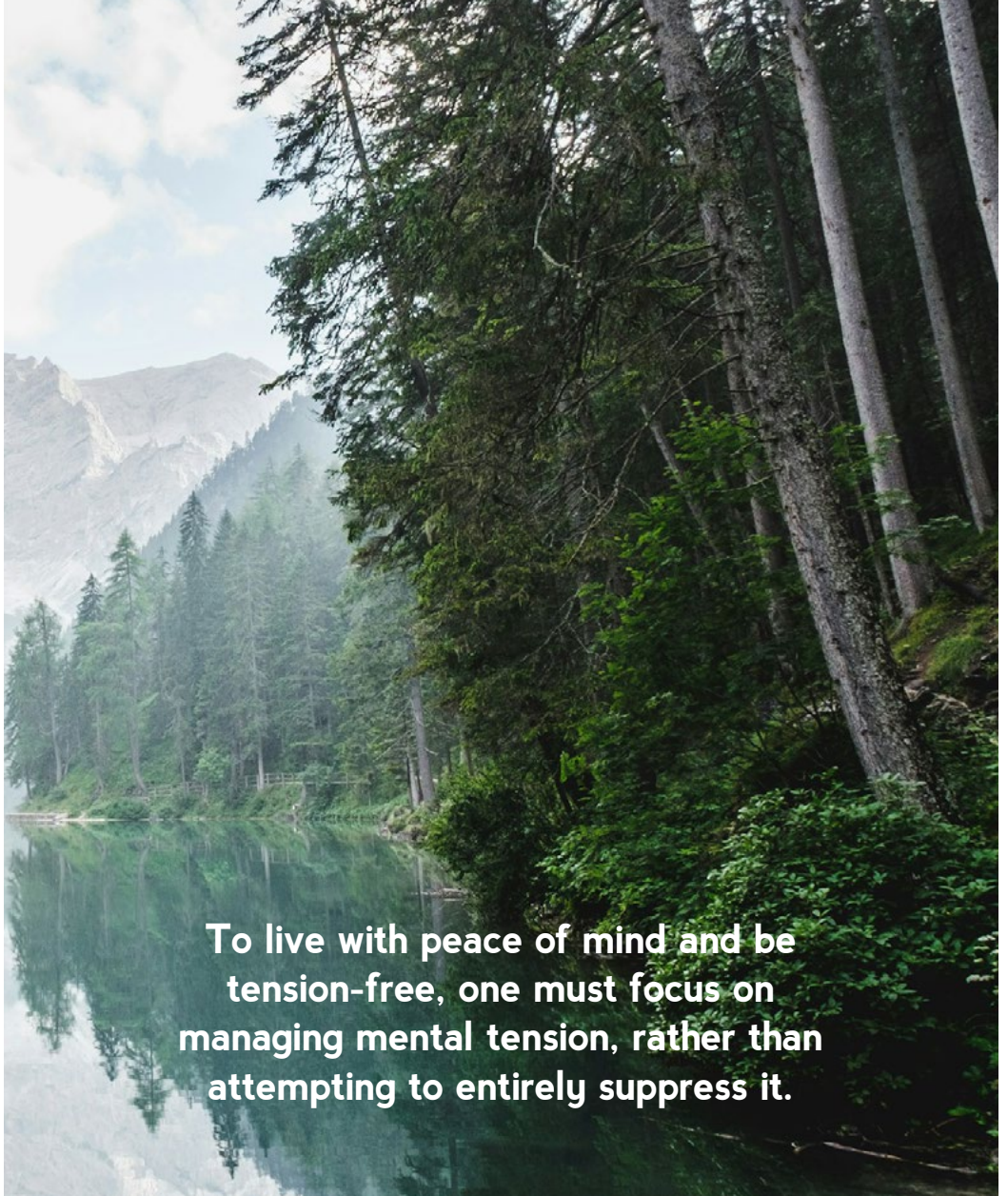


ENGLISH BIMONTHLY ISSUE 118 MAY-JUNE 2024

SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living



To live with peace of mind and be tension-free, one must focus on managing mental tension, rather than attempting to entirely suppress it.

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 118 MAY - JUNE 2024

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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S DESK



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

ADDRESS OF PARADISE

IN Islam, mother has been given a very high and prominent position. In this regard, one of the famous sayings of the Prophet is: Paradise lies under the feet of the mother (*Musnad al-Shahab al-Qaza'i*). The way this *Hadith* is generally interpreted is quite contrary to its true meaning. This *Hadith* is taken in a way in which the mother is given a high position. That is, if the child wants to enter Paradise, then he should completely obey the mother, without which the child cannot get Paradise. But this is not the true meaning of this saying.

The Prophet Muhammad established a duty-conscious society. According to Islamic teachings, it is the responsibility of the individual to perform his duties, not to see what others are doing. The Prophet stated this fact in another place: A believer should fulfill his duty and as far as his rights are concerned, ask God for them. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*).

Based on this principle, "Paradise is under the feet of the mother" would mean that the mother's responsibility is much greater than that of the child. This *Hadith* actually addresses a mother. Mother plays a very important role in a child's life. This *Hadith* means that it is in the hands of the mother to create a passion for Paradise in a human being. Maulana Wahiduddin Khan writes, "As a mother, a woman's biggest task for her children is to try to make her children a good human being. Every child is born on true nature. By birth, every child is Mr Nature,

but as a result of later conditioning, every child loses his true nature. This is where a mother has to play her constructive role." (*Al-Risala, December 2007*)

The first 10 years of a child are called formative period in psychological terms. The formative period is very important. Because in this formative period, the personality that is formed within someone remains throughout the later age." (*Al-Risala, March 2019*)

A better person is one who has the courage to live his life, who rises above negative thinking and displays positive thinking. He is one who is able to plan life on a constructive basis.

"The role of a woman as a mother is the preparation of the next generation. The human race is like a flowing river. In human society, the previous generation goes away and the new generation continues to take its place. Mother's job is to prepare children for this new generation. Mother's responsibility is to send a better person to the next generation every time. Who is a better person? A better person is one who has the courage to live his life, who rises above negative thinking and displays positive thinking. He is one who is able to plan life on a constructive basis, who does not create any new problem for his society, who is a giver member of his society, not just a taker member."

(*Al-Risala, December 2007*)

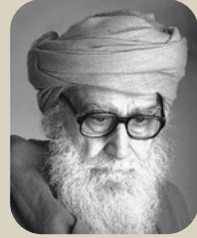
Children generally live with their mothers. Early in their lives, they observe her the most and unconsciously imitate her. Whatever the mother does, it is her thought out action. Therefore, the mother should take great care that whatever work she does, she should do it according to God's will.

The path to Paradise is a path of proper planning, education, training, and gratitude instead of ungratefulness, patience instead of impatience. It is a way of God-realization. Based on this interpretation, it is as if in this *Hadith* a mother has been given the responsibility to play her role in making her child a good human being. This *Hadith* is a serious call for mothers to understand their importance and develop high qualities in themselves, because children follow their mothers the most in their formative period. □



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)



A LESSON IN SIMPLICITY

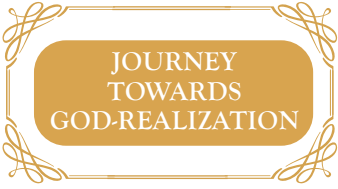
(The following article is taken from Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's Diary, May 20, 1986)

TODAY (May 20, 1986) is the tenth day of the month of *Ramadan*. This year, the month of *Ramadan* falls in May-June. Before the month began, I was extremely apprehensive of how this year's fast would pass in the hot summer season. But the ten fasts ended in such a way that it did not feel that something very unusual had happened in life.

In normal times, if you want to remain without food and water from morning to evening, it seems very harsh. It even becomes intolerable. But these days of hunger pass in such a way in the month of fasting that it is not felt when the month of fasting has come and when it has gone.

Fasting has many religious and spiritual benefits. Perhaps one of the advantages of these is that fasting is a lesson in boosting morale. Every year a person is made to experience that the difficulties encountered in practising God's commandments should not be considered difficulties. No matter how difficult a task in God's way may seem, if you start this work on God's trust, God's help will be with you. And that work will be accomplished in such a way that in the end you will not even feel that it was a difficult task.

My life is very simple. I have no interest in food and drink. I eat even the seemingly ordinary food items considering them great blessings from God. But due to my physical weakness, I am in such a situation that I cannot tolerate hunger and thirst. Therefore, before the commencement of *Ramadan* every year, I become apprehensive about how this month will pass. But when the month of fasting comes, it passes so quickly, as if the 30th day has arrived immediately after the first day. I think it happens with the help of God. Through fasting, the fasting person is shown that God's help makes every difficult task easier. The only condition is that a person should start his work putting his complete trust in God. □



MAN IN THE WORLD OF GOD

THE W. M. Keck Observatory is a two-telescope astronomical observatory set up on Hawaii's Mauna Kea. Astronomers in California spent more than a decade designing a revolutionary telescope having a 10-metre aperture that enables four times the "seeing power" of any functional telescope on earth. Millions of dollars were needed to make the project a reality. It was named after the W.M. Keck Foundation of Los Angeles that financed the project. Completed in 1993 (Keck 1) and 1996 (Keck 2), they are the 3rd and 4th largest telescopes.

The telescopes were designed by astronomers at the California Institute of Technology and the University of California, Berkeley. While under way, Howard B. Keck, chairman of the foundation said that these would be so powerful that, "It will permit one to see the light of a single candle from the distance of the moon." The Keck Telescope enables astronomers to see objects 12 billion light years away. Scientists are now able to investigate the nature of quasars and explore how galaxies and stars formed. When the telescopes were being built, Marvin L. Goldberger president of Caltech said:



*Man's vision itself
is proof of the
all-reaching vision
of God. His own
existence is proof of
the existence of God.
The vastness of the
universe is proof of
the infinite vastness
of God.*

"It should provide answers to the most challenging and basic questions of the universe." (*Newsweek*, January 14, 1985).

God has created an incredibly vast universe. He has also given man the power and technology to behold the vastness of His creation. This is so that man may see the universe in all its greatness, and then wonder at the greatness of the One who created it; so that he may be able to actually see things happening millions of miles away, and thousands of years ago, and be so dazed by the expanse of his vision that he is moved to cry out: "Lord, You have given light to the world. How infinitely more

radiant You must be. Lord, You have given man sight. How infinitely more penetrating Your vision must be.”

Man’s vision itself is proof of the all-reaching vision of God. His own existence is proof of the existence of God. The vastness of the universe is proof of the infinite vastness of God. God has created the world, and man, in His own image. He wants man to be able to look at himself, and the world around him, and see there a reflection of the face of his Lord. He wants man, not only to find answers to questions relating to creation; He wants him to get to know his Creator as well. □



Follow **Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's** Whatsapp channel to receive spiritual and inspirational quotes, reels, articles, and other enlightening updates

A NON-VERBAL MESSAGE

Resilience and Perseverance

A certain student from Rajasthan failed in his high school examinations. He appeared again the following year but failed again. After having failed for the third time, the next year, he was so ashamed of his performance that he left his home too embarrassed to show his face to his family.

He just kept walking about aimlessly. After a long time, he stopped at a well to quench his thirst. Women and children had gathered around it, filling their pots by turns. There he caught sight of something, something small, but of great significance. He was deeply moved, and his thirst was gone. All of a sudden, he felt as though he had found something far greater than the water he had come for. What happened was quite simple. The villagers, who visited the well for water, usually brought two earthen pots. They would place one pot on a stone near the well while lowering the other on a rope inside the well to draw water. To his astonishment, the part of the stone on which the pot was placed had rubbed away and there was a hollow there. The pot was made of clay, he thought, but when it was placed on the same spot over and over again, it had worn away the stone which was a far harder substance. The strong element had given way to the weak just through constant action. "Then why should I not succeed in my examinations if I too persevere? I can surely overcome my shortcomings by putting greater effort into my studies!"

Such thoughts brought him to a halt. He immediately decided to go back home and start working hard on his studies once again. The following year he appeared for the fourth time in his high school examinations. This time the result, astonishingly, was the opposite of the previous year. He had done his papers so well this time that he secured first class. After having failed three times he had finally distinguished himself. The lesson of the stone had worked like a miracle, and this had altered his attitude altogether. The same student who had run away from home, unable to face defeat, passed

Any seemingly trivial event can teach a lesson pointing to man's shortcomings and failures provided he shows sufficient receptiveness to the message it conveys. If he only cares to look, he will find around him some "stone" or the other, which he needs to set him on the right course again.

with flying colours in all the examinations he took. When he topped in his MA examination, he was given a scholarship to study abroad and from there he took his doctorate.

This may be a solitary instance that occurred in a certain village, but, indeed, at every place there exists such a “stone”. This stone can teach a lesson pointing to man’s shortcomings and failures provided he shows sufficient receptiveness to the message it conveys. If he only cares to look, he will find around him some such “stone” or the other, which he needs to set him on the right course again. □



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THREE TYPES OF PEOPLE

The True Class Distinction

THE highest-ranking individual, from the religious point of view, is one who goes in constant fear of his Lord, turning to Him in all matters. Such a man leads his life as if God were watching over him. He fears invisible God far more than any visible objects of this world, and bows before his Lord with a penitent heart. Such are the souls desired by God. The Almighty is pleased with those who have suffered for His cause. When they meet Him on the day of the Great Reckoning, God will shower upon them His choicest blessings. He will send them into evergreen gardens where they shall remain forever. There they shall have all that they desire, and more. God's blessings are infinite.

Ranking somewhat lower is the occasional and inadvertent wrongdoer. Yet he too can be forgiven by God and share His blessings, provided he is a true believer, has mitigated whatever evil he has done by good deeds and is not obstinate about giving up his evil ways. All he has to do then is turn to God in penitence and confess his sins; God will then turn to him in mercy and forgiveness.

The mortal who ranks lowest is one who is preoccupied with the love of the world, love of himself and pride. He is interested in mere externals, mere fripperies. He never holds his tongue for fear of his Lord. He does not stop short when reminded of the word of God. It is true that he will be rewarded for his deeds in the course of his own lifetime. Success and glory will be his. He will never suffer setbacks or losses. But it is just such a one who in the next life will suffer Hellfire and brimstone, having lived for himself alone with no thought for God. It is then that he will learn what it means never to have cared a whit for the next world. It is in the life Hereafter where he will learn that his strivings were in vain and his ambitions fruitless.

Man should endeavour to belong to the first category. He would still be counted as fortunate if he finds himself among the second category. As for the third group, one should strive utmost and keep praying so that he does not fall among the lowest of the low. Eternal damnation awaits such people. □

The Almighty is pleased with those who have suffered for His cause. When they meet Him on the day of the Great Reckoning, God will shower upon them His choicest blessings.

THE LAW OF PATENTS

(Dr Farida Khanam)

A new phenomenon has emerged in the modern era, i.e., to give an inventor the monopoly to use his invention for a limited time. This is called patent in the language of law. It is a type of intellectual property that gives its owner the legal right to stop others from using or selling something he has invented for a limited period of time without his permission or to receive some royalty from the invention. Thus, the law of patents gives the inventor special rights over its use for a fixed period of time.

A patent is a temporary Government grant of a monopoly to the inventor in return for complete disclosure about the invention to the Government.

This is a temporary grant. Because no invention is the result of the efforts of a human being alone, but more than fifty percent of it directly or indirectly cooperates with natural resources and other human beings. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the first recorded patent was granted in 1421 to the Italian architect and engineer Filippo Brunellesco (1377–1446).

The law of patents is a reminder of a greater reality of the universe. This is to accept the monopoly of the Creator of the universe over creation. Unlike man's invention, there is no contribution by anyone in the Creator's invention. The Creator has invented His creation alone without the help of a partner, and every moment He is providing the means for its development and nourishment. Therefore, the Creator's monopoly over His invention cannot be for a limited period. The Creator's monopoly over creation is eternal.

The Creator has clearly placed the proof of His creation in front of man. This corpus of evidence is mentioned in the Quran. All that is needed is that one should read and understand this book with an open mind. This will reveal to man the fact of what his Creator wants from him. And what will be the benefit of man in doing so. Just as according to worldly custom, a person is entitled to royalty on his invention, in the same way, God, the Lord of the universe, also deserves to receive royalty for his creation and invention. Every woman and man should pay the royalty to the Creator for themselves and whatever things in the world they benefit from.

Royalty is defined as a legally binding payment made to an individual or company for the ongoing use of their assets, including copyrighted works, franchises, and natural resources.

Royalty that is due to God is worship of God and total submission to Him. This is a natural binding for a human being. The Quran says: People, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, so that you may become righteous, who made the earth a bed, and the sky a canopy; and it is He who sends down rain from above for the growth of every kind of fruit for your sustenance. And do not knowingly set up rivals to God. (2: 21-22)

A closer scrutiny of the universe shows that all creatures except man have surrendered themselves to the Creator through instinct. Only man is a creature of which some have completely surrendered to the Creator, and some have not surrendered (22: 18). This is because under God's creation plan, the Lord of the universe has given man the freedom to bow down to Him, and it is His will that man should bow down to his Creator, through his free will, and he should accept Him as his Lord by choice and pay some royalty on his behalf to the Creator as a token. For those who will do so, God has prepared for them an eternal reward, that is, to bestow the seat of truth in eternal Paradise. □

The Lord of the universe has given man the freedom to bow down to Him, and it is His will that man should bow down to his Creator, through his free will, and he should accept Him as his Lord by choice.

Faith

IS UNSEEN BUT FELT

IS STRENGTH WHEN WE
FEEL WE HAVE NONE

IS HOPE WHEN
ALL SEEMS LOST

THE SPIRIT OF *HAJJ*

Man's Journey towards God

IT is incumbent upon Muslims to perform *Hajj*, at least once in their lifetime, as long as they possess the means. As is clear from the following excerpts from the Quran and *Hadith*, *Hajj* (pilgrimage) is one important pillar among the five foundation pillars of Islam:

Pilgrimage to the House is a duty to God
for anyone who is able to undertake it (3: 97)

The first House to be built for mankind was the one at Bakkah [Makkah]. It is a blessed place, a source of guidance for the whole world. (3: 96)

"There are five basic pillars of Islam," said the Prophet Muhammad: "To bear testimony that there is no deity save God, and that Muhammad is His Prophet; to establish prayer and pay the poor-due; to make pilgrimage to the House, and fast during *Ramadan*."

The root meaning of the word "*Hajj*" is "to set out" or "to make pilgrimage." Canonically, it has come to refer to a Muslim act of worship, performed annually, in which the worshipper circumambulates the House of God in Makkah, stays a while in the plains of Arafat and performs other rites which together constitute *Hajj*—the act of pilgrimage.

Hajj is a comprehensive act of worship, involving both financial outlay and physical exertion. Both remembrance of God and sacrifice for His sake are part and parcel of *Hajj*. *Hajj* is an act of worship in which the spirit of all acts of worship has, in some way or another, been brought into play.

The sacred duties of *Hajj* revolve around the House of God in Makkah. What does the House of God represent to a believer? It brings to life a whole prophetic tradition, stretching from Abraham to Muhammad. The House of God stands as a model of true faith in God, and submission to the Master of the House. "The Prophets gave up everything and followed the Lord," is the message that rings out from the Lord's House; leave all and follow Him. They were obedient to His will; be you so also. They served His cause on earth; serve Him until you die, and you will prosper forever."

The journey to *Hajj* is a journey to God. It represents the ultimate closeness one can achieve to God while living in this world. Other acts

of worship are ways of remembering God; *Hajj* is a way of reaching Him. Generally, we worship Him on an unseen level; in *Hajj* we worship Him as if we saw Him face to face. When a pilgrim stands before the House of God, it seems to him that he is standing before God Himself. He is then moved to revolve around the Lord's House, like a butterfly encircling a flower, clinging to His doorstep as a servant begging for his master's mercy.

The uniqueness of *Hajj* lies in the unique nature of the place in which it is performed. Throughout the ages, Makkah has remained a venue for the manifestation of God's signs. It was here that the great communicator of the divine message, the Prophet Abraham, made a memorial to man's life of belief and submission. And it was here, following in the same tradition, that the foundation of Islamic history was laid: fourteen hundred years ago, the Prophet Muhammad changed the spiritual face of Arabia, from one littered by many godheads, to one illuminated by the countenance of the One God.

Much history lies behind the rich and noble tradition existing in Hijaz. It is a land that has received God's special grace. The spiritual wealth it has on offer is enough to enrich any poor traveller, enough to revive any languid heart. A sea of divine mercy flows where only sand and sky meet the eye, in the environs of Makkah and Madinah. There the pilgrim is cleansed and washed.

Among all Muslim acts of worship, *Hajj* holds a prominent position. In one *Hadith*, the Prophet called it the supreme act of worship. But it is not just the rites of pilgrimage that constitute this importance; it is the spirit in which *Hajj* is performed. Let us put this another way and say that it is not merely a matter of going to Makkah and returning. There is much more to *Hajj* than that. *Hajj* has been prescribed so that it may inspire us with new religious fervour. To return from *Hajj* with one's faith in God strengthened and rekindled, that is the hallmark of a true pilgrim. *Hajj* only takes its place as a supreme act of worship when it is undertaken in its true spirit and performed in the proper manner. It will then be the greatest act in a pilgrim's life: he will never be the same again.

To perform *Hajj* is to meet God. When the pilgrim reaches *Meeqat*, the border of the Sacred Territory, he is filled with awe of God: he

The House of God stands as a model of true faith in God, and submission to the Master of the House. "The Prophets gave up everything and followed the Lord," is the message that rings out from the Lord's House.

feels that he is leaving his own world and entering God's. Now he is revolving around Him, running towards Him, journeying on His behalf, making sacrifice in His name, praying to the Lord and seeing his prayer answered.

The House of God in Makkah is one of God's signs on earth. There, souls, which have strayed from the Lord, take comfort in Him once again; hearts, which have become hard as stone are brought low before Almighty God; eyes, which have lost their vision, are filled with divine radiance. But these blessings of *Hajj* are available only to those who come prepared for them. Otherwise, *Hajj* will be just a tour, a visit that leaves no lasting impression upon its perpetrator.

Hajj reigns supreme among all acts of devotion. Like the Sacred Mosque in Makkah has a status above all other mosques, so the worship that is performed there—as part of the pilgrimage—stands head and shoulders above all other acts of devotion.

"Hajj is to stand in the plains of Arafat." These words of the Prophet Muhammad illustrate the importance of sojourning in that place. The plain of Arafat, in which pilgrims spend one day, presents a picture of the arena of the Judgement Day. Host upon host of God's servants flock in from all sides to witness the spectacle. And what a spectacle! All are dressed in similar, simple attire. There is nothing to single any person out. All are reciting the same words: "Here we are at Your service, Lord." How can one who witnesses this spectacle but call to mind the like of this verse of the Quran:

The trumpet will be blown and, at once,
they will rise up from their graves, and
hasten to their Lord. (36: 51)

The pilgrims gather on the plain of Arafat in order to recall the time when they will gather on the plain of the Last Day. What they will experience in practice in the next world, they conjure up visions of it in this world.

For all these reasons, *Hajj* reigns supreme among all acts of devotion. Like the Sacred Mosque in Makkah has a status above all other mosques, so the worship that is performed there—as part of the pilgrimage—stands head and shoulders above all other acts of devotion. □



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SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living

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

SILENCE

The Most Beautiful Voice

KNOWN to be a man of few words, a wise man was asked why he was so miserly with words. He replied, "The Creator of the world has given man two ears, but just one tongue. This is so that we may listen more than we speak, not so that we may speak more than we listen."

Listening more than speaking is certainly the most prudent course to adopt. In doing so, we increase our own knowledge, we give ourselves the opportunity to have a better understanding of the man's viewpoint and by our silence we encourage in the speaker a greater receptivity to what we shall have to say when finally, it is our turn to hold forth. When we speak, it is not generally sufficient just to utter the truth. We have to be able to talk persuasively if our listeners are to be convinced. This is where our having listened carefully to what they have to say is an advantage, for, then we know in advance what misapprehensions we have to sweep aside, what illusions we have to dispel and what emotional barriers we have to break down. If we continued to speak without ever listening to others, we shall always find ourselves in a weak, uncertain, ill-informed position. Xenocrates has aptly said, "I have often regretted my speech, never my silence."

Sometimes, we voice opinions which are not so well supported by facts as we imagine, and so we can save ourselves the embarrassment by first hearing the subject discussed from different angles by the speaker. It is only after mature reflection upon what they have said that we should venture to air our own views. And even then, they should be aired with full consideration for the feelings of our listeners.

The propensity to talk too much is often a sign of being more interested in singing one's own praises than of getting to the heart of the matter. It shows lack of seriousness in one's general attitude to others. The effect of this is to be seen at its worst when the flow of talk is based on insufficient or superficial knowledge. What it most obviously betrays is a lack of character.

The practice of listening more than speaking is not just the external expression of one isolated personality trait; it reflects rather a whole state of mind. Indicative of sincerity and humility, it is the essence of a fine character. □

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.



PROGRESS IN INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

RELIGIOUS differences have always existed between people. That is why interreligious dialogue has been found in one form or the other since ancient times. Fourteen hundred years ago the Prophet of Islam held in Madinah a three-religion conference—in modern terminology, a trialogue—to exchange views on religious issues.

Such attempts have repeatedly been made in history. The circumstances that unfolded following the Second World War led the Christian Church, in particular, to pay great attention to this matter. Through its continuous efforts dialogues of this nature are regularly being held in various countries, between Muslims and Christians in particular.

These efforts have borne fruit, at least partially. For instance, it is as a result of these efforts that on the one hand, a Church has appeared once again in Ben Ghazi (Libya) while on the other, a mosque has been built in Rome for the first time in recent history.

If the Quran is consulted with this point in view, we find two main principles on which to hold dialogues. One is derived from this verse of the Quran:

Say: O People of Book, let us come to a word common to us
and you that we will worship none but God. (3: 64)

The first and foremost principle for any dialogue held to discuss two or more religions is to strive to find a mutual basis for peaceful coexistence.

It is a fact that finding a common ground in secular matters is comparatively easy, for nothing is held as sacred in secularism. On the contrary everything acquires a sacred character in religion. That is why it becomes the most difficult task to find a basis for agreement in religious matters. However, despite all difficulties, we must continue our efforts, peacefully, irrespective of the results.

The second principle given by the Quran is purely a matter of pragmatism. That is, matters should be settled on practical grounds by avoiding their theoretical aspects. This principle is derived from this verse of the Quran:

To you your religion and to me mine. (109: 6)

This principle is generally referred to, in today's context as religious coexistence. This means that whenever common grounds for agreement between two or more parties cannot be arrived at on an ideological basis, then the way of practical coexistence must be adopted.

In the course of this continuous and vast interaction, for the first time in human history, people seem less like strangers to one another. A great gap has been bridged. People are learning one another's languages.

The Community of Saint Egidio provides a good example of a continuing dialogue of this nature. This promotes interaction on a mass scale between adherents of different religions. In view of its vastness, it may be rightly termed a super dialogue. The religious meet held under the auspices of the Community of Saint Egidio on a large scale each year makes a considerable contribution towards the achievement of the goal targeted by interreligious dialogue.

We should not judge our efforts in this matter only by the results of meetings held in the name of formally arranged interreligious dialogue. The truth is that "interreligious dialogue" is not now limited to specific meetings held in the field of religion. It has rather assumed the form of a vast historical process—spontaneous, ongoing and perhaps never fully recorded. Negotiation in controversial matters is in tune with the spirit of the age. Today, it has permeated all walks of national as well as international life.

Modern industrial revolution and modern communication have added such vast dimensions to human relations that now the entire world has been converted into a global village. People of various persuasions are coming closer on a universal scale. This interaction serves as an

ongoing dialogue of an informal nature. In this way with distances narrowed, the confrontational attitude now gives way to compromise.

Interaction is an unproclaimed dialogue. When, as a result of circumstances, interaction between people of different persuasions increases, the purpose of the dialogue is served on its own.

Today, in educational institutions, offices, and factories, in travel, on playgrounds and in national and international activities, adherents of different religious traditions are meeting one another on a scale hitherto unwitnessed.

In the course of this continuous and vast interaction, for the first time in human history, people seem less like strangers to one another. A great gap has been bridged. People are learning one another's languages. They are becoming familiar with one another's culture. Making concessions to one another has become a need of the people themselves.

These factors have brought people closer right across the world. And it is a psychological truth that closeness and interaction in them serve the purpose of a practical dialogue. In this way, a natural dialogue has come into existence and has become an ongoing process at all times and in all places.

Probably the most notable result of this historical process is that after a long intellectual struggle religious intolerance has been universally rejected. Religious intolerance has now been replaced with complete religious freedom. Today under auspices of the United Nations all the nations of the world have signed the universal declaration of human rights.

In accordance with this declaration religious freedom has been accepted as the natural birthright of all human beings. As opposed to practices in ancient times, no one now enjoys the right to persecute anyone on the basis of religion. This is the change which has confined the sphere of religious difference to peaceful negotiation.

Interreligious dialogue had its beginnings in individual interaction, paving the way for discussions held in religious gatherings. Then it became a part of a world movement. Now, that day too will dawn when the world is no more ridden with religious disputes, and we are able to live in a peaceful and harmonious world.

The effects of this can be seen in all walks of life, whether religious or secular. Every one of us, consciously or unconsciously, plays a part in making religious coexistence a reality.

Interfaith dialogue becoming a part of the historical process holds great promise for us, as in this case its success is assured. This is how every great revolution of history has got under way. Whenever a movement goes beyond the stage of individual or group efforts and joins the historical process itself, then the continuity of that movement is ensured and ultimately nothing can stop it reaching its destination.

In short, interreligious dialogue had its beginnings in individual interaction, paving the way for discussions held in religious gatherings. Ultimately the time came when it became a part of a world movement. Now, if the course of events is any indication, God willing, that day too will dawn when the world is no more ridden with religious disputes, and we are able to live in a peaceful and harmonious world. □



SPIRIT OF RAMADAN

Man is here for a test, Breaking one's arrogance and stubbornness, fasting makes man realize his helplessness. Man is cut to size. It makes man realize how dependent on God he is. Thus, he prays truly from the heart, connecting him with the Almighty.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

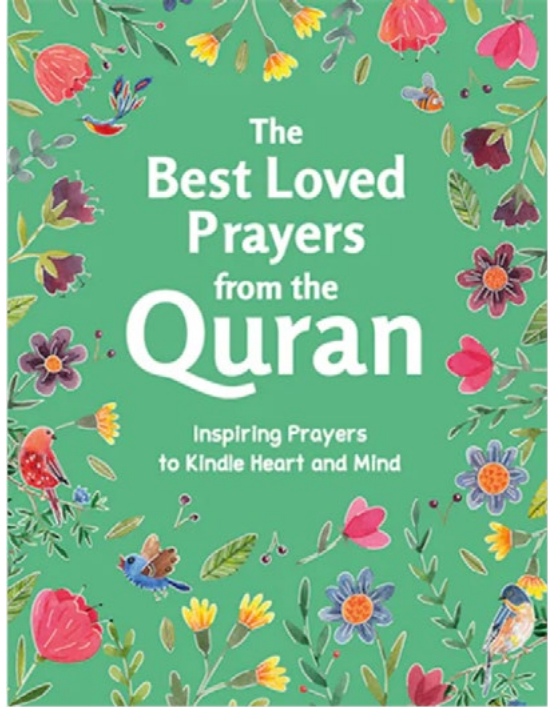
Name of the Book: The Best Loved Prayers from the Quran

Author: Dr Saniyasnain Khan

Pages: 96

ISBN: 9788178988054

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



This selection of prayers for children of seven years and above expresses the variety and richness of prayer and is designed to be used at home, or at school. With bright and colourful illustrations, this book will encourage children to explore their own ways of praying. The best prayers are often the ones we say naturally when we are happy, excited or sad about something. But at that time, we don't always find the right words to express our inner feelings. Reading these prayers from the Quran, you will find the best words and phrases to pray with, at any time and in any situation. In that way, you will find yourself closer to God, as if you are whispering to Him. Then it will not be just you alone, but an exchange between you and the Almighty, which will begin to flow, inspiring and lighting up your mind and heart. May this collection of prayers bring you wisdom and many blessings!

Relish a selection of prayers from this amazing book.

PRAYERS OF THE PROPHETS

Remember Zakariyya, when he called out to his Lord, Do not leave me heirless Lord, You are the best of heirs." So We heard his prayer and gave him Yahya and made his wife fit to bear him a child. They used to hasten to do good and they called on Us in hope and fear, and they were always humble towards Us*. (*Al-Anbiya* 21: 89-90)

*The Prophet Zakariyya silently prayed to Allah and the prayer was granted in an astonishing and wonderful manner. This shows what real prayer is. True prayer is an outpouring of the firm belief that all powers vest in Allah. Man receives every single thing only on His giving it to him, and no one can own a thing if He does not confer it on him. True prayer needs to be directed solely towards the one and only God. That is why true prayer gushes forth when one is alone, when there is nobody present except Allah and oneself.

This is an account of your Lord's mercy bestowed upon His servant Zakariyya, when he called upon his Lord in low tones, saying, 'Lord, my bones have weakened and my head has turned hoary with age, but never, Lord, have I been disappointed in my prayer to you: now I fear my kinsmen when I am gone. (I have no hope of their continuing my mission) for my wife cannot have a child, so grant me a successor from Yourself, to be my heir and to be the heir (of the blessings) of the House of Yaqub; and make him, O my Lord, acceptable to you. 'Zakariyya, We bring you good news of a son whose name shall be Yahya. We have not given such a name to anyone before.' (*Maryam* 19: 2-7)

My Lord, let me land with Your blessing in a blessed landing place. You alone can provide the best landings. (23: 29)

'O my Lord! I would prefer prison to what these women are inviting me to do. And if You do not save me from their cunning, I may yield to them and so become one of the ignorant.' So his Lord answered him and protected him from their cunning. He is All-Hearing and All-Knowing. (*Yusuf* 12: 33-34)

Nuh said, 'My Lord, help me! for they have rejected me,' (*Al-Mu'minun* 23: 26)

I complain of my anguish and my sorrow only to Allah. Allah has made known to me things that you do not know. (*Yusuf* 12: 86)

My Lord, I take refuge with You from asking You something of which I have no knowledge. If You do not forgive me and show me mercy, I shall be one of the losers. (*Al-Hud* 11: 47)

And when they came to the Valley of the Ants, one ant said, 'Ants! Go into your dwellings, in case Sulayman and his hosts accidentally crush you.' Sulayman smiled broadly at its words and said, 'Lord, inspire me to be thankful for the blessings You have granted me and my parents, and to do good deeds that please You; and include me, by Your grace, among Your righteous servants!*' (*Al-Naml* 27: 18-19)

*The Quran emphasizes that every single thing that man receives in this life is Allah's bounty, and that man is, therefore, required to be extremely grateful for these blessings without number.

Our Lord, in You we have placed our trust and to You we turn feeling sorry and to You is the final return. Our Lord, do not make us the victims of those who deny the truth, and forgive us our Lord. For You alone are the Mighty, the Wise One. (*Al-Mumtahanah* 60: 4-5)

My Lord, bestow wisdom upon me; unite me with the righteous; give me a good name among later generations; and make me one of those who will have a right to enter the Garden of Bliss. (*Al-Shu'ara* 26: 83-85)

Lut prayed, 'Lord, help me against this wicked people.' (*Al-Ankabut* 29: 30)

My Lord, save me from these unjust people. (*Qasas* 28: 21)

Lord, my bones have weakened and my head has turned white with age, but never, Lord, have I been disappointed in my prayer to you. (*Maryam* 19: 4)

Our Lord, give us patience, make us stand firm, and help us against those who deny the truth. (*Al-Baqarah* 2: 250)

Lord forgive me!

Grant me such power as no one after me will have-You are the Most Generous Provider. (*Sad* 38: 35)

O Allah, our Lord! Send down for us a table spread with food from heaven, so that it may be a feast for us, for the first of us and for the last of us: a sign from You. Give us what we need to live, for You are the best of supporters. (*Al-Ma'idah* 5: 114)

Nuh said, Embark on it. In the name of Allah, it shall set sail and cast anchor. Truly, my Lord is forgiving and merciful.' (*Al-Hud* 11: 41) □



WATER AS SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT

Respect Nature

WATER is a great boon for life. And greater the boon, greater the conservation required. Without water, life could not exist on Earth. Without water, there could be no development of civilization. In the absence of water, the Earth would become barren like other planets in the solar system and beyond. It is this reality towards which the Quran points the reader when it asks:

‘Have you considered if your water were to sink into the ground, who could then bring you flowing water?’ (67: 30)

The importance of water cannot be overstated. Up to 60 percent of the body of an adult human comprises of water. The Quran says that God has made every living thing out of water (21: 30). Abdul Rahim Khane-Khana was an important minister and poet during the Mughal rule in India. A line from one of his poems is:

Rahim pani rakhiyo bin pani sab soona

(O Merciful, preserve water, as without water there is nothing!)

It is a fact that water is a great bounty bestowed by the Creator on us. If we look at it in this perspective, we realize what a great source of spirituality water is, as it reminds us of the Merciful Creator. This important water resource evokes the spirit of gratitude. Human life is so very dependent on water that our reliance on it repeatedly brings to mind the Creator. According to Islam, the quality most desired in a person is his willingness to acknowledge the Creator. If a person truly discovers the value of water, he will see it as a source of spiritual nourishment. Water is a symbol of the virtues of peace, tolerance and the spirit of giving, traits that human beings need to develop. If a spiritual culture is fostered in human society, its every member will take great care not to waste water. Such people will make sustainable use of this precious resource. The realization of the importance of water will tell one how to manage water properly.

The Prophet of Islam laid great emphasis on conserving water. He once observed someone using water extravagantly and advised him to be very cautious in its use. The person in question asked if we needed to be meticulous even when using water. The Prophet replied: “Yes, do not waste water, even if you are on the banks of a flowing river.” There

are many verses in the Quran that make such references to water. When studied in the light of modern scientific data, one will realize that oceans on Earth are not only reservoirs of water, but also oceans of spirituality.

Water is a symbol of the virtues of peace, tolerance and the spirit of giving; traits that human beings need to develop. If a spiritual culture is fostered in human society, its every member will take great care not to waste water.

Water is made by coming together of two gases: hydrogen and oxygen. Two elements which are individually gaseous in nature, combine to produce liquid water. Nature has gathered this water in the seas and the oceans. At least 3.5 percent of this sea water consists of salt, which acts as a preservative. Because of its salty taste, we cannot drink it or otherwise make use of it. But by the workings of the laws of nature, the water in the oceans and seas rises up into the atmosphere as water vapour, being separated in this way from the salt content. This water vapour then collects together to form clouds, which bring rain. Rainwater is fresh water that we can put to use for our various daily needs. This

entire process, known as the hydrological cycle, takes place on a global scale. If one were to ponder over this phenomenon, one would become extremely thankful to God.

Spirituality is only another name for this thankfulness. This spirit becomes a disincentive to squandering the crucial blessing of water. A person who is truly grateful to God for the blessings of water will ask himself: 'If I cannot create water, how can I waste it?' □

The Quran

is a book of God, enshrining the wisdom of nature. A source of divine secrets, it has to be rediscovered every day.

PLAY YOUR PART IN CONSERVING WATER

Indispensible Resource

IN his poetic masterpiece, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, English poet and theologian Samuel Taylor Coleridge, described the agony of a sailor who is surrounded by water but cannot drink it. Deeply distressed by the irony, he exclaims, "Water, water everywhere, Nor any drop to drink!"

This expression of Coleridge is an illustration of human limitations. Though water is vital for man's survival, he cannot create water to sustain himself; yet he mindlessly wastes this essential natural resource. There are vast reservoirs of fresh water in the polar icecaps, but they are melting at an alarming rate and draining off into the oceans, while increasing sea levels. This situation is also causing significant shortage of potable water. Experts predict that the shortage of water will become so acute that a Third World War might break out over this issue. Scientists across the world have repeatedly emphasized that global warming accelerated by human action is the greatest danger of our times. The creation of water is a marvel: two distinct gases with special properties come together to take the liquid form of water. If nature had not been endowed with this potential, the creation of water would not have been possible.

Water is indispensable but global shortages are increasing at an alarming rate, that it is making the wastage of water a great cause of concern. While governments try to find ways of resolving the water issues of their nations, it is also pertinent that, as responsible citizens, each one of us should become involved in the initiative to conserve water. According to United Nations reports, water scarcity already affects every continent in the world. If each individual were to awaken to the responsibility of mindfully using water resources, he could contribute greatly to addressing the issue of water shortage. Charity begins at home, so each one of us should resolve to rise to the occasion and do our bit by finding out how we can do something to reduce our own water footprint and help manage the need of water.

Water is not just a source of physical existence: it is an equally important source from which to derive spiritual nourishment. It teaches us to be a giver and fulfil our responsibility towards others. The flow of water in a mountain stream, for instance, is repeatedly obstructed by stones in its path. But the spring does not attempt to remove the stones to continue

The creation of water is a marvel: two distinct gases with special properties come together to take the liquid form of water. If nature had not been endowed with this potential, the creation of water would not have been possible.

on its journey. Instead, it moves ahead by flowing around and alongside the stones, as if telling us not to collide with obstacles, but to continue on our way regardless. Everything in this world continuously conveys the message that we should give, without taking anything in return, and discharge our duty in a selfless manner.

According to the Quran, water is a bountiful creation of the Creator. The Quran says. 'We have made every living thing out of water.' (21: 30) We have to regard it as a sacred duty imposed on each one of us to continue to preserve life for future generations. We should adopt this culture, and live as givers, rather than takers. □



THE SCEPTRE OF WATER CRISIS

Tread Carefully

IN the bustling city of Bengaluru, India, a crisis looms large—one that affects not just its residents but serves as a microcosm of a global issue: water scarcity. With its rapid urbanization and burgeoning population, Bengaluru finds itself grappling with a dwindling water supply, polluted lakes, and depleting groundwater levels. Yet, Bengaluru's struggle is not unique. Across the world, from Cape Town to California, water scarcity is increasingly becoming a pressing concern, threatening the very fabric of human existence.

The Bengaluru Conundrum

Bengaluru, once known as the Garden City, is now infamous for its water woes. The city's exponential growth, fuelled by its status as India's Silicon Valley, has placed immense strain on its water resources. According to the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), the city's water demand is estimated to reach 2,400 million litres per day (MLD) by 2031, while the current supply stands at a mere 1,400 MLD. This glaring deficit underscores the urgency of the situation.

Global Perspectives

Bengaluru's plight mirrors a larger global trend. The World Resources Institute estimates that by 2040, global water demand will exceed current supply by 56%. This alarming statistic underscores the urgent need for concerted action on a global scale.

In California, the most populous state in the United States, prolonged droughts have severely strained water reserves. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, over 90% of the state is experiencing abnormally dry to exceptional drought conditions. This has prompted unprecedented water conservation measures and sparked debates over sustainable water management practices.

Meanwhile, in Cape Town, South Africa, the spectre of "Day Zero"—the day when the city's taps would run dry—loomed large in 2018. While stringent water rationing measures and public awareness campaigns averted the immediate crisis, it served as a wake-up call for cities worldwide.

The Quran repeatedly emphasizes the significance of water as a divine blessing and a symbol of God's mercy.

Water, the source of life, is one of the most precious resources on our planet. In Islam, water is not only revered as a vital component for physical sustenance but also holds significant spiritual importance. The Quran and *Hadith* provide guidance on the responsible use, conservation, and prevention of wasting water, emphasizing the importance of stewardship and gratitude towards this divine gift.

Water as a Blessing

The Quran repeatedly emphasizes the significance of water as a divine blessing and a symbol of God's mercy. The Quran says: We have made every living thing out of water will they still not believe? (21:30) This verse highlights the fundamental role of water in the creation and sustenance of life, inviting reflection on its value and purpose.

Conservation and Responsible Use

In Islam, water is not only revered as a vital component for physical sustenance but also holds significant spiritual importance.

Islam teaches the principles of moderation, balance, and sustainability in all aspects of life, including the use of natural resources like water. Prophet Muhammad emphasized the importance of moderation in consumption and the avoidance of wastefulness. In a *Hadith* narrated by Ibn Majah, the Prophet said, "Do not waste water, even if you perform your ablution on the banks of an abundantly flowing river." This *Hadith* underscores the value of water conservation, regardless of its apparent abundance.

Prevention of Wastefulness

Islam urges believers to be mindful of their water usage and to avoid extravagance or wastefulness. The Quran admonishes against wastefulness, stating, 'O Children of Adam, dress yourself properly whenever you are at worship: and eat and drink but exceed not the bounds: God does not love those who exceed the bounds.' (7: 31) This verse encourages moderation in consumption and discourages extravagance, including the squandering of water.

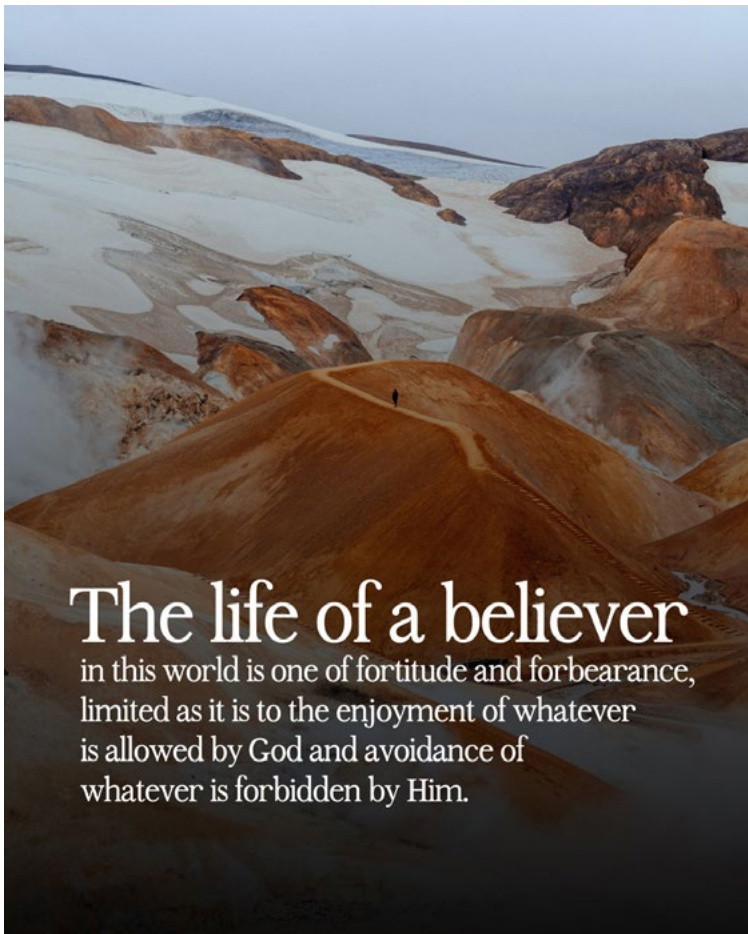
Practical Guidance

Islam provides practical guidance on conserving water in everyday activities. For instance, in performing ablution (*wudu*) before prayers, Muslims are instructed to use only the amount of water necessary to

fulfill the ritual purification. Prophet Muhammad demonstrated this in his own practice, using minimal water for ablution even though water was readily available to him.

Addressing the Crisis

In Bengaluru, efforts to mitigate the water crisis are underway, albeit slowly. The rejuvenation of lakes and the implementation of rainwater harvesting initiatives are steps in the right direction. The promotion of water-efficient technologies and the recharging of aquifers through artificial recharge techniques hold promise in bolstering the city's water security. □



The life of a believer
in this world is one of fortitude and forbearance,
limited as it is to the enjoyment of whatever
is allowed by God and avoidance of
whatever is forbidden by Him.

MEMORIES OF MAULANA

A Tribute By Nigar Ataulla

THE month of April is here, with its beautiful sunshine, which is so important for us. On some days at this time of the year one can hear the call of the koel, reminding one of those 'exam times' when we were students, isn't it? And, if there's thick enough greenery around, one can hear crickets sing, too! Maybe they are thirsty and are waiting for the monsoons.

April also takes my mind to two people who passed away in this month some years ago. One is my father, whose death occurred on April 27, 2019, and the other is Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, who passed away on April 21, 2021. You may wonder why I am connecting them both. It's very simple: It was through my father that I got introduced to Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's writings and wisdom.

It began many decades ago when my father would travel to Delhi on work. It was there that he met with Maulana. My father was fond of discussing religion and reading books in Urdu, and I suppose he had at least some heart-to-heart conversations with Maulana on these matters during visits to Delhi. Maulana very generously gave him some of his books, and that's how he became an avid reader of *Al-Risala* magazine. When he would return from Delhi, he would sometimes give me books by Maulana that had been translated to English. I also remember him mentioning the hospitality extended to him by Maulana and Farida Aapa, Maulana's daughter.

This is how I was first introduced to Maulana's writings. I couldn't read Urdu, and so the simple articles that appeared in the then English version of *Al-Risala* appealed to me. Reading one book by Maulana—*God-Oriented Life*—which my father had brought back from Delhi opened my eyes to matters related to the higher realm—God, accountability for our actions, the Hereafter and the impermanence of this world. I simply loved this book! It talked to me, as it were, and really touched my heart! It tugged at my heartstrings, hinting that there were aspects of my lifestyle that needed correction.

As the magazine I was working with at that time needed book reviews, I got connected to Goodword Books, which was connected with Maulana and his school of thought. The books containing colourful and happy illustrations and stories for children that they published were wonderful! Reviewing these books for the magazine I worked with delighted me immensely!

Meanwhile, my father continued with his interest in Maulana's *Al-Risala*. I remember his younger brother dropping by at home and them discussing and praising Maulana and his books and writings.

One day, Maulana arrived in my city for a programme. He was also to meet my father and his colleagues at the institution where my father was then working. It so happened that due to some food- or digestion-related issue, I had fallen sick. I was dehydrated and taking medicines and was exhausted. Maulana was scheduled to give a lecture at the institution where my father was working that evening and my father told me that I should attend it. I said there was no way I could sit through the programme as I was exhausted.

I was at home in the afternoon resting when my mother got a call from my father, who said that I should come over and that he was sending a car to pick me up. I panicked and wondered why my father was insisting I should come for the talk when he knew my condition.

I forced my tired self and reached the venue. I told my father that I wouldn't sit inside the hall but could watch everything from the outside gallery sort-of space as I didn't know when I would feel sick. I realized later that my father did not want me to miss Maulana's talk and that is why he insisted on me being there despite my feeling sick. He valued Maulana's wisdom.

Later in life, I was in Delhi, and I happened to meet Maulana. I was fortunate to attend a few of his regular Sunday classes, where he would discuss issues and take questions from visitors.

Maulana passed away some years ago, but the intellectual legacy he left behind still lives on and is benefitting many people. It has certainly benefitted me, including in the form of some precious bits of wisdom from him that I happened to read just recently on the subject of patience. Here, Maulana talks about how one should practise patience in daily life amidst the challenges that one faces. At first it seemed as if one needs to be almost an angel to practise what Maulana says about being patient. But reading more about his guidance on patience, it began to make some sense. It made full sense to me very recently when I had to encounter what for me was a big challenge!

That morning, Ginger, a very friendly neighbourhood cat, made his way to the apartment where I currently live. It is his routine to come by in the morning and then I take a packet of cat-food for him and head outside the apartment complex to give it to him. As I set off, I spotted a neighbour, who was possibly returning from a walk. I wished

him a good morning with a smile, to which he responded, and then he said: "This cat is a pest. Because of him, my dog barks every day!", or something to that effect.

I did not react and say anything. Instead, I continued smiling and went my way, with Ginger following me. My focus was to first give hungry Ginger his food peacefully outside before another obstacle might come our way! After finishing this task, as I returned to the apartment, I realized that my neighbour's statement had hurt me. After all, a dog will bark, because dogs do bark—that's how God has made dogs, and so, that's the way it is. Now, I could have answered my neighbour back by complaining about some aspects of his own behaviour (including his occasional quarrels with his spouse and his scolding delivery boys) and I could also have said that all of this behaviour on his part was a 'pest' (to use a word that he had used). But I didn't. What made me refrain from doing so?

***Thank you, Maulana,
for leaving behind
precious practical
wisdom, so useful
for everyday living,
through your
writings.***

Apart from the 'You must get along well with your neighbours' logic, it was Maulana's words on patience which I had been reading a few days ago that led me not to react to my neighbour's remark. Keeping quiet in the face of this challenge, I experienced, through this little event, what is a really workable solution in such challenging situations. Avoiding reaction and practising patience can really help one maintain one's peace of mind (as well as good neighbourly relations), this event

showed me. While a corner of my heart still hurts that an innocent cat could be talked about in such a harsh manner by someone, I know the patience that I practiced then will not be in vain!

Thank you, Maulana, for leaving behind precious practical wisdom, so useful for everyday living, through your writings. We need reminders every now and then of your wisdom about how to positively deal with challenges, because life is not all roses, for it has its share of thorns, too!

Ending this tribute to Maulana, I would like to say "Thank You" to my father for having introduced me to Maulana and to Maulana for sharing his precious wisdom with so many people, including myself. □

CPS NEWSLETTER

CPSInternational
women for peace and spirituality



DR. SAFEENA TABASSUM



MS. FAHMIDA KHAN

LEARNINGS FROM TAZKIRUL QURAN THE QURAN 97:1-5

LIVE ON YOUTUBE

TODAY, 5 APRIL AT 9:00 PM (IST)

CPS International Women's group conducts regular discussions between its members on the topics of spirituality and peace. These discussions are streamed online. A new series of discussions titled Learnings from Tazkirul Quran is available on YouTube: Here are the YouTube links:

<https://youtube.com/@CPSInternational>
<https://youtube.com/@CPSInternational>

On the occasion of **Maulana's 3rd death anniversary**, CPS International, New Dlehi livestreamed a conversation between Prof. Farida Khanam, Dr. Saniyasnain Khan and Maulana Farhad Ahmed discussing Maulana and his mission.

Watch the programme at
www.fb.com/maulanawkhan

Remembering
MAULANA
WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Prof. Farida Khanam | Dr. Saniyasnain Khan | Maulana Farhad Ahmed

SUNDAY, APRIL 21 | 10:58 AM (IST) | FB.COM/MAULANAWKHAN

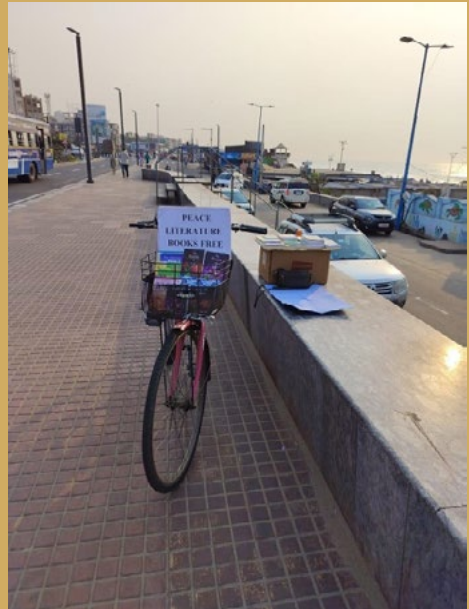
Promoting Peace among Muslim Society

Ms Ayesha Yusra from Vishakhapatnam reports:

This morning when I started from home for introduce the message of peace, I found so much more traffic than usual. For a second, I thought I have to drop the idea but suddenly I changed my mind that have to go, this is my duty, and it's my love for God. Alhamdulillah, I reached the place finally.

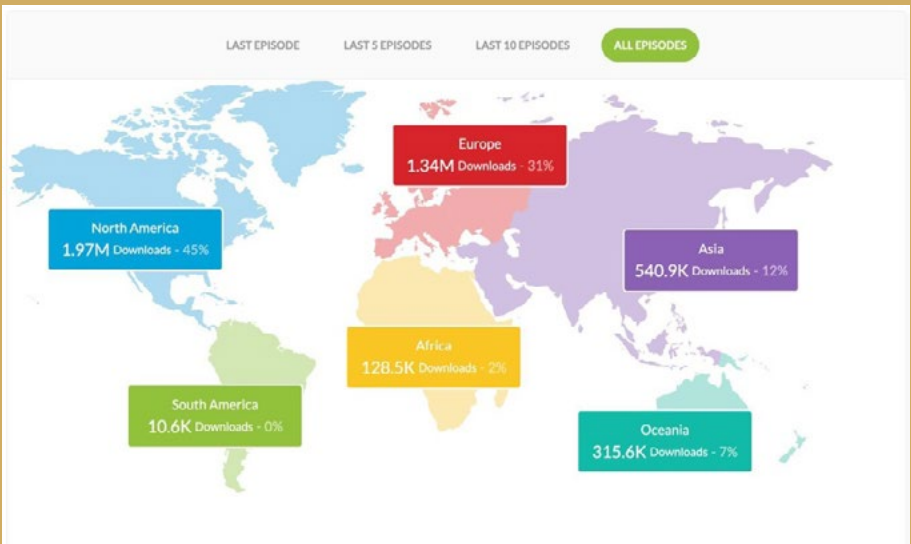
An elderly gentleman came and asked me Amma! Do you have a copy of the English Quran? I want to give it to a man who has been a seeker of truth for a long time. He wants to know what the message of the Quran is. I gave the copy and some literature and asked him, sir, have you ever read it? He said no. Then I gave another copy of a Telugu Quran and family life. He took them with so much respect.

And I realized that if I made an excuse and stayed at home then I would never get this great opportunity again in my life.





Distribution of spiritual literature of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan.



CPS team of USA reports:

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan’s English translation of the Quran Audio, beautifully narrated by Sean Barrett, has reached a milestone with a staggering 4.3 million downloads on Spotify and various other platforms! Don’t miss out on this enlightening experience. Dive into the depths of wisdom today!



Download link:

<https://open.spotify.com/show/1lIBPascXiLSvgbzPJSK34?si=hhQqxj7OQjuQjxwNUS032A>



Portuguese and Spanish translation of Quran are being distributed to the visitors to Foz do Iguacu, Brazil mosque daily.



2,000 copies of English translation of the Quran were being sent to Ajman UAE for free distribution during Iftar.

Several volunteers at Wayland, MA USA Mosque helped pack and ship 480 copies of the translation of the Quran. Many got to learn about the CPS USA mission.



AN UPDATE FROM CPS MICHIGAN

Every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, year round, at the following three locations, peace and spirituality books are placed in Free Book Booths at the following places. Free Book Booths have been in operation for some time, most visitors just pick up copies of Quran Translations.

1. County Line Trade Center 20900 Dequindre, Warren, MI-48091
2. New Baltimore Trade Center 35248, 23 Mile Road, New Baltimore, MI-48047
3. Westland Flea Market 4170 W. Broad St.Columbus, OH-43228



Mr Humayun Khan distributes Quran and Discover Islam book to his customers in his Restaurant in El Salvador in South America

This is feedback from one seeker:

By the grace of God, Maulana's efforts of addressing modern mind are manifesting with the literature of maulana and the efforts of CPS team. May Almighty assist all of us to carry on the literature distribution and sharing creation plan of God to human societies across the globe. Amen!

This is the Instagram Link of a review of Maulana's English translation of the Quran:

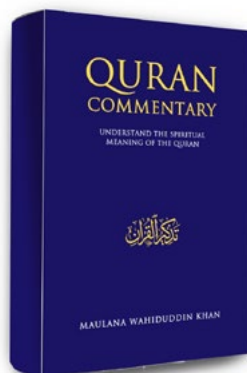
<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C4QGQkv7cg/?igsh=MTRyamg5OXN1MmNkcg%3D%3D>

THE WORD OF GOD

From The Scriptures

The Quran is the book of God. It has been preserved in its entirety since its revelation to the Prophet of Islam between CE 610 and 632. It is a book that brings glad tidings to humankind, along with divine admonition, and stresses the importance of man's discovery of the Truth on a spiritual and intellectual level.

Translated from Arabic and commentary by
Maulana Wahiduddin Khan



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

O you who are wrapped up in your mantle, stand up to pray for much of the night. It may be half the night or a little less than that or a little more, but recite the Quran slowly and distinctly. For We are about to send down to you a message of considerable gravity. (73:1-5)

Literally 'recite the Quran in slow, measured rhythmic tones'. This means 'recite, paying full attention to the import of the content'. When recited like this, a two-way process between Quran and its reciter comes into play. For him, the Quran is an address or speech by God and his heart starts answering this address at every verse. In the Quran where there is any mention of God's majesty, the reciter's entire existence is strongly affected by the realisation of His greatness. When God's blessings are enumerated in the Quran, the reciter's heart overflows with gratitude; when God's retribution is described in the Quran, the reciter trembles on reading it; when an order is laid down in the Quran, the feeling becomes intensified in the reciter that he should become the obedient subject of his Lord by carrying out that order.

Literally 'weighty words' refers to that order for giving warning which is mentioned in the next chapter, 'Arise and give warning' (74:2). This means inform people about the hazards of the Hereafter. Undoubtedly this is the most difficult task in the world. For this, the missionary has to stand by the pure and unadulterated Truth, even if he becomes a stranger to all his people. He has to tolerate being tormented by the people, so that the relationship between him and his addressees remains unaffected till the last moment. He has to be unilaterally

governed by the principles of patience and avoidance of confrontation, so that his status as *da'i* should not be damaged.

Surely, getting up at night [for worship] is the most potent means of subduing the self and most suitable for the word [of prayer]. You have by day prolonged occupations [with Dawah work]. Remember the name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him wholeheartedly. He is the Lord of the east and the west, there is no deity but Him, so take Him as your Guardian. Bear patiently with what they say, and ignore them politely. Leave it to Me to deal with the deniers, who live a life of comfort, and bear with them a little longer. We have in store for them heavy fetters and a blazing Fire, food that chokes and painful punishment on the Day the earth and mountains shall shake and the mountains crumble into shifting sand dunes. (73:6-14)

Delivering the call for acceptance of the Truth means initiating the most difficult campaign. One who does so becomes persona non grata in his entire surroundings. In such conditions, the only Being whom the preacher of Truth finds as his sympathiser and supporter is his Lord. He not only goes on remembering his God in his heart, but he also stands before Him during the night. Night time is the time of leisure. In the dead silence of night man finds a better opportunity to turn towards God with full concentration. In the path of the mission of Truth, strewn as it is with difficulties, this is the only real weapon which the missionary has.

It is the way of a true preacher that, when he is troubled by an addressee, he does not inveigh against or argue with him, but rushes towards God. He abstains from negative reaction till the last moment. And to continue to work, rising above such a reaction, is the essential condition which makes a man a missionary of the Truth in the real sense. □



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

The remedy for ignorance is asking questions. (Prophet Muhammad)

The spirit of enquiry is the hallmark of an open society and the above saying of the Prophet aptly illustrates this principle. A culture of curiosity and open-mindedness will foster development in any society by motivating its members to learn enthusiastically and enrich their knowledge. This is because awareness of one's ignorance is half of knowledge, as it becomes a stepping-stone to seeking and finding answers. A questioning mind is like a flowing river that is replenished with fresh thoughts and ideas and continues on its journey.

What is the significance of Hajj?

Hajj is a congregational act of worship. It is the fifth pillar of Islam. Muslims from around the world gather at Makkah to perform the pilgrimage. The *Hajj* rite begins on the 7th day of the month of Dhul Hijjah and ends on the 12th day. Every year, approximately two million individuals take part in this worship. The pilgrimage serves as a unifying platform that brings Muslims from different nations together in a religious gathering, fostering a profound sense of unity within the Islamic community. *Hajj* is a profound demonstration of unity and solidarity. The pilgrimage of *Hajj* is a sacred journey towards God. It represents the highest level of closeness to one's Lord in this worldly life. While other forms of worship serve as a means of remembering God, *Hajj*, however, is a means of attaining proximity to God. If other forms of worship are the worship of God at a level of unsees, then *Hajj* is the worship of God at the level of the seen. *Hajj* is a divine encounter: It is a meeting with the Almighty. When a person embarks on pilgrimage and reaches the sacred destinations of *Hajj*, he experiences extraordinary divine feelings. It is as if he has left behind his own world and entered into the realm of God.

Tell us something about Prophet Abraham.

Prophet Abraham was born in ancient city of Ur, located in the present-day Iraq. He lived for 175 years. Abraham was known for his exceptional qualities and unwavering devotion to God. He spoke to his people about one true God and questioned them about polytheism. But his very own people threw him in the fire. However, God saved him and bestowed upon him the favour of righteous descendants. God

instructed Abraham to build the *Kabah*, and call people to pilgrimage. Abraham and his son, Ishmael together constructed the *Kabah*, the centre of monotheism, towards which people from all over the world would visit. Earlier, prophets were sent to a small community. Abraham was the first Prophet who travelled far and wide to spread the message of God. Also, the institution of prophethood continued among his descendants for the next four thousand years. The last Prophet, Prophet Muhammad, whose prophethood will continue undiminished in its influence till the Day of Judgement was among his descendants.

What is Talbiyah? What is its significance?

During *Hajj*, the pilgrims frequently recite the *Talbiyah* in the form of the following phrase:

"Labbayk Allahumma labbayk, labbayk la sharika laka labbayk, innal hamda wan-ni'mata laka wal mulk. La sharika lak." (Here I am, O God, here I am, You have no partner, here I am. Verily, all praise, blessings, and dominion belong to You. You have no partner.)

By saying these words repeatedly, a psychological state is cultivated within the pilgrim that greatness belongs to one God alone. All other forms of greatness pale into insignificance compared with the supreme greatness of God. This profound realization serves as the key to unity. Unity and solidarity cannot be achieved in an environment where each individual claims superiority over others. When individuals are ready to lose their personal sense of greatness in favour of another, this results in unity and solidarity.

What are some of the rituals performed during Hajj? What is their significance?

Tawaf: An important part of the *Hajj* is *Tawaf* which involves circumambulation around the *Kabah*. People from all corners of the world who gather in Makkah during the *Hajj* season commence their journey by performing the *Tawaf* around the *Kabah*. This act symbolizes a practical admission that their endeavours will revolve around a single focal point. They move in the same circle. This parallel can be drawn to the physical centrality observed in the solar system, where all the planets orbit around the Sun, the central point. Similarly, *Hajj* imparts the profound lesson that man should centre his life around the worship of one God and revolve within this divine circle.

Sa'i: Afterward, the pilgrims proceed to perform *Sa'i* between Safa and Marwah. They start from Safa and walk towards Marwah, then return from Marwah to Safa. This process is repeated seven times, completing

seven rounds. This act of Sa'i teaches the lesson that a person's efforts should be restrained within certain boundaries. Without limits to their pursuits, they would wander aimlessly. However, when boundaries are established, individuals remain focused within them. They continuously return to the same points where their fellow pilgrims continue their activities. This is the case with other rituals of *Hajj* as well. All the rituals of *Hajj* are performed with a unified focus, despite their various aspects. It is as if there is a divine force like a magnet attracting all scattered elements towards a single point.

The Gathering at Arafat: After engaging in various rituals all these people gather in the vast field of Arafat and a remarkable scene unfolds at that moment. It appears as if all the differences among human beings have suddenly vanished. People have let go of their conflicts and have become one, just as their God is one. When all the pilgrims, dressed in white Ihram attire, come together in the expansive field of Arafat, observing from a height, it seems as though, despite differences in language, colour, status, and gender, everyone has become completely united. Different nationalities seem to merge into a larger nationality. The truth is that *Hajj* showcases such a profound demonstration of unity and solidarity that no other example can be found anywhere else in the world.

Visit to Madinah: Although the prescribed rituals of *Hajj* are concluded in Makkah, most pilgrims also visit Madinah after completing *Hajj*. The ancient name of Madinah is Yathrib. However, towards the end of his life, the Prophet of Islam made it his centre. Since then, it has been known as Madinat al- Nabi (the city of the Prophet). Madinah is its abbreviation. Masjid al Nabwi built by the Prophet Muhammad, is located in Madinah. His grave lies inside this mosque. The remnant signs of his prophetic life can be seen all around. When the pilgrim reaches Madinah, it serves as a profound lesson for them in unity and social cohesion. In the Prophet's Mosque, they are reminded that they have only one guide. As they depart, they realize that in spite of the multitude of geographical and national differences among them, they are all required to follow the path shown by the same Prophet. They endeavour to make him the guiding force in their lives.

What is the spirit of sacrifice?

During the occasions of *Hajj* or *Eid al-Adha*, the act of animal sacrifice encompasses two dimensions: one is its spirit, and the other its form. In terms of its spirit, sacrifice represents a commitment or pledge. The physical act of sacrifice serves as a pledge in action. By sacrificing an

animal, a believer symbolically pledges to devote his entire life to the path of God. He follows the footsteps of his forefather, Abraham, in being so devout and obedient to his Creator that he is ready to sacrifice even his most prized possession if need arises in God's way.

What is the social aspect of Hajj?

Every year, approximately two million individuals take part in *Hajj*, and this pilgrimage serves as a unifying platform that brings Muslims from different nations together in a religious gathering, fostering a profound sense of unity within the Islamic community. God has designated the *Kabah* as a sacred place where people return to find peace. It is a centre, a gathering place that serves as a common reference point and symbol for all. Though Muslims from different corners of the world are gathered, speaking different languages, during *Hajj* season, they all become united. They come together to worship the same God. Throughout *Hajj*, their focus remains steadfastly on the same God. Thus, *Hajj* becomes an act of worship, that, with all its rituals, imparts lessons of social cohesion and centrality.

There is a Hadith that cautions Muslims about the intention of performing Hajj. Kindly elaborate.

In a *Hadith*, it is mentioned: "There will come a time when people perform *Hajj* for entertainment, the middle class for business, the scholars for fame and reputation, and the poor seeking monetary help." This *Hadith* is indeed quite alarming. In light of this, it is crucial for Muslims, particularly in the present age, to engage in introspection and evaluate their action whether or not they are sincere in intention.

How should a person conduct himself after performing Hajj?

According to a saying of the Prophet, a person after completing *Hajj* is akin to a newborn baby, cleared of all sins. This should be a person's attitude after completing *Hajj*. He should cleanse himself of all negative thoughts, remove any hatred or malice he might have harboured towards his fellow, forgive those who wronged him and wholly connect himself with his Lord. He should pledge to lead a God-oriented life and also exhort others to remember God and celebrate His praises. He should be conscious of spreading the peaceful message of God to all his fellow human beings.

Can you summarise the benefits of Hajj?

Hajj, when performed with sincerity and devotion, has the power to transform the pilgrim, similar to what is known as "deconditioning"

in modern terms. *Hajj* is a transformative journey that aims to decondition every individual, allowing them to reconnect with their inner nature. Essentially, the person who was previously bound by external conditioning becomes aligned with their true nature through the experience of *Hajj*. However, this benefit of *Hajj* is attained by those who perform the pilgrimage with the right intention and spiritual mindset. For those who merely go through the outward rituals of *Hajj* without any spirit, it remains just an outing lacking any deeper significance. □



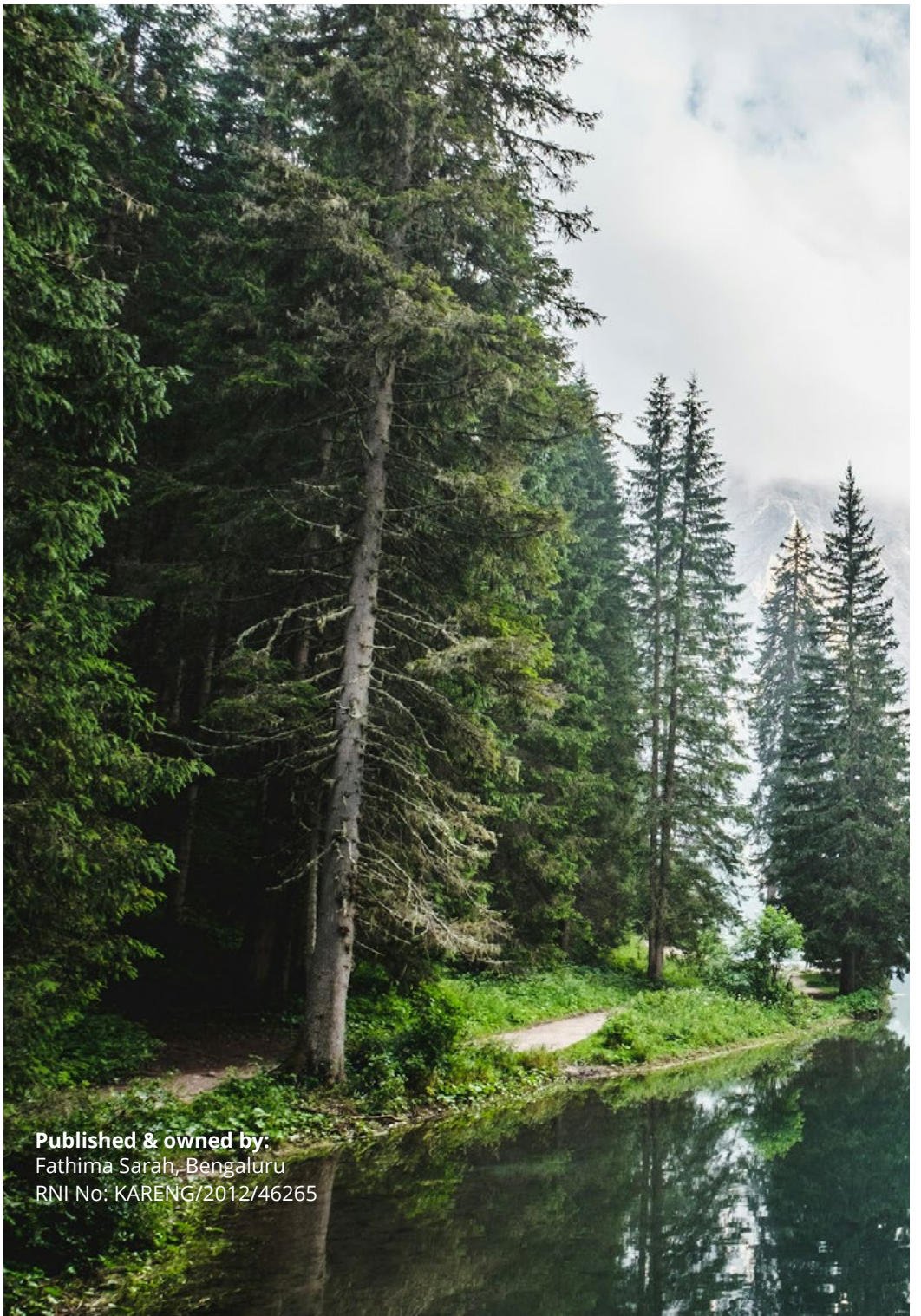
The Quran forbids extravagance, which is spending without real need (7:31). The Prophet of Islam said, "Indeed, extravagance is to eat everything you desire." (Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith no. 3352)

It is man's legitimate right to spend on real needs. One should not spend out of desire and pleasure. God gives someone surplus wealth, not for spending it only on himself. Wealth is God's trust, and he should spend it only on the things God has ordained for him. Extravagant lifestyle is an indication that a person has not fulfilled God's trust.

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.



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