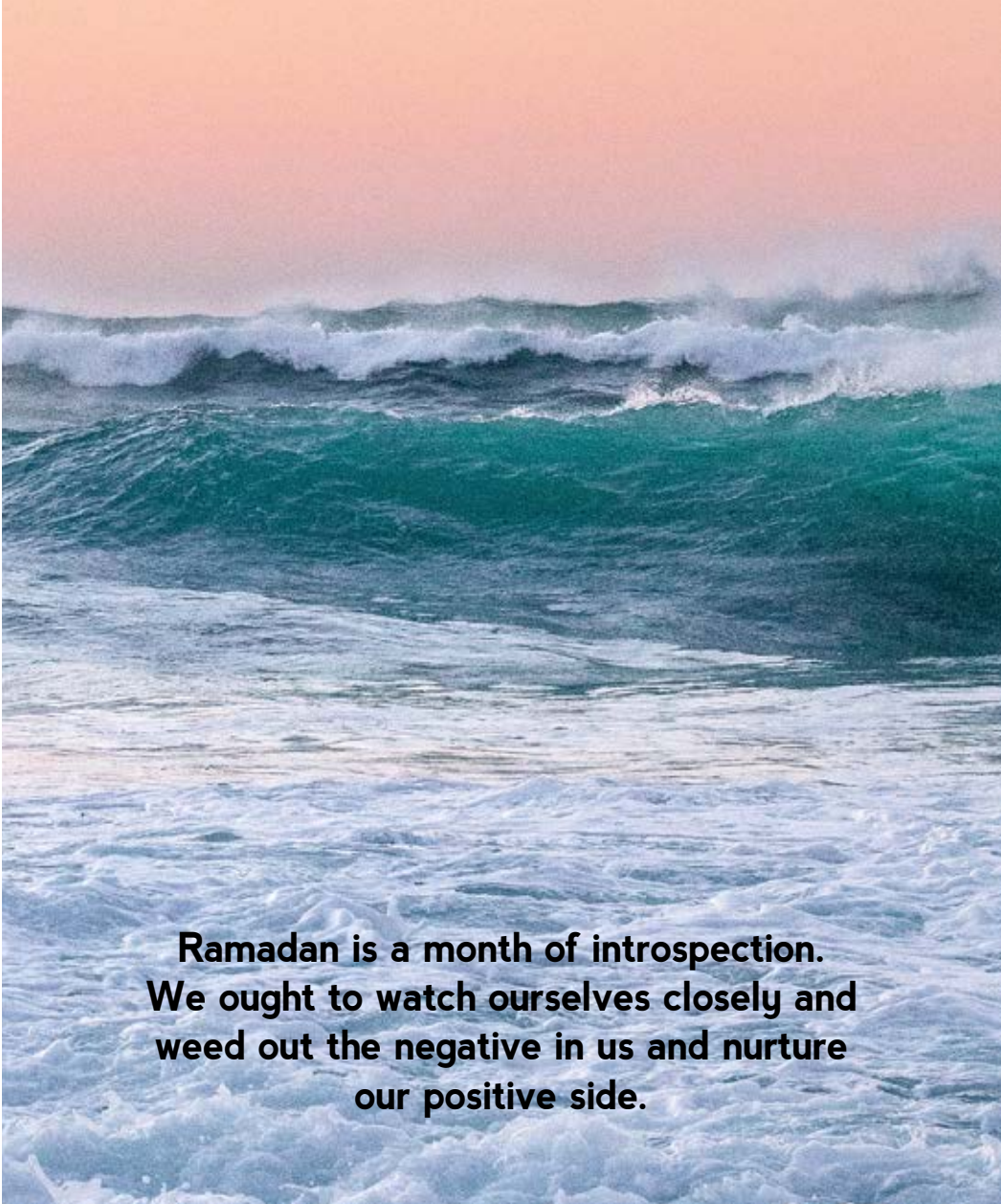


ENGLISH BIMONTHLY ISSUE 117 MARCH-APRIL 2024

# SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living



**Ramadan is a month of introspection.  
We ought to watch ourselves closely and  
weed out the negative in us and nurture  
our positive side.**

# A MAGAZINE FOR THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

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

## Spirit of Islam bimonthly...

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

United in prayers  
SOI Editorial Committee

# **SPIRIT OF ISLAM**

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living

ISSUE 117 MARCH - APRIL 2024

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## FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S DESK



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### REALIZING THE TRUE PURPOSE IN LIFE

**W**HEN a person works, makes money, builds a house, and makes an effort to improve his standard of living, he appears to be engaged in efforts towards some worthy end. But a life of this nature cannot be called a purposeful life, for these activities do not demonstrate man's unique status. It might seem as if they are the result of deliberation, but if one looks at the matter in depth, one will see that the motive force behind these actions is the same urge that motivates an animal in various ways, i.e. its concern for its own survival. It is the driving force of one's desires, the pressure of one's needs, and the wish to fulfill the demands of one's self that underlie such a life. These are the considerations which, in fact, guide a person in his search for his livelihood.

There are certain material needs without which man cannot live. He requires food, clothes, a place to live; he requires a reliable source of income to sustain him throughout his life. He is forced by these considerations to obtain these things. Then, upon observation he finds that those who have an abundance of these material things enjoy respect and apparently possess every form of happiness and luxury in this world. Thus, he is driven on to do more than just seek a livelihood; he desires to earn to a degree greatly in excess of his actual requirements.

In bustling markets, grandiose offices, and opulent buildings, he is not really guided by deliberate thought. Rather, he is being guided by inflated ideas of his own needs, desires, longings and ambitions to achieve fame and high status in this world. For this reason, these activities cannot be considered as being directed towards the purpose, which sets man apart from the animals and lends him a higher distinction.

Man's greater dignity cannot be based only on a purpose which emanates from inner desires and pressures of environment. His true purpose in life can only be one which reflects the nobler side of his character; one which represents him as the superior being that he is.

*Ramadan*, the month of fasting, is the month which reminds us of our true purpose in life. Life of this world is temporary. We all witness death every day. Life is so unpredictable. However, death is not the end of a person's life. It is only the beginning of the next stage of life. Death is that interim stage when man leaves this temporary world of today for the eternal world of tomorrow. He goes out of the temporary accommodation of the world to enter the eternal resting place of the Hereafter. The coming of this stage in the Hereafter is the greatest certainty in one's life. No one can save himself from this fate in the Hereafter.

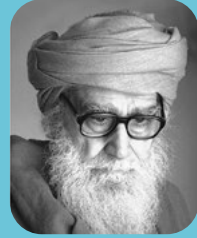
***The month of fasting is a month to help us in our spiritual pursuits by rising above the materialistic pursuits. By abstinence from even basic needs of food and water for a few hours one tries to keep desires under control and undertakes the hardship voluntarily.***

In the above context, the month of fasting is a month to help us in our spiritual pursuits by rising above the materialistic pursuits. By abstinence from even basic needs of food and water for a few hours, one tries to keep desires under control and undertakes the hardship voluntarily. During the rest of the eleven months this training should assist in not immersing oneself in just materialistic goals. In the following pages of this magazine there are articles elucidating the spirit of the fasting which will instil in us sincerity to live a God-oriented life with a staunch belief in our accountability in the Hereafter as to how we spent our life on earth.

May God give us the true benefit of this month and save us from just observing it in a superficial form as witnessed in the present culture! It is a month of abstinence and control, not a month of indulgence after a few hours of ritualistic hunger and thirst. □

## 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)***



## PUNE DIARIES

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*In March 1986, the President of the Islamic Centre, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, visited the central Indian city of Pune. This was his fourth journey to Pune, his previous visits having taken place respectively in 1971, 1983 and 1984. Pune was then known as Poona. It was then a city of about one and a half million peoples, 100,000 of which were Muslims. The size of the congregations which gathered this time to attend Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's talks was indicative of a substantial increase in the number of Al-Risala readers in that town. A full account of the Journey was published in Al-Risala, (June 1986) and here we give an abridged version in translation.*

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### **Making up for Lost Time**

**O**N the evening of March 19, 1986, I was due to travel from Delhi to Poona. I arrived at the airport at the correct reporting time and initially we were informed at the Indian Airlines desk that the flight would be on time. At the last moment, however, we were told that the plane was one hour late. During travels, there is always a chance of delay. All modes of travels such as cars, trains and buses are prone to delays. While there may be genuine reasons for such delays, it is not uncommon that such cases arise due to the behaviour of some unruly passengers or due to inefficient management of the schedules. All this involves a considerable waste of time and constitutes a substantial loss to the nation. Yet it is at times such as these that one realizes what a great blessing faith is, for it compensates for every loss. There is a saying of the Prophet Muhammad to the effect that one extraordinary thing about a believer is that everything turns out well for him. If everything goes according to plan, a feeling of thanksgiving is aroused in him, but should his plans go awry, he realizes that man can only propose; it is God who disposes. In this way he comes closer to the Lord.

### **Easier Said than Done**

After an hour-long wait, we boarded the plane. After taking my seat, I picked up the Indian Airlines in-flight magazine (*Swagat*, March 1986) and began to read about how Indian Airlines is one of most widely



ranging airline companies, possessing a big fleet, consisting of a variety of aircrafts. It provides a daily service of 240 flights, landing at 73 airports all over the country, besides which its planes also fly to Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Bangkok and Bangladesh. It has agreements with various international airline companies, "so wherever you are, Indian Airlines is within reach."

The aircraft I had boarded was still standing on the runway, and I was reading all these impressive things in the in-flight magazine, when, all of a sudden, we heard an announcement over the loudspeaker that we should all alight from this plane. It seemed that we were to make the journey to Poona in another aircraft. So, all the passengers disembarked and boarded another aircraft. Clearly, more time elapsed in this process and the plane was eventually two hours late. The words, "We wish you a comfortable journey," were written in bold letters in the in-flight magazine, which made me think how easy it is to say things, but how difficult to convert one's words into actions.

### **Muslims in Poona**

Muslims in Poona number one lakh (100,000) a sufficient number to accomplish any constructive work, should they set their minds to it. But, unfortunately, the state of Muslims in Poona is much the same as that of Muslims in other cities. Instead of applying themselves to constructive work, they waste their time and energy quarrelling among themselves and making futile demonstrations. Christians in Poona are fewer in number than the Muslims, but they far exceed their Muslim counterparts in the amount of constructive work they perform.

*One extraordinary thing about a believer is that everything turns out well for him. If everything goes according to plan, a feeling of thanksgiving is aroused in him, but should his plans go awry, he realizes that man can only propose; it is God who disposes.*

### **Negative Approach of Muslims**

A Hindu building-contractor in Poona constructed a multi-storey apartment building. Immediately Muslims were alarmed that their houses were being exposed and their *purdah* violated, so they began a campaign against the contractor. He pointed out that there was a Muslim-girls' school nearby, next to which the very Muslims whose children attended the school had built a multi-storey building similar to the one constructed by himself. The apartments in that building had

then been rented out to the public. Did this not amount to a violation of their *purdah*? Why did they not launch a similar agitation in that case too? That was the end of the Muslims' agitation and the building remained in its place.

A similar situation arose in connection with a mosque in Poona named *Masjid Munshian*. It is situated on one side of a road. On the other side of the same road and a little further down, a hotel by the name of Silver Inn has been built. This hotel includes amongst its facilities a Permit Room, or, in other words, a licensed bar. The Muslims, fearing that the sacrosanctity of their mosque was being violated by the consumption of liquor near at hand, decided to observe January 26, 1985 as a "black day". Posters were fixed on walls, slogan raised, and on January 26, a number of Muslims put up a shed outside the hotel, vowing to observe a hunger strike until this liquor-dispensing tavern had been closed down.

A delegation of the Muslims went to the office of a local Marathi newspaper, *Tarun Bharat*, in order to register their protest. The editor pointed out to them that the owners had built their hotel at a considerable distance from the mosque, and that the bar in the hotel had been opened with Government permission. "Besides" he said, "in the other direction from your mosque, there is another mosque situated quite nearby. Right beneath the walls of that mosque, Muslims are engaged in the illegal sale of liquor. Why not launch a campaign against them to end their illicit trade?" So, once again, the Permit Room remained untouched, while the protest campaign of the Muslims fizzled out after just one day of noise and commotion.

### **Hindu Organizations in Poona**

The last time I was in Poona, I went round Noble College, a large education institute, belonging to the Christians of Poona, while this time I had the opportunity of inspecting the building of a Hindu organization by the name of Jnana Prabodhini. Despite the large scale of its activities, this organization does not accept any help from the Government. Part of its programme is financed by fund-raising, while the remainder comes from its own industrial and agricultural projects. Jnana Prabodhini is engaged in a wide range of activities. One of its functions, for example, is to select talented individuals from Hindu youth and prepare them for the I.A.S. examination. These people later take over key Government positions, thus ensuring that a degree of influence is maintained in administrative circles.

There is another Hindu organization in Poona, called Sadhu Vaswani Mission, which is engaged in a wide range of academic activities. One of its schemes has been given the name: Life-beyond Project. This project can be described as a systematic effort to rationally and scientifically prove the validity of the doctrine of reincarnation. Research on this topic is being conducted on a worldwide scale. There is yet another institute here, Vasant Vyakhyanmala, in which lectures are held every year in the month of May, the holiday season, on a wide range of religious and historical topics. Highly qualified people are invited for these lectures from all over the country. To attend these lectures, one has to obtain a ticket, which is bought at a price. Even so the spacious auditorium is packed to capacity.

One special quality of the Hindu community is the diversity of their activities. Take, for instance, Gandhiji's boycott of foreign cloth (1921). Muslims were as much a part of this campaign as Hindus, but there was one important difference between the approaches adopted by the two communities. If Hindu, on the one hand, burnt cloth from the mills of Lancashire, and Manchester, then they also established hundreds of cotton mills in their own country, whereas Muslims kept on burning foreign cloth, but did not establish any mills of their own. Such has been Muslims'

*The Muslims are easily incited to destructive activities but, when called upon to perform constructive work, they remain impassive, as if they have not even heard the call.*

approach to every issue in modern times. They are easily incited to destructive activities, but, when called upon to perform constructive work, they remain impassive, as if they have not even heard the call. When anyone wishes to gain popularity among the Muslims, what he does is raise some negative slogan in their midst. To present a positive programme before Muslims is tantamount to sacrificing one's own position, but it ought to be accepted that encouragement is the only way to breathe new life into the Muslim community as a whole. Since no Muslim leader of modern times has shown himself willing to make this self-sacrifice, the Muslims are caught in a rut of constant negativity.

### **Programmes in Poona**

While I was in Poona, from March 19 to March 22, a total of nine meetings were held, in which I addressed audiences consisting of both Muslims and Hindus. Particularly noteworthy was a public meeting held in the hall of the Tilak Samarak Mandir, the largest and most

famous Hindu temple in Poona. This meeting which took place on the evening of March 20, was attended by the Mayor of Poona, along with a considerable number of highly educated people. The topic of this address, laid down by the organizers of the meeting, was: The Prophet of Islam: Founder of the Modern Age.

I gave a one-and-a-half hour talk on this subject and the audience listened attentively from beginning to end. Some Hindu brethren afterwards offered comments such as these: "We have not seen a Maulvi like this before. We had no idea that this was the meaning of Islam." Many bought books published in English by the Islamic Centre from a bookstall set up outside the hall, among these being" *Muhammad: The Prophet of Revolution*. Specially for the occasion, the organizers had printed some pamphlets consisting of articles from *Al-Risala* translated into Marathi. These were distributed among the audience.

### **Progress of *Al-Risala* Mission in Poona**

*Al-Risala*, and the cause it represents, are by the grace of God receiving wider and wider dissemination in Poona. One of the programme organizers told me that, in comparison to previous trips, this time they had laid less emphasis on publicity, yet the attendance for my talks was much larger than on previous occasions. On Friday, March 21, a meeting was arranged in the Makkah Masjid of Poona prior to the congregational prayers. On reaching there I saw this sentence above the door of the mosque: "High station in life comes from raising oneself, not from raising slogans and banners." There were at least twice as many people in the mosque as compared with the number who normally attend Friday prayers. In spite of this mosque being so large, it was filled to capacity. Similar audiences assembled for every meeting which was held.

One gentleman put forward a suggestion that *Al-Risala* be published in regional languages. He said that about three-quarters of Gujrati- and Marathi-speaking Muslims, for example, were able to read only Gujarati and Marathi script. They were not able to read Urdu. *Al-Risala* would not have to be translated into these languages. A transliteration would be sufficient, with the original Urdu rendered into Gujarati and Marathi script. He said that this would not only be beneficial to Muslims, but also to people of other faiths who were able to understand Urdu, but could not read it.

Another member of the audience said that nowadays only those newspapers and journals which had the backing of some major organization were able to last. Whichever publication you looked at, he

said, appeared as if the person behind it were someone else. “*Al-Risala* has been coming out regularly for the last ten years, and with such an impressive format,” he remarked. “Who is its sponsor?” I told him that the sponsor of *Al-Risala* was God, and no one else. “Then this is no less than a miracle,” was his reply.

### **Advice to Youth**

Some youngsters asked me for my autograph. This is what I wrote for one of them:

“In order to obtain something, it is not enough for one to desire it. There is a price for everything in life and until one has paid the required price, one will not be able to achieve the object of one’s desire.”

When one person asked me to give him some advice, I told him:

“Hardships are the price paid for living a principled life.”

Addressing some young people, I said: “Whatever is in your hearts, that is what you should utter with your tongues; whatever you wish for yourselves, you should wish the same for others too; when you are dealing with mortal men, imagine that your dealings are with Almighty God.”

One gentleman told me this quotable quote:

“In everything, look before you leap;  
But in charity, leap before you look.”

### **Return from Poona**

On the evening of March 22, 1986, I returned from Poona to Delhi. On the plane I was given the Madras edition of *The Indian Express* to read. On page three, there was a report of the March 21 proceedings in the Tamil Nadu Assembly. The Budget was being debated. A Congress-member, A. Arumogam, rose and made a speech in which he laid emphasis on the need to promote Hindi in the State. Since he was speaking in English, Finance Minister Mr Nedunchezhiyan asked the member if he had any knowledge of Hindi, and he replied: “*Chhota chhota maloom hai.*” (I know a little)

*In order to obtain something, it is not enough for one to desire it. There is a price for everything in life and until one has paid the required price, one will not be able to achieve the object of one's desire.*

The honourable gentleman had in his mind the English word “little” which he translated literally into Hindi as *chhota*, whereas in fact the right Hindi word to express the meaning which he wished to convey would have been *thora*, not *chhota*. This is a very common failing. A person speaks, expressing what is in his mind, and he mistakenly thinks that he is expressing some reality of the outside world. □

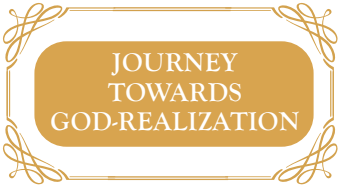


## **CPS Women's Group**

New Delhi

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## GOD'S SIGNS

**M**ULTIPLE verses in the Quran point out that there are signs in the universe for people to understand. For example, consider the following verses of the Quran.

"There are signs in the heavens and the earth for those who believe: in your own creation and all the creatures He has spread about, there are signs for people of sure faith; and in succession of night and day, and in the means of subsistence which God sends down from the skies, giving life thereby to the earth after it had been lifeless, and in the circulation of the winds: [in all this] there are signs for people who use their reason." (45: 3-5)

According to the above verses of the Quran, God requires man to believe in certain hidden realities. To make this easier, He has set up material symbols of these realities in the outside world. Therefore, man has 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. Wind and water show us the mercy of the One Who has created them. The trees and the mountains provide a pointer to God's exquisite beauty.

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 see the divine wisdom that lies behind every object of creation. In all its vastness, the cosmos will serve as a constant reminder of the infinity of God. The earth and the heavens will become manifestations of His splendour; he will come to know the Lord by observing them. □

*If a man opens his mind to the signs of God around him, the universe will become a manifestation of God's splendour. He will discover his Lord by observing them.*

# AFTER MAULANA

*A CPS Members Reminisces*

ON October 4, 2022, I reached the residence of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (Nizamuddin West, New Delhi). When I opened the gate and entered, Maulana's daughter Dr Farida Khanam called out to come upstairs. My steps were faltering. Somehow, I managed to climb the stairs and enter the room of the late Maulana. The person I used to see there was absent. I felt strongly about his absence. My eyes were tearful. A few simple and beloved words of Maulana were echoing in my ears. For example, Hey brother! Look brother! Listen brother! etc. It was like the cry of an aching heart. Along with this, these questions also started to be heard: "Iqbal Sahib! Fayyaz Sahib! Do you have any new news, any new experience?" Once a gentleman said that there is no news. In response to this, Maulana said how can you say this? Every day a new sun rises, the whole universe is moving in high order—isn't that news? As if, according to Maulana, news was not just what was printed in the newspapers, but the real news was the one, from which the sustenance of God-realization is obtained.

I felt that today the questioner is apparently not present in front of us, but the question remains. So that even after Maulana, the process of God-realization continues without stopping. I looked at the empty chair in Maulana's room, where he used to sit, with tears in my eyes, thinking, on one side the empty chair on the other side all the academic works of Maulana. As if the chair and books were saying that his personality is now present in these books.

**At Panch Piran Graveyard:** After this, for the first time, I got the opportunity to visit Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's grave in Basti Hazrat Nizamuddin Cemetery. After entering through the main gate of Panch Piran, there is a strong wall of a mausoleum at the end of the graveyard. Just before that, Maulana's grave is situated. The words *As-Salam Alaikum ya Ahl al-Quboor* (O inhabitants of the grave! peace be upon you) lingered on the tongue.

I approached, ascertained the qiblah direction and performed the funeral prayer. My heart was addressing Maulana saying, Maulana! At present I am by your grave. With the level of knowledge that you have reached, my colleagues and I will have to move forward. At that time, I was in the cemetery in a state of anxiety. Sometimes I would touch the inscription on the grave, sometimes I would look at the grave. As if I



want to hear something from Maulana. But my consciousness said that Maulana, following the Last of the Prophets, clearly told everything about God openly, and showed good will to the last extent.

Now Maulana has separated from us under God's natural law and has left for the journey of the Hereafter. It is our responsibility to carry forward the true understanding of Islam that we have found through Maulana.

Suddenly I remembered a supplication at the time of breaking the fast, which means that the thirst is gone and the veins are watered, and if God wills, rewards are bestowed. I changed the words and started reciting this prayer like this: Maulana's soul has departed, the body was handed over to the grave and it is hoped that God, by His grace, will give Maulana a place in *Jannat al-Firdous*. And I also thought that when Maulana's soul was departing, he himself would have been repeating the same words that my soul has departed and my body has been buried, I hope that my Lord will give a better decision in my favour. As if Maulana's simple life was the "fasting" of the path of God-realization, death became the *iftar* of meeting God for him.

For the sake of searching for the truth and finding the facts, Maulana's bones weakened and the blood of his veins dried up. The reality is that if true religion disappears and formal ritualistic worship remains, there is a time to rediscover the spirit of worship. Maulana Wahiduddin Khan has done the same thing.

God is the source of all hope. The greatest blessing for a true believer is that his whole life is spent in anticipation, but it ends in hope. Because he is going to a 'known place', that is, to the Hereafter and the eternal Paradise created by God. Whether it is God-realization or the awareness of the Hereafter, there is no age bar to enter into serious thought about them. However, Satan causes negligence. He makes people believe that these are not the subjects of youth, these are the subject of old people. This is the greatest ignorance and rebellion of man.

The fact is that the remembrance of death and the preparation for it are becoming less and less common these days. If a preacher or a teacher reminds us of realization of God or concern for the Hereafter, then we should appreciate it. Newspapers or newsmagazines inform

***According to Maulana, news was not just what was printed in the newspapers, but the real news was the one, from which the sustenance of God-realization is obtained.***

us about all the other topics every day, but not about the Hereafter. According to God's plan of creation, the real preparation is for the Hereafter. The Quran says: We chose them (prophets) for a special [purpose]—proclaiming the message of the Hereafter. (38: 46)

Therefore, the Hereafter is a special subject of the person who takes on the responsibility of introducing God to people. The problems of this world are the subject of every person, but the challenges of the Hereafter constitute the subject of Prophet and those who believe after him.

***God is the source of all hope. The greatest blessing for a true believer is that his whole life is spent in anticipation, but it ends in hope.***

This is what I have found from my meetings with Maulana, telephone conversations and his books. He utilized his abilities to the last extent for this purpose. He made it his mission to worship God and call humankind to discover Him. His entire corpus of writings and talks can be understood from this point of view.

**(~Maulana Syed Iqbal Ahmad Omari, Oomerabad, Tamil Nadu) □**



March-April 2024 Issue can be downloaded from:  
[www.cpsglobal.org](http://www.cpsglobal.org)



## **SPIRIT OF ISLAM**

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living

Spirit of Islam bimonthly is being published in digital format only.

A revamped Spirit of Islam website will be launched soon.

To access the archives (January 2013 to August 2023) and to search the archives topic wise, please visit:

<https://spiritofislam.co.in/spiritnew/>

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY SPECIAL

*An Interview with Dr Stuti Malhotra*

*Friday, March 8, 2024, marks the celebration of International Women's Day. This special day recognizes the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The Editorial Team of **SOI** brings for you the enlightening and inspiring story of Dr Stuti Malhotra, a founder member of the CPS International.*



---

***Will you please enlighten our readers with some details about your formative years?***

My dad's family is from Jalandhar in Punjab. I've always been a shy and reserved girl, very emotional and not really into socializing. I used to feel nervous about meeting people, even if they visited our house. Since my mother worked in a Bank, I helped my mom with household tasks. I have a sister, and both of us were taught to be independent and handle things on our own. My mother always says that even if we have many servants, we should still know everything because not knowing makes us vulnerable to being deceived. So, from a young age, I took care of our home.

***What memories of your parents do you cherish?***

During our teenage years, my sister and I were often home alone, supervised by neighbours. Once, a neighbour complained that we were wandering outside when our mom was at work. When Mom came to know about it, she scolded us, but it turned out the neighbours had mistaken us for someone else. Despite the mix-up, we learned to take responsibility and not blame others.

In another incident, my sister and I were playing with the neighbour's kids, and the neighbour's daughter, who was known for being notorious, slapped me. When I went home crying, my mom was there. Instead of asking for details or whose fault it was, she scolded me. Knowing the girl was troublemaker, she said I shouldn't have played with the girl. Mom made it clear she wouldn't fight my battles; I had to handle things on my own. This upbringing taught us to be independent.

My dad, a mechanical engineer at Mother Dairy, always emphasized, "Work is Worship." I witnessed my parents' hard work and sincerity, instilling a strong work ethic in me. At home, we weren't into ritualistic worship; my parents were easygoing. However, as I grew up, I became interested in rituals, superstitions, and other such things in my search for God.

***Please shed some light on your early education and jobs.***

I grew up in Delhi and went to Air Force Bal Bharati School. Later, I studied B. Com at Delhi University. I started working even before finishing my studies. Back in school, I gave tuition to contribute to my family's finances. When I was in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, I taught commerce and Business Studies to 11<sup>th</sup> graders. I began working at Dover Technology Company, a Fortune 500 company, right after my final exams for graduation. Despite not knowing how to use a computer initially, I made a promise to learn and work hard, which I fulfilled. This job taught me a lot about dealing with people, working on computers, using Microsoft Excel, Tally, and various aspects of finance and corporate work. Being the youngest in the organization, everyone took care of me like a kid. I even spent extra time on Saturdays to learn more about computers.

Because I was paid on a daily basis, I had to stay at the office even after everyone else had gone home. I utilized that time to learn about Microsoft Excel and computers. Everyone at work trusted me so much that I would calculate my own salary, and the boss would sign the cheque without checking. It was a big responsibility not to break that trust. I was very careful, but I made a mistake one month and wrote my salary cheque for less money. When I gave it to my mother, she noticed. I couldn't admit my mistake at the office because I was embarrassed of my mistake. So, I had to accept the lower amount that month as a penalty for my error.

***Tell us something about Dr Rajat Malhotra, your husband.***

After working for five years post-college, I married Rajat Malhotra in 2001, whom I consider a blessing from God. His support has been crucial in everything I've achieved. I joined American Express after marriage and worked there for 14 years. Despite being inclined towards spirituality, I pursued a Diploma in Business Administration and IFRS during my job. Later, I pursued my passion for religion by earning a Master's in Religious Studies from Punjabi University, Patiala, followed by a Ph.D. from the Department of Guru Granth Sahib Studies at the same university.

***What did you think about Islam before you met Maulana Wahiduddin Khan?***

I have always been spiritual and on a quest to connect with my Creator. In my search, I tried various things, but I didn't know much about Islam. I only knew the phrase "Allah-u -Akbar" which I thought meant King Akbar was the greatest. This shows my lack of knowledge about Islam. However, the positive aspect was that I was not biased and remained open-minded about other religions.

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

As I mentioned, I've always been open-minded without biases towards Muslims or any other community. I knew Khalid Bhai from my school days. He used to teach English to my cousins at my aunt's place, and I had met him there. Khalid Bhai also visited my home when I was in school. However, the visits stopped for a few years without any particular reason.

After many years one day, when my family was out for lunch, we unexpectedly met Khalid Bhai in the market. By that time, Khalid Bhai had met Maulana. He spoke about Maulana to me. I was desperately seeking answers at that time, feeling restless and frustrated as I couldn't find solutions despite trying everything. This frustration even led to bad temper and conflicts.

When I met Khalid Bhai, he told me about Maulana, and I decided to meet him. It was October 2, 2001. I came with Khalid Bhai to meet Maulana and asked Maulana various questions. Maulana made me feel comfortable, and I didn't hesitate to ask whatever was on my mind. My questions ranged from how to deal with my mom's anger when I came home late from work to why there was so much suffering in the world. I even wondered why all the problems seemed to happen to me. Maulana patiently answered all my questions, giving me his undivided attention. That day, October 2, 2001, became a turning point in my life, and I am grateful to my Almighty for leading me to Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. Maulana explained the Creation Plan of God and introduced me to my Creator. He explained about Heaven and Hell and that all the problems are part of test. After listening to Maulana everything I wanted to know fell in place. For me it was like a jigsaw puzzle getting solved. I was so happy and contented that I had met Maulana Wahiduddin Khan and from then there was no looking back.

### ***How did Maulana influence your way of thinking?***

Maulana gave my life a clear purpose: to spread the message of peace and harmony. He completely transformed my life, guiding me from being a lost soul to living a life centred on God. His teachings helped me change from a crying, unsure person to a strong and confident girl. I went from being a negative thinker to adopting a positive mindset.

The lessons from Maulana wherein I was connected with my Creator helped me sail through my life. I applied his life formulas during my 14 years at American Express. These teachings made my corporate journey smooth, helping me build a good reputation at Amex and form lasting relationships. Maulana has transformed many lives, and I am one of them. Without meeting him, I can't even imagine where I would be today.

### ***How did Maulana encourage you to take up studies again after marriage?***

Maulana broadened my perspective and guided me at every stage of life. I could talk to him about anything, and he would explain things. It's not an exaggeration to say that Maulana loved all of humanity.

I was a vegetarian for some years, and Maulana instructed my husband, Rajat, never to force me to eat non-vegetarian food. Even when we ate together, he made sure there was vegetarian food for me. While food may not have been a big concern for him, it reflects his sensitivity towards people.

When I finished my Masters in Business Administration and IFRS, I wanted to study more. I asked Maulana if I should pursue a Masters in Religious Studies. His face lit up with a big smile, showing how happy he was. After completing that, I asked if I should do a Ph.D. in Sikhism and Islam. His immediate response was, "*Neki aur puch puch*" meaning for a good cause, you don't need to ask." That was my Maulana, always there to guide and support. I used to think I was very sensitive, but Maulana was even more so. It's because when you genuinely care for humanity, you automatically become sensitive towards others.

### ***What inspired you to wholly devote yourself to the CPS Mission?***

As I mentioned, Maulana gave me a life mission to spread the message of peace and harmony. After working for 14 years at American Express, I wanted to quit my job and dedicate myself to the mission. I believed that if God had been kind enough to give me this message, it was my duty to share it with others. Maulana provided me with the purpose

of life, and I couldn't ignore this responsibility. I am grateful to God for blessing me with a supportive husband, Rajat Malhotra, who has always encouraged me. He has taken the responsibility of supporting me, allowing me to dedicate myself to the cause of God.

***Maulana's central teaching was about being connected to God. Kindly share with us the most inspiring teaching of Maulana which has helped you in this connection.***

Maulana helped me connect with my Creator. The idea of reflecting and staying connected with God is crucial for me. It means you can communicate with God all the time, understanding that God is the most powerful while humans are not. I recall Maulana saying, "A believer is someone who is so conscious all the time and thinks twice before doing anything, even if it's right, fearing it might turn out wrong." Maulana made me mindful of God, making me aware that God is watching my every action. He also taught me the importance of looking within and staying humble. My prayer is always that even unconsciously, I shouldn't hurt or trouble anyone.

Maulana always stressed the importance of high thinking and simple living. In a deeper sense, spirituality means thinking deeply, and outwardly, it means living simply. Self-management leads to spirituality. If you master self-management, you become a master of spirituality. According to Maulana, there is no greater wealth than spirituality, and to achieve it, one must learn the art of simple living and high thinking.

Maulana once quoted this one verse from Quran "And those who give to others what has been bestowed upon them with their hearts trembling at the thought that they must return to their Lord; it is they who vie with one another in doing good works and shall be the foremost in doing so." (23: 60-61)

When God showed His reflection to Moses on Mount Tur, the mountain crumbled, and Moses fainted. But in Paradise, people will see because their nature in Paradise will be different. If you want to "see" God, there is a condition: A believer should adopt a personality like Prophet Moses, surrendering and trembling at the thought of catching a glimpse of God. Then one becomes a God-oriented person in the true sense. This thought always keeps me connected with my Creator.



### ***What are the CPS-related tasks you are shouldering post Maulana Saheb's demise?***

I am trying to do a few things. There are few pages of Hindi articles added in Urdu *Al-Risala*. I take care of those pages. I also try to assist Naghma Aapa and Farida Aapa with English translation of Maulana's literature. I also participate in interfaith programmes wherein we gift the Quran and other writings of Maulana. As I have done my Ph.D. in Islam and Sikhism, I am writing a book on the similarity between both religions which will help in building bridges between the two faiths, and there can be interfaith dialogue. I also write for the *Speaking Tree* column in the *Times of India*, Academic journal, and other publications that are part of interfaith efforts.

### ***What is your message to women members of the CPS in particular?***

Maulana has helped women discover their talents and understand their potential. He always said women can spread the message and participate in all forms of activities to introduce the Message of God. He always emphasized that believers are responsible for caring for their health so they can carry out this all-important work. Women, in particular, have incredible potential for multitasking, but they often neglect their health. Maulana stressed that good health is crucial for effective work of introducing the Word of God.

Additionally, Maulana highlighted that everyone has significant potential. It's our responsibility to uncover our talents, understand our expertise, and explore our potential. By doing so, women can become programme makers, approaching tasks more creatively and effectively. I would request all women members of the CPS to please take care of their health as they play an important part in spreading the message of peace to the entire humankind.

### ***What kind of inspiration do you draw from Prof Farida Khanam?***

Prof Farida Khanam has played a crucial role in the mission. She has provided a wealth of material for those who don't know Urdu, making Maulana's ideology understandable to the English audience. Without her translations, people who don't speak Urdu would miss out on the abundance of wisdom written by Maulana. Prof Farida Khanam has played a vital role in translating this material into English, making Maulana's teachings accessible to English-speaking individuals.

Additionally, Prof Farida Khanam has played an important role for women. She has become a role model for hard work, and sincerity. I have witnessed her dedicated and sincere efforts to translate Maulana's works. □

# WOMAN'S POSITION IN ISLAM

*Leading by Example*

**T**HE honourable position accorded by Islam to woman is symbolically demonstrated by the performance of the rite of *sa'i*, as an important part of the pilgrimage to Makkah, made at least once in a lifetime as a religious duty to all believers who can afford the journey. The rite of *sa'i* is performed by running back and forth seven times between Safa and Marwah, two hillocks near the Kabah. This running, enjoined upon every pilgrim, be they rich or poor, literate or illiterate, kings or commoners, is in imitation of the desperate quest of Hajar (Hagar), Abraham's wife, for water to quench the thirst of her crying infant when they arrived in the dry desert country, four thousand years ago, at God's behest, long before there was any such city as Makah. (God's aim in leading Abraham, his wife and child to this barren, inhospitable land was to bring into being a vigorous civilization, would play a revolutionary role led by the last Prophet.) The performance of this rite is a lesson in struggling for the cause of God. It is of the utmost significance that, this was an act performed by a woman. Perhaps there could be no better demonstration of a woman's greatness than God's command to men, literally to follow in her footsteps. □

*There could be no better demonstration of a woman's greatness than God's command to men, literally to follow in her footsteps.*



What we can achieve through the  
**patience and Peace,**  
we cannot achieve by violence.  
What we can achieve gradually,  
we cannot achieve in one go.

# ACKNOWLEDGING THE ROLE OF PROF FARIDA KHANAM

*On the occasion of **International Women's Day**, we bring to the fore some aspects of Prof Farida Khanam (or Farida Aapa, as we fondly call her) from the pen of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan.*

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**A**N individual who has greatly contributed and helped me in my mission is my daughter, Farida Khanam. She was born on May 2, 1952, in Azamgarh. Despite facing health challenges since childhood, she achieved a higher education through extraordinary perseverance. She began by privately preparing for her high school and pre-university exams at Aligarh Muslim University. Subsequently, she successfully passed her BA (English Honors) examination from Delhi College (New Delhi). She pursued her MA in English Literature from Delhi University and further pursued an MA in Islamic Studies from Jamia Millia Islamia (Delhi). Eventually, she obtained her doctorate from Jamia Millia Islamia and later retired as a reader from the Department of Islamic Studies at the same institution.

Farida Khanam's contribution to our mission is immeasurable and cannot be adequately expressed in words. In 1976, when I launched the monthly publication *Al-Risala*, she took on a significant portion of the workload, including article preparation. Since then, she has remained fully dedicated to our mission. She has played a crucial role in the administrative affairs of the *Al-Risala Mission*, ensuring its global dissemination, while my son Saniyasnain Khan has taken charge of its management. Farida Khanam has provided invaluable support in terms of writing.

In my experience, individuals who have contributed to my mission often desire recognition for their efforts. However, in Farida Khanam, I have found a unique quality best described by the saying, "Do good and throw it in the river." Selfless dedication to a mission is a trait that is perhaps more commonly found in women than in men.

One of my Urdu books, *Mazhab Aur Jadeed Challenge*, gained widespread acclaim. The book gained significant popularity and was subsequently translated into multiple languages. The Arabic translation of the book carries the title *Al-Islam Yatahadda*.

There was a persistent demand for an English translation of this book. Many individuals attempted to translate it into English independently but faced difficulties. The main challenge lay in the fact that the book contained numerous excerpts from English sources, which had been translated into Urdu. Translating these passages into other languages posed no issues since the translators could work directly with the provided translations. However, for an English translation, it was necessary to have access to the original English texts to avoid the inaccuracies of translating from English to English twice.

Numerous English scholars who expressed interest in translating the book approached me, requesting access to the original English texts. However, the challenge was that during the writing of *Mazhab Aur Jadeed Challenge*, I had consulted various books over a considerable period. I had gathered these books from different libraries and personal collections of scholars, and I had lost track of the exact sources of the quotations. It became apparent to me that translating the book into English was not feasible due to this issue.

***Selfless dedication to a mission is a trait that is perhaps more commonly found in women than in men.***

Remarkably, Farida Khanam took the initiative to address this challenge without my prompting. She tirelessly began searching for the original English texts in various libraries, day and night. Her dedicated efforts extended to libraries such as the Aligarh Independent Library, Delhi Public Library, Delhi University, and other university libraries. She diligently obtained the complete citations and original excerpts from all the required books.

Her motivation in this regard sparked when she received an extensive list from Mr. Ikramuddin Ahmed (IAS), who had read my book *Mazhab Aur Jadeed Challenge* and compiled a detailed list of the relevant books spanning several pages. Although I couldn't provide her with those books, the list served as a catalyst for Farida Khanam. She embarked on a quest to search for these books in various libraries, armed with the provided list. Eventually, she managed to acquire all the English excerpts and proceeded to translate the entire book, incorporating these excerpts. This translation underwent several stages before it was finally completed and printed in Delhi in 1985. The translated book was titled *God Arises* and spanned 288 pages.

This undeniably serves as a remarkable illustration of selfless cooperation, and it appears to me that such a flawless and selfless

contribution can only be made by a woman. It seems that the subtle abilities required for such selfless cooperation may have been bestowed upon women exclusively by the Creator.

I would like to recount another incident that took place during a trip to Switzerland in July 2002. In collaboration with various Western countries, an international organization called the Nuclear Disarmament Forum was established. Within the framework of this organization, an international conference was held in the historic city of Zug, Switzerland, which brought together professors and highly educated individuals from different countries. I had the privilege of attending this conference upon their invitation.

On the morning of July 29, Andrei Bykov, the President's spokesman, made an announcement regarding the need for a document on International Peace. The intention was to publish it in multiple languages and disseminate it globally. Subsequently, he formed three groups comprising conference participants, instructing them to convene separately and work on producing their respective documents. The plan was to select and present one of these documents in the upcoming meeting scheduled for the following day. Each group engaged in collaborative efforts for two days and handed their documents over to Andrei Bykov.

Around ten o'clock at night, as I was alone in my room preparing for bed after performing the *Isha* prayers, Andrei Bykov unexpectedly entered. His countenance betrayed a sense of sorrow. "All three groups have submitted their documents to me, but none of them meet my expectations," he lamented. He expressed his distress regarding what he would present to the attendees in the morning meeting. "In my desperation, I went to the nearby church and prayed," he confided. "It finally dawned on me that only you can accomplish this task. You have the ability to create the document I desire." With that, he informed me that he would see me again in the morning, firmly believing that by then, I would have prepared the desired document. I was taken aback and unable to provide a response. Eventually, he left my room, leaving me alone with my thoughts.

***It seems that the subtle abilities required for selfless cooperation may have been bestowed upon women exclusively by the Creator.***

During this trip, my daughter Farida Khanam was also accompanying me, staying in a separate room at the same hotel. I called her on the

telephone and narrated the story of Andrei Bykov. I expressed my helplessness in achieving what renowned professors and English experts couldn't accomplish. I felt utterly powerless in the situation. However, Farida Khanam responded with a completely different perspective. "We have the entire night," she declared. "We will pray to God and stay awake to prepare it." After an hour of her insistence, I finally acquiesced.

Subsequently, I sat down with Farida Khanam, engaging in a discussion about the document. Eventually, we finalized its outline. Farida Khanam took charge of writing, with me contributing my thoughts in both English and Urdu, which she then transformed into English. This process consumed several hours, and eventually, a few-page article took shape. However, by the time it was completed, dawn had begun to break.

Following this, we both performed the *Fajr* prayers. Afterward, over morning tea, Farida Khanam proceeded to the conference office, where she typed the three-page document on the computer. Simultaneously, she printed multiple copies and promptly handed them over to Andrei Bykov.

***The selfless contribution of Farida Khanam exemplifies the remarkable natural miracle ingrained in a woman's character as an inherent instinct.***

After reviewing the document, Andrei Bykov returned to my room with a noticeable sense of delight. Clutching a copy of the paper, he exclaimed, "This is exactly the kind of document I desired. I will present it in today's session, secure its approval, and disseminate it worldwide." He further expressed his admiration, stating, "I have never come across

a document on peace that is as clear and concise as this one."

This document finds its place within my 136-page book titled *The Ideology of Peace*, published in 2003. It served as the initial catalyst for gaining international recognition for my perspective on global peace and the efforts I had undertaken. Subsequent incidents unfolded, culminating in the honour of receiving the International Peace Prize in Switzerland on October 12, 2002. The award was presented by former Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev. Detailed accounts of this event can be found in the travelogue *MY JOURNEY TO SWITZERLAND* (<https://cpsglobal.org/books/my-journey-switzerland>). The selfless contribution of Farida Khanam exemplifies the remarkable natural miracle ingrained in a woman's character as an inherent instinct.

One of the significant aspects of Farida Khanam's role in my life revolves around our daily discussions on scientific and religious subjects. These discussions are not mere casual conversations; rather, they form an integral part of our intellectual evolution. I am grateful for God's grace that I have never experienced intellectual stagnation, as the process of my intellectual development continues to unfold. Undoubtedly, one of the sources fuelling this ongoing growth is the scholarly exchange I engage in with Farida Khanam on a daily basis. For this reason, I often refer to Farida Khanam as my intellectual assistant.

An example highlighting our intellectual collaboration can be found in the book, *Woman: Architect of Humanity*. Towards the end of the book, I added a short essay in the section titled "Dedication." In this article, I emphasized the sacrificial role played by Hajar, mother of Prophet Ishmael in ancient times, which marked the beginning of a new era in human history. I further expressed the need for a woman to step forward and assume a similar role in contemporary times.

After completing the article, I shared it with Farida Khanam, as is our usual practice. Upon reading it, Farida Khanam expressed her opinion that focusing solely on one woman for ushering in the second era was not appropriate.

She suggested making it more inclusive and relatable, so that every woman could see herself as the intended recipient and understand the role she too must play. Taking her advice into consideration, I revised the text accordingly.

In my personal experience, I have found that women are particularly suited for these enriching discussions. With their innate qualities, they possess the ability to excel in such endeavors. Farida Khanam's long-standing involvement with the *Al-Risala Mission* was not a simple matter for her. Throughout this journey, she encountered numerous challenges and faced adverse circumstances. However, her dedication to the mission never wavered. In observing Farida Khanam's experiences, I have discovered a crucial attribute of women: unwavering loyalty. A relationship driven solely by rationality cannot endure for long.

***I am grateful for God's grace that I have never experienced intellectual stagnation, as the process of my intellectual development continues to unfold. One source that fuels this growth is the scholarly exchange I engage in with Farida Khanam on a daily basis.***

Alongside intellectual fulfilment, a deep emotional commitment to the cause is indispensable. This fervent dedication ensures that the bond with the objective perseveres till the end, despite any grievances that may arise.

## CONCLUSION

Women possess a natural inclination towards emotions, a characteristic that is relatively uncommon in men. When there are no significant barriers, women quickly form an emotional bond with a goal or mission. This emotional attachment remains steadfast and enduring. This selfless connection serves as the strongest guarantee for success in any endeavour, and women exhibit this type of selflessness more frequently than men.

Based on my knowledge and experiences, it is likely that every woman shares similar qualities to what I have observed in Farida Khanam. Each woman is born with inherent potential, akin to Farida's attributes. However, it is true that not every woman can attain the same level as Farida. Nevertheless, the responsibility lies with all men to recognize this reality. It is commonplace for men to view women merely as objects of pleasure or household support. Consequently, they fail to realize the innate potential of women. What remains unrecognized cannot be utilized.

Women are a precious asset to every man, but this capital lies in potential form. It is the responsibility of men to discover and nurture this potential, transforming it from possibility into reality. □



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# TOWARDS GLOBAL PEACE

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



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## ISLAM AND PEACE

**I**N the tenth chapter of the Quran, there is a verse which says, “God calls man to the home of peace, and He guides whom He wills to a straight path.” (10: 25)

This and other similar verses tell us that the goal of Islam is peace in this world as well as in the next. Those who continue to strive for peace, along with those who finally attain it, are of the elect, and will be welcomed in the perfect ‘home of peace’ in the world to come.

Islam sees all human beings as the creatures of the Almighty—a concept which brings them all on to one level. When God is given His rightful place in the world, people are at once divested of those features which distinguish one individual from another, placing them higher or lower in the human hierarchy. Then all greatness is God’s and all human beings become His servants on a plane of equality. The following is a discussion on Islamic approach to establish peace.

### **Non-Interference**

An Islamic principle intended to promote peace is that of non-interference. This principle, if universally applied, can produce the same divine order as is evident in the farthest reaches of the universe, where the stars revolve eternally in their own orbits, no star ever encroaching upon the orbit of another. What holds good at the astronomical level also holds good at the level of human society. That is, order prevails when everyone functions within their own sphere, taking care never to trespass upon the domains of their fellow human beings.

This, unfortunately, is a principle which is not sufficiently adhered to. When America gained independence, people took to the streets to celebrate the occasion. A person went out to celebrate his country's freedom from foreign domination in his own particular way. He strutted exuberantly down the street, swinging his arms in a carefree manner and totally ignoring all other pedestrians. Eventually, he hit a passer-by on the nose.

The passer-by was enraged and said: "What is this foolhardiness? What makes you walk in this frivolous manner, swinging your hands about in this way?" "America is free," the man replied, "I'm free to do what I want and walk as I wish." "Well," replied the passer-by, "your freedom ends where my nose begins."

The response of the passer-by was, in fact, the voice of man's true nature, reasserting universal norms and calling out for an end to man's deviation from them. The law of nature is such that the universe has functioned impeccably for billions of years, no star or planet ever having left its orbit to enter that of another. It is man's instinctive wish that he should be guided by such a law. The remonstrance of the American passer-by was simply an expression of this desire.

In a universe which has been forcibly subjugated to the will of God, man is privileged to have a will of his own. While the entire universe conforms to God's will, each part functioning in exemplary harmony with all other parts, man misuses his freedom, straying from the path that God has laid down for him. The problems which he encounters in life are part of the price which he has to pay for his God-given freedom. All his trials and tribulations are ultimately traceable to his own wilful deviations.

### **Principle of Avoidance**

One of Islam's most important principles is that of avoidance, that is, keeping oneself aloof from avoidable confrontations. A good analogy is our obedience to the traffic control system, which prevents accidents by ruling that vehicles must keep to their own side of the road, never speed head-on towards each other, nor suddenly cross the path of another. Even far off the ground, collisions could occur if the principle of avoidance were not invoked. Imagine two jet-airliners approaching each other at an altitude of 30,000 feet. Unless one of them received instructions to fly at, say, 35,000 feet, disaster would be inevitable.

The safety rules which apply to traffic embody the very principle which, if implemented, would relieve our everyday existence of so many

unnecessary clashes. Before this can happen, this principle should have to be universally recognized and adopted.

There is no gainsaying the fact that our present world is one of competition, with everyone relentlessly pursuing his own ends. This being so, the only safe onward journey will be one in which people steer clear of one another whenever a clash of interests seems imminent. It is not in our hands to put an end to all such rivalry with its inevitable confrontations, for that is all part of the divine scheme of things. The

*In a universe which has been forcibly subjugated to the will of God, man is privileged to have a will of his own.*

sole remedy human beings themselves can offer is the scrupulous avoidance of path which is directly confrontational. That is the only way in which disaster may be averted.

In the life of the Prophet, we find a number of salutary examples, such as the decision he made when he learned that the great warrior Khalid was advancing upon him with his army (AD 629). A pitched battle seemed inevitable, but the Prophet, who was at that point approaching Hudaibiyah on his way to

Makkah from Madinah, promptly took his men by a different route, choosing an unfamiliar path well away from the main thoroughfare along which Khalid and his troops were advancing. By this simple stratagem, he avoided what would certainly have been a disastrous confrontation. We would do well, in the highly competitive world of today, to follow the Prophet's example, in order to secure a safe and peaceful existence for all humankind.

### **Converting Negative into Positive**

In a verse of the Quran (42: 37), true believers are stated to be willing to forgive when they are angered, or, to put it in another way, they convert their anger into forgiveness. This is an important part of the teachings of Islam, and it has been described in the Quran in different ways. For instance, at one place, it is stated that 'good and evil are not equal'. (41: 34)

If we reflect upon the whole complex system according to which our world functions, we come to the conclusion that it is essentially one of conversion. Through the conversion of matter, energy is created. Through the conversion of the soil's nutrients, trees are grown. The cow eats grass, and the grass is converted by it into milk. Indeed, all kinds of progress depend upon this principle of conversion in the universe.

Man, likewise is subject to these very processes. The lives of individuals as well as the cohesion of society are dependent upon this universal principle. In the case of true believers, the conversion is of anger into forgiveness. This is achieved by extinguishing the fire of revenge within. Their hatred is then converted into love. In short, on all occasions when one reacts negatively to the misdeeds of one's fellow human beings, one must make every endeavour to take this negative reaction and convert it into positive action.

This principle was exemplified in many ways throughout the life of the Prophet of Islam. For instance, he had good reason to regard the Makkans as objects of his vengeance, for they stubbornly opposed his message, forced him to leave his native city and subsequently had skirmishes with the Muslims without there having been any provocation on the part of himself or his Companions. But when Makkah was conquered, he did not treat them as war criminals which was, in effect, what they were, but, instead, forgave them unconditionally and unilaterally. The Prophet did not wreak his revenge on a single one of them.

*On all occasions when one reacts negatively to the misdeeds of one's fellow human beings, one must make every endeavour to take this negative reaction and convert it into positive action.*

### **Non-Aggression**

Another important Islamic principle calculated to guarantee a peaceful society is that of refraining from all offensive action. In Islam, war is to be waged only as a matter of defence, and that, too, when it is quite unavoidable. The Quran permits to fight only against attackers, so that we have no right to wage war against anyone who is not on the offensive.

The Prophet of Islam himself engaged directly in warfare on only three occasions, at Badr, Uhud and Hunain. In each case, he was forced into fighting. The Battle of Badr took place when the Makkan army advanced upon Madinah with the avowed intention of slaying the Prophet and his Companions. Only then did the Prophet ready himself and his Companions for defensive action. The battle of Uhud, which takes its name from a mountain on the periphery of Madinah, was fought between the Makkans and the Muslims of Madinah. The fact that the fighting took place on the borders of Madinah, which is a 300-mile march from Makkah, is a clear indication of the defensive nature of the engagement as far as the Madinans were concerned. For the Prophet, there was no way out but to defend himself.

The third battle took place at Hunain, when the Prophet was on his way from Makkah to Taif. The path to Taif lay between two mountains, and there, under cover of the mountainous terrain, the enemy lay in wait. Finding themselves suddenly ambushed, the Prophet and his Companions were forced to fight in self-defence.

Islam aims at fashioning souls which are God-oriented; which find God so great that everything else pales into insignificance; a soul which comes to possess such boundless peace of mind that nothing can disturb it; which are totally free of negative reaction; which can turn everything in this world, whether far or near, into food for more profound thought which, finally can never become a prey to worldliness. This truth is aptly illustrated by this *Hadith* of the Prophet of Islam.

***Islam aims at fashioning souls which are God-oriented; which find God so great that everything else pales into insignificance.***

*"Nine things the Lord has commanded me:*

*Fear of God in private and in public;*

*Justness, whether in anger or in calmness;*

*Moderation in both poverty and affluence;*

*That I should join hands with those who break away from me;*

*And give to those who deprive me;*

*And forgive those who wrong me;*

*And that my silence should be meditation;*

*And my words remembrance of God;*

*And my vision keen observation." □*



# STAYING COOL

## *The Road to Success*

**T**HE most delicate and treacherous part of space journeys is when the spacecraft returns to the earth's atmosphere. Take the case of the Apollo-8 spacecraft, for instance. Before the capsule touched down on December 27, 1968, it had to negotiate a precipitous return to the earth's atmosphere. Because of the earth's gravity – seven times that of outer space – the speed of the spacecraft soared, reaching an astronomical 39,000 kilometres per hour. Because of its extraordinary speed, the heat of the spacecraft rose to terrifying proportions. Air friction started heating up the space vessel as soon as it entered the earth's atmosphere. Soon it became literally red hot, reaching a temperature of 3,300 degrees Celsius.

No animal can survive at such a temperature. How was it, then, that the three American astronauts aboard the craft were able to remain unaffected by the blazing inferno that had been built up around them? The reason they were able to return safely to earth was that the spacecraft in which they were traveling had been constructed in such a way that its interior would not be affected by the severity of conditions on the outside. In spite of the incredible heat on the outside, inside the craft the temperature was just 21 degrees Celsius. Imagine – 3,300 degrees on the outside; 21 degrees on the inside.

***If there is hate and anger directed against one from the outside, one must not let such feelings get inside one. Instead, one should cultivate feelings of pardon and forgiveness in one's heart.***

This event from the realm of space travel has an important lesson to teach us in our lives on earth. Time and again, we run into highly charged situations in life. Outwardly, it seems impossible to go on. There is only one way to

survive under such conditions, and that is by not letting oneself be inwardly affected by one's outward situation. In such moments, one ought to suppress one's emotions and keep one's feelings under control. Only then will one be able to maintain one's inward cool. One will not be able to survive crises in life if one lets one's inward condition become as highly charged as one's outward situation. If, on the other hand, one remains inwardly calm and composed, one will be able to survive the heat of external circumstances, and safely reach one's destination.

If there is hate and anger directed against one from the outside, one must not let such feelings get inside one. Instead, one should cultivate feelings of pardon and forgiveness in one's heart. If the whole world wishes one evil, still one should only have good feelings for others. There is no other way of succeeding in life. If one adopts the same feelings as one's outside environment, the challenges of life are sure to be more than one can bear. □

*One will not be able to survive crises in life if one lets one's inward condition become as highly charged as one's outward situation.*

### **MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN:**

In developing our personality, the most important thing for us is to broaden our mind by awakening our consciousness. To awaken our consciousness, we require three things—study, observation and intellectual exchange with other people.



Books are the greatest source of knowledge we can study that we have, the world of nature is the greatest source of knowledge that we can observe, and in the matter of intellectual learning, it is essential for us to form the habit of learning from others, and continue in this learning process. A spouse is an immediate intellectual partner. From this point of view, marriage is a great opportunity for intellectual development, as both people can interact with each other and make intellectual progress together. Intellectual development is essential for everyone. Marriage offers just such an ideal opportunity for intellectual partnership.

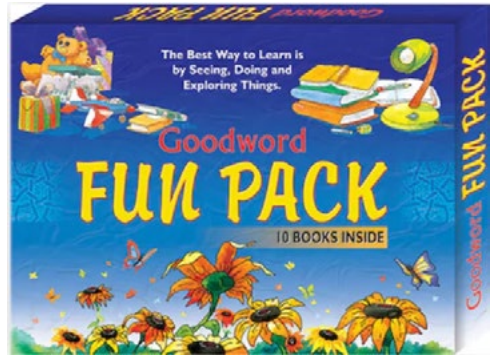
# CHILDREN'S CORNER

Name of the collection:  
**GOODWORD FUN PACK**

Name of authors: **Siddiqa Juma, Dr Saniyasnain Khan, Harun Yahya, Amatullah AlMarwani, Maryam Kinte, Khalina Khalili**

ISBN: **9788178985886**

Number of books: **A set of 10 books.**



This gift box contains books that children will love to read. It stimulates listening skills, helps establish reading readiness, and promotes a secure, satisfying Islamic self-image. It is meant for younger children, but older readers can also use it. Most importantly teachers and parents can use this as a resource for teaching about the purpose of Islamic values. The following is a list of 10 books included in the beautiful set:

- **BEAVERS: SKILLFUL DAM WORKERS**
- **THE WORLD OF OUR LITTLE FRIENDS: THE ANTS**
- **ZAAHIR AND JAMEL THE CAMEL: BELIEVE IN ALLAH**
- **ZAAHIR AND JAMEL THE CAMEL: HAJJ**
- **GARDEN OF ISLAM: THE CAMEL'S JOURNEY**
- **LEARNING ABOUT ISLAM**
- **THE PROPHET MUSA AND THE KIND-HEARTED QUEEN: COLORING BOOK**
- **MY RAMADHAN ACTIVITY BOOK**
- **SLEEPERS IN THE CAVE: COLORING BOOK**
- **DOT-TO-DOT FUN: ANIMALS ENTERED THE ARK**



# CPS NEWSLETTER

Women members of the CPS family regularly livestream dialogue on various Islamic topics. This is the YouTube link of a latest conversation between Senior CPS Members, Dr Safeena Tabassum and Ms Fahmida Khan on “How can I spread the message of peace and spirituality?”

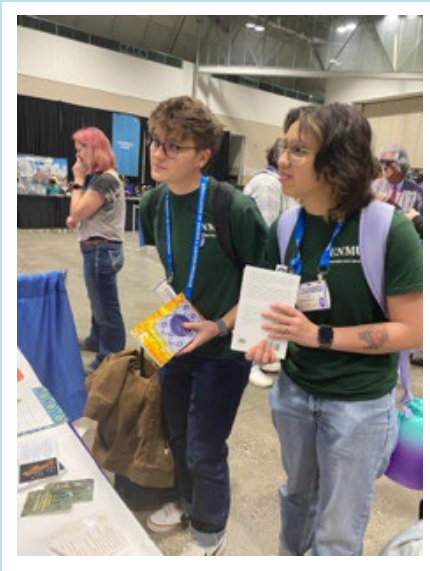
<https://youtu.be/wTYYsr33ZsQ?si=iwYPnPn39qFQIVU8>

## **\*Press Release from CPS USA Team\***

“The Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP)” Annual Conference & Book Fair, a highly anticipated event celebrating literature and connections, took place in Kansas City, Missouri, from February 7-10, 2024.

With a consistent theme of honouring writers and their works while fostering a love for reading, writing, and reflection, the conference welcomed diverse participants, including the Center for Peace and Spirituality, USA (CPS USA).

CPS USA made a notable contribution by distributing 20 boxes of the Quran translations and the book Quranic Wisdom. Their participation underscores the event’s spirit of inclusivity and cultural exchange.



Goodword Book participated in the World Book Fair held at New Delhi.



## **Mumbai CPS Team Meeting Report**

Date: January 28 January 2024

Venue: CPS Mumbai member Yasmin Shaikh's home in Mumbai.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Ms Reshma Shaikh. She runs an NGO in Mumbai. She is keen to understand CPS ideology. Mr Sripal Vimalchand Kothari was also in attendance. He shared many important things on life. Fehmida Aapa from Delhi CPS team shared her spiritual journey.



CPS Delhi Member Dr Rajat Malhotra gave a presentation to students at the **Margins to Mainstream Foundation** in Old Delhi on February 03, 2024, discussing the topic of “Hudaybiyyah Wisdom.” The talk explored the historical importance of the Hudaybiyyah Treaty, emphasizing its significant impact on Islamic history.

Furthermore, practical insights derived from this historic treaty were shared, aiming to offer lessons applicable to daily life for achieving success. Following the presentation, students engaged in a Q&A session and received spiritual literature as gifts.



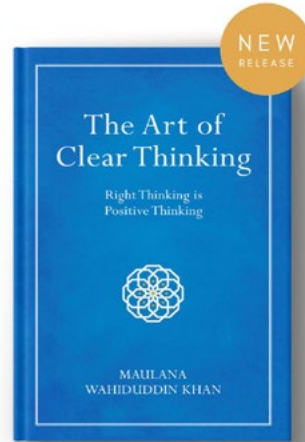
A Blogger from Bangladesh visited Goodword Book Stall in book fair. He was enthralled by the fact that free distribution of Quran is happening in India while back in his country people are of the opinion that Muslims here live in fear and Islam is crushed. However, what he observed he said has forced him to think otherwise. Here is a link of his post:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/dr5BMjjodPBALjbm>

## Book Release

Right thinking is man's greatest action.  
If we think right, we will do right, and  
succeed, both in this world and the Hereafter.  
This book guides readers toward right thinking.

DOWNLOAD AT [CPSGLOBAL.ORG](https://www.cpsglobal.org)



Download: <https://www.cpsglobal.org/books/art-clear-thinking>

Abdulrazak Gurnah, the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature 2021 and author of ten novels visited the Goodword Book Stall at the Book Fair held at Kolkata.

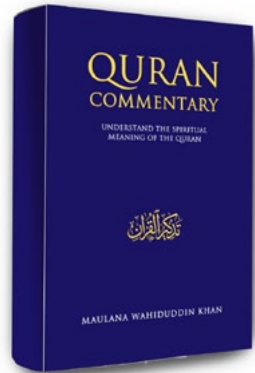


# THE WORD OF GOD

*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**



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## THE NIGHT OF DESTINY

***We sent it [Quran] down on the Night of Destiny. And what will make you comprehend what the Night of Destiny is? The Night of Destiny is better than a thousand months; on that night, the angels and the Spirit<sup>a</sup> come down by the permission of their Lord with His decrees for all matters; it is all peace till the break of dawn.*** (97: 1-5)

A particular night of the year (perhaps some night in the last days of the month of *Ramadan*) is the night of decisions by God. Certain tasks have to be performed in the course of the year in connection with the administration of the world, and the angels descend to the earth to arrange for them to be carried out. On a similar particular night, the revelation of the Quran began.

<sup>a</sup>This refers to the Angel Gabriel.

It seems that on that night there is an abundance of angels on the earth. Those who are spiritually aroused are influenced by this atmosphere and, as a result, they become imbued with a spirituality which enhances the value of their religious deeds at that time as compared to such deeds as are performed in ordinary circumstances.

The Prophet Muhammad divided the month of fasting into three parts. He called the first ten days 'blessings', the next ten days 'forgiveness' and the last ten days as 'Freedom from Hellfire.' The Prophet also said, 'The best days of this world are the last ten days of *Ramadan*.' Therefore, during the last ten days the Prophet's family would join him

in what they called, 'the tightening of his belt'—in its figurative sense—indicating total seriousness of devotion.

For this reason, as the month draws towards the last ten days, the worshippers give more time to prayers, give more in charity and read as much as possible from the Quran, beseeching their Lord for His mercy and forgiveness.

When the Prophet was asked by his wife, Aishah, what one's prayer should be if one finds the Night of Destiny, *Lailat-ul-Qadr*, he taught her this simple prayer: *Allahumma innaka afuwwun, tuhibbul afuwa, fa afuanni*. (O God, You are forgiving, You love forgiveness, so forgive me.)

### **QURANIC VERSES ON FASTING**

***The month of Ramadan is the month when the Quran was sent down as guidance for humankind with clear proofs of guidance and the criterion by which to distinguish right from wrong. Therefore, whoever of you is present in that month, let him fast; but he who is ill or on a journey shall fast a similar number of days later on. God desires ease for you, not hardship. He desires you to fast the whole month, so that you may glorify Him for His having guided you and so that you may be grateful to Him.*** (2:185)

Fasting serves as training for two things at the same time—inculcating the spirit of thanksgiving and instilling the fear of God in the heart of the believer. Food and water are great blessings of God, yet man is incapable of attaching due importance to them. While fasting, he goes hungry and thirsty the whole day, then at sunset, in a state of extreme hunger and thirst, he eats and drinks to his fill. He then realizes through his own experience how great are the blessings of God which are present in the form of food and water. This experience produces boundless feelings of gratitude towards his Lord. On the other hand, fasting also serves as a form of training for a God-fearing life, which entails abstaining from all kinds of sins and evil deeds, which God has forbidden. A total abstention from food and drink from dawn until sunset is an exercise in making God one's guardian. The entire life of the believer is a life of fasting. During the month of Ramadan, he receives his training by temporarily, abstaining from certain things, so that for the rest of his life he may permanently renounce all those things of which God disapproves. The Quran is a great blessing of God to man. It is through fasting that man enables himself to be truly thankful to God, and to lead a godly life in accordance with the teachings enshrined in the Quran. □



# 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.***

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***What is the special relation between the Quran and fasting during Ramadan?***

The Quran states, "The month of *Ramadan* is the month when the Quran was sent down as guidance for humankind with clear proofs and criterion by which to distinguish right from wrong". (2: 185) This shows the close link between the month of *Ramadan* and Quran. The Quran is a reward to His servants from God and fasting is acknowledgement of the reward. Through fasting man makes himself worthy of being thankful to God.

The main purpose of fasting is to go through the Quran with complete focus and dedication. This is a very serious study. So, believers are required to stay away from all other activities and concentrate their minds totally on the study of the Quran so that they are able to discover the deep meaning in the Quran.

***How can we discover the deeper meaning of the Quran?***

According to a *Hadith*, "The wonders of Quran shall never cease." (*Sunan al-Darimi*) From this we understand that just as taking more and more water from an ocean doesn't dry it up; similarly, continually reflecting on the Quran keeps unfolding its deeper meaning.

Materialists think on the lines of "more and more money" but the mindset of a believer should be "more and more wisdom from the Quran." In other words, if you dedicate the month of *Ramadan* to the study of Quran, you shall discover newer meanings. Taking us away from the routine of life, fasting prepares one for the study of the Quran. And when a person studies the Quran with a well-prepared

mind, contemplating on the verses, he can understand the teachings of the Quran in greater depth and discover the deeper meaning of the Quran.

### ***Can you give an example of discovering the deeper meaning of the Quran?***

I think the following verse of the Quran opens a whole new meaning to the reader: "Believers, fasting has been prescribed for you, just as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard yourself against evil". (2: 183)

This verse highlights that fasting is a universal practice and it is a common element across religions. And ever since man inhabited earth, prophets were sent to guide him, and they enjoined their community to observe fasts. When man observes a fast today, he gets connected to a long history.

When I understood this, I was gripped by the realization of this thrilling idea that those who observe fasts in the month of *Ramadan* become a part of that divine chain which begins from the first pious person and ends with the last man of history! The realization that you have got connected with the list of those pious and God-fearing men who led a rightly guided life is an overwhelming experience.

### ***Is overeating during sehri desirable?***

Those who indulge in overeating to curb the feeling of thirst and hunger during *sehri*, in effect do not observe the fast as they do not allow the purpose of *Ramadan* to be met. Let me clarify this with the following instance from the life of the Prophet.

When the Prophet Muhammad was returning from Taif, he was overwhelmed with sorrow at the response he received from the leaders of Taif. The people of Taif ordered their children to throw stones at the Prophet Muhammad to drive him out of the city, causing him to bleed profusely.

It was in this state of being wounded, hungry and thirsty, that God suggested turning the valley of Makkah into gold for him but the Prophet Muhammad replied, "No, my Lord, but let me have enough to eat and be hungry on alternate days; then when I am hungry, I shall make supplication to You and make mention of You, and when I have enough, I shall praise and thank You." (*Musnad Ahmad*)

From this *Hadith*, it can be drawn that the feeling of hunger and thirst serve the purpose of inculcating sensitivity within a person by making him experience helplessness. This develops piety in a person.



### ***Why is Ramadan called a month of patience?***

In the *Hadith*, *Ramadan* is called the month of patience. (*Musnad Ahmad*) This month is meant to serve as a training course in patience. Patience enables the individual to lead a successful life in this world by keeping his negative feelings under control.

Negative feelings, it must be remembered, present the greatest obstacle to human progress. Fasting is the pious way to solve the biggest of human problems.

### ***How is Ramadan a month of sympathy?***

The Prophet said: The month of *Ramadan* is the month of sympathy. (*Shu'abul Iman*) Fasting teaches a man what basic human requirements are. It tells him what hunger and thirst are. Those who do not get a chance to feel hungry or thirsty, experience these feelings during this month when they fast. For a few hours, the rich also come to live in the same conditions in which a poor man lives. *Ramadan* is, therefore, a process of rejuvenation of a believer. He can look forward to applying the lessons learnt during *Ramadan* to everyday life.

A person who has fasted in the true spirit can count on drawing upon the reservoir of fortitude that he has built up, on the power of *dua*, of patience and gratefulness when he is faced with any trying situation.

### ***Does a believer who fasts in the best of form and spirit contribute positively to the society?***

Contributing positively to society is possible for a believer by universalization of the spirit of fasting. Every person in this world who eats, and drinks should acknowledge the act of eating and drinking as exceptional, as if God Almighty were directly sending down these blessings to him.

One must make the spirit of fasting a universal realization for oneself. That is, the profound feeling of God being the Giver and one's own self being the 'taker' should inspire him to become a 'giver' member of the society. That is, one should strive to give to others what one is receiving from the Creator.

### ***What is Laylat-ul Qadr?***

One of the special features of *Ramadan* is the '*Lailat-al-Qadr*' in Arabic. Its English equivalent is the Night of Destiny. It is also referred to as the 'Night of Decisions' and God takes decisions for the coming year on this night. This night falls on one of the last ten nights of *Ramadan*. Great

importance is attached to this night and the Quran calls it 'better than a thousand months.' (The Quran, 97:1-3)

Once Aishah (The wife of the Prophet), asked the Prophet as to how she should pray during *Lailat-ul-Qadr*. The Prophet gave this prayer: "O God, You are the Forgiver, You love to forgive Your servants, so You forgive me." (*Sunan Ibn Majah*)

The greatest thing to ask God is forgiveness. It is forgiveness which leads one to eternal Paradise. Therefore, one should seek forgiveness from God Almighty on this night.

### ***What is the essence of the festival of Eid after fasting for a whole month?***

As fasting does not imply mere hunger and thirst, the day of *Eid al-Fitr* does not merely imply feasting and celebration. It should rather strengthen in us the right perspective of the ephemeral nature of this worldly life and the imminent delights of the Hereafter that are sure to follow.

This should be truly manifested in the thankfulness we present to the Creator by offering prayers and by giving more in charity to the needy. As the period of fasting is spent in self-preparation and spiritual development, the day of *Eid* should inculcate in the believer a new spirit and a renewed sense of zeal and determination towards the journey to the life Hereafter. The message of *Eid* fosters the rekindling of our faith and the opening of new vistas and an entirely fresh and innovative approach to the struggles of life which would culminate by the grace of God with the rewards of everlasting Paradise.

### ***Does Eid help in strengthening the social bonds among people?***

The occasion of this festival provides, above all, a valuable opportunity to extend the hand of friendship to people from other communities and remove misunderstandings often prevalent in the society. Muslims should forge friendship with their neighbours, friends, and colleagues to foster harmony and the spirit of sharing.

*Eid* provides a God-given opportunity for social interaction between different communities. By sharing our happiness with them we can go a long way in easing the tension between people of all faiths. The establishment of cordial relations among different communities will result in prosperity of the community and the nation at large. □

WE ASKED CHATGPT TO OFFER  
SOME INFORMATION ABOUT CPS  
INTERNATIONAL, NEW DELHI.  
THIS IS THE RESPONSE.

The Center for Peace and Spirituality (CPS) is a renowned organization dedicated to promoting peace, harmony, and spiritual enlightenment.

Founded by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, CPS aims to foster understanding and cooperation among people of diverse backgrounds and faiths. The center's activities include interfaith dialogues, seminars, and conferences that encourage mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. CPS also emphasizes the importance of personal and spiritual growth, offering guidance and resources for individuals seeking a deeper connection with themselves and the world around them. Through its inclusive and compassionate approach, CPS serves as a beacon of peace, inspiring positive change and unity in society.

**Turn to God in times of ease and He will  
turn to you in times of difficulty.**

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