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SPIRIT OF ISLAM

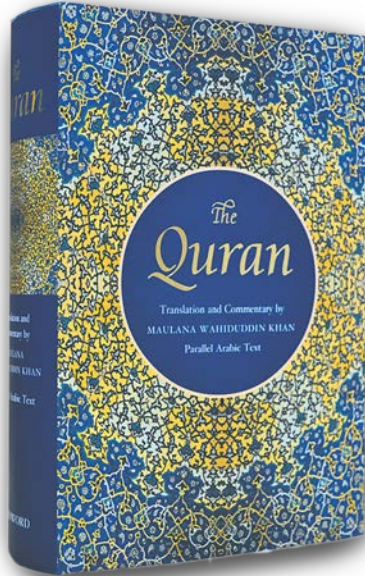


**Success is never final and failure never fatal.
It is courage that counts**

The Quran

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY
MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN
PARALLEL ARABIC TEXT

This commentary on the Quran is a concise, easy-to-read guide that enables today's readers to understand the deeper meanings of the Quran and to reflect upon its relevance in the present world. It focuses on the main themes of the Quran, such as God-realization, enlightenment, closeness to God, remembrance, prayer, peace and spirituality. It lays stress on the fact that through reflection, deep thinking and contemplation, divine lessons can be learnt from the signs of God scattered across the world.



This commentary thus explains the meaning of the Quran in such a way as to give readers a clearer understanding of the message of the Quran and helps them in finding their own way of making it relevant to themselves.

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SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Spiritual Living

SPIRIT OF ISLAM

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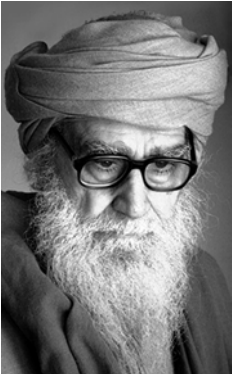
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FROM MAULANA'S DESK



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

THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW INDIA

POLITICS is full of differences. If we tried to eliminate such differences, it would prove to be counterproductive. In other words, it would result in a greater evil. Then, what is the alternative? Democracy is the answer. Democracy, in one sense, is the art of difference management. Democracy means a non-confrontational settlement of differences.

India's just concluded sixteenth general election is a landmark in the history of Indian democracy. This election has led to a sea change in India's politics. But the whole process was totally peaceful. From A to Z it was a smooth exercise. For one political group, this election led to an unprecedented victory, while for another political group, it was a near disaster. But a good sign is that the defeated group welcomed the winning group without losing any time, while the winning group has declared that this was a victory of none other than Bharat, and that they were ready to engage in the sharing of politics for the benefit of India's development.

Democracy is the best form of inducting the spirit of healthy sportsmanship in politics. During the age of kingship, the man wearing the crown used to say: 'I am here to rule the land,' while in a democracy the winner has to say: 'I am here to serve the land.'

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

Democracy is the best way to settle political differences in a positive spirit. It offers a twofold strategy: adopting a sharing principle with respect to common national issues, and at the same time adopting the policy of non-interference with regard to those issues that are regional and not national.

We proudly say that India is the largest democracy of the world, but this statement refers only to the quantitative aspect of our democracy. Now we need to add one more dimension to this statement, and that is, the qualitative aspect. The time has come to show the world that Indian democracy is value-based rather than simply power-based.

**Democracy is the art of difference management.
Democracy means a non-confrontational
settlement of differences.**

Swami Vivekananda was a great soul of India. He visited the US in 1893. One day Swamiji was walking along a street in Chicago, clad in two lengths of untailed cloth. At that time in the US, this kind of attire was quite unfamiliar. On seeing this, a woman whispered to her husband, "I don't think that man is a gentleman." Swami Vivekananda overheard this remark. He walked towards the lady and said to her politely: "Excuse me, Madam, in your country it is the tailor who makes a man a gentleman, but in the country from where I come, it is character which makes a man a gentleman."

For India, character is not simply a matter of individual behaviour. It also reflects in the policy of the state. Now the time has come to re-shape India on moral principles.

The term *Ramarajya* was used by Mahatma Gandhi to define democratic-righteous rule during the Indian independence struggle. At the same time he clarified, "By *Ramarajya* I do not mean Hindu Raj. I mean by *Ramarajya*, Divine Raj; the Kingdom of God. The *Ramarajya* of my dream ensures equal rights for all."

The present change in Indian politics provides an opportunity to lay the foundation stone for an India that has been the dream of all the great minds of our country. The present world is said to be a developed world, but all the modern developments are material developments.

This kind of development is one-sided. Jesus Christ rightly said: "Man does not live by bread alone". (Matthew 4: 4) India is now in a position to present a new model of qualitative democracy; that is, value-based democracy.

Everyone talks about *bharatiya parampara* (the Indian tradition). What is the Indian tradition? I have made an in-depth study of this subject. I can say that basically there are two important aspects of the Indian tradition: peace and spirituality. Peace and spirituality make up the real identity of India. India can thus emerge as the harbinger of these two values.

Peace and spirituality make up the real identity of India.

As far as peace is concerned, India under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi adopted the peaceful method for its freedom struggle. This method was so successful that India emerged as the foremost name in pacifism. India became the identity of peace. Everywhere in the world anyone who wants peace refers to the Indian example.

Now it is the turn of spirituality. The subject of spirituality has become a fad. Everyone in the modern world wants spirituality. But the only hope lies in India. India, at least potentially, is a spiritual nation. What is required is to turn this potential into reality. India possesses spiritual qualities in the fullest sense of the word and the present world is greatly in need of spirituality. The need of the hour is to combine these two aspects, and the result will be in the form of a new international phenomenon; that is, the emergence of India as a spiritual superpower of the world. □

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan
editor@thespiritofislam.org



Be Truthful

*In this world falsehood too may appear to carry weight,
but in the Hereafter nothing will carry weight except the truth.*

TRUE ISLAM

Submission to God

ISLAM literally means submission. Submission is the essence of Islam. Submission means submission — or surrender — to God. When one discovers the existence of God and makes Him his sole concern, he surrenders before Him in the complete sense of the word. When a person Islamizes his thought, his dealings, his actions, he is a Muslim. This is the true spirit of Islam.

At the same time there is a 'form' of Islam. However, there is a difference between the two. Submission to God is the real part of Islam, while the form is a relative part. Let us take the example of *salat*, or prayer. The essence of prayer is *khushu'* (THE QURAN 23: 2); that is, divine consciousness, while *ruku'* (bowing down) and *sajdah* (prostration) are the form of prayer. In Islam both the spirit and the form are required, but not on an equal basis. *Khushu'* is the inner part of prayer, while *ruku'* and *sajdah* are the external part of prayer.

Islam literally means submission; submission to God or surrender to God.

It is a psychological fact that when a person adopts a certain belief with all his heart and mind, it is bound to find external expression. This psychological fact applies to the religion of Islam as well. Basically, Islam consists of an inner spirit, but when this inner spirit is inculcated in a person in all sincerity, it is also bound to find expression in his external behaviour. Without spirit there is no value of form; and if there is spirit but no form, then it is not Islam; rather, it is something else.

For example, there is a verse in the Quran about charity. It says:

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.

THE QURAN 23: 60

This is the Quranic definition of Islamic charity. If there is charity without the fear of God, then it is not Islamic charity. Charity is Islamic in nature only when the giver possesses the spirit defined in the above verse. So is the case of all Islamic practices.

This principle applies to all the commandments of Islam. When one declares his Islam, he recites the *kalima*, but this *kalima* must entail the realization of God. The recitation of the *kalima* without realization of God is nothing but lip-service.

When a person adopts a certain belief with all his heart and mind, it is bound to find external expression.

In short, both the spirit and the form are required in Islam. However, spirit is the real part of Islam while the form is a relative part of Islam.

The inner spirit is absolute. No erosion in the inner spirit is acceptable. Islam gives some concession in form, but there is no concession in spirit. For example, during ablutions in cold weather, Islam allows you to touch your socks instead of washing the feet. However, there is no concession in the spirit of ablutions, which is aimed at purification of the soul. □



Belief in God

*Belief in a God of perfection is
more than just a dogma.*

It illuminates man's soul and enraptures his heart.

*If one relishes a delicious fruit, and goes into ecstasy
on hearing a tuneful melody,
how then can one fail to be
moved by the discovery
of God, who is the
fountainhead of
all goodness.*

THE CROW AS A TEACHER

Lessons from Nature

THERE is a story in the Quran which bears a great lesson for man. Adam was the first man. Abel and Cain were the two sons of Adam. There arose a dispute between the two on some issue, and finally Cain killed Abel. The other part of the story has been narrated in the Quran in these words: "His soul persuaded him to kill his brother, and he killed him and became one of the lost. Then God sent a crow, which scratched the earth, so that He might show him how to bury the corpse of his brother. 'Alas!' he cried, 'Am I not able even to be like this crow, so that I may bury the corpse of my brother?' And he repented." (THE QURAN 5: 30-31)

This story is not an isolated story. It gives us a comprehensive understanding; that is, in nature there are examples for man to draw lessons from. If he contemplates on these lessons, he may find wisdom for life. The fact is that with the exception of man, the whole world follows the strict laws of nature — the material and plant world follow natural laws, while animals are governed by their instinct. They have no freedom of choice. They are managed by angels. Due to this, the material world, plant world and animal world are guaranteed of not deviating from the right path.

But man is quite a different creature. Man enjoys freedom and is thus completely free to make his own choices. Because of this nature of human existence, there are deviations from the right path in human life. Man misuses his freedom and the result is evil and corruption.

In this state of affairs, the best way for man is to follow the example of the world around him. What the rest of the world is doing under compulsion, he must do by choice. For example, there are numerous stars and planets in the vast space. All these astronomical bodies are continuously in motion, but there are no collisions among them. They are revolving in their respective orbits, and do not try to confront each other. Man must follow this pattern; that is, he must plan his activities without engaging in confrontation with other people.

All the creatures of the world, both animate and inanimate, are examples for man. If man ponders over the natural phenomena, he will certainly discover the right way of living, which is free of confrontation, hate and violence. □

CREATIVE LEADERSHIP

Discovering Opportunities Amidst Problems

HUMAN life is full of problems. Any leadership that emerges, is bound to emerge amidst problems. Also, every leadership shares the common claim of aiming to solve problems.

But there is a difference. One kind of leadership only exacerbates the problem, while the other kind either solves the problem or at least reduces the magnitude of the problem. Only the second kind of leadership can be called creative leadership.

Why is there a difference in the results of these two kinds of leadership? The basic reason is that uncreative leadership is the outcome of reaction; it begins with protests and ends with protests. In such a situation another title for uncreative leadership is protestant leadership.

**Life and problems are inseparable from each other.
With every problem, there are opportunities.**

In contrast, creative leadership always reaches some kind of positive result. Its beginning is positive and its end is also positive. In terms of results, uncreative leadership is a curse for mankind, while creative leadership is a blessing for mankind.

Why is there such a difference? The reason is that uncreative leadership sees things at face value, so it knows of nothing except problems. It begins with complaints and protests and also ends with complaints and protests. On the other hand, creative leadership is able to see what is beneath the surface. It is able to discover an opportunity amidst the jungle of problems. The method of creative leadership involves avoiding problems and trying to avail all opportunities. This is the wisdom of life. Due to this difference, uncreative leadership always fails, while creative leadership always achieves success.

The wisdom behind this state of affairs is that problems are a part of life. Both life and problems are inseparable from each other. This is a law of nature. But, there is another aspect of the law of nature, which may be formulated in these words: 'With every problem, there

are opportunities.' Creative leadership is so wise that it knows this law of nature. It, therefore, never allows itself to become enmeshed in problems. Rather, it always tries to find opportunities and avail of them in its favour. This wisdom is absent in uncreative leadership.

Creative leadership begins with planning. A creative leader is one who is able to dispassionately assess the situation and after analysing all the aspects of the situation, finalizes his plan. He will say: 'My way is to begin from the beginning.' While the uncreative leader is unaware of this reality, he jumps into the helm of affairs without any planning. He proves to be a practical example of the saying: 'Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.'

The criterion of good leadership is the result.

Creative leadership is wise leadership in the true sense of the word. It is better for those deprived of this wisdom to remain inactive than try to play an active role in arriving at any solution.

The criterion for judging good and bad leadership is the result. Don't see their slogans, but see the result they yield. Slogans can be misleading, while the result should be the true criterion of judgment. □



Remembering Death

Man has to pass his life in this world in such a way that every happening becomes for him a reminder of the Day of Judgement. His sleeping and rising should also serve as reminders of life after death.

SCIENCE SPEAKS ABOUT GOD

Seek the Creator

NATURE is the subject of science. Science studies nature and discovers those laws through which nature is being governed. In other words, science studies the creation without referring to the Creator.

It is not the concern of scientists to discover the Creator. Moreover, this kind of bifurcation is practically impossible. One cannot detach the engineer from the machine, then how can one detach the Creator from the creation? Science discovers the marvels of nature, but the question arises as to who created these marvels? When we try to find out the answer to this question, we cannot help acknowledge the existence of God.

One cannot detach the engineer from the machine, then how can one detach the Creator from the creation?

There are a number of books on this subject. A recent one is *Why Science Does Not Disprove God* written by mathematician Amir D. Aczel, who is currently researcher in the history of science at Boston University. The following are excerpts taken from a review on this book by the physicist Alan Lightman:

There is plenty of good scientific evidence that our universe began about 14 billion years ago, in a Big Bang of enormously high density and temperature, long before planets, stars and even atoms existed. But what came before? The physicist, Lawrence Krauss in his book discusses the current thinking of physicists that our entire universe could have emerged from a jitter in the amorphous haze of the subatomic world called the quantum foam, in which energy and matter can materialize out of nothing. Krauss's punch line is that we do not need God to create the universe. The quantum foam can do it quite nicely all on its own. Aczel asks the obvious question: But where did the quantum foam come from? Where did the quantum laws come from? Hasn't Krauss simply passed the buck? Legitimate questions, but ones we will probably never be able to answer.

...Aczel discusses the mysteries of "emergent" phenomena —

when a complex system exhibits a qualitative behaviour that cannot be explained in terms of the workings of its individual parts: for example, the emergence of self-replicating life from inanimate molecules or the emergence of consciousness from a collection of connected neurons. He writes, "The inexplicability of such emergent phenomena is the reason why we cannot disprove the idea of some creative power behind everything."

...The fine-tuning problem: For the past 50 years or so, physicists have become more and more aware that various fundamental parameters of our universe appear to be fine-tuned to allow the emergence of life — not only life as we know it but life of any kind. For example, if the nuclear force were slightly stronger than it is, then all of the hydrogen atoms in the infant universe would have fused with other hydrogen atoms to make helium, and there would be no hydrogen left. No hydrogen means no water. On the other hand, if the nuclear force were substantially weaker than it is, then the complex atoms needed for biology could not hold together.

In another, even more striking example, if the cosmic "dark energy" discovered 15 years ago were a little denser than it actually is, our universe would have expanded so rapidly that matter could never have pulled itself together to form stars. And if the dark energy were a little smaller, the universe would have collapsed long before stars had time to form. Atoms are made in stars. Without stars there would be no atoms and no life.

So, the question is: Why? Why do these parameters lie in the narrow range that allows life?

If our particular universe did not have the right parameters to allow the emergence of life, we wouldn't be here to talk about it. In a similar way, Earth happens to be at the right distance from the Sun to have liquid water, a nice oxygen atmosphere and so on. We can ask why our planet has all these lovely properties, amenable to life. ...But if we lived on Mercury, where the temperature is 800 degrees, or on Neptune, where it is 328 degrees below zero, we could not exist. (*The Washington Post*, April 11, 2014.) □



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN *AL-DEEN AND SHARIAH*

Eternal over Circumstantial Guidance

According to verse 13 in chapter 42 of the Quran:

He has ordained for you the same way of religion which He had enjoined on Noah, and that We have now revealed to you, and which We had already enjoined for Abraham and Moses and Jesus, so that you should remain steadfast in religion and not become divided therein.

Referring to various communities who received guidance by their prophet, the Quran has this to say:

For each We have appointed a law and a way.

THE QURAN 5: 48

FROM these two verses of the Quran, we learn that the guidance God sent through His prophets has two parts to it. One is called *Al-Deen* and the other is called *Shariah* or *Minhaj*.

Al-Deen refers to that part of divine guidance which has been given equally to all the prophets, from Noah to the Prophet of Islam. This is the eternal part of God's guidance. In this part of guidance there has never been any change in the past, nor will be there be any change in the future. But in the other part of divine guidance, known as the *Shariah*, we find changes being made. Different Prophets have been given a different *Shariah*. That is, unlike *Al-Deen*, *Shariah* is subject to change.

This division in the teachings means that God's religion which has an eternal message, has been the same at all times. But when this message is practically applied to any given situation, it becomes a matter of *Shariah*. And in the matter of *Shariah*, the situation has to be taken into consideration. It is due to this wisdom that we find differences in different *Shariah*. For, the circumstances keep changing. No *Shariah* can be eternal in its entirety. It will always remain a subject of *Ijtihad* or exercise of judgement with reasoning. In this exercise of *Ijtihad* the practices of previous prophets can serve as examples for us. □

SHARIAH IS NON-POLITICAL

From *Speaking Tree, Times of India*

Muslims, in their zeal to conform to religious injunctions, ought not to make a nuisance of themselves, says Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. He points out that following Shariah is a personal matter.

THE Supreme Court issued a ruling on July 7, 2014, that has triggered a new discussion regarding the *Shariah* and its implications. The gist of this ruling is that *fatwas* issued by *Darul Ifta* or *Darul Qaza* have no legal sanction and no place in India's constitutional scheme. I think this ruling is right. It does not go against the *Shariah*. If anything, it goes against those who are running institutions in the name of the *Shariah*.

Shariah, in fact, is a non-political concept. This means that anyone who wants to follow the Islamic way of life in his personal affairs must refer to the *Shariah*. It is only a matter of personal following; no institution or state is involved in this.

Personal Behaviour

In Chapter *Al-Maidah* of the Quran, there is a verse regarding this issue. It says:

To every one of you, We have ordained a law and a way.

THE QURAN 5: 48

In this verse, the words *shir'a* and *minhaj* are used for personal behaviour. They have nothing to do with politics or the state.

This verse declares that the *ummah* (followers) of all the prophets were given a *Shariah*. And it is established by the Quran that no previous *ummah*, except the *ummah Muhammadiyyah* (Muslim community) was able to establish a state. Therefore, we will have to take the word *Shariah* in the sense that can be commonly applied to all the *ummahs*. This aspect of prophetic history is enough to believe that the word *shir'a* or *Shariah* is used in the sense of personal behaviour. Because, the *ummah* of all the prophets were common in the matter of personal behaviour and not in political affairs. It was everyone's need to know the religious teaching regarding his personal life. But as far as political teachings are concerned, they were not required because no government was established by these prophets.

Shir'a or *Shariah* literally means 'method'. It is not equivalent to law or political injunction. Even when there is only one believer, he needs to follow the *Shariah* in his private life, way of worship, ethical behaviour and personal dealings with other fellowmen. This is *Shariah*. And, in this sense, the word *Shariah* has no political connotation at all.

The word *fatwa* does not in any way mean judicial verdict; it is simply a personal opinion. If a believer wants to know about his personal behaviour, for example, he wants to know about his way of worship or his dress, then, he may visit an Islamic scholar and put this personal question to him. And, that scholar may give him his opinion according to his knowledge of Islam. That is *fatwa*.

**The word *Shariah* has no political connotation at all.
The word *fatwa* does not in any way mean judicial
verdict; it is simply a personal opinion.**

Establishing *Darul Qaza* or *Darul Ifta* is the institutionalisation of *fatwa*, which did not exist during the age of the *Sahaba* (Companions of the Prophet) and the *Tabi'een* (Companions of the Companions). It was an innovation of the later period of Islamic history.

Darul Qaza and *Darul Ifta* are not illegal, but a condition attaches to them. If the national tradition and the constitutional system of a country allow the establishment of such institutions, then there is no harm in it. Otherwise, establishing such institutions must be avoided.

The word 'Islam' has a connotation of peace. So, 'Muslim' means a peaceful person. All Islamic teachings are based on the concept of peace. Muslims are asked to live as law-abiding members of every society, whether they are living as a minority community or a majority community, and whether they enjoy political power or not. In every situation, they must keep the peace and avoid all kinds of confrontation.

There is a *Hadith* which says:

By God, that person will never enter Paradise, who
creates a nuisance for his neighbours.

(Sahih Muslim)

A nuisance is not only that which you think is a nuisance, but also anything which your neighbour considers to be troublesome. So,

Muslims must adopt that kind of behaviour which is acceptable to their neighbours. Anything that is not acceptable to their neighbours is a nuisance. In this matter, the neighbour's opinion must prevail and not that of Muslims.

Muslims are asked to live as law-abiding members of every society, whether they are living as a minority community or a majority community, and whether they enjoy political power or not.

There are different kinds of nuisance. It is also a nuisance that the Muslim community insists on implementing its religious law in India, although the majority of Indian people and the system of India take it to be an unwanted initiative. Thus, Muslims must refrain from such behaviour as it creates a nuisance for their neighbours. □

This article originally appeared in the *Speaking Tree*, a *Times of India* Publication, dated 14 July 2014.



The Creation Plan of God

The present world is nothing but a tiny interlude in our never-ending life span.

The present world has been designed as a 'testing ground' for man; the Last Day as the 'result day' of man's test; and the after-world as the time for man to have the eternal 'reward' or 'punishment', depending upon how he fared in his 'test'.

SILENCE: AN INTELLECTUAL PROCESS

Silence is Golden

ANGER is a very common phenomenon. How to manage anger is a problem faced by every man and woman. The Prophet of Islam has given a wise formula in these words:

When a person is angry, he should keep silence.

Bukhari

Silence is not a state of vacuum. When a person becomes silent, he is often engaged in a great intellectual process. The fact is that anger is a presence of high activity in the mind. Under natural processes the mind releases extraordinary amounts of energy in a state of anger. At this juncture, there are two options for every person; that is, to give this energy either a positive direction or a negative one. If anger is diverted to the negative side, the result would be revenge, intolerance and unsympathetic attitude towards others. On the contrary, if one is able to divert it to the positive side, it would result in such healthy qualities as tolerance, well-wishing and sympathy for others.

**When a person becomes silent, he is often engaged
in a great intellectual process.**

Silence has a great role to play in this process. If man is able to maintain silence, automatically the energy released by anger will get diverted to the positive side. And then under the very law of nature, all healthy qualities will arise. If the energy released at the time of anger is turned to the negative side, then man is himself responsible for it. However, when it is diverted to the positive side, it is totally on account of the natural process. □



THE CULTURE OF PEACE — Part II

Teachings of Islam

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

Killing a Single Person is Tantamount to Slaying the Whole of Humanity

The Quran tells us:

Whoever killed a human being — except as a punishment for murder or for spreading corruption in the land—shall be regarded as having killed all mankind [...].

THE QURAN 5: 32

Killing someone is a very heinous act. It is legitimate only if someone becomes an incurable danger to social peace. To kill someone without genuine justification is tantamount to the slaughter of the whole of humanity, because such an action is a gross violation of respect for life.

It is as reprehensible and enormous a crime to kill a single person as it is to kill a large number of people.

With regard to the consumption of alcohol, a *Hadith* report tells us that if a large quantity of something leads to intoxication, then a small quantity of it, too, is forbidden. The same principle applies in the case of killing as well. It is as reprehensible and enormous a crime to kill a single person as it is to kill a large number of people. The only difference between the two is of degree, but in terms of the nature of the act itself there is no difference whatsoever.

From the above-quoted Quranic verse one can gauge the great importance that Islam gives to peace and security. Islam demands that if a single person is killed, the entire society must react as if it is not a single individual, but, rather, the whole of humanity, that has been slain.

Dousing the Fires of Violence

The Quran tells us:

Whenever they kindle the fire of war, God puts it out.

THE QURAN 5: 64

From this Quranic verse we learn something about God's Creation Plan. We learn that this Plan is based on the principle of peace. We learn that if someone is bent on stirring the fires of violence, we should try to put out the flames through measures of peace so that the fire does not spread. It should never be that one party throws bombs and the other party retaliates in the same way. This is definitely not the proper way to react. The right way to respond is that if someone throws a bomb, you must defuse it.

Success goes along with patience.

The above-quoted Quranic verse indicates that throwing a bomb in retaliation for a bomb thrown by someone else is not the way that God wants us to behave. God wants us to respond to situations like this by seeking to defuse bombs and render them ineffective at the very outset itself so as to prevent the disruption of peace.

It is natural and but to be expected that one will inevitably face various unfavourable conditions in society. No human society has ever been free of these. The solution to this problem is not to try to eliminate these conditions. Rather, their real solution is that we must make sure that we do not add an additional undesirable condition to the already existing ones. We must not add one more bomb to the existing number of bombs.

In this way, we can help prevent unfavourable conditions from further worsening, and, in this way, we can solve them. This is the real and effective solution to the problem.

Strife After Reform

The Quran tells us:

Do not corrupt the land after it has been set in order. This is for your own good, if you are true believers.

THE QURAN 7: 85

This Quranic verse indicates a fact of Nature — that this world has

been perfectly created. Here, everything has been made according to its desirable plan. This means that humans should act in a balanced way in this world, without distorting the balanced pattern of Nature. If we distort this plan of Nature, it will lead to chaos.

We must completely abstain from violence and lead our lives entirely on the basis of the principle of peace.

Innumerable processes are at work in the world, all in accordance with Nature's system of balance. The earth rotates and revolves non-stop. The sun continues to pour its light on the world. The winds blow, the rains come, the rivers flow, the plants and trees grow, and so on. Innumerable processes like these carry on without any interruption, day and night, all of them in a perfectly peaceful manner, with no violence or confrontation whatsoever.

This is the plan of Nature, and human beings should live according to it. Hence, we must completely abstain from violence and lead our lives entirely on the basis of the principle of peace. Those who behave to the contrary engage in what is termed in the Quran as *fasad* or 'corruption in the land'. They are definitely not engaged in promoting reform.

Avoidance, Not Confrontation

The Quran instructs us;

Avoid the ignorant.
THE QURAN 7: 199

The opposite of avoidance is confrontation. Avoiding conflict keeps one within peaceful limits, while confrontation leads to violence between opposing parties. No one — whether individuals or groups — lives alone in this world. People live in proximity with many others, each of who has his own objectives and separate agendas. It is because of this that people and groups often come into confrontation and conflict with each other.

There are two ways to respond to this situation: avoidance of conflict, on one hand, and confrontation, on the other. There is simply no third option. If one chooses the path of confrontation, it will only result in fighting. The whole of human history testifies to the fact that fighting only enables one to give vent to one's pent-up emotions but that it has no real benefit at all. Hence, one must abstain from, and consciously

avoid, confrontation. This sort of avoidance not only saves one from further harm, but also gives one the opportunity to carry on in the journey of progress without being stopped by any hurdles that may come one's way. Such avoidance may seem to be in reaction to an opposing party, but its purpose is actually to save oneself from useless confrontation and to carry on with one's journey free from obstruction.

Patience, the Secret of Success

The Quran instructs us:

Have patience: God is with those who are patient.

THE QURAN 8: 46

According to a *Hadith* report contained in the *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad, the Prophet is said to have declared that it is greatly beneficial to exercise patience in the face of things we do not like. Success goes along with patience. Along with difficulty, the Prophet added, there is ease.

It is natural and but to be expected that one will inevitably face various unfavourable conditions in society.

It often happens that when people are faced with a difficult situation or when they undergo a bitter experience, they get worked up. In some cases, they may even take to violence. But this sort of reaction is a result of being unaware of Nature. The fact is that the Law of Nature always supports those who are firmly established in truth and justice. Such individuals and groups, if they act with patience and not in haste, will inevitably be successful. Success will inevitably follow them.

According to the Quran (46: 35), the opposite of patience is haste. A person who behaves in a patient manner follows the plan of Nature. In contrast, someone who acts hastily deviates from this plan. And a person who deviates from the plan of Nature can be sure that it is impossible for him to succeed.

No To Conflict

The Quran tells us:

Let them not dispute with you on this matter.

Call them to the path of your Lord [...]

THE QURAN 22: 67

From this Quranic verse we learn that, not disputing with someone means not giving the other person the chance to dispute. That is to say, whenever differences arise between two parties, they should keep them within the limits of peaceful dialogue. They must never let these differences go beyond their initial limits and transform into a violent conflict.

We must completely abstain from violence and lead our lives entirely on the basis of the principle of peace.

In this world, tensions constantly arise on various grounds between individuals and groups. In itself, this sort of tension is something quite natural. It happens everywhere, and under all sorts of conditions. The real thing to consider here is that we should make sure that these tensions or differences do not go beyond their limits. For differences to turn into physical confrontation or violence is for them to transgress their limits. No differences are in themselves wrong if they remain within their limits. But when they go beyond their limits they become unacceptable.

The above-quoted Quranic verse tells us something about how a person inspired by a worthy and positive purpose in life conducts himself. For such a person to succeed, the only thing that should be a matter of discussion with others is his purpose. For anything else to become a matter of discussion between him and others is futile.

Now, the question arises as to how can such a person, who is motivated by a positive purpose in life, establish a non-conflictual atmosphere in his relationship with others. The answer is that this is possible only by his exercise of patience in a unilateral manner. In practical terms, there is simply no other way. A person with a purpose in life adopts a policy of unilateral avoidance of confrontation, through which he is able to establish a balanced atmosphere in his relationships with others so that his journey continues uninterrupted.

War Only For Defence

The Quran tells us:

Permission to fight is granted to those who are attacked,
because they have been wronged [...].

THE QURAN 22: 39

This Quranic verse teaches us an important principle that also relates to inter-community and inter-national relations. And that is, that the only legitimate war is one that is fought in defence, in response to clear aggression. All other forms of war are forms of *zulm* or oppression, and oppressors have no place in God's world. As this Quranic verse indicates, wars other than those that are defensive have no justification whatsoever.

No differences are in themselves wrong if they remain within their limits. But when they go beyond their limits they become unacceptable.

According to the Quran, defensive wars may be fought only after issuing a clear declaration or announcement. Unannounced or undeclared war is not permissible in Islam. Furthermore, in Islam a defensive war can only be fought by an established government. Non-governmental actors do not have the permission to unleash war under any pretext whatsoever. Keeping these teachings in mind, it is clear that according to the law of war established by the Quran, all forms of war other than defensive war that is fought out of compulsion are illegitimate according to Islam. This means that guerrilla war, proxy war, undeclared war and aggressive war are all, without any doubt, illegitimate in Islam.

War is something truly despicable. According to the eternal Law of Nature, peace is the general rule or norm, while war is an exception. War can be resorted to only under extreme necessity—in order to protect oneself, and that, too, only when all possible peaceful ways to avoid confrontation have been sincerely tried and have failed.

The Path of Patience Wins God's Help

The Quran instructs us:

Have patience: God is with those who are patient.

THE QURAN 8: 46

The path of patience can also be termed as the path of peace. The opposite is the path of violence. The above quoted Quranic verse tells us about a natural law—that those who walk the path of peace will find that at every step Nature helps them. On the other hand, those who adopt violence are denied Nature's assistance—and for such people there is nothing in this world but failure and destruction.

What does walking the path of patience mean? It means that in the face of difficult or unfavourable conditions and situations, a person does not lose his tolerance, and so his positive thinking remains unimpaired. He distinguishes the possible from the impossible, and begins his journey from what he knows to be possible. He does not hanker after immediate results.

**Those who walk the path of peace will find that
at every step Nature helps them.**

Rather, he adopts the gradual way. He does not lose heart in the face of loss; but, instead, keeps walking ahead with the future in mind. He accepts what the present gives him. As for what he might receive in the future, he adopts a wait-and-see approach. He keeps his desires under the restraint of the Law of Nature, rather than trying to subordinate the Law of Nature to his desires.

Patience is completely a positive action, and not a passive or negative reaction.

.....to be continued.

Part I of this article appeared in the previous Issue (No 19, July 2014).

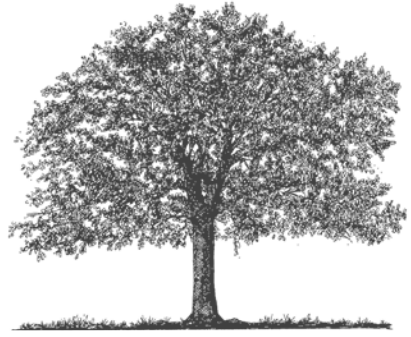


Success through failure

One's initial feeling of disappointment should quickly transform itself into a greater determination to try harder, and to channel one's energies more effectively towards one's goal.

FROM THE SPIRITUAL TREE

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



THE CHALLENGE OF SATAN

IT has been narrated in the Quran that when Satan was asked to bow down before Adam he was outraged. He declared to God that, given the opportunity he will lead all the children of Adam astray. At that time he challenged God saying:

Most of them, You will not find grateful.
THE QURAN 7: 17

God has bestowed countless favours upon man. Then, why is it that man refuses to acknowledge these favours and becomes ungrateful. The answer to this lies in the analysis of the character of Satan.

**In spite of countless instances for gratitude
man becomes ungrateful.**

Satan was a *Jinn* (THE QURAN 18: 50). God had bestowed many favours to the *Jinns*. It was God who created them and granted them an existence. They were given freedom of choice. God gave them extraordinary powers. He bestowed them with long life. He granted them all that they

needed to live in God's world. In spite of all these gifts of God, why did Satan not show gratitude to God?

The reason for this is that the temperament of complaining became so predominant in Satan that he forgot all the other numerous blessings of God. He generalized one event of complaint so much that he could not remember anything other than this grievance.

With one instance of grievance, man forgets all the other good things in his life, choosing to focus only on the issue of complaint in his heart.

The special method that Satan employs to mislead man is by exaggerating the grievances of man. This negative attitude is so enhanced by Satan that with one instance of grievance, man forgets all the other good things in his life, choosing to focus only on the issue of complaint in his heart. He generalizes this one negative instance so much that he is unable to see or acknowledge all the other positive things in his life. In spite of countless instances for gratitude he becomes ungrateful. Those who find themselves in such a feeling of ungratefulness should conclude that they are under the influence of Satan. They should immediately seek forgiveness from God and change their outlook. □



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TRYING TO CHANGE HISTORY'S OUTCOME

Futile and Impractical

THE Kabah was originally constructed by the Prophet Abraham some 4000 years ago. At that time, it was rectangular in shape. Before the advent of the Prophet Muhammad, the Quraysh of Makkah had reconstructed the Kabah, and made it into a square-shaped structure. The Kabah retains this square shape even today.

According to a *Hadith* in the Sahih al-Bukhari, the Prophet told his wife Aisha that he wanted to reconstruct the Kabah once again on its Abrahamic foundations but he abstained from this because, owing to practical reasons, this was no longer possible. This report concerning the Prophet teaches us an important principle — and that is, that the wheels of History cannot be put into reverse gear.

The wheels of History cannot be put into reverse.

This is no ordinary matter. This report about the Prophet indicates a very basic law of Nature — that the journey of History always proceeds from the past to the present and from the present to the future.

It is not possible to reverse History; to unmake what has already happened. It is beyond human control to make History travel in the reverse direction — from the future to the present, and from the present to the past. Given this, the only sensible thing to do in this regard is to accept the present status quo as far as History is concerned and to make one's plans accordingly, rather than seeking to deny this status quo.

The History of the Kabah is an example in this regard. The Prophet accepted the above-mentioned law of Nature and did not try to reconstruct the Kabah on its earlier Abrahamic foundations. Later, after the Prophet's demise, Abdullah ibn Zubair (d. 692 AD) destroyed the structure of the Kabah and remade it on Abrahamic foundations. But soon after Abdullah ibn Zubair's death, Hajjaj ibn Yusuf al-Thaqafi (d. 714 AD) destroyed the structure that Abdullah ibn Zubair had built and reconstructed the Kabah on the foundations that the Quraysh had earlier built it on.

Present-day Muslims are completely unaware of the principle of Nature that is exemplified in the above *Hadith* about the Prophet. And that is why they repeatedly violate this principle. The only result is that in doing so they further magnify their own destruction.

Once History has been written, then, trying to change it is in practical terms, nothing but folly.

The Khilafat Movement in the early 20th century; the Palestinian Movement in the mid-20th century; the Kashmiri movement at the end of the 20th century; and scores of other such Muslim campaigns are ample evidence of this. Those who led these movements tried to reverse the outcome of History. But this did not happen. History cannot be changed. But the folly of this sort of Muslim politics only further increased and exacerbated the Muslims' devastation.

At the time when History is being made, you can influence this decision if you adopt a wise policy. But once History has been written, then, trying to change it is in practical terms, nothing but folly.



No time to interfere

*If one does not make oneself a target for another's vengeance,
but lets everyone continue pursuing his own goal in life,
then one is not going to find one's own path
blocked by others.*

*One will find everyone so absorbed in
minding his own business that
he has no time to interfere
with that of others.*

THE MAKING OF THE INDIAN NATION

Foster Patriotism

MORE than sixty years have passed since India gained its independence, but it has yet to join the ranks of the developed countries. That is a dream still to be realized; and this in spite of India being a large country teeming with potential.

One reason for this tragic failure is the Indian people's lack of national character. The majority of the deficiencies we find in the country today can be traced to this basic shortcoming. Bereft of this sterling quality, we have fallen short in taking the country towards progress and prosperity.

National character is the capacity and the will to hold the interests of the nation supreme in every sphere.

What is national character? It is, to put it simply, the capacity and the will to hold the interests of the nation supreme in every sphere. Whenever there is a clash between individual and national interests, it means individual concerns being subordinated to the greater good of the nation. Whenever a nation has made any progress, it has been due to this spirit of nationalism. Without such a spirit, no nation can advance itself either internally or externally.

Now, the question that arises is: why, during this same period, many other countries such as Singapore, Korea, Malaysia and Japan, etc have succeeded in fostering a strong, national spirit in their people, and now stand alongside developed countries, while India still lags far behind.

There is one basic reason for this: attempting to achieve the possible by means which are impossible. Producing national spirit or character in India is certainly possible. It is just that we have set off on the wrong track, and once on it, it is difficult to retrace our steps and get on to the right track.

After independence, an 'Indian nation' had come into existence in the political and geographical sense. But, at the psychological level — the level of feelings and emotions — our position has still been that of

a nation-in-the-making. For the desired national reconstruction to take place, our leaders proposed a recipe based on the concept of a common heritage with three main parts: religious unity, historical unity and cultural unity.

Religious unity implied that all religions were essentially one. It was believed that if this concept could take root in people's minds, it would produce a sense of unity all over the country. Historically, of course, this assumption was wrong; there is a long, sorry record of co-religionists fighting fiercely among themselves.

For instance, in the war of Mahabharata, warriors on both sides were of the Hindu religion. In the first and second world wars, combatants on both sides were of the Christian faith. Babar had armed confrontations with his own co-religionists, finally inflicting decisive defeats on them. And so on.

The attempt to bring about religious unity in India has had active support right from the time of Akbar, who bolstered it politically, to recent times, when intellectuals such as Dr. Bhagwan Das (a contemporary of Jawaharlal Nehru) attempted to solve the problem with their encyclopaedic knowledge of the subject. But this goal could never be achieved for the simple reason the assumption that all religions are one and the same is incorrect; and no durable structure can be erected on false premises. It is an undeniable fact that there are differences between the various religions.

Whenever there is a clash between individual and national interests, individual concerns must be subordinated to the greater good of the nation.

Given these differences, it is difficult, if not impossible, for the adherents of one religion to reach the point of agreeing that the tenets and practices of another religion have an equal value. However, if the adherents of different religions see each other first and foremost, as human beings, as members of the same human race, they can certainly accord each other equal respect. Through mutual respect, many social benefits can accrue which would be rendered impossible in the wake of futile attempts at mutual recognition of religious beliefs.

Let us now look at how history comes into the picture. It is assumed that even where there are people of different persuasions, a common sense of history will produce a common sense of nationhood. And where such a sense is seen to be lacking, it is advocated that it be inculcated. But this would again be an attempt to achieve the possible by means which are impossible.

All countries, be they as small as Singapore, or as large as the US, are inhabited by varied races and ethnic groups. In this respect there are several different strands to their historical heritage. But in none of these countries has there been any attempt to bulldoze people into sharing a common sense of history.

Instead, there has been an acknowledgment of each citizen's individuality. That is why, albeit imbued with different historical feelings, various groups lead harmonious lives and are engaged in the common cause of nation building.

The third point concerns the acceptance of a common culture. This is wholly impracticable. Culture inevitably evolves a long historical process. It can never be imposed upon a group through any external agency.

The only practicable basis of nationhood is patriotism.

After the Second World War, a movement was launched in the US to produce a common culture throughout the country by a process of Americanization. A similar movement was launched in Canada, but in both countries, these initiatives were a failure. Ultimately both had to abandon the idea of uni-culture and come to terms with multi-culture. In India, as elsewhere, this is the only possible solution.

The truth is that the only practicable basis of nationhood is patriotism. That is, the feeling on the part of the individual or group that their future is linked with one country and one country alone; that individual success is inextricably linked with the progress of the country; that the interests of the country must be held supreme, and that if sacrifices are required for the safety or advancement of the country, they must be made willingly. Without such feelings of patriotism as are defined here, no country can be run successfully.

If the task of constructing the nation is to be successfully accomplished, we must rid ourselves of our obsession with such impracticable concepts as unity of religion, history and culture, and should forge ahead on the same lines as Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Britain, France and America.

**Individual success is inextricably linked with
the progress of the country.**

Our prime target should be generating patriotism in our country. And it should be a patriotism which is based not on the past, but on the present and the future. The only way to do this is to instil in each and every individual a deep-rooted love of his country.

If we set ourselves sedulously to such tasks as these, we should, within the span of one generation, be able to create for ourselves the ideal nation. □



Helplessness

Sometimes, in the course of daily life, a feeling of helplessness overcomes man, the same kind of helplessness that he experiences after the observation of the universe through a telescope.

This helplessness can be overcome only if man submits to his Creator.

WAY TO HAPPINESS

Make God your Sole Concern

ROBERT Warne Wilson was born on November 3, 1926, in a lower-middle income family in Detroit. He started with humble beginnings and worked his way up to amass wealth amounting to over \$800 million. Then came the other side of the picture.

Late in his life, Mr. Wilson suffered a debilitating stroke, which led to health problems. According to his friends, he always said he didn't want to suffer, and when the time came, he would be ready! He perhaps meant he would be ready to take his life, so he could spare himself the suffering. No doubt it was this 'ostrich' like thinking, which made him give out his money to different NGOs and charities. At the age of 87, he took his life by throwing himself from his 16th floor apartment in New York on December 23, 2013.

There are many cases of this kind of suicide. Why do these people choose suicide when they have all kind of worldly things in their possession? The reason is that when a person begins his life, he believes that if he is able to earn money, he will also achieve happiness. According to him happiness is a purchasable item. But after he amasses wealth, he discovers that money has failed to give him a happy life. Then there are other problems, such as old age, accident, and disease. This experience leads to what may be called "money-stress". That is, money becomes a liability rather than an asset. This is the case of everyone who makes earning money as their goal in life.

This reminds us of a very relevant Quranic verse: "Surely in the remembrance of God hearts can find comfort" (THE QURAN 13: 28). To remember God is not to recite the word 'God'. It is to make God one's sole concern. It is to discover the Creation Plan of God. It is to mould one's life according to divine culture. It is to embrace Paradise as one's goal. In a single word, it is to adopt God-oriented life. Finding God means to find one's real purpose in life. When a person discovers his real purpose in life, he develops his personality into one that has been called in the Quran as a "soul at peace ". (THE QURAN 89: 27)

If you want to live with a peaceful mind, you must elevate yourself from worldly goals, and make God your sole concern. This is the only way to develop a peaceful mind in this world. □

INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

Pragmatism is the Answer

MAY 26, 2014 was a historic day in Indian politics. On this day the fifteenth Prime Minister of India was sworn in. Pakistan's Prime Minister personally attended the ceremony. Later, there was also a meeting between the two prime ministers. This event holds great hopes for many people, for they believe that this may be a fresh beginning which will give a new direction to the relationship between India and Pakistan.

Optimism is good, but in practical life it is always reality that prevails, and not optimism. The experience of the past is enough to make us believe that the problems between India and Pakistan cannot be solved by conventional methods. Now is the time to rethink the entire matter. It requires a creative formula. A creative formula is never based on idealism: it can be based only on pragmatism. Pragmatism is the only option in this regard.

Delink political and economic issues so that trade is not held hostage to political disputes.

India and Pakistan have tried to solve their problems through wars, track-two diplomacy, through the so-called internationalization of the issue, and so on. But, all these have failed to achieve the required results. Now we need a fresh outlook.

What is meant by a fresh outlook is not 'fresh' in the complete sense of the word. It is, in fact, the revival of a wise formula initially suggested by an eminent economist from Pakistan, Dr. Mahbub ul Haq. But it didn't prove to be acceptable to the Pakistani people at that time. He was forced to leave Pakistan and settled in New York where he died at an early age on July 16, 1998.

His formula was based on the delinking policy, which means the delinking of political and economic issues and on the notion that trade should not be held hostage to the Kashmir dispute (*Indo-Pak Relations: New Voices for Peace*, Rita Manchanda, Journal of Peace Studies, Vol. 3, Issue 14, January-February, 1996).

The delinking policy in this regard means putting controversial issues on the negotiation table, and opening up all other relationships such as trade, education, free intellectual activity, business, industry, tourism, and so on.

Life is full of problems at the individual, social and international levels. The best and wisest course is to not allow problems to become hurdles in the path of development. It is good to try to solve the problems, but in practice, it is not a good option. The better option is to observe the principle of differentiation that is, leaving aside the controversial issues and opening all doors to avail of other opportunities, without any restriction.

This concept is justified by reason. A successful example of this formula can be found in the post-Second World War era of Japan. After the Second World War, there was a problem like that of Kashmir between the US and Japan. This centred on the Japanese island of Okinawa, which had been occupied by the US after the war. Japan adopted the same delinking policy with regard to this island and diverted its energies toward post-war development. The result was miraculous: within thirty years Japan emerged as an economic superpower of the world.

**Set aside controversial issues to the negotiation table,
and open up all other relationships such as trade,
education, free intellectual activity, business,
industry, tourism, and so on.**

In 1947 Pakistan came into existence on account of the two-nation theory. But in reality, these two nations ended up as two conflicting neighbours. This nature of Partition made two close neighbours into two distant neighbours, as described by veteran journalist Kuldip Nayar in his *Distant Neighbours* (1972).

Now the question is not how to try to completely end the problems between the two, but how to stay as good neighbours, in spite of the problems. The only practical formula in this situation is the delinking policy that was successfully adopted by Japan.

This issue is not an isolated one. It is very much related to the development of both countries. It is a fact that due to this situation, both India and Pakistan have been engaged in several wars. This

is not good for either of the countries. At present there is a Cold War-like situation between the two countries. This situation between neighbouring countries is disastrous in terms of the outcome for both. Reason tells us that if the ideal is not possible, then we have to opt for the pragmatic solution. Therefore, it is in the best interests of both the countries to bring an end to this unwanted situation. The above solution is based on this logic.

A permanent settlement should be brought about between the two countries, if not on an ideal basis, then on a pragmatic basis.

After Independence, the first requirement for both countries was to undertake development on world standards. However, this hasn't happened to date. For example, in both countries there is not a single university that measures up to international standards. This is the basic problem. Because of the situation that existed between the two countries, after Independence both countries were forced to enter into an arms race. Consequently, huge amounts from respective budgets in both countries have been spent on defence which would have been better spent on development. A permanent settlement should be brought about between the two countries, if not on an ideal basis, then on a pragmatic basis. □



Diversity

*There is nothing wrong in diversity of opinions.
In fact, this is a positive quality that
has many advantages.*

*The beauty of the garden of life is
enhanced if the flower of unity is
accompanied by the
thorn of diversity.*

FLOWERS AND THORNS

The Creation Plan of God

THE life span of a human being is more than a billion years but this life span is divided into two different periods. Approximately 100 years of this life is before death and the entire remaining life after death. The first phase of life is spent in the present world and the next phase of life is to be spent in the world of 'tomorrow'.

Today's world is like a jungle. We have flowers as well as thorns. In the world of 'tomorrow', the flowers and thorns will be separated from each other. After this a final eternal world will be experienced where part of it will consist of only thorns, and another, of only flowers.

Everyone has the opportunity to make preparations for their eternal future in today's world. One has to show from their life's record whether they have qualified to dwell in the jungle of thorns or in the Garden of Paradise.

The conditions of today's world are actually a means of preparation of man's personality.

In today's world, these two groups are being formed. Every man shows from the record of his life as to which of the groups he has qualified himself in — the group of thorns or the group of flowers. The conditions of today's world are actually a means of preparation of this personality. Every man and woman undergoes this process.

In the world of today, both these kinds of personalities do not appear to be separate; but in the world of tomorrow, both kinds of personalities will be separated completely as in the form of flowers or in the form of thorns.

The two-sided action affecting the human personality can also be termed as the positive and negative personality. Every man experiences negativity in today's world. One who takes negative experience entirely in its negativity will develop a negative personality within him. A person who converts negative experiences into positive food (lessons) will form a positive personality.

For instance, a person abuses you, troubles you, and provokes you. In that case you have two ways of responding to them. One is the way of 'tit-for-tat'. Just as you have been troubled, you do the same to the other person. You also abuse him, trouble him, and harm him. You are reacting to another's provocation.

Today's world is like a jungle. We have flowers as well as thorns. In the world of 'tomorrow', the flowers and thorns will be separated from each other.

The one who responds or retaliates in this manner develops a negative personality. He reaps the harvest of thorns in him. This personality becomes a thorny personality. He will rise up as a thorny personality in the world of 'tomorrow' and he will be cast in the jungle of thorns where he will spend his life eternally in grief and frustration.

On the contrary, a person who responds in a positive manner to a negative behaviour is the one who was abused by others but did not abuse anyone. Others tormented him but he did not torment others. He was harmed, but he did not harm others. He was provoked by others, but did not provoke or retaliate against anyone.

This is the man who lived like a flower amidst thorns. He built a personality like a flower within him. Such a personality will be given the opportunity to live in the Garden of flowers. In today's world of thorns, what is the way of making a flowery personality? For this, nature provides us some living examples. The humble cow is one such example. The cow is an industry of nature. It is given grass from the outer world but the cow converts it, through its inner mechanism, into milk. Something similar is to be done by every man and woman in this world. Every man and woman has to continuously change the 'grass' into a form of 'milk'.

There are two major parts of human brain — the conscious mind and the unconscious mind. When a thought comes in the mind of man, initially, it appears in the conscious mind. Gradually, in due course, it reaches the unconscious mind. The unconscious mind of man is a part where every item is preserved forever but that is not in the grasp of man's conscious mind. Whosoever wants to have a flowery personality will have to activate his mind whenever a negative item comes to his mind and convert it into a positive item. So that in the next stage

when this item moves on to the unconscious mind, it is preserved as a positive item rather than a negative one.

For instance, if any thought of hatred comes to his conscious mind he has to diffuse that hatred and convert it into thoughts of love. When some jealous thought comes to his mind, he should convert it into feelings of acknowledgement.

One who converts negative experiences into positive lessons will form a positive personality.

On any matter when his ego has been stoked, he should convert it into modesty. Any experience producing in him feelings of selfishness should be converted into the feeling of selflessness. In any event, if he thinks he is deprived of his rights he should mould these feelings into that of gratitude.

For those men or women who manage to build such a personality, the store of their consciousness will be a treasury of positive items. It will be completely free from negative items. It is positive personalities such as these that will receive a place in the Garden of flowers in the eternal world after death. There they shall spend their lives in a state of eternal joy and bliss. □



Education in Islam

A study of the life of the Prophet of Islam tells us that education, which is the arousal of human awareness, is as essential for women as it is for men.

Indeed, it is only aware men and women who can conduct the matters of life smoothly.

SUICIDE IS NOT AN OPTION

Failure is Never Final

HERMANN Hesse (1877–1962) was a famous German poet and novelist. In his early age, Hesse experienced personal turmoil and conflict with his parents. This situation led to extreme frustration such that at the age of fifteen in 1892 he attempted suicide. But, due to some reason he was saved.

According to a study, it has been established that those who attempt suicide but do not die, develop in them great incentive and later emerge as heroes. The same happened with Hermann Hesse. He completed his education and subsequently adopted writing as a career. After a long struggle he became a great writer and in 1946 was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Our Creator has endowed us with great qualities. It is required of every human being to unfold these qualities and play the role that is destined for him or her by providence.

Man is not born in this world by way of accident, but in accordance with a divine plan. Our Creator has endowed us with great qualities. It is required of every human being to unfold these qualities and play the role that is destined for him or her by providence. According to this creation plan of the Creator, every person must live in hope. There is no excuse for becoming pessimistic.

Our world is full of opportunities. If someone fails in doing something, he should take it as delay and not as final failure. In such a situation, committing suicide is not an option for any man or woman. One has to adopt the formula of wait and see, rather than taking one's own life. □



THE REAL GIVER

Acknowledging God

THE well-known Indian lyricist-screenwriter Gulzar was awarded the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for his contributions to the growth of Indian Cinema at the 61st National Awards ceremony in New Delhi on May 3, 2014. For Gulzar this was a highly emotional event. He was so overwhelmed that he said: "There are few moments in life when a writer, whose work is to play with words, doesn't know what words to choose to express gratitude and thank people." This is not a rare event. There are many examples where people were so overwhelmed with gratitude towards a giver that they failed to express it in words.

God is the real giver of all bounties and all good things.

Every gift that one receives is from God, not from man. God is the real giver of all bounties and all good things. It is a strange fact that people fail to discover the real giver. God has created man; He has bestowed all kinds of qualities on him, provided all favourable circumstances in which man plays his role, and everything one receives from birth to the last breath is given by God. However, not many are aware of this fact. They know of some superficial aspect of life, but they do not appreciate the deeper aspect of life. This is the greatest tragedy of human life.

This state of affairs is not very simple. It means that people are living in ignorance. They are unaware of the reality of life. People know things but they do not know the Creator of all things. Making people aware of this fact is the greatest task before reformers. □



Change yourself

*You cannot change the law of nature, so change yourself.
This will give you the gift of a comfortable life in every situation.*

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 610 and 632 A.D. It is a book that brings glad tidings to mankind, 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**

We created man — We know the prompting of his soul, and are closer to him than his jugular vein — and the two recording angels are recording, sitting on the right and the left: each word he utters shall be noted down by a vigilant guardian. (50: 16-18)

The study of this world shows that there is an unerring system of 'recording' in operation here. Man's thoughts are impressed on the membrane of his brain. Every utterance a man makes is permanently preserved in the shape of sound waves in the air. Man's actions are preserved in the external world by means of heat waves in such a way that they can be repeated at any time.

All these are known facts of today, and these known facts are what make the Quran's claim credible that man's intentions, his utterances and his actions, are all in the knowledge of his Creator. All affairs of all human beings are entered in the registers of the angels.

The trance of death will come revealing the truth: that is what you were trying to escape. The trumpet will be sounded. This is the Day [you were] warned of. Each person will arrive attended by an [angel] to drive him on and another to bear witness. You were heedless of this, but now We have removed your veil, so your sight today is sharp.

His companion attendant will say, 'I have here his record ready.' 'Cast into Hell every ungrateful, rebellious one, hinderer of good, transgressor, causing others to doubt, who has set up another god besides God: cast him into severe punishment' — and his associate [Satan] will say, 'Lord, I did not make him transgress, he had already gone far astray himself.' God will say, 'Do not quarrel in My presence.

***I gave you the warning beforehand and My word shall not be changed, nor am I unjust to My servants.'* (50: 19-29)**

A picture of death and Doomsday thereafter has been drawn in these verses. It shows what will happen to those who, finding themselves free in this world, became arrogant. This pictorial description is so terrible as to cause extreme unease in the minds of all living beings.

***On that Day, We shall ask Hell, 'Are you now full?' Hell will answer, 'Are there any more?' Paradise will be brought near to the righteous and will no longer be far away. This is what you were promised—this is for everyone who often turned to God and kept Him in mind, who fears the Compassionate One, though He is unseen, and comes to Him with a penitent heart; so enter it in peace. This is the Day of everlasting life. There they shall have all that they desire, and there is even more with Us.* (50: 30-35)**

Who are entitled to the eternal Paradise of God? They are the people who, in this world, went in constant fear of God's punishment. Those who were afraid before they actually came face to face with their Maker will be the ones who will be safe from fear and grief on that Day, whereas others who knew no fear will be terror-struck. Fear of God creates heavenly attributes in man, while a lack of fear creates the attributes of Hell.

***How many a generation, far greater in prowess, have We destroyed before them! They searched the entire land: but could they find a refuge? There is truly a reminder in this for whoever has a heart, whoever listens attentively.* (50: 36-37)**

Nations of the world progress and rise until they reach their zenith. But, when they are afflicted by God's scourge, as a result of their misdeeds, they are reduced to such a condition that they cannot find any place in the world to which they can run away or in which they might take refuge.

There are great lessons in these events of history. But lessons can be learnt only by one who is mentally alive so that he may derive their unspoken message from events, or by one in whom the capacity to hear is unimpaired, so that when divine messages are conveyed to him, they go straight to the core of his innermost being unimpeded. □



NEWS BRIEF

BANGALORE DAWAH MEET

BANGALORE was the venue of the *Dawah* Meet held from 12th–15th June 2014. It was organised by the Bangalore Chapter of CPS International (Centre for Peace and Spirituality). Nearly a hundred men and women participated in this Meet from different parts of the country. The venue was Visthar Academy for Justice and Peace, Bangalore.

Those who attended would testify that it was a totally different kind of Meet. During the proceedings, there were more than ten spiritual learning sessions but there was no clapping, no political discussions, no communal talk, no emotional speeches and no complaints against anyone. Instead, there were peaceful discussions in a completely spiritual atmosphere.

Some programmes took place in the open, in nature where the chirping of birds could be heard, like a divine song playing in the background of the speaker's talk. The entire proceedings were recorded and can be viewed at <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/48712316>.

The nature of proceedings of the Bangalore *Dawah* Meet can be understood by just this one point mentioned below, from the talk of the patron of CPS, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan.

All India Radio broadcasts a daily show titled, '**Born to be remembered**'. Referring to it, he said that while listening to this programme, his mind was triggered to think, was man really born merely to spend less than one hundred years in this world and then perish forever leaving behind only a few memories? Other than memories, nothing else remained of that person. This was a highly pessimistic view of human history. Contrary to this, the Quran gives us an optimistic view of human history. If you read the Quran, you will find that the Quran explains the purpose of man's life. In accordance with this purpose, every man and woman is expected to strive to qualify for Paradise so that in the post-death period, they may gain entry into their real habitat: the eternal and perfect world of Paradise! He said that keeping this in mind, a more apt title to describe the situation of man would be, '**Born to Live in Eternal Paradise**'.

The Bangalore *Dawah* Meet was a spiritual meet. Those who participated in this gathering were already involved in *Dawah* activities, that is, they were engaged in disseminating the message of God to all mankind. The *Dawah* mission is a non-political, non-communal and non-material mission. It is an *aakhirat*-oriented mission. It has no commercial purpose, neither directly or indirectly. The purpose of this Meet was to provide a boost to those who are already actively engaged in *Dawah* efforts. May God bless us, may God help us realise this noble cause! □



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Glossary

- Abdullah ibn Zubair** (624–692); companion of the Prophet Muhammad; first Muslim born in Madinah after the Hijrath.
- Aisha** (612–678); daughter of Abu Bakr, wife of Prophet Muhammad.
- Akbar** (1542–1605), Mughal dynasty Emperor in India from 1556-1605.
- Akhirah**; *aakhirat* ; The Hereafter
- Al-Deen**; *deen* (religion); religious ideology.
- Babar** (1483-1530) 16th-century ruler of the Indian subcontinent and founder of the Mughal Empire.
- Bhagwan Das, Dr.** Dr. Bhagwan Das (January 12, 1869 – September 18, 1958) was an Indian Theosophist and public figure.
- Bukhari** (810–870); Muhammad Al-Bukhari; Persian Islamic scholar who authored the Hadith collection known as *Sahih al-Bukhari*.
- dark energy** — energy embedded in the space surface of the universe that causes the universe to expand faster and faster as it ages.
- Darul Ifta** A council of *muftis* from where *fatwas* are issued.
- Darul Qaza** Muslim judicial court.
- dawah** communication of the message of God.
- fasad** spreading corruption, rebellion, dissension, mischief and disorder across society.
- fatwa** legal opinion; judicial verdict.
- fine-tuning problem** an explanation for the fine-tuning of the universe required for the human species to thrive..
- ijtihad** exercise of judgement with reasoning.
- Imam Ahmad** Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855); Islamic scholar and theologian; famous for *Hadith* collection known as *Musnad Ahmad*.
- Jinn** A living creation of God made from fire; *jinn*s have free-will just like mankind.
- Kabah** the sacred house of God built originally by prophets Abraham and Ismael in Makkah (Mecca).
- Kalima** The Islamic creed—'There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God.'
- Khilafat-e-Rashida** also Rashidun Caliphate or "Rightly Guided" caliphs (632–661 AD) is the collective term comprising the first four caliphs in Islamic history (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali).
- khushu'** divine consciousness; God consciousness.
- Minhaj** the path or method.
- mufti** Islamic scholar who is an interpreter or expounder of Islamic law.
- quantum foam** abstraction in quantum mechanics conceptualised as the foundation of the fabric of the universe.
- Sahaba** Companions of the Prophet.
- Sahih Muslim** Famous *Hadith* collection by Imam Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj (815–875).
- Shariah**; *Shir'a* ; moral code and religious law of Islam.
- shura** council for mutual consultation.
- Tabi'een**; *tabe'e* —those followers or companions who directly learnt from the Companions of the Prophet of Islam.
- Ummah** religious community; followers of a prophet.
- ummah Muhammadiyyah** Muslim community; followers of the Prophet of Islam.
- Zulm** oppression

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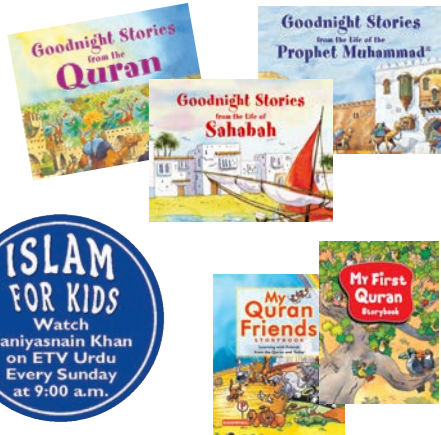
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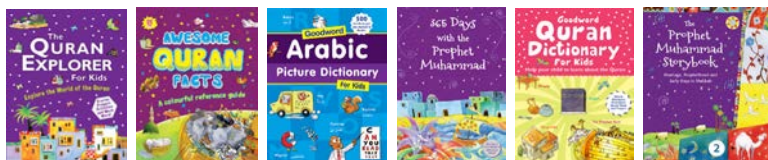


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