them by, and they give no heed to them." (12: 105)

This verse shows that such signs have continued to be shown by God throughout human history as may remind man of his limitations and draw his attention to the fact that he cannot build a successful life for himself without God's guidance. But man, by ignoring these signs, does not learn any lessons from them and fails to be rightly guided.

The time has finally come for man to awaken, to take lessons from the signs in nature and in history and plan his life in a way that benefits him in his post-death period.

For the last 5000 years, the great minds of the world have been endeavouring to arrive at the truth through philosophic pursuits, but after a long struggle, all that they have learned is that the discipline of philosophy is wholly inadequate to lead man to any certain destination.

After the emergence of modern science, man thought that he could discover the truth by scientific methods. Finally, he has come to the conclusion that scientific methods can lead man only to a knowledge of things, it cannot lead man to the knowledge of truth.

For the last several thousand years, man believed that he could arrive at the truth by employing spiritual methods. It was believed that man's heart was a reservoir of reality. And by concentrating on the heart, truth could be discovered. But, finally, it was proved that the heart was only a means of circulating blood. It was not a treasure house of truths and realities.

Similarly, on seeing the progress of modern civilization, it was hoped that the journey of civilization would finally lead man to a perfect world, but the problem of global warming has shown that the present world has almost reached its end. It has not been possible, here in this world, to bring the much sought-after ideal civilization to its peak.

Such signs, both in nature and in history appear continually. It seems that the period—the time span set for the present world by its Creator, has now expired and the time has come for this temporary world to be terminated, so that it may be replaced by the eternal world of the Hereafter. These words of the Quran are indicative of this reality.

“On that Day We shall roll up the heavens like a scroll of parchment. As We originated the first creation, so shall We repeat it. This is a promise binding on Us. Truly, We shall fulfill it. (21: 104)

Only One Chance

Now the time has finally come for man to awaken, to take lessons from the signs in nature and in history and plan his life in a way that benefits him in his post-death period. One who loses this opportunity should know that another such opportunity is not going to come again. Man has been given only one chance to build his future. It is now up to him whether he utilizes it or loses it forever. Those who make use of this chance have eternal Paradise in store for them, while those who fail to make use of this chance, will have a fate such as is described in the Bible:

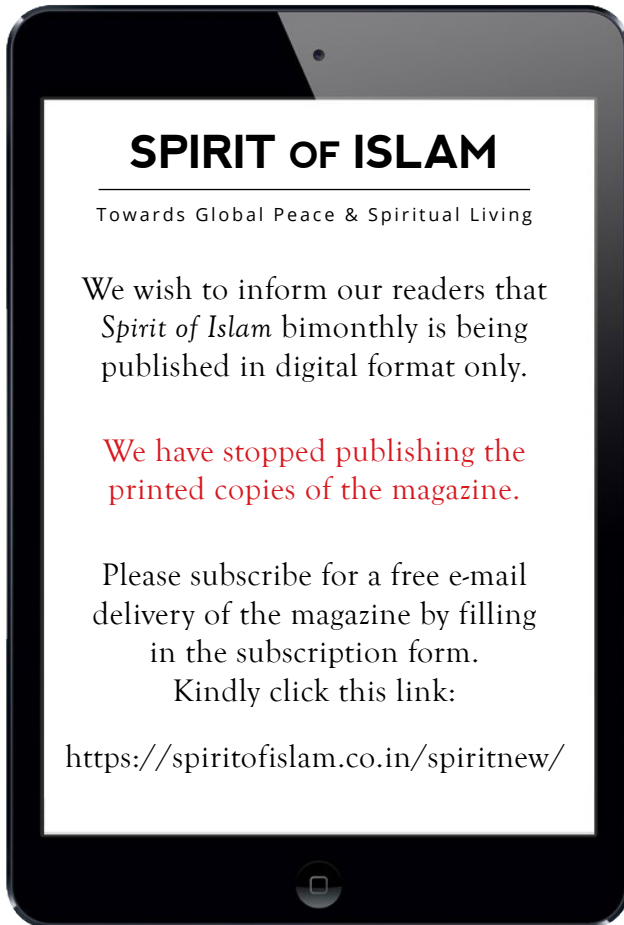
“And they will be cast into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gashing of teeth for all eternity.” (Matthew 13:42)

There is no doubt about the coming of the Doomsday. The signs tell us that now the time has come very close. Now it is the last hour when man may seek forgiveness from God and rush to seek refuge in God's mercy.

Warning Signs of Doomsday

In the first week of June 2007 a conference of the G-8 nations was held in Berlin, Germany, in which the heads of the developed countries participated. The main issue on its agenda was global warming; but, even after lengthy discussions, no programme could be finalized to address this concern. *The Times of India*, New Delhi of June 10, 2007, published a report of this meeting titled: **“Too broke to save the world.”**

Given this state of affairs, it is the responsibility of the representatives of all religions to apprise the people of this great danger. They must tell people that the last chance to prepare themselves for the final reckoning is coming to an end. Now, with no further delay, they must rouse themselves and lead their lives in accordance with the divine plan. □



THE LIMITS OF LAW

Crime without Due Punishment

ON August 26, 1978, two children, Sanjay, 15, and Gita, 17, became victims of a cold-blooded murder committed in the capital city of India, Delhi. The nation's conscience was aroused by this horrendous crime, and a massive manhunt was launched for the heartless killers. Finally, two men, Jasbir Singh, alias Billa, 25, and Kuljit Singh, alias Ranga, 23, were arrested at Agra railway station, and charged with the murder of the two children. A lengthy court case followed, which ended with both men being sentenced to death. A series of appeals followed, but all were turned down, and after their case had passed through all the various legal stages, both men were hanged, on January 31, 1982 in Delhi's Tihar Jail.

It was Additional Session Judge M.K. Chawla who delivered the death sentence. His five-page verdict contained this sentence: "The ends of justice would be met only if the two accused were put to eternal sleep, thereby allowing others to live in peace."

The words of the judge give an apt illustration of the limits of human law. All that human law can do is separate criminals from the rest of the society; it is not capable of delivering the punishment which they deserve. To take an innocent life is such a ghastly crime that there is no worldly punishment that can atone for it. A judge in a human court of law cannot punish a murderer in a manner commensurate to his crime. He can only prevent those with criminal and homicidal tendencies from causing further harm to human society.

The limitations of this world necessitate the coming of another, unlimited world, which will make up for the shortcomings of this world.

The limitations of this world necessitate the coming of another, unlimited world, which will make up for the shortcomings of this world. Without the Hereafter, this world is incomplete. Here, a judge can only separate a criminal from potential victims. This is done with a view to maintain the smooth running of human society. It does not amount to justice. In the next world, justice will be done. Everyone will receive the punishment which they deserve. There, the punishment will be proportionate with the crime, which is never the case in this world. □

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Name of the book:

My First Quran Storybook

Author's Name: Dr Saniyasnain Khan

Pages: 208

ISBN: 9788178982404

The Goodword Book of Quran People for Kids provides fascinating reading on all the important people in the Quran. Written specially for children aged eight and above, this encyclopaedia includes entries on more than 130 men and women of the greatest importance in the Scripture. ***The Goodword Book of Quran People for Kids*** is a

fascinating tool that will help every child have a better understanding of the way Allah wants us to live in this world. It is full of faith, love and fun. It will encourage young people to learn by the example of others.

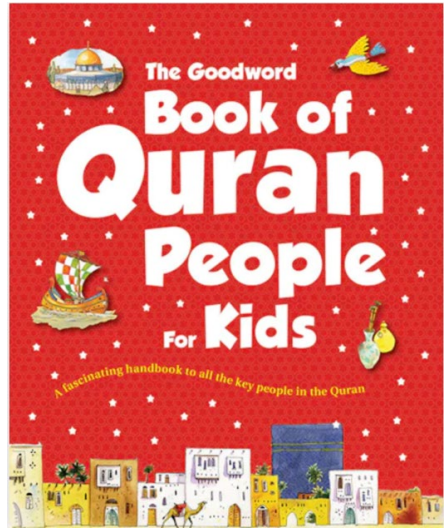
Saniyasnain Khan is a children's author, with over 100 children's books to his credit. He hopes that his books will be a true companion on the path of spiritual development and will help children to know the true purpose and meaning of life. The author can be reached at: skhan@goodwordbooks.com. Here is a selection from the book.

Yaqub

Yaqub (Jacob) was the son of the Prophet Ishaq (Isaac) and father of the Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) and was himself a Prophet. Allah made him truthful and righteous. He was also known as Israil, which means 'servant of Allah'. The Children of Israel tribe was named after him.

Allah gave the news of his birth to his grandfather, the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham), calling him a gift' (nafila) even before the birth of his father the Prophet Ishaq.

The Prophet Yaqub lived in Jerusalem in the 19th century B.C. He had twelve sons. His most loved son, the Prophet Yusuf, was thrown into a well by his jealous stepbrothers. The Prophet Yaqub was blinded by



sorrow, but he remained patient. He turned to Allah in his pain and suffering, but never complained. He knew that Allah was merciful and beneficent and he had perfect faith in Him. He never gave up hope for the Prophet Yusuf, though people called him a mad old man.

The Prophet Yusuf was saved and was taken to Egypt where he later became the most trusted minister of the Egyptian king. The Prophet Yaqub's eyesight was restored when his eyes were touched by the Prophet Yusuf's shirt. Later the Prophet Yaqub settled in Egypt with all the members of his family.

He asked his children always to worship Allah and follow the true faith even after his death. They promised to follow the true faith, the faith of the Prophets Ibrahim, Ismail and Ishaq. The Prophet Yaqub died at the age of 143 years and was buried in Hebron near Jerusalem.

Moral: Allah is always merciful to His believers. He never disappoints them.

Key Events: Loss of the Prophet Yusuf, reuniting with the Prophet Yusuf.

* See the Quran: Al-Baqarah 2: 132-133; Aal-Imran 3: 93; Al-An'am 6: 84; Yusuf 12: 86; Maryam 19: 49-50; Al-Anbiyaa 21: 72.

* See in this book: Children of Israel, Binyamin, Ibrahim, Ishag and Yusuf.

Relatives:

Grandfather: the Prophet Ibrahim

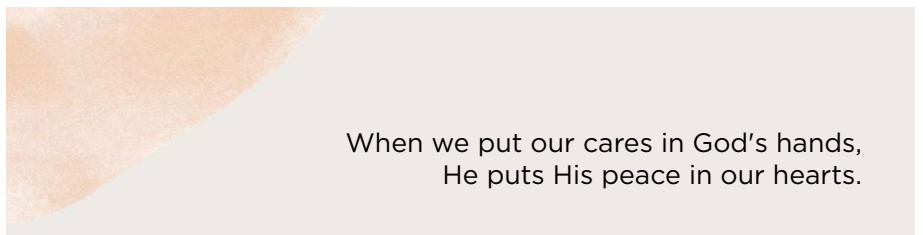
Father: the Prophet Ishaq

Son: the Prophet Yusuf

Wife: Rahil

Study Questions: Who was the Prophet Yaqub?

What was the nature of his suffering? □



When we put our cares in God's hands,
He puts His peace in our hearts.

THE MOST SUCCESSFUL MAN

Historical Proof

“There is no more astonishing career in history than that of the founder of this religion (Islam) and scarcely any man has more profoundly influenced the destinies of the world. He was, of course, favoured by circumstances, but he knew how to turn them to his purposes, and he faced adversity with the determination to wring success out of failure. While he could not have succeeded in another place or at another time, it is tolerably certain that no one could have succeeded at all.” E.E. Kellet, *A Short History of Religions* (London, 1933) p. 333

“He was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels.” Dr Michael H. Hart, *The 100*, New York, 1978

The people who opposed the message of the Prophet of Islam were so ingrained in hostility that they left no stone unturned to uproot not just the message but also the messenger and his adherents. Beset by extreme adverse circumstances, it seemed highly unlikely that the message would survive. Despite this, his message spread far and wide and found acceptance in every corner of the world. This success has no parallel in human history. This extraordinary conquest was achieved by him through special divine help.

The Prophet faced adversity with the determination to wring success out of failure.

God has thus provided a historical example to show people that, finally, only those will succeed who follow the true, divine path. Those who tread other paths, shall be left in a state of despair and dejection in the world of God in the life to come. □



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.

PROBLEM OF WEALTH

Not a Bed of Roses

MANY people believe money can solve all their problems, but as Richard Watts says, "More money, more problems." A review has been published about the extremely rich people of America which has been titled "Off with silver spoon."

In America wealth has become a disease which is called "affluenza". That is why the wealthy Americans want to find a way to getting rid of this disease. According to a recent study, 1 of 5 wealthy people are limiting their children's legacies to assure that they do not get everything in life on a silver platter. The CNBC Millionaire Survey found that more than half of wealthy Americans plan to leave each of their children just about \$1 million or slightly more.

Some of the wealthiest people have been named in this regard, Bill gates, Ted Turner, Jamie Lee Curtis and Catherine Zeta Jones. They have all taken steps to ensure that their children do not fall victim to affluence and the moral, emotional and practical problems associated with having too much money. Bill Gates' former wife, Melinda says: "We don't want our kids to lead a paranoid, pointless life." And the kids' loss is charity's gain. For these super-rich parents have donated a total £12 billion in charity. (*Life Positive* monthly, New Delhi, April 2002, p. 86) Those who are deprived of wealth regard wealth as a great blessing. But when one finds the wealth, then their thinking is changed. Now they learn that just as not possessing wealth is a problem, similarly, possessing wealth is a greater problem.

A man who had newly acquired wealth was asked by one of his friends, "Since you have acquired wealth you have changed considerably." The wealthy man said to his friend: "I've been stricken with the lightening of wealth; this is my problem."

If man can experience this before acquiring wealth, he will never desire for the possession of wealth. He would think that the life of contentment is better than aspiring more and more wealth. □



THE UNIVERSAL MODEL

Be a Giver

MAN finds himself in a vast universe. As if, universe is a very big society, and man is only a small part of this society. Man has to adopt the same behaviour in his life as the other components of the universe have practically adopted. This is the right natural course for man and the secret of his success lies in adopting this course.

What is this model presented by the universe? Observe the stars and planets in the universe. All stars and planets move in their own orbits with great precision and regularity. They do not trespass another's orbit. Due to this discipline, there is peace in the universe.

Man should also opt for this policy of non-interference in the society. Everyone should know it consciously that his freedom ends where the freedom of others begins.

Similarly, look at the world of plants. The plants have silently opted for this system of supplying oxygen continuously to fulfill the necessities of living bodies and keep intaking the unwanted carbon dioxide exhaled by the living bodies. This is a selfless system of profitability. It is essential for man also to opt for this system in his life.

Likewise, we know that the waters of spring on the mountain flow from upwards to downwards. It repeatedly happens that stones come in their path; they appear to be obstacles in their journey. But the spring does not attempt at removing the stone and then continue its journey. Instead, it carves its way ahead alongside of the stones. As if, it is giving the message: do not collide with the obstacles, instead continue your activities by keeping away from them.

Similarly, we see in the world of animals, that now and then they have some issue of dispute. But it always happens that for a short time, they growl or gore. But very soon, they become normal as if nothing had happened. In the same manner, man has to live in his society. In social life many a times one meets with unpleasant experiences. However, he should always make this unpleasantness temporary. It should not be allowed to stay permanently.

The study of the universe shows that here each thing gives something to others without taking anything for themselves from others. For instance, the sun unilaterally provides light to the inhabitants of the world, but it does not ask for any price for it. The air continuously supplies the oxygen without taking any compensation for it. Similarly,

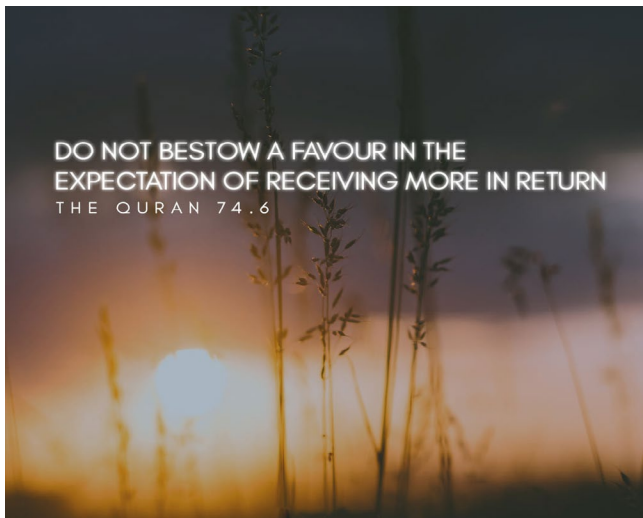
all the things of the present world are engaged in the service of people without any return, none of these send their bills for their services to the people.

This shows that the entire world around us is a giver world, it is not a taker world. The culture of this world is a giver culture. Each and every thing in this world continuously conveys this message that one should be a giver without taking from others. Man has to adopt this giver culture. He has to live as a giver in his society rather than a taker.

The universe around us serves as a vast model. The secret of success for man is to opt for this model in his life. In the rest of the universe this model is established compulsively under the law of nature, while man has to establish this model in his life consciously, of his own free will.

To bring one's free will under the universal discipline is like living as if one has no choice even though he has been given the power to choose. This attitude of submission to the laws of nature is the only right behaviour for man. This is the behaviour which will guarantee his success in his life. □

Everything in this world continuously conveys this message that one should be a giver without taking from others. Man must adopt this giver culture. He must live as a giver in his society rather than a taker.



TRAGEDY OF MAN

How to Destress?

ACCORDING to the law of nature, human beings are created in such situations where they have to spend all their lives in hardships. Difficulty, hardships, and heartbreaks are essential parts of the creation plan of the Creator. No man has the power to prevent himself from a life of trials and tribulations. In this world, grief and hardship are parts of creation plan of God. This system is to remind man of the fact that the present world is not made as a place of luxury and comfort rather it is made as a testing ground. The present world is created so that man may pass through different situations or conditions. In these situations, it is being decided whether any person is eligible for the eternal life of Paradise or not. One who does not respond positively and rightly in these situations, is eligible to be separated from the rest and thrown into the dustbin of Hell.

In the present developed world, the conditions of hardships are always present. But the people, owing to unawareness of God's creation plan, do not understand its nature. By giving the wrong response they prove themselves in the eyes of God such persons who underwent the examination course but could not make themselves successful.

In the present times, big institutions have been established, claiming to perform de-stressing, in order to relax people by stopping the function of thinking. But this is a kind of temporary solution to the problem. The practical solution to this problem is stress management.

This is a matter of general observation that those people who have suffered in their lives engage themselves in human service or social service. As if this is a way of eliminating sadness, but this is not the right and desirable reaction to difficulties and hardship. Social service is human service and as such it is without doubt a praiseworthy task. But when it is seen from the point of view of the creation plan of God about human life, we find an unwanted aspect about the social service. A person who experiences difficulties in life and then engages in social service, his psychology is, to put it briefly, "Let no other suffer what I have suffered."

This psychology shows that man thinks every matter as simply a worldly matter. For him, sufferings are only worldly suffering, and the biggest task is to make this world a non-suffering place. Whereas this thinking is against the creation plan of God, therefore it is just not possible to

make this world a suffering-free zone. Whenever a person experiences unpleasantness in the world, it happens so that a person may take right lessons from it; so that he is reminded of the reality that the present world is the world of trial. Nobody can find a comfortable life here. Man ought to take lessons from negative experiences of the world.

He must awaken the consciousness in himself that in this limited world he cannot achieve his desired life. That he has to seek his desired life in the next life of the unlimited world. In such a situation, the right lesson from unpleasant experiences is that man remembers the next world of Paradise. He awakens this thinking in himself that let me not suffer in the Hereafter that which I have suffered in this world.

Successful is he, who has realized eternal world in this temporary world, one who has discovered the secret of eternal success of the next world in the failures of the present world. God has made this present world in accordance with such a plan that here every man lives in 'toil'. On the other hand, this is a reality that the world after death will be free from all grief and only the chosen people of God will receive it.

If observed in the light of this creation plan, the root of all human problems is that the people want to build their paradise in the world before death, whereas under the system of nature, such situations do not prevail here at all as may enable one to make his paradise on earth. Just as no building can be erected either on sand dunes or marshy lands, similarly, in this present world, it is not possible for anyone to construct the life of their dreams. And when man meets with failure under the law of nature, he falls prey to different types of negative reactions which wreak havoc to his personality.

The right thing is that man acknowledges and accepts this law of creation and according to it, he plans his life. This plan is just one—to strive to develop in oneself the desirable traits in this present world, so that he may be held eligible for the admission in Paradise in the world after death. According to this creation plan of God, man has to be content in the world before death and as a result, in the world after death he has Paradise in store for him. □

The root of all human problems is that the people want to build their paradise in the world before death, whereas under the system of nature, such situations do not prevail here at all as may enable one to make his paradise on earth.

LABOURS OF A LIFETIME

Finding the True Impetus

HELEN HOOVEN SANTMYER (1895-1986) lived to the age of 90. She became crippled and half-blind. She also suffered from emphysema. Because of her infirmity, she resided permanently in a nursing home in Xenia, Ohio, U.S.A.

When Helen Hooven Santmyer was working as a reference librarian, she started to write a book. At first she worked on it in her spare time. Then, when ill health forced her to retire, she continued her work in the nursing home where she lived.

She wrote the whole book out herself, in longhand, on a ledger. In 1982, she completed the book. She presented it to the Ohio State University Press for publication. The final manuscript filled 11 boxes. A handful of copies were printed, but the book met with no initial success. It seemed as if Helen Hooven Santmyer's name would vanish without trace from the American literary scene.

But at least one person who bought the book read it and liked it. He was praising it in an Ohio library one day when the librarian overheard his conversation. The word was passed on to a producer, then an agent, then the American Book-Club. Each party found the book entrancing and worthy of a greater audience.

Finally Helen Hooven Santmyer's book, entitled "*...And Ladies of the Club*" was nominated for the Book Club Award in January 1984. It won the Award, and with it a sum of over 1 million dollars.

Helen Hooven Santmyer did not seek fame or wealth from her novel. Its topic, the story of two Ohio families in the period between the American Civil War and the great depression of the early 1930's was obviously not aimed at the commercial market. The author believed that Sinclair Lewis had painted a false portrait of the American dream in his novel of the 1920's, *Main Street*. She wanted to correct that picture. As Haynes Johnson writes in the Washington Post:

The author was clearly not in the market for big bucks. She obviously was motivated by saying something in which she believed. The bare account of how she produced the work over the years, in her spare time, in sickness and in health, in itself provides an astonishing testament of her perseverance. (*Guardian Weekly*, January 29, 1984)

Strong belief in something makes one rise above one's worldly situation. It makes one concentrate on one's end in life. No matter what hindrances and obstacles lie in one's path, one soldiers on until one reaches one's final destination.

The conviction that spurs a true believer on is faith in the life to come. He bears all forms of hardships, suffering and adversity in this world. He realizes that this ephemeral world is for trial; in the next eternal world of God he will be rewarded for his efforts. As Helen Hooven Santmyer laboured for over half a century in the compilation of her book bearing all forms of adversity in her determination to attain her goal in life, so the believer labours all his life for the attainment of reward in the Hereafter. And, as Helen Hooven Santmyer's sustained effort bore her due reward in this world, so the believer's sustained effort will bear him due reward in the next world. He will be made to enter Paradise of eternal repose and bliss. □

Strong belief in something makes one rise above one's worldly situation. It makes one concentrate on one's end in life. Despite hindrances and obstacles, one soldiers on until one reaches one's final destination.



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THE HUMAN PERSONALITY

A Unique Combination

THE chapter *Al Tin* (The Fig) of the Quran is very short, but it has a great lesson, a universal message for all human kind—an eternal formula for a successful life. The following is its translation.

We have indeed created man in the best of moulds, then We cast him down as the lowest of the low. (95:4-5) Anyone who goes through these verses will discover great meaning in them. Everyone by nature has a unique personality, but nothing in this world is all good—the human personality has minus points as well as plus points. One who makes the most of his plus points is successful, whereas one who becomes a victim of his minus points is doomed to failure.

The plus and minus points can be summed up under the headings of reason and emotion. One who obeys reason achieve success, while one who is led by his emotions is bound to face disaster. Reason, implying unbiased thinking, leads to a realistic approach. It makes you a mature person and guides you to give well-considered responses and to plan all your actions in a rational way. A life which is based on reason is invariably marked by success and salvation.

The human personality, a unique combination of mind and body, is a great boon for every man and woman. If you use your personality to the best advantage, you will become a super achiever.

The emotional approach is only another name for an irrational approach. One who is swayed by his emotions becomes unrealistic in his dealings. His actions will be a case of “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread”. With a single word-change, the formula goes like this: Emotional people rush in where angels fear to tread.

The emotional approach is not a very simple one and can come at a great cost. Dealing with things emotionally is like mishandling glassware. You can mishandle ironware, but you cannot behave like that with glassware, because it might fall down and be smashed.

In any human situation, you have similarly to handle matters with great care, otherwise the result will be like the smashing of delicate glassware. If this happens, it will lead to a breakdown in relationships and you cannot afford such a breakdown.

The human personality, a unique combination of mind and body, is a great boon for every man and woman. If you use your personality to the best advantage, you will become a super achiever. But then there is the other possibility, that is, of putting your personality to the wrong use. Misusing your personality is like mishandling glassware. You are doomed to paying a heavy price for doing so. But, if properly used, it will lead to super achievement. Improper use will lead to dismal failure.

There are numerous creatures in this world, but out of all of them, man is quite unique in having freedom of choice. Freedom of choice is a valuable asset that elevates man to the highest rank. But freedom of choice is a double-edged sword. It may kill your enemy but at the same time it can kill you too. So, while one who is extremely cautious can become a universal hero, one who opts for rash, ill-considered courses of action will be reduced to a total zero. □

God will ask
on the Day
of Judgment: O son of Adam, I asked you for
food but you did not feed me.

He will reply: My Lord, how can I feed you when you are
the Lord of the worlds?

God will say: Did you not know that so and so person asked
you for food but you did not feed him, and had
you fed him you would have found Me with him?

PROPHET MUHAMMAD ﷺ

REMARKABLE POSSIBILITIES IN THIS WORLD

New Opportunities

GOD has created this world with remarkable possibilities. Here, when an endeavour appears to fall into the oblivion of failure, a new light shines out from the darkness. When a house falls, it leaves the space for another house to be constructed in its place. The same is true of human life. Here, with every failure, there arises a new possibility of success. In the competition of two nations, if one nation becomes developed and the other is left behind, the matter does not end there. Subsequently, a new process begins to take shape where the people of developed nations adopt a lavish lifestyle and enjoy luxurious facilities, whereas the people of underdeveloped nations develop a passion for hard work and struggle, and thus become developed.

In this world of God there is no question of being overtaken by disappointment and depression. No matter how unpromising the circumstances may appear to be, there will always be a new opportunity for success close by.

This means in this world of God there is no question of being overtaken by disappointment and depression. No matter how unpromising the circumstances may appear to be, there will always be a new opportunity for success close by. One has to avail of this new opportunity in order to convert defeat into success.

Moreover, deprivation in this world is not something valueless; deprivation gives rise to the passion for enterprise. And in this way makes groups more active and produces the possibility for greater success.

Those who wish to advance and be successful in life without passing through the necessary stages, will have to build another world for themselves—one which satisfies their own requirements for in this world that God has created, their dreams can never come true. □



MOTIVATION IS GREATER THAN FAVOUR

A Catalyst for Success

ACCORDING to a survey, out of the world's hundred richest people today, 27 are heirs and 73 are self-made. Of the self-made, 18 have no college degree and 36 are children of poor parents, but some billionaires had neither a degree nor wealthy parents. In other words, super-achievers are not born, they are self-made people. It is not external favour that makes one a super-achiever, but one's own struggle. Super-achievement is not achieved through inheritance, but is self-acquired success.

No one is a born a billionaire, but everyone is a potential billionaire. It is the unfolding of one's own potential that makes one a billionaire or super achiever. Nature does not discriminate between one person and another. Nature's gifts come to everyone equally. It is the receiver himself who either utilises them or not.

So-called deprived persons are in fact privileged persons. Their state of deprivation serves as inner motivation. When they see others are progressing, it creates a strong incentive in their minds.

Any state of deprivation brings about a kind of brainstorming which enhances inner spirit. They enter the world of competition working to their full capacity. They develop the spirit of do or die. It is this spirit that leads them to success.

There is a saying that 'Mr X was born with a silver spoon in his mouth'. This kind of birth creates a kind of contentment in the concerned person, and this kind of contentment kills motivation. While one who was born in a poor family without a silver or a golden spoon, develops a kind of discontent that ought to activate one's mind and trigger a fire within one to do hard work.

The laws of nature are greater than everything else. They are eternal: they cannot be changed. The law of nature in this regard says that it is not ease but effort, not facility but difficulty that makes achievers out of ordinary people. So, the future is full of hope and opportunity! □



CPS NEWSLETTER

As part of promoting peace in Muslim societies, CPS teams have been gifting Peace and Spirituality literature of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan at various places:



Dr Sana Zarrin (CPS Kolkata team) organized Independence Day programme at her home. She invited a few children and inspired them to perform. Their families also accompanied them. She presented CPS peace and spiritual literature to everyone.

This Independence Day, CPS Vishakhapatnam team presented Peace and Spiritual literature of CPS to Andhra Pradesh Health Minister V Rajani, District Collector Dr. A. MALLIKARJUNA, and a lady Superintendent. Each of them graciously accepted the spiritual gifts.

Download your free copy of Al-Risala Hindi here:

<https://cpsglobal.org/magazines/al-risala-jan-feb-2023-0>

अब हिंदी में

माहनामा जनवरी – फरवरी 2023

अल-रिसाला

मौलाना वहीदुद्दीन ख़ान

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

Please watch the Sunday programme *In conversation with Prof. Farida Khanam* on the topic **Living with Angels** at www.fb.com/maulanawkhan



IN CONVERSATION WITH
PROF. FARIDA KHANAM

Living with Angels

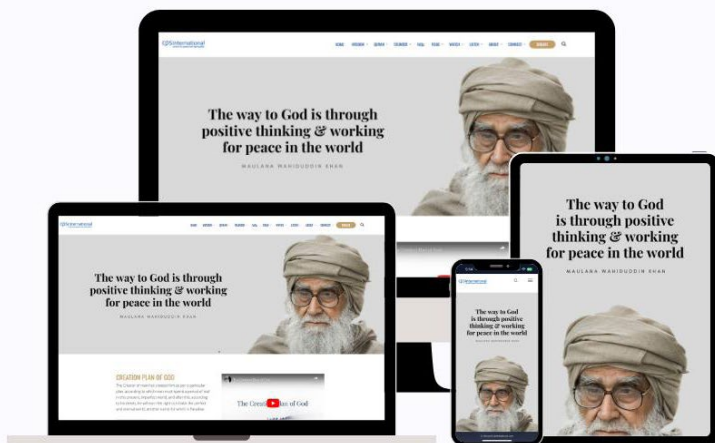
SUNDAY, 6 AUGUST AT 10:30 AM (IST)
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The website www.cpsglobal.org has long been functional and serving the needs of seekers of Truth worldwide. The need for a redesigned, revamped and feature-rich update was being felt by the CPS International. CPS Delhi team began this task and the updated version with excellent user interface was launched on August 13, 2023. Kindly click on the link here to experience the newly designed website: www.cpsglobal.org

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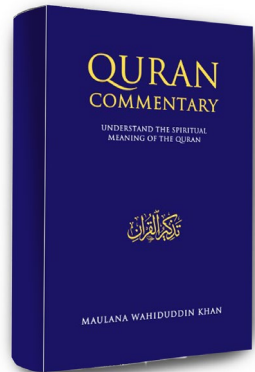


THE WORD OF GOD

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



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

By the sun and its rising brightness and by the moon as it follows it, and by the day as it reveals its glory and by the night when it draws a veil over it, by the sky and how He built it and by the earth and how He spread it, by the soul and how He formed it, then inspired it to understand what was right and wrong for it. He who purifies it will indeed be successful, and he who corrupts it is sure to fail. (91: 1-10)

Almighty God has made threefold arrangements for the guidance of man. On the one hand, the universe has been so constructed that it has become the practical manifestation of God's will. On the other hand, the human psyche has been infused with an intuitive consciousness of good and bad. Thereafter, it was arranged that Truth and falsehood, justice and injustice be revealed clearly through the prophets in a language understandable to the people. Even after this, if people do not adopt the right path, they are undoubtedly transgressors.

The Thamud tribe rejected the truth because of their arrogance, when the most wicked man among them rose up. Then the messenger of God said to them, 'This is God's she-camel. Let her drink.' But they gave him the lie and hamstrung the she-camel. So, their Lord destroyed them for their crime and razed their city to the ground. He did not fear the consequences. (91: 11-15)

The she-camel of the Prophet Salih, in a way, symbolised the principle that one should respect the rights of others and discharge one's duties to them accordingly, even if they are helpless and weak. It is quite possible that a creature which, to all appearances, is only a 'she-camel', may be God's sign brought before people to test them. □

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.

People have a great deal to say about other human beings but are at a loss for words when it comes to the subject of God. Why?

Yes, people are storehouses of encyclopedic knowledge about human beings, but they are empty and uninformed where God is concerned. It is because they have not experienced the greatness of God. They have not witnessed the miracles of God. They are only aware of the creatures while remaining blissfully unaware of the Creator.

People utter the words 'God is great', yet why do not they actually experience the greatness of God?

People recite the words *Allah-u-Akbar* which means 'God is great' in their prayers but in practice, the greatness of others besides God dominates their lives. They do not realize that the aura of greatness surrounding humans in this world is just a façade put on for the test of humans. Those who can see through this façade will realize that no one besides God has any real greatness.

Why does the greatness of other humans dominate people's lives?

Man is forced by his very nature and the circumstances in which he finds himself on earth to seek some external source of dependence. Unable to rely on his scant inner resources, he seeks a prop in life—one who will compensate for his shortcomings. Only God with His Infinite power can help us and guide us. However, since God is not visible in this world, man, wanting to see something before he believes it—usually sees other human beings and allots the greatness to them that should have been allotted to God alone.

Who are the people considered as great?

Usually, charismatic leaders occupy this spot of “greats” in the sight of men, who have captured the popular imagination. Such leaders are accorded the adulation that should be accorded to God alone. Faced with an inner vacancy, a yawning gap in his soul that had to be filled, man should have turned to God for replenishment instead of other men.

What is the harm of according greatness to humans?

Man has been endowed with certain faculties in this world. He has been invested with bodily strength and blessed with intellectual prowess. He has been granted access to wealth, rank, resources and opportunities. All these human faculties are from God. He has given them to man for a purpose: that man should use them to earn something for himself.

There are two ways for a man to “earn”. One is that which leads to what the Quran calls being ‘arrogant in the land without justification. However, another form of earning is the opposite of this, which is the earning of humility and graciousness from what one has.

In other words, if a person is proud of what he has in this world, he uses it for his self-aggrandizement, which will make it a steppingstone to personal power which gives rise to arrogance leading to oppression of other humans.

The other form of earning comes from seeing the resources he has been endowed with as God’s gift. A man sees his helplessness before God and thanks Him for His countless blessings. Instead of using his faculties and resources for personal ends, he devotes them to the service of God which is nothing but benefitting the fellow humans.

What is the harm of self-glory?

Humans are not perfect beings and have limitations. In such a situation living in a sense of greatness will only come in the way of one’s intellectual development. Man will be under the illusion that he knows it all. This will lead to arrogance. He will not be open to healthy criticism. He will harbour feelings of power over people, not acknowledging the contribution of his fellow beings and failing to be grateful to both man and God. He will live a self-oriented life in which self-interest, personal ambition, greed and lust are the dominating motive forces. One who lives such a life puts all he has into furthering his interests.

The other person who recognizes and acknowledges God as great will be a humble person who will live a God-oriented life which acknowledges

God's greatness on one hand and his humility vis-à-vis other fellow beings which will be a driving force for him to contribute positively to the human society as a duty and not as a favour.

How can one develop the feelings of greatness for God?

Multiple verses in the Quran point out that there are signs in the universe for people to understand. God has set up material symbols to see the reflection of invisible realities in the mirror of visible signs. The sun and the moon give us a glimpse of God—the source of all light. The birds and the animals provide us with a picture of innocence; they are God's representatives on our planet. The sky, in its vastness, gives us an idea of the might and greatness of God. The beauty of this world will remind him of God's beauty; the greatness of the natural phenomena impresses on him the greatness of the One who created them.

If a person opens his mind to the world's wonders, taking in all that he sees in the universe, he will find the light of God shining in all that he beholds. He will come to know of the glory and greatness of God. □

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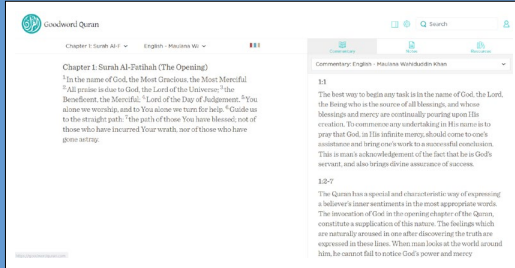
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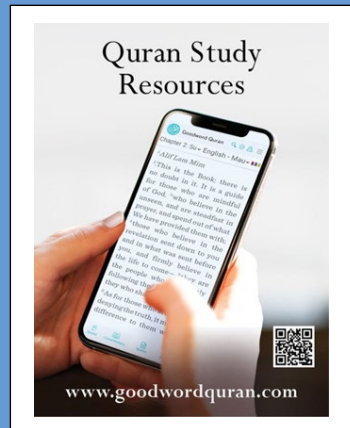
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The formula of a rights-conscious person is: **THEY** must do it,
while the formula of a duty-conscious person is: **I** must do it.

