

SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living



One who runs after the ideal goal, loses both the ideal as well as the practically achievable goal.

ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

Spirit of Islam is a monthly magazine which is now in its seventh year of publication. The aim of this journal is to present Islam in the contemporary idiom, while at the same time the contents are of universal appeal and of interest to a wider circle of spiritual seekers. It is our desire to help Muslims rediscover Islam, focusing on its message of peace and spirituality as derived from the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet, and in general we strive towards religious understanding for bringing about greater harmony.

Another purpose of this magazine is to assist its readers to deal with life's challenges, deriving positivity even from negative occurrences, gaining in spirituality and developing themselves intellectually so that they may contribute constructively to society.

The magazine's regular readers will appreciate that the entire thrust of its articles is directed to the individual—a collection of intellectually prepared individuals being the sole foundation on which a peaceful and harmonious society can be built.

As the subtitle indicates, *Spirit of Islam* is working towards enlightening people on the subject of global peace and regularly addresses relevant contemporary issues. The articles on peace based on the teachings of the Prophet of Islam offer us an ideology of peace—principles which lay down how peace may be established between conflicting groups, controversies resolved and conflicts defused. We believe that violence begins in the mind and so an effective ideology of peace needs to be presented to counter its influence.

We hope and pray that God helps us in this noble endeavour and grants us His special blessings!



SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living

ISSUE 80 AUGUST 2019

CHIEF EDITOR

MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN
www.facebook.com/maulanawkhan

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

PROF. FARIDA KHANAM

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

DR. NAGHMA SIDDIQI
MARIA KHAN
PROF. ZAHEERUDDIN
AIJAZ AHMED
MOHAMMAD USMAN

PRINTER AND PUBLISHER

FATHIMA SARAH

OFFICE

SPIRIT OF ISLAM
002, HM WIMBERLY, 6, BERLIE STREET CROSS
LANGFORD TOWN, BENGALURU 560025, INDIA

PRINTED AT

COSMOS PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS
450, 3RD CROSS, WILSON GARDEN, BENGALURU 560027

ACCESS ONLINE AT

www.spiritofislam.co.in

FOR LATEST UPDATES

f <https://www.facebook.com/spiritofislamnew/>
@ <https://instagram.com/soimagazinew>
t <https://twitter.com/spiritofislamnw>

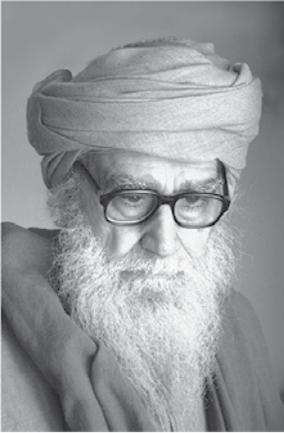
CPS INTERNATIONAL

www.cpsglobal.org
www.cpsquran.com

CONTENTS

■ FROM MAULANA'S DESK	3
■ FROM THE EDITORIAL DIRECTOR	6
■ ISLAMIC SOCIETY	13
■ A EUREKA MOMENT	14
■ EARTHQUAKE	15
■ TOWARDS GLOBAL PEACE	16
■ PERSEVERANCE	19
■ INDIA—A POTENTIALLY SPIRITUAL COUNTRY	22
■ PLAY YOUR PART IN CONSERVING WATER	27
■ A DAY FOR JUSTICE	29
■ WISHFUL THINKING	31
■ FROM THE SPIRITUAL TREE	33
■ NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR	35
■ RESPONSIBILITY, NOT PRIDE	37
■ TWO METHODS	38
■ GROWING IN FAITH	39
■ TWO ATTITUDES	40
■ WHAT IS DEATH?	41
■ THE WORD OF GOD	43
■ ASK MAULANA	46

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 Demiurgus Peace International Award and Sayyidina Imam Al Hassan Peace award for promoting peace in Muslim societies. He has been called 'Islam's spiritual ambassador to the world' and is recognized 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.

A REALISTIC APPROACH

OF ALL THE PROBLEMS faced by the Muslims, the first and foremost, which requires an immediate solution, is their inability to be realistic in their approach. The remedy still eludes the Muslims.

When it comes to the state of Muslims in India, it has been my firm opinion that India is thriving with opportunities for Muslims to progress. There is no dearth of possibilities for Muslims to live as an honourable, prosperous and advanced community. Yet a certain deficiency in them has unnecessarily created all manner of problems for them. That deficiency is nothing more or less than their own lack of realism. If Muslims could just become realistic in their approach, nothing could stand in the way of their betterment.

Whatever the events, I am convinced of the aptness here of this verse of the Quran: "You may hate a thing although it is good for you." (2: 216) This verse unambiguously states that even in the seemingly very disturbing situation, a great fortune lies hidden.

1. The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims 2018, Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, Jordan.

What is this great fortune? It is the necessity it creates for adopting a very realistic approach. The greatest secret of success in the world of today is the ability to think and act realistically. Human nature itself inclines man to realism. The so-called Muslim leaders, however, have misled Muslims by their emotionalism and superficiality. Now the outcome has made their incompetence as clear as daylight. Nevertheless, I am optimistic

The greatest secret of success in the world of today is the ability to think and act realistically.

that now Muslims will free themselves from the unhealthy influence of their misguided leaders, and will chart a course of action in accordance with nature, the Quran and the example set by the Prophet.

The Prophet of Islam was the most realistic person in history. That is why his success was the greatest ever achieved by anyone. The present situation, which is very much on a parallel with the adversity faced by the Prophet, has brought Muslims to a point

where they will of themselves become realistic. And this new turn to their lives is certainly the greatest guarantee of success and progress.

The whole system of the earth and the heavens is based on reality. Man too can succeed in this world simply by conceding to this reality. It would be a matter of great satisfaction if Muslims could now discover this secret, which is the sure ladder to success.

‘Many a small group, by God’s command has prevailed against a large group. God is indeed with the steadfast.’ (2: 249)

This verse of the Quran shows that if a minority group is suffering at the hands of a powerful majority, there is nothing in this for them to feel depressed or frustrated about. This should be looked upon as one of the God-given opportunities for the weaker group. This challenge provides impetus to the minority to re-plan, work even harder and achieve its goals.

How can such a reversal of the present order take place? The secret, according to this verse, lies in patience. Those who are faced with challenges require more alertness and need to make more efforts just to survive; the patience and endurance which they learn in the process are what enable such a group to dominate and conquer their fears and come out with flying colours.

Patience for a human being or a human group is just like the heat applied to water. When water is heated up to hundred degrees centigrade, it starts boiling. The molecules of water change their state from liquid to gas, and scatter outward in the form of vapour. In this way, heat converts water into gas. Water taking the form of gas becomes so powerful that it can move mighty machines.

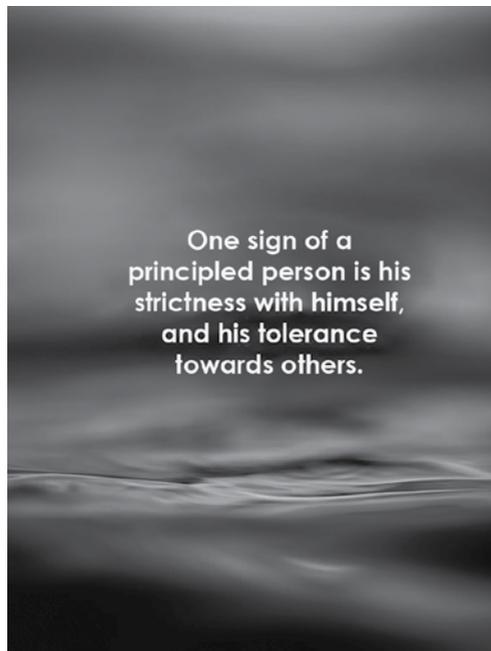
In a similar way, when a group is continually faced with adverse circumstances, when its very identity is challenged, it reaches the point of explosion. Its latent capabilities are so aroused that it rises from the state of "water" and turns into "vapour".

History shows that whenever a group has faced persecution, its potential has been awakened. It has emerged in the form of an unconquerable force. Arnold Toynbee, a historian, has termed this process as *Challenge-Response Mechanism*. It is patience coupled with wise strategy that converts this ordinary group into an extraordinary group. □

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

editor@thespiritofislam.org

Follow Maulana at speakingtree.in (Times of India)



FROM THE EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Dr. Farida Khanam has been a professor at the Department of Islamic Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi. A Study of World's Major Religions, A Simple Guide to Sufism are two of the books amongst others, of which she is the author. She has also translated many books on Islam authored by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. Currently, the chairperson of Centre for Peace and Spirituality (CPS International), an organization founded by her father Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, she is a regular contributor of articles to journals, newspapers and magazines. Dr. Khanam has edited Maulana's English translation of the Quran and has also translated his Urdu commentary of the Quran into English. Under Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Peace Foundation, along with the CPS team, she has designed a series of courses on peace-building, countering extremism and conflict resolution.

AN INTRODUCTION TO ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE

Understanding the Basics

ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE or *fiqh* literally means an understanding and knowledge of something. The Quran has used the word *fiqh* in its general sense of 'understanding' on more than one occasion. In the early days of Islam, the terms *ilm* (knowledge) and *fiqh* were frequently used interchangeably to denote an understanding of Islam in general. This shows that in the Prophet's time, the term *fiqh* was not understood in the legal sense alone, i.e. synonymous with law. The Prophet once blessed Ibn Abbas (d.68 AH) in these words: '*Allahumma faqqih ho fiddin*', that is, 'O God, bestow upon him understanding in religion'. By these words the Prophet did not mean exclusively knowledge of law. He meant a deeper understanding of religion.

Technically, *fiqh* refers to the science of deducing Islamic laws from evidence found in the sources of Islamic jurisprudence. The sources of law are four and are explained in detail below; the Quran, the *Sunnah*, Consensus (*Ijma*) and Inference (*Qiyas*). But by extension of meaning, *fiqh* also means the body of Islamic law deduced in this way.

Shariah literally means a 'route to the watering place' or a 'visible and well marked-out rail'. Hence in Islam it means a 'clear path' or a 'highway' to be followed by all the believers. The Quran uses the term *Shariah* with the meaning of 'religion', that is a way, ordained by God for man to travel on in the course of his life. The word *shariah* was used

in the Prophet's time for the essentials of Islam, that is, the sum total of Islamic laws that were revealed to the Prophet of Islam in the form of the Quran.

The Prophet, besides conveying the revelation, gave commandments as well. These orders and exhortations of the Prophet were firmly based on revelation, but did not form part of the Quran. They are called the *Sunnah*, which is the second source of Islamic law, the first being the Quran.

Fiqh is thus the name given to jurisprudence in Islam. In other words, *fiqh* or the science of Islamic law, is the study of one's rights and obligations, derived from the Quran and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, the consensus of opinion among the learned and analogical inference.

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF *FIQH*

Fiqh, in its widest sense, covers all aspects of religious, political, and civil life. In addition to the laws regulating ritual and religious observances (stipulated prayers), it includes also the whole field of family law, the law of inheritance of property and of contract. In other words, it makes provisions for all the legal questions that arise in social life as well as for religious practices. It also includes criminal law and its procedure as well as constitutional law and laws regulating the administration of the state and matters pertaining to security issues.

During the time of the Prophet, there was no such well-defined science as that which later came to be known as *fiqh*. The only ideal for the early Muslims was the conduct of the Prophet. They learnt ablutions, saying prayers, performing *Hajj*, etc., under the instructions of the Prophet and by observing his actions. On certain occasions, cases were brought to the Prophet for arbitration. The Prophet's decisions were taken as models for other similar cases.

Fiqh refers to the science of deducing Islamic laws from evidence found in the sources of Islamic jurisprudence.

The Companions occasionally asked him questions relating to certain serious problems and the Prophet gave them suitable replies. People in his lifetime were not interested in unnecessary philosophical discussions or in hair-splitting details. The Companions generally asked the Prophet very few questions. On one occasion, when someone put unnecessary questions to him, the Quran asked the Companions to

desist from doing so. The result was that the *Sunnah* remained mostly a general directive interpreted by the early Muslims in different ways.

What the Prophet had done was to lay down certain regulations, but the jurists elaborated them with many more details. The reason for these further additions to the laws by interpretation is that the Prophet himself had made allowances in his commands. He left many things to the discretion of the community to be decided according to a given situation.

People in Prophet's lifetime were not interested in unnecessary philosophical discussions or in hair-splitting details.

In the early days of Islam, the law was neither inflexible nor very rigidly applied. Different and even contradictory laws relating to many problems could be found acceptable on the basis of argument. It seems that the Prophet provided a wide scope for differences by giving instructions of a general nature, or by validating two diverse actions for the same issue depending on the circumstances. The

Prophet aimed at providing opportunities for the application of his guidelines in a variety of circumstances in the future. Had the Prophet laid down specific and rigid rules for each problem, the coming generations would have been prevented from exercising reason and framing laws according to the need of the hour.

After the demise of the Prophet, the Companions spread out in different parts of the Muslim world. Most of them came to occupy positions of intellectual and religious leadership. The people of their regions approached them for decisions regarding various problems. They gave their decisions sometimes according to what they understood from the Quran and the *Sunnah*.

The interpretation of the Quran also caused differences of opinion among the Companions. The points on which the Quranic injunctions were silent or those points not dealt with in detail in the Quran were to be explained. The result was that these verses were sometimes interpreted in the light of the traditions of the Prophet, and sometimes on the basis of the jurists' opinions. Moreover, since the traditions themselves were diverse, it was natural that there were differences.

In some cases, a Companion did not know a particular *Hadith*; hence he decided the problem on the basis of his own opinion. When the relevant *Hadith* was brought to his notice, he withdrew his personal judgement. On this account, Umar, the second Caliph, changed his opinion several times.

On certain occasions, it so happened that the relevant *Hadith* was available but the reporter himself could not understand its real meaning. Ibn Umar is reported to have narrated a *Hadith* from the Prophet that a deceased person is punished on account of the mourning of his relatives. When this tradition came to the attention of Aisha, she rejected it saying that Ibn Umar might have been mistaken, or might have forgotten some relevant part of the tradition. She also observed that the *Hadith* reported by Ibn Umar goes against the Quranic verse: 'No soul bears the burden of another.'

The Companions, however, tried their best to establish their decisions on the Quran and *Sunnah*. They aspired to keep their decisions and personal judgements close to those of the Prophet. Despite their differences, they did not deviate from the spirit of the Quran and *Hadith*.

The people who followed took their stand on the opinions expressed by the Companions. They retained in their memory the *Hadith* of the Prophet and the opinions of the Companions and made attempts to reconcile opposite opinions. They exercised independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) in two ways. First of all, they were not afraid to give preference to the opinions of one Companion over another, and sometimes, even to the opinions of a person who came after over those of a Companion. Secondly, they engaged in original thinking themselves. In fact, the real formation of Islamic law starts in a more or less professional manner with the people who came after the Companions (now known as Successors).

In the early days of Islam, the law was neither inflexible nor very rigidly applied. Different and even contradictory laws relating to many problems could be found acceptable on the basis of argument.

With the Successors, Islamic law began to take its formal shape and develop into an independent subject of study. In this age, the principles that governed *fiqh* were the Quran, *Sunnah* and deductive reasoning. The Prophet himself introduced these principles.

As mentioned above, the practice of Islamic jurisprudence came into existence with the advent of Islam, but it developed into a regular discipline in the second century AH. Abu Hanifa played the leading role in this gigantic task of compilation and systematization of Islamic law. By Abu Hanifa's time, the accepted rules of *fiqh* had not been collected and had not yet been systematized into a regular discipline, if they were perpetuated, it was by being passed on verbally. There were no strict methods of reasoning, no rules for derivation of orders, no grading of

Traditions, and no principles of analogical deduction. *Fiqh* had a long way to go before becoming a system.

Finally, four orthodox schools of legal thought emerged. These are called *madhhab* in Arabic. These *madhhabs* were named after the famous jurists of the time: Abu Hanifa (AD 699-767), Malik ibn Anas (AD 711-795), Al-Shafi (AD 767-819), and ibn Hanbal (AD 780-855).

THE SOURCES OF FIQH

There are four sources of *fiqh* or Islamic law:

a) Quran b) *Hadith* c) Consensus (*Ijma*) d) Inference (*Qiyas*)

a) The Quran

The Quran is the fundamental and main source of Islamic jurisprudence from which all other sources derive their authority. It consists of the very word of God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad over a period of twenty-three years (AD 610-632). That is why the law in Islam is divine in origin.

The texts of the Quran which are concerned mainly with the rules of Islamic law occur in the following chapters: Al Baqarah, An-Nisa, Al-Imran, Al-Maidah, An-Nur, and Bani Israil.

The rules pertain to:

Reform in unlawful heathen customs, such as gambling, drinking of intoxicants, usury, etc.

Social reforms dealing with matters such as marriage, the position of women, divorce, the chastity of men and women, slavery, etc.

Criminal laws relating to punishment for theft, slander, murder, etc.

International laws pertaining to defence and peace, and directions relating to people of other faiths and protection of their rights, etc.

b) The *Hadith*

Next in importance after Quran is *Hadith*. The *Hadith* itself derives its authority and legal validity from the Quran.

Hadith means narration of the sayings, deeds and approvals of the Prophet. The Quran generally deals with the broad principles or essentials of religion, going into details in rare cases. The Prophet himself usually supplied the details, either by showing in his conduct how an injunction should be carried out, or by giving verbal explanation.

The Quran says,

“Obey God and obey the Messenger.” (4: 58)

“Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you, abstain from it.” (59: 7).

“You have indeed in the Prophet of God a good example for those of you who look to God and the Last Day, and remember God always.” (33: 21)

In the light of these verses, one can infer that following of the *Hadith* is binding on a believer. The *Hadith* collection provides us with guidance in matters of legislation. It does not deviate from the Quran. It is in compliance with it.

The Quran and the *Hadith* are the main sources, to which all other sources are secondary. The Book, however, is the first source. The authority of *Hadith* is increased by the fact that the Prophet Muhammad not only theorized, but also had the opportunity to put the Quranic teachings into practice in all affairs of life, both spiritual and temporal.

c) *Ijma* (Consensus of jurists)

Ijma is the third source of Islamic jurisprudence. It is derived from the Arabic word *jama* (to add) and in Islamic legal terminology, *ijma* signifies consensus of opinion among the jurists of a particular age on a question of law. Jurists have defined *ijma* as an ‘agreement of the Muslim jurists of a particular period on any matter or point of Islamic law.’”

Ijma derives its authority or legal validity from the Quran and *Hadith*. The Quran says: “Obey God and obey the Prophet and those amongst you who have authority” (4: 57) and also, “Ask the People of the Book, if you do not know. (16: 43) The Prophet Muhammad says: “My followers will never agree upon what is wrong.”

Ijma may be based on the Quran, *Hadith* or analogy. This is the view of all the Sunni schools. That *ijma* is an essential principle of Sunni jurisprudence, was proven by its use immediately after the death of the Prophet. The Muslim community acted upon it as soon as they were called upon to solve the first and most important constitutional problem that arose on the Prophet’s death. That is, the selection of the head of the community. The election of Abu Bakr to the Caliphate by the votes of the people was based, as is well known, on the principle of *ijma*. All the Sunnis accept it as a source of Islamic jurisprudence.

Consensus is responsible for the further development of Islamic law after the completion of the Prophet's mission. Islam is a preserved religion and its Prophet is the last one. In the Quran, only fundamental principles of legislation are given and in the matters on which there is no explicit order, God has permitted the exercise of individual opinion. But a consensus of opinions of jurists is superior to individual opinions of experts on Islamic legal science as it is a collective opinion of a number of jurists. In the absence of any relevant order of the Quran or *Hadith*, consensus assumes the status of law.

d) Inference/Analogical Deduction (*Qiyas*)

Qiyas is an important source of Islamic jurisprudence and is regarded as an instrument in solving legal issues on the basis of reasoning based on original texts. All four schools of Sunni jurisprudence accept that in matters which have not been provided for by the Quran or precepts of the Prophet and *Ijma*, the law might be deduced from what has been laid down by any of these three authorities through the use of *qiyas*, which is generally translated as 'analogy'.

Qiyas literally means 'to weigh' or 'to measure' but, as a term of Islamic jurisprudence, it denotes the process by which a rule of law is deduced from the original text in view of a common cause. As a source of law, *qiyas* is defined as "an extension of law from the original text. It is a process of deduction by which the law of a text is applied to cases, which, though not covered by the literal language of the text, are governed by the reasoning given in the text. This process is applied in such cases with legal effect which are not directly covered by the text. *Qiyas* may be used only in the light of the Quran and *Hadith*, otherwise it will be invalid. More than one example can be cited from the Prophet regarding his approval of *qiyas* as a source of *fiqh*.

One basic consideration that underlies every Islamic decree is that the believer, at all times and while doing any activity should be mindful of God. He should not forget that he is going to answer for his every deed before God. □

Dr. Farida Khanam
hub@thespiritofislam.org



ISLAMIC SOCIETY

The Rights of the Orphan

THE QURAN says: 'Do not oppress the orphan.' (93: 9). God has commanded all believers to treat the orphan with love and affection. Orphans need our special care and attention. We need to give them our best help and support so that they may not end up being exploited. Prophet of Islam said 'Even passing a hand over the head of an orphan with love and affection is an act of charity'.

The Quran is full of injunctions on the fair treatment of the orphan. On innumerable occasions the Quran has exhorted Muslims to take great care of the orphans in society, and especially if an orphan is one of their own relatives. Then it becomes the moral and religious duty of every member of the family in question to take care of the orphan.

The following verse of the Quran equates those who deny the Day of Judgement with those who reject orphans. "Have you seen one who denies the Day of Judgement? Who turns away the orphan".

It can be inferred from the above verse that God abhors those who repel orphans as much as He abhors those who deny the Day of Judgement—one of the fundamentals of Muslim faith. Denying the Day of Judgement amounts to unbelief and God has likened the oppressor of the orphan to an unbeliever.

Exploitation of the orphan can lead to serious evils in the society. In more than one place in the Quran, God has mentioned general commandments regarding orphans. For instance, (4: 36) 'Show kindness to parents, and to near kindred, and orphans, and the needy.' The virtuous are those who, despite their love for it, give away their wealth to their relatives and to orphans and the very poor. (2: 177)

The rights of an orphan are considered sacrosanct in Islam. Those who do not honour the rights of the orphan will bring down upon themselves the wrath of God both in this world and in the Hereafter. "Those who devour the wealth of orphans wrongfully, do but swallow fire into their bellies" is the warning mentioned in Quran (4: 10). Another of the verse asks the believers to 'Restore the property of the orphans to them (when they reach maturity) and do not devour their wealth by mixing it up with your own. For this indeed is a great sin'. □



A EUREKA MOMENT

Discover Your Religion

SIR ISAAC NEWTON (1642-1727) was born into a Christian family. A regular church-goer, he can be said to have been a religious man in every sense of the word. But he is known to the world as a scientist not as a man of religion. He spent his whole life setting down the results of his research into the solar system, and it is in this capacity that the world has come to know him.

The same is true of most scientists. Most of them have, in their personal lives, been religious men. They were generally born into Christian or Jewish families, and remained associated with their ancestral religion until the end of their lives.

Something one discovers, becomes one's greatest treasure. One feels one cannot survive without presenting it to the world.

But the thing that these scientists presented to the world was science, not their ancestral religion. They spent their whole lives delving into the mysteries of science and devoted their energies to handing the results of their endeavours on to the world.

Why is it that these people became famous as scientists, rather than as men of religion? The reason is that religion was something that they had inherited from their ancestors, whereas science came to them as a discovery. One

can never develop ardent enthusiasm for one's ancestral inheritance. Something one discovers, on the other hand, becomes one's greatest treasure. One feels one cannot survive without presenting it to the world.

Today, there are millions of people in the world who regard themselves as religious. In spite of this, we find that religion does not play an active part in their lives. It does not become the focal point of their thinking and concentration. Therefore, it has not been possible for such people to become enthusiastic proponents of religion.

If they themselves had discovered the religion they adhered to, they could not but have proclaimed it to the rest of the world. They would have staked their lives for it. But those who receive religion as a legacy, and do not make it a conscious finding of their own, will not be moved by their faith in this manner. They will be like so many other "Newtons" who believe in one religion or the other, while their energies and enthusiasm are directed towards other fields besides religion. □

EARTHQUAKE

A Glimpse of the Doomsday

ON June 21, 1990 the northwestern part of Iran was hit by an earthquake so severe in its intensity that it left 80,000 dead and 200,000 injured in its wake. A comment frequently heard at that time was that this was God's punishment for the Iranians.

Such remarks are absurd. Any tragedy befalling this world is designed to make God's servants tremble in fear of their Maker. It is not an occasion for the castigation of supposed wrongdoers by the self-proclaimed righteous people. The truth is this earthquake was linked neither to Iran's iniquity nor to God's chastisement. An earthquake is a geophysical event; it is meant as a lesson for everyone, and not just for the people of Iran, or any other country for that matter.

Every severe earthquake causes a similar amount of devastation. According to *The Times of India* of June 23, 1990, not a single house in the affected area had been left standing. In reality, an earthquake's true significance lies in its being a reminder of Doomsday. What happens before, during, and after an earthquake is simply a miniature version of what will actually transpire on a horrendous scale on the Day of Reckoning.

God has built this world as a temporary testing ground. When this period of trial is over, God will cause a severe earthquake to take place. Its impact will cause all structures to collapse, all bastions of human greatness will simply vanish from the face of the earth, and civilization as we know it will cease to exist. Then God, in His omnipotence, will create a new world in which He will reward each of His creatures according to their deeds.

The correct attitude to natural calamities is that one should learn a lesson from them. Attributing them to the misdeeds of others will only bring down God's wrath upon one's own head. □

What happens before, during, and after an earthquake is simply a miniature version of what will actually transpire on a horrendous scale on the Day of Reckoning.



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.



DESIST FROM INTOLERANCE

THE QURAN (30:60) relates: So have patience [O Muhammad]! God's promise is true; let not those who will not be convinced make you discouraged.

Consider a new tree. Based on the law of nature, this tree will start bearing fruit after a few years. But if some impatient people start demanding that the tree start yielding fruit after just a few months, they will destroy the tree with their impatience. Because of their behaviour, the tree will not be able to manifest its natural potentiality.

Similar is the case with developments that manifest themselves in the social sphere. Those on the path of truth will be repeatedly faced by provocations from people who are opposed to them. They will have to encounter numerous challenges, both mental and physical, that threaten to provoke them. This is a very delicate period for them. In such a situation, if they lose their patience and peace of mind and get entangled in the controversies that their opponents are bent on raking up, their real task will remain unfinished and they will start quarrelling with their opponents about unnecessary issues. By turning intolerant, they disobey God; and people who disobey God can never receive God's help.

There are many different ways in which one can lose one's patience and become intolerant. For instance, by not willing to tolerate a minor damage or inconvenience for the sake of a higher purpose or goal and to start quarrelling about this. Or, for instance, by not ignoring issues

that might hurt one's sentiments and by getting worked up because of them. Another way in which people might express this lack of tolerance is, if instead of working for their own social and economic development, they start making demands on others and take to protesting, demonstrating and engaging in other such forms of negative political action. Or, they may zealously rush ahead and take seemingly very daring steps without having developed their own character. Or, they may give inordinate importance to the challenges that they will necessarily have to face in society and then get provoked and start fighting with others. They may develop unrealistic expectations from others, and when these expectations are not met, they may get angry with them. They may not take into account human weaknesses, and so when they see a weakness in someone, they may create a big hue and cry about it. They may refuse to negotiate with the political authorities, and, instead, involve themselves in conflicts with them.

The principle of not allowing yourself to lose your patience and tolerance is based on great wisdom. If you violate this principle in the desire for obtaining the opportunities that you do not possess, you will only lose the opportunities that you presently enjoy. If you launch an agitation to topple the political authorities who allow you to work in the non-political field, the latter will perceive you as their enemy, and, using the power at their disposal, can easily suppress you. If your opponent is strong and commits some excesses against you and you fail to tolerate this, deadly violence will break out, which will play havoc with your entire life. Such are the perils of allowing yourself to lose your patience and tolerance.

Whenever you want to start some work, you will almost inevitably have to face complaints from others. You will have to contend with stiff opposition. Now, if you give importance to every complaint and every sort of hurt or damage caused to you by your opponents, you will inevitably start fighting with them.

You will leave aside your real task, being so taken up in opposing them. Suppose those who are on the path of truth do not abide by patience and tolerance and somehow still manage to acquire dominance in society. In such a situation, because of their lack of preparation, they will not be able to maintain this position for long. They will start fighting among themselves. If they had not focused on the task of purifying

The best way to respond to an opponent is to clear your own way ahead by exercising patience and wisdom.

and developing their character, after grabbing political power they will promote strife and conflict, not peace and progress.

If people on the path of truth have not developed the firm conviction that the only thing of importance for them is truth and that all other matters are secondary, they will become engrossed in other issues if they acquire dominance in society. In this way, they will give birth to new social problems. If they have not risen above the psyche of revenge, after acquiring political power they will start avenging their former enemies, causing their societies and countries to become so weak that it will become impossible to manage them. If they have not developed the power of tolerance, they will unleash war against every person or group who might hurt their egos. If, stirred by their emotions, they lose control of themselves, in the name of ending one evil they will only succeed in producing many more.

To exercise tolerance means to wait for the manifestations of human possibilities that emerge from the ever-changing nature of human beings.

Whenever you face an unpleasant situation at the hands of someone, you generally think just one thing: "This man is my enemy! I must suppress or fight him!" But this is a very wrong way to estimate a person. God has placed

great flexibility in the human psyche. It is a proven fact that human beings do not remain in one state all the time. Rather, they keep on changing. To exercise tolerance means to wait for the manifestations of human possibilities that emerge from this ever-changing nature of human beings.

Islam stresses the importance of patience precisely because one should wait for a future period to come to pass when the latent potentials hidden inside people can manifest themselves. Some people go to extremes in their opposition to others by turning aggressive. But in this world that God has made to test human beings, your opponents too, have the freedom to act, just like you do. The best way to respond to them is to clear your own way ahead by exercising patience and wisdom, instead of becoming agitated by others and reacting angrily. A person's lack of patience and wisdom is his enemy's deadliest weapon.

The most foolish person is one who hands over this weapon to his adversary himself. The same holds true for entire communities. □



PERSEVERANCE

Prerequisite of Success

IT HAS BEEN very aptly observed that success lies in perseverance. The entire gamut of human history testifies to the truth of this saying. Life's journey, frequently directed along uneven paths, is one in which one faces many unfavourable situations. Yet the wayfarer has to continue his journey whatever the odds. This is called perseverance. One who possesses this quality reaches the destination of success in this world. The greater the perseverance, the greater the success.

This is a law of nature. Just open your eyes and you will find clear indications of this reality.

A man, standing by the side of a rock, looked down and found that, due to the continuous lashing of the waves, the rock had worn away. He exclaimed, "Look, the rock is a hard object, while water is so soft. But even if as soft a thing as water acts with perseverance, it can crush as hard an object as a rock into pieces. All the huge quantities of sand found on the sea shores have been produced by this lashing of water against the rocks."

Life's journey, frequently directed along uneven paths, is one in which one faces many unfavourable situations.

The career of Dr. Subramanian Chandrasekhar (1910-1995), an eminent mathematician, provides a worthwhile human parallel. From his childhood, he showed keen interest in mathematics and astronomy. Later, he took up as the subject for his research the birth and death of the stars. In this connection, he presented his initial conclusion in the form of a research paper at a meeting of Astrophysical Society held on January 11, 1935. Scientists of repute, including Sir Arthur Eddington, were present at the meeting. Sir Arthur Eddington ridiculed Chandrasekhar and tore his papers to pieces.

Afterwards, Chandrasekhar wanted this paper to be published in the Astrophysical Journal published from London. But his paper was rejected. Disheartened by this discouraging experience, he left Britain for India. Here he applied to different universities for a job but failed to find one. He was rejected both at home and abroad.

Yet this was not enough to dishearten Chandrasekhar. He now left India for Chicago, USA, where he found the circumstances more favourable. He devoted himself once again to his research. Gradually

his theory became so popular that his papers were regularly published in important scientific journals and magazines. Ultimately his theory came to be accepted as *Chandrasekhar Limit* in the world of science. At the age of 73, in 1983, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics.

Human history is replete with such exemplary lives. Anyone who has achieved any real success in this world has done so through continuous effort and perseverance. There is no other path to success in this world.

Anyone who has achieved any real success in this world has done so through continuous effort and perseverance.

It has been observed that if you want to achieve success for yourself, you should cultivate the virtue of patience, for success is always dependent upon exercising patience. This is necessary because in a period of struggle, such obstacles come in the way as apparently remove one further from one's destination. That is why man must never allow himself to become discouraged. Equipped with patience and perseverance, he should persist in his efforts.

This is so great a certainty that it leaves no choice as to our course of action. We have to abide by this verdict of nature, for we can survive only by living in accordance with it. It is not possible for us to change the system of nature.

Given this state of affairs, wisdom demands that we refrain from wasting our time in complaints and protests, and instead we should take steps to banish despair and discouragement. Adopting the path of realism, one must continue one's efforts. Thus, success will become as certain as the setting of the sun in the evening and of its rising again the next morning. Unflagging effort inevitably leads one to one's desired goal.

Nature requires only a few months to grow a crop of cucumber. But this is not the case with the oak tree. Nature here requires a period of a hundred years. Then how can man be exempt from this universal principle?

If you are not willing to accept the reality of a long, very long struggle, you shall have to be content with very minor success. The indispensable price of great success is long-term endeavour. One who is not willing to pay this price should not expect any great success. □



AN EXCLUSIVE WEBSITE FOR QURAN TRANSLATIONS IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES



Scan to Download
Mobile App

THE QURAN

Read Quran in the language of your choice

🕊️ Greetings of Peace from CPS International

Translations of Quran available in the following languages



Also Visit

Spirit of Islam



CPS Global



Moulana Wahiduddin Khan



Our Vernacular Websites



CPS Kannada
CPS Marathi

CPS Tamil
CPS Malayalam



INDIA—A POTENTIALLY SPIRITUAL COUNTRY

Power of Spirituality

TOLERANCE is an integral part of India's tradition. One can say that tolerance is India's national identity. India has a long history of the culture of tolerance. India is a multi-religious society. Followers of almost all the major religions live in India with total harmony. One can say that India has proved to be a peaceful haven for different religions and cultures. In this sense, one can say that India is like a peaceful garden in which all kinds of plants and trees flourish. This is the identity of India. India is a composite society. According to the 2011 census, the demographics of India's population according to religion are: 79.80% Hindus, 14.23% Muslims, 2.30% Christians, 1.72% Sikhs, 0.70% Buddhists, 0.37% Jains, and 0.9% followers of other religions.

The Indian Constitution accords Muslims equal rights of citizenship in every aspect and there is no discrimination at all on the basis of religion.

This composite nature of the Indian society is not by accident. It is attributed directly to the Indian way of thinking. According to the traditional way of thinking, India believes in plurality, or in the words of the great Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi, "the manyness of reality." Hindus comprise the majority in Indian population. The Hindu religion is based on *advaitvad*, that is, monism. Monism means that divine reality is one, manifested in different ways. According to this religious

philosophy, the Hindus believe that everything in the cosmos is an *ansh*, or part, of divinity. They believe in the concept of an indwelling god, that is, every human being has a content of divinity. Due to this concept, the Hindu mind accords equal position to every man and woman. This is the genesis of the culture of tolerance in India.

The Bhagavad Gita is one of the holy books of Hinduism. It maintains that all paths lead to the same destination. It was this concept that was declared by the well-known Hindu thinker Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) at the Parliament of the World's Religions in these words: "We believe not only in universal toleration but we accept all religions as true." (Chicago, September 11, 1893). It is a fact that Hinduism believes in religious pluralism. Almost all scholars of Hinduism, for example, Sri Aurobindo Ghose, Rabindranath Tagore, C. Rajagopalachari, and S. Radhakrishnan, have confirmed this concept of Hindu philosophy.

A practical example of this culture is narrated by Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) in his famous book *The Discovery of India*, in these words: "In Kashmir, a long-continued process of conversion to Islam had resulted in 95 per cent of the population becoming Moslems, though they retained many of their old Hindu customs. In the middle nineteenth century the Hindu raja (ruler) of the state found that very large numbers of these people were anxious or willing to return en bloc to Hinduism. He sent a deputation to the pundits of Benares, the religious centre of India, inquiring if this could be done. The pundits refused to countenance any such change of faith and there the matter ended." According to the Hindu pundits, this kind of conversion was not objectionable.

Due to this mindset, the authorities of Hindu religion have accorded Islam a very honourable status. For example, Dr Bhagavan Das (1869-1958) was a well-known scholar of Hindu religion. He authored a large number of learned works on philosophy and religion. He writes in his magnum opus, *The Essential Unity of All Religions*: "The word Islam has a profound and noble meaning which is, indeed, by itself, the very essence of religion. Derived from salm, peace, *shanti*, it means 'peaceful acceptance' of God; calm resignation, submission, surrender."

If there are some problems faced by the Muslim community in India, they are due to the law of nature and not on account of any kind of discrimination.

The different religions of India have their own distinct history of how they reached this land. As far as the religion of Islam is concerned, it first reached India toward the end of the seventh century AD, that is, in the same period that is regarded among the three golden periods of Islam. This first group of Muslim Arabs came from Iraq by sea-route and settled in Kerala, a coastal state of India. Due to the above-mentioned Indian spirit, this group was hailed with respect. The Indians conferred on them the title of Mappila, which means a highly respectable person. Jawaharlal Nehru, in *The Discovery of India*, observes that when the Arabs came to India, they brought with them a brilliant culture.

Due to this reason, Islam found a very favourable atmosphere in India. In the beginning, Muslims were just a small group, but now they comprise about 14.23% of the 1.32 billion population of India. An eminent Indian scholar of ancient history and culture, Tara Chand, has documented the advent and influence of Islam in India. His major contribution to Indo-Islamic culture and philosophy is his worthy book *Influence of Islam on*

Indian Culture. The book, which was first published in 1922, has become a classic on this subject for researchers and historians.

According to the Indian Constitution, which came into effect in January 1950, Muslims have equal rights of citizenship in every aspect and there is no discrimination at all on the basis of religion. There are about one million Muslim masjids, madrasas (seminaries) and various Islamic organizations in India at present. All these institutions are flourishing and working smoothly. There are numerous schools, colleges and universities freely run by Muslims. Muslims have a distinctive presence in every field of Indian society such as the government, administration, business, industry, education and social institutions. The President of India holds the highest office in the country. He is the head of the state and the first citizen of India. In the history of independent India, four Muslims have, to this date, held the office of the president. These were: Dr Zakir Hussain (1967-1969), Mohammad Hidayatullah (July-August 1969), Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed (1974-1977) and Dr APJ Abdul Kalam (2002-2007). Mohammad Hamid Ansari served as 12th Vice-President of India. (2007-2017)

A nation armed with the spiritual power of its individuals is in a position to inculcate spirituality in international life.

If there are some problems faced by the Muslim community in India, they are due to the law of nature and not on account of any kind of discrimination. Differences are a part of the law of nature. Thus, it is but natural that there are problems in every society, including a Muslim society. These kind of problems are normal and not worthy of any consideration. According to the law of nature, it is impossible to have a country which is totally problem-free, and certainly India is not an exception in this regard.

Swami Vivekananda is one of the most admired religious leaders of India. He was a great believer in Hindu-Muslim unity. Once he stated his concept in these words: "I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islam body." (Letter dated June 10, 1898, *Letters of Swami Vivekananda*)

Due to this spirit of tolerance and mutual acceptance, Islam and Muslims found a very favourable soil in India. For example, the Sufis generally came from Central Asia and settled in various Indian cities. They established *khanqahs* (a place for spiritual retreat) and tried to

peacefully disseminate the message of Islam. The above historical references explain how it was possible that the different groups of religion and culture have been living in harmony in India since long. How the people of a nation had so many religious beliefs and how they could live together from the past to the present with this diversity, without conflict? It was not due to any coincidence. But, it was due to the deep-rooted traditions of the Indian culture. The theoretical explanations of this phenomenon can be different, but, it is a fact that this kind of tolerance is a great strength of India. It gives India a special place on the world map. The well-known Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi is the greatest name in pacifism. In its article on pacifism, the fifteenth edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica has this to say about Gandhi: "The most massive, comprehensive, and historically effective example of nonviolent activism is that of the movements unchained and organized by Mahatma Gandhi." The case of Mahatma Gandhi is not an individual case, in fact, he was only a manifestation of India's spirit of peace and tolerance.

In the pre-WWII era, certain countries adopted a social model that was based on uniculturalism. Some examples of these countries are Canada, the USA and Australia. However, this model completely failed to work. Then in the post-WWII period, they adopted a new model which was based on multiculturalism. It is interesting to note that India had adopted the model of multiculturalism since the beginning of its history and up to the present day. It is this model that provides the pace of development to both the Muslim community as well as the non-Muslim communities.

Another wonderful aspect of India is that it is a potential spiritual superpower. A case in point is of Mother Teresa who was born in Europe but upon her visit to India she was so fascinated with this land of spirituality that she decided to settle here. She dedicated her entire life to social upliftment. In recognition of her services, she was awarded the prestigious Nobel Prize. On this occasion, she was invited to the USA to address an American audience there. She began her address with these historic words: "I have come from a rich country to a poor country." She was indeed referring to the spiritual wealth of this country. It is a fact that India has a long tradition of spirituality and moral values. In other words, potentially, India is a spiritual hub. This is the true spirit of India. We only need to revive ancient Indian traditions in our lives, for India to emerge as a spiritual superpower in the world. It will be able to conquer the world with its spirituality. But turning this Indian potential into reality would need a long and sincere effort. It is a struggle involving many phases, consisting of purely peaceful methods.

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

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

Why is India a spiritual power? This is traceable to its long spiritual tradition. Where the western world was engaged in technical activities in previous centuries; India, throughout those same centuries was engaged in spiritual activities. While the western world was producing material experts in the form of physical scientists, India was producing spiritual scientists, in the form of Swamis and Sufis. It is this factor, which has been mainly responsible for the difference between India and the western world. India might be a developing country, in the material sense, but it is a developed country, in the spiritual sense.

India can show the world the path to peace and spirituality and thus emerge as a spiritual superpower.

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

Swami Vivekanand was a great soul of India. He was quite right in predicting that, after independence, India would emerge as spiritual leader of the world. In spite of all the material progress that has been made, the world is in search of spirituality. Indeed, spirituality—a national asset of India—is the real identity of our country. For centuries, the lofty Himalayas have served as an abode of spirituality. Its message flows eternally in the water of the Ganges and the Jamuna, while tall green trees provide spiritual solace, and beautiful birds warble the songs of peace. This rare combination of spiritual greatness is to be found only in India. This is what makes it a spiritual superpower. It is in this sense India is potentially a superpower. It should be our aim to bring about a spiritual renaissance in the second decade of the 21st century. □

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 ice-caps 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 emphasised 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 such an alarming rate, that it is making the wastage of water a grave 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

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.

our bit by finding out how we can do something to reduce our own water footprint and help manage the need for 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 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 conserve water as an act of worship; 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 as takers. □



DOWNLOAD THE
SPiRiT OF ISLAM
MOBILE APP



A DAY FOR JUSTICE

A Lesson from History

THROUGHOUT 1984, Iraq kept stepping up its attempt to ruin the Iranian economy by cutting off export of oil through the Kharg Island terminal. Hoping to force Iran to negotiate an end to the four-year-old Gulf War, the Iraqi authorities conducted systematic attacks on international shipping using the Iranian oil terminal. Their efforts were considerably assisted by their acquirement of sophisticated Exocet missiles from France. So successful have these missiles been that Aerospatiale—the French manufacturers of the Exocet—considered fit to bring out an advertisement in the *London Economist*, announcing that their product had hit and disabled many vessels in the Gulf War.

The advertisement, quite conveniently does not mention the dozens of crewmen on these vessels who were killed or injured. The Exocet, as the advertisement omits to say, has disabled and wrecked not only ships but human life as well.

The fact that Aerospatiale, like the manufacturers and distributors of so many other weapons of destruction, consider it fit to advertise the devastating nay life-taking qualities of their products, is due to the reason that they feel there is none to bring them to account for their actions. Everyone knows that killing innocent people, and giving others weapons to kill them is a crime against God and humanity. Yet those who wield political and economic power in this world continue to kill, and even take pride in their action, when it serves their interests. They think that their power gives them a license to kill.

It is inconceivable and unacceptable to think that some people should indulge in games of death and destruction and are allowed to go without paying for their crimes.

The human conscience demands that such people be brought to justice; it cries out, "Who is going to take away their license to kill?" Yet in this world, they are never brought to justice. Those who perpetrate these crimes against humanity are accorded state funerals and buried as 'heroes'. They are condemned and punished only if they happen to be on the losing side.

In a world where the human conscience, and the order of the whole universe, demands justice, it is inconceivable and unacceptable to think

that some people should indulge in games of death and destruction and are allowed to go without paying for their crimes.

There must come a day when the powerful are made powerless, and made to answer for their actions; when those who innocently died at their hands are invited to bear witness against their persecutors. That will be the Day of Judgement, the day when the Owner of all true power brings justice to the world, and punishes those to whom He gave power as a test, and who mercilessly misused it. □



CPS INTERNATIONAL (NEW DELHI) IS NOW ON WHATSAPP

**TO RECEIVE MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN'S
VIDEOS, ARTICLES, QUOTES AND OTHER UPDATES
WHATSAPP YOUR NAME AND LOCATION ON**

+91 9999944118



USA

Centre for Peace and Spirituality
2665 Byberry Road, Bensalem, PA 19020
kkaleemuddin@gmail.com

WISHFUL THINKING

Living in Wonderland

FIFTY YEARS ago on July 21, 1969, the American astronaut Neil Armstrong, became the first man to set foot on the moon. Armstrong continued working for NASA until 1971. Afterwards, he took up a job as a university professor at the University of Cincinnati.

When Armstrong stepped onto the lunar surface, he famously said: *'That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind'*. Another story about Armstrong was printed in the Malaysian newspaper *Star* (January 10, 1983), and the Sri Lankan *Daily News* (January 29, 1983).

The story spread like wildfire throughout the Muslim world. "The world-famous astronaut Neil Armstrong," read the *Star* caption, "was the First Man to set foot on the moon. He has since become a Muslim and the reason given was that when he first stepped on the moon, he heard a clear sound which was very clear to him and his companions. At that time, he thought his ears were playing tricks on him as he was rather excited and over-awed by his first experience on the moon. When he was sent on a lecture tour to various countries, one of the first places he visited was Cairo, Egypt, and he heard the same sound again. So, he asked the Egyptian companion nearest to him what the sound was. He was told that it was *Azan*, the call to prayer and the glorification of God. He was astounded for that was the same sound and the same words to the best of his memory that he heard on the moon. It was then that he decided to learn something about the religion and finally embraced Islam. As a result of that, he lost his coveted job. But, according to him, he had found God, and nothing else mattered."

On reading these reports, the founder and President of the Centre for Peace and Spirituality, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, wrote a letter to Mr. Armstrong, seeking his verification. In his reply, dated May 5, 1983, Mr. Armstrong categorically denied the truth of the reports. "Dear Mr. Khan," he wrote. "Thank you for the courtesy of your letter. The reports of my conversion to Islam, of hearing the voice of *Azan* on the moon, and later in Cairo (I have never been in Egypt) are all untrue. Several magazines and newspapers in Malaysia, Indonesia and elsewhere have published these reports without verification. I apologize for any inconvenience that this incompetent journalism may have caused you. Sincerely, Neil A. Armstrong."

The report had also implicated the American government, for it had been stated that on accepting Islam, Armstrong was promptly fired by

the US Space Agency. American government took extensive measures to counter the report. American posts all over the world were told that there was nothing in the story. On May 12, 1983, a televised press conference was held in the American Centre, New Delhi, in which journalists were linked by telephone directly to Neil Armstrong's office in Ohio so that they could hear his direct denial that he was a Muslim or had been sacked. He further made clear, according to the *Hindustan Times* report (May 13, 1983) that "he had never been exposed to Islamic teachings, nor had he read the Quran."

How strange it is that Muslims have not discharged their responsibility to communicate the creation plan of God to Armstrong and others yet they are only too willing to concoct stories about their religion having conquered, not only the world, but the moon as well. Explaining the extra efforts made to ensure that the rumour was quashed, an official of the U.S. Information Ministry said: "A story like this is self-generating. It is intriguing to a Muslim. It can have a long shelf life."

The reason that Muslims are so "intrigued" by stories of this nature is that they make them feel happy in the thought that Islam has conquered the world, and relieve them of any responsibility of conveying God's message to others. What will a people, who have nothing but wishful thinking and shunned responsibilities to offer, when they come before God? □

ATTENTION

Please

Our vernacular websites' domain names have been changed to:

www.cpsmarathi.com

www.cpstamil.com

www.cpskannada.com

www.cpsmalayalam.com

The true face of Islam through CPS—Peaceful & Spiritual

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



PARADISE: A KNOWN ENTITY

THE QURAN states that the joys which God's true servants will experience in Paradise will be a materialization of the joys they experienced in their worship in the world. In this world, God does not come out into the open; the joy that comes from realization of His existence and faith in Him is, accordingly, an abstract one. But in the next world, God will manifest Himself in all His glory; the joy that will come from beholding Him will become apparent for all to see.

It is this realization that is the true aim of the Islamic life. All the actions of Islam are just a means towards conscious discovery of God; they are ways of establishing contact with the Creator. There is more to our relationship with God than performing some good deeds and God in Heaven being pleased with us in return. It is not a superficial and supposed relationship of this nature; it is a deep and direct one. The actions of God's servant are, in their outward form, obedience to His commandments; but in reality, they are a means of conveyance to a place of communion with the Lord. There, one

*All the actions of
Islam are just a
means towards
conscious discovery
of God.*

calls upon Him in secret; one implores and beseeches Him for help; one attaches oneself to Him with arduous devotion; one really feels as if one has thrown oneself at God's feet. Discovery of God in this manner is the supreme objective of religion, and all its commandments and injunctions are aimed at achieving this discovery. Whoever discovers God in this world will discover Him in the next world also; but whoever fails to discover God in this world will also fail to discover Him in the next world. This experience of communion with God is indeed a wealth unrivalled.

This wealth is God's provision to His believing servants (20:131). Outwardly, fulfilling God's commandments is in one's own power; one can do so or not as one feels inclined. But the inner states that one experiences while performing the will of God are not in one's own power; one cannot create them. Where, then, do they come from? They are the provisions of God without which one's believing personality cannot survive.

Discovery of God is the supreme objective of religion, and all its commandments and injunctions are aimed at achieving this discovery.

When the Prophet Zakaria saw this provision in the person of Virgin Mary, which enabled her to realize God and do His will, he exclaimed: "Where is this from?" "It is from God," she answered (3: 37)

One's actions are the result of one's own efforts, and these states are God's reward for good deeds. God does not keep His supreme blessings in reserve; He grants them to us unstintingly here and now. They descend upon us as soon as we show ourselves to be

worthy of them. The sublime spiritual experiences one feels when God accepts some action are an introduction to the Heaven that God has promised those who believe in Him and do good deeds. They are a fragrance of the garden of Paradise which one scents in this world.

Though they cause one to tremble, they are the greatest joy that one can feel. No worldly enjoyment can be compared to them. This in itself is intuitive proof of the fact that these states are a reflection of that supreme divine gift known as Paradise. That is why the Quran says that the Paradise which believers will enter in the next world will be for them a "known provision" (37: 41). It will not be strange to them; it will be something familiar with which they had become acquainted in the world. "God will admit them to the Paradise He has made known to them," or, as the Prophet put it: "The people of Paradise will know their dwellings even better than anyone of you knows his dwelling in the world." □

NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR

A Case for the Life Hereafter

JUNE 8, 2019 marked the 70th anniversary of the publication of *1984*, George Orwell's famous novel of life in the future. The novel was written in 1948 and became an instant success. Since then it has sold more than 30 million copies and has also been translated into many languages.

The year 1984 had also become, in the words of Peter Jenkins of *The Guardian*, "an almost mythical date in human history". When the year 1984 arrived, people took to comparing the situation postulated by Orwell, with that which existed in the real world. Mrs. Thatcher, for instance, was reported as saying that "Orwell was wrong". We do not, she asserted, have a totalitarian state of the kind that Orwell predicted.

But the picture that Orwell depicted for 1984 was not meant to be taken literally. It is a symbolic expression of the course that evil in the world of man might take. George Orwell saw ominous trends in the political system of 1948; he projected those trends to 1984, and described the society that might result. 70 years later the novel still resonates with modern society and political consciousness and human freedom. *1984*, the novel has become an essential part of the modern consciousness.

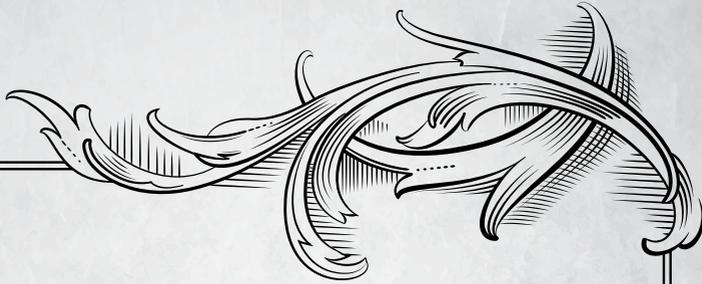
Orwell saw that man is in the middle of a perfect world. Everything in nature is exactly as it ought to be. There is no exploitation, prejudice, tyranny or corruption in the world around man. His own world, however, is fraught with evil. The world of nature, in all its beauty, proclaims that there is a path to perfection that man too can follow. The world of man, in all its corruption, cries out that man has failed to follow that path. The purpose of *1984* is to warn man off from cultivating his potential for evil, and cultivate instead the good that is latent in him.

*The world of nature,
in all its beauty,
proclaims that
there is a path to
perfection that man
too can follow.*

But the pessimistic tone of *1984* shows that Orwell did not see human society reaching a state of perfection in this world. "It is quite possible that man's major problems will never be solved," he wrote in 1944, "but it is also unthinkable who is there who dares to look at the world of today and say to himself, 'It will always be like this'."

Indeed, if one looks at the world of man, there seems to be no end to the evil that he perpetrates. Yet if one looks at the world around man, its perfection tells one that there must come a time when man also merges with the perfect world around him.

The only way out of this paradox is to accept the coming of another world when reality will be enforced on man, as it is already enforced on the world of nature; when God's Will shall prevail in the world of man, as is already the case in the rest of the world. The only ones who will be fit to inhabit that perfect world will be those who had consciously become a part of it in this world; those who bowed to the Will of God when they had the power to rebel. □



CIRCULATION NOTICE TO "SOI" SUBSCRIBERS

Esteemed subscribers of "Spirit of Islam" monthly are hereby informed that we have Postal Registration Licence. Under this registration, the magazine is posted from Bengaluru on 24th/26th of each month.

Please allow a minimum of seven (7) days for the magazine to reach your destination in India. If you do not get the copy latest by 15th of the month, do alert us by email at: thecentreforpeace@gmail.com or Whats app on 9060555757. Write your name and address.

Thank you.



RESPONSIBILITY, NOT PRIDE

The True Lesson of Religion

A RENOWNED Muslim leader delivered a speech in an international conference. In his own words, he was speaking on behalf of the 1.8 billion Muslims living in the world today. Here is an excerpt of his speech:

As they enter the 21st century, the Islamic peoples, who have rediscovered their pride in their religion, their great culture and their unique social and economic institutions, are confident that the advent of this century would mark the beginning of a new epoch, when their high ideals of peace, justice, equality of man, and their unique understanding of the universe, would once again enable them to make a worthy contribution to the betterment of mankind.

This example distinctly shows that more than anything else, Muslims seek to derive pride from their religion. It is this attitude that has nullified all their efforts in the present age. Tremendous efforts are under way in the name of Islam in the world today, but all these efforts emanate from a sense of pride rather than a sense of responsibility. The Quran mentions that only worldly activities can emanate from a feeling of pride (57: 20). Activities which are focused on the life after death emanate from a feeling of servitude towards God (51: 56). Pride leads to egoism and selfishness, whereas a feeling of servitude results in humility and responsibility.

A truly Islamic movement is one which seeks to warn man of God's punishment.

A truly Islamic movement is one which seeks to warn man of God's punishment. But the aim of present-day Islamic movements is world supremacy. These movements have come into being as a result of a feeling of national superiority. Islam is something in which Muslims today take pride; it has ceased for them to be the true path to eternal success. This in itself is proof enough that these movements are nationalistic rather than truly Islamic. The Islam that Muslims are striving for today is a national version of Islam, not the true religion of God. For a feeling of pride is the foundation of national religion, whereas divine religion can only be based on a sense of responsibility. □

TWO METHODS

Gentleness as a Great Strength

AS THE LEGEND goes, the wind and the sun once challenged one another as to which one was more powerful than the other. The argument went on and on indefinitely. Then both decided to demonstrate their respective powers on an object, and whoever won was to be acknowledged the more powerful.

It was early in the morning, and a person covered with a blanket was seen walking in a field. Both the sun and the wind said, "Let us test our strength on this person. The one who manages to remove his blanket from his body will be held the more powerful."

***God's blessings
come to the one
who behaves gently
instead of harshly.***

The wind, first in the field, blew harder and harder until a gale was let loose. But when the man saw the storm approaching, he became afraid of his blanket flying away in the wind, so as the wind started blowing, he went on tightening his blanket around him more and more. Thus the wind failed to separate the blanket from the man's body. Next, the sun came on the scene to show its strength. Instead of a rapid action, it opted for a slow and steady one. It gradually began spreading

its rays in the atmosphere. The man started feeling somewhat hot, so he loosened his blanket. Then, when he became very hot with the sun's rays, he removed the blanket from his body, folded it and hung it around his neck.

This allegory tells us the difference between gentle and harsh action. The way of gentleness in dealings leads to success while the harsh way leads to failure.

By gentleness one can win peoples' hearts. Harshness only drives people further away. By forgiving someone for his ill-treatment, one awakens in him a sense of shame. Whereas by returning evil for evil, a reaction of revenge and retaliation is produced. As the *Hadith* tells us, God rewards gentleness and not harshness. That is, God's blessings come to the one who behaves gently instead of harshly. □



GROWING IN FAITH

Work in Progress

A SCIENTIST once reflected, "Observing nature is my religion, if any day I don't discover something new in nature, I feel that the day has been wasted." If this is the state of one who is absorbed in God's creation, how can the state of one who is absorbed in the Creator Himself be any different? Just as the scientist discovers something new in the world of creation every day, so a believer should always be making new discoveries about his Creator—discoveries that increase him in faith. Any day that he does not find something new is like a day that has been wasted; it is as if he has not established contact with God on that day.

Faith is another word for the discovery of God. God is a never-ending reality; He has no limit. So, discovering Him is also a never-ending event. Faith that does not grow is not really faith at all; it is just a manner of neglecting God.

If one's mind is constantly directed towards God, one will repeatedly experience novel manifestations of His glory; time and again a new divine light will shine on him. Just as God's virtues are interminable, so a believer's search for knowledge of God is a journey that never comes to an end.

If one's mind is constantly directed towards God, one will repeatedly experience novel manifestations of His glory; time and again a new divine light will shine on him.

This fresh knowledge is sometimes expressed in the form of divine states with which one was so far unacquainted. Sometimes it surges to one's lips in the form of words of supplication which one had never conceived before. Sometimes a previously concealed secret of God's wisdom becomes apparent to one. Sometimes one attains hitherto unknown degrees of proximity to God. Sometimes profound new understanding of truths is inspired within one, which all the words one knows are inadequate to express. □

A concise way of describing the Islamic way of life is to say that it is a life of self-control. The various controls and the code of discipline that one is expected to observe during Hajj can be seen as a training for such a way of life.

TWO ATTITUDES

Submit to the Truth Before Death

THE QURAN says that on Judgement Day, when humankind is gathered before God, man will look upon his deeds. Those who denied God, and rebelled against Him, will behold the doom that awaits them. In anguish they will cry out:

“Would that I were dust!” (78: 40)

When Umar, the second Caliph of Islam, lay on his death-bed, after being mortally wounded by the dagger of Abu Lulu Firoz, his son, Abdullah ibn Umar was resting his father’s head in his lap. “Rub my cheek in the dust, Abdullah,” Umar said to him. Abdullah ibn Umar did so. Then, with his head resting on the ground, Umar addressed these words to himself:

The only creditable submission of God is that which comes before He makes Himself manifest

“Woe betide you, Umar, and woe betide the one who gave birth to you, if God does not forgive you.” (*Tabaqat Ibn Saad*)

If one compares both these events, one will find that the very words uttered by those who do not believe in the next world, are those uttered by believers in this world.

Who dare rebel against God when He appears before man? Everyone will submit to Him then. But the only creditable submission of God is that which comes before He makes Himself manifest. God wants us to bow to Him before He reveals Himself. He wants us to discover Him through His signs in the universe.

The only reason that people rebel against God is that He has not physically manifested Himself before them. But how can one rebel against Him when He manifests Himself in all His might? Man is cowed into submission before a lion. How then can he dare otherwise when he comes face to face with God, the creator of the lion?

A believer is one who experiences in this world and humbles himself without seeing God what others are going to experience in the next world. □



WHAT IS DEATH?

Towards the Hereafter

OF ALL THE STAGES through which a person will have to pass, death is the most certain. Everyone who is alive now will be dead sometime in the future. One day the eyes of those who see will fade and their tongues freeze into silence. Every human being will one day be leaving this world, never to return, and entering a world which he will never leave.

No one can be sure when death will come; it might strike at any instant. The gravity of the situation lies in death not being the end of life, but rather the beginning of a new, eternal life, a world of everlasting reward or retribution.

Everyone is on a journey from life to death. Some have set their sights on the world, others on the Hereafter. Some strive to satisfy their own desires and egos, others are restless in love and fear of God.

Both types of people appear the same in this world. But in relation to the life after death, there is a world of difference between the two: those who live in God and the Hereafter are redeeming themselves, while those who live in worldly pleasures and selfish desires are condemning themselves to doom.

Every human being will one day be leaving this world, never to return, and entering a world which he will never leave.

The world beyond death is, as Arthur Koestler, a Hungarian-British author put it, an “unknown country”. We are all traveling towards that unknown country. The strangest and most mysterious event of our lives is death. Everyone is anxious to know what will become of them after death.

The American evangelist, Billy Graham, has written a book called *The Secret of Happiness*. He writes in this book that he once received an urgent message from a famous political leader, who wanted to meet him at the earliest opportunity.

When Billy Graham reached the politician’s residence, he was ushered into a separate room. There the politician addressed him in a heart-rending tone. “I am an old man,” he said, “Life has lost all meaning. I

am ready to take a fateful leap into the unknown. Young man, can you give me a ray of hope?"

It was, indeed, only a man of religion who could give him an answer.

Death is lying in wait for everyone. In one's youth one tends to forget death, but in the end the hand of fate holds sway. In old age, when one's strength is on the wane, one realizes the imminence of death; one is moved to wonder what lies in store for one in the Hereafter; one searches for a ray of hope which can illuminate the world one will have to face after death.

The strangest and most mysterious event of our lives is death. Everyone is anxious to know what will become of them after death.

It is this ray of hope that God's prophets have come to the world to provide. The prophets have taught man that there is another world—one that is both eternal and ideal—

after death. Those who will be admitted to this perfect world in the afterlife are those who, in this life on earth, prove themselves worthy of it by their righteous actions.

This message has been summed up in these words of the Quran: "And God calls unto the home of peace." (10: 25) □



**WE LOOK FORWARD
TO YOUR FEEDBACK**

Dear readers,

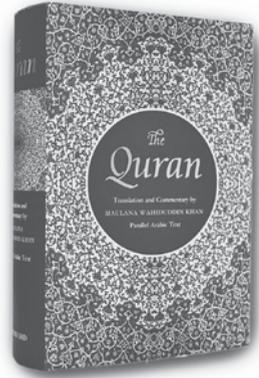
*Spirit of Islam team believes in the involvement of readers to enhance the quality of the magazine. Your precious views, suggestions, and recommendations in this regard are earnestly solicited and will be readily acknowledged. Kindly mail us your views at:
thecentreforpeace@gmail.com*

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 AD 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

All praise be to God, Creator of the heavens and the earth, who made the angels His messengers, with wings—two, or three, or four pairs. He adds to His creation whatever He wills; for God has the power to will anything. No one can withhold the blessings God bestows upon people, nor can anyone apart from Him bestow whatever He withholds: He is the Almighty, the Wise One. (35: 1-2)

God created angels to carry messages and execute orders. But, Satan misled people to believe that the angels had a distinct identity of their own and that they could be the source of bringing blessings in this world and salvation in the Hereafter. So, some communities drew imaginary pictures of them, giving them names 'Lat' and 'Manat' and started worshipping them. Some communities treated them with the reverence which rightfully was due to God. In the present age, reverence for the 'law of nature' is the modern version of a similar misconception. But the fact is that both the angels and the law of nature are subject to the will of One God alone.

People, remember God's favour to you. Is there any creator other than God who provides for you from the heavens and the earth? There is no God save Him. How then are you turned away from the truth? If they reject you, other messengers have been rejected before you. To God all affairs will be returned. (35: 3-4)

Man is in need of innumerable things to sustain his life, for example, light, water, air, food, minerals, etc. Each of these elements require the combined and concerted actions of universal forces to come into

existence. Who else except the one God is capable of bringing about such a big event? When the Creator and Organizer of all these things is the One God, then how could it be reasonable for people to worship any entity other than Him?

It is a peculiar historical experience that those who accord a position of greatness to things other than God are intractable when it comes to re-assigning that greatness to God, even though the call for this may be made by a prophet in person. The reason for this is people find it easy to continue with previously accepted notions; whereas accepting a new prophet would mean putting one's faith in something different. For the individual to acquire this type of '*iman*' (faith), he must activate his own thinking powers; he should discover the Truth through his own insight. Undoubtedly, this has always been the most difficult task for a man to perform.

O Men! The promise of God is true. Let not the life of this world deceive you, nor let the Deceiver deceive you about God. Surely Satan is your enemy: so, treat him as an enemy: he calls on his followers only so that they should become inmates of the burning Fire. Those who are bent on denying the truth will have a severe punishment, while those who believe and do good deeds will have forgiveness and a great reward. (35: 5-7)

On the face of it, the facts of life (and Hereafter), though conveyed to us by God through His prophets, appear to be figments of human imagination, because they are not immediately encountered. Conversely, the things of the present world appear to be real, because man encounters them today itself.

Sudden death, the upheaval of earthquakes and other such incidents shake a man's composure. These, in fact, remind one of Doomsday, before its actual occurrence. But Satan immediately diverts the attention of the people by saying that these events have natural causes and are not a result of divine intervention. That day is bound to come when a distinction will be drawn between the true and the false; righteous people will be rewarded for their virtue and wrongdoers will be punished for their evil deeds.

Is he whose evil deeds are made alluring to him so that he looks upon them as good, [equal to the man who is rightly guided]? God leaves to stray whom He wills, and guides whom He wills. Do not destroy yourself with grief for them. God has full knowledge of all their actions. (35: 8)

Almighty God has blessed every man with the capability to think and distinguish between truth and untruth. One who utilizes this innate talent, receives proper guidance and one who does not is left to go astray.

When Truth appears before a man, he has two options before him. If he accepts the Truth, his mind starts off in the right direction and he becomes a wayfarer journeying towards the Truth. But if some extraneous consideration or some psychological complication comes in his way and, under its influence, he refuses to accept the Truth, he then starts devising ways and means of justifying his rejection of it and tries to prove that his bad deeds are actually good deeds. Those who suffer from such psychological barriers never admit the Truth. It is only when, after death, they come face to face with God that they reap what they have sown.

It is God who sends forth the winds so that they raise up the clouds. We drive them to a dead land, and by them bring the earth to life after its death. Such is the Resurrection. If anyone seeks glory, let him know that glory belongs to God alone. Good words ascend to Him and righteous deeds are exalted by Him. Those who plot evil deeds shall be sternly punished and their plotting will come to nothing. (35: 9-10)

The present world gives us an introduction to the Hereafter. Rain, a common phenomenon, indicates that a force is at work which is beyond our ken. Rain results from the action of universal forces. The sun, the air, the sea, gravitational force and many other factors combine with each other in perfect coordination to produce the rain which makes dry land come alive.

This process of rain-making proves that the Organizer of the universe has full powers over it. He brings about an event according to His plan.

Revitalizing a barren piece of land and resurrecting a dead man are both feats of the same calibre. If the possibility of the first event is proved, by analogy, the possibility of the second event automatically stands proved.

The present world is a testing ground. Therefore, here even an undeserving person may temporarily receive honour, but in the Hereafter all the honours will fall to the lot of those who are really deserving of them. The criteria for judging worthiness will be righteous words (*al-kalim at-tayyib*) and pious deeds (*al-'amal as-salih*), that is, man's expression—in thought, word and deed—of his discovery of God and the devotion of all his strength to the service of the Almighty. Those who build their lives in piety are bound to secure God's help. □

ASK MAULANA

Your Questions Answered

What is the significance and message of Hajj?

Man should turn towards God, making God the central focus of his life, this is the significance and message of the pilgrimage. Although *hajj* lasts for just a few days, the lessons it provides have a much broader significance. *Hajj* is a comprehensive guide for the entirety of one's life. When we take leave of our homes and families and set off for *hajj*, we feel that we are journeying towards God. It is as if we have left our world and are entering the world of God. We feel we are heading towards the House of God, to the abode and place of action of God's Prophet and his Companions—to the historically significant places of people who had devoted their entire lives for the sake of God, and who gave their lives in God's path.

With this, the pilgrim also realizes the fact that he is setting off for that place which God specially chose to reveal his final guidance to humankind. In this manner, *hajj* leads the pilgrim towards becoming a God-oriented person. He recalls and remembers God. His mind is filled with thoughts of God. If earlier he used to think principally about himself, now he thinks mainly of God.

What is the meaning and importance of the words which a pilgrim utters repeatedly during the journey?

During the journey, the pilgrim calls out the following words:

God is the Greatest! God is the Greatest! There is none worthy of worship other than Him! And God is the Greatest! God is the Greatest! And all praise is for Him!

Repeating these words constantly, a consciousness develops in a *hajj* pilgrim that all greatness is for God alone. In comparison to God, everything else pales into insignificance. This is the real secret of social consciousness. You cannot have unity and harmonious collective living where every person thinks that they are greater than the others. On the other hand, when everyone surrenders their sense of individual greatness, they will find unity and harmony. Disunity is a result of the dispersal of greatness and unity is a result of the acknowledgement of a single greatness. People can live harmoniously together only when everyone surrenders their sense of greatness before a single being.

What is the spirit behind the words 'Labbaik! Allahuma Labbaik! (Here I am at Your service! O God, Here I am at Your service!)

When the pilgrim utters the above-mentioned words, he does not mean to say that he has come to settle in Makkah. It is not a declaration of his having left his homeland and arriving in Makkah. It is actually a declaration of having left his previous conduct or behaviour. It is an announcement to say that, 'I am here with complete willingness to obey You (God), and do whatever You (God) command. To submit my life and soul to Your command.' Although the pilgrim declares, *Labbaik*, 'Here I am at Your service!' at the place of *hajj*, he must stand by this declaration in practice in his personal life on his return from *hajj*.

Is the square structure around which the pilgrims circumambulate like an idol for the Muslims and what is the meaning of going around it?

The square structure is a historical structure originally built by Prophet Abraham in the centre of a large courtyard also called the House of God. It is not an idol for the Muslims. It is known as the Kabah. The pilgrims go around the Kabah seven times, symbolizing their willingness to have God as the centre of their lives. They affirm that they will consider God as the focus around which their lives will revolve. It is as if scattered bits of iron are being pulled towards a divine magnet. The circumambulation (*tawaf*) is symbolic of making all one's efforts constrained around a single focus.

Believers all over the world turn towards the Kabah every day, offering their five daily prayers. When they pray together facing the direction of the Kabah, they experience an amazing sense of unity. The *tawaf* during *hajj* provides the pilgrims an invaluable lesson—of working together, of doing things together in harmony. Differences between rulers and subjects are eliminated completely, as are ethnic differences. It is as if every single person has just one status; as a servant of the one God.

What kind of personality should emerge after one performs Hajj?

The personality that should emerge after performing *hajj* is one in which a two-fold activity is set in motion, one form being external; and the other internal.

External activity refers to conveying the word of God peacefully. Pilgrimage inspires a devotee to continue the prophetic mission of calling people towards a God-oriented life. Internal activity refers to a heightened sensitivity and awareness towards piety, self-control, the avoidance of violence and aggression and the need to lead a life which is devoted to God, instead of one devoted to self-glorification. □

Bringing you a splendid range of Islamic books, spiritual writings of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan and children's products.

GOODWORD BOOKS - DELHI

A-21, Sector 4, Noida - 201 301
Tel. +91120 - 4314871
Mobile +91 8588822672 +91 8588822673
+91 8588822674+91 8588822675
+91 8588822676 mail: info@goodwordbooks.com

Goodword Books - Chennai

324, Triplicane High Road,
Triplicane, Chennai-600005
Tel. +9144-4352-4599
Mobile +91-9790853944, 9600105558
mail: chennaigoodword@gmail.com

Towards Spiritual Living

Al-Risala and Spirit of Islam are two monthly spiritual magazines. They aim at helping individuals discover for themselves answers to their questions on spirituality, religion, this life and the life beyond, and also instill in them the spirit of dawah work.

Annual Subscription (12 issues)

Spirit of Islam: India - ₹ 400

Bank transfer, DD and cheque in favour of 'Centre for Peace'

A/c No. 01360 1000016325
Indian Overseas Bank, Bengaluru
IFS Code - IOBA00 00136

Online payment facility available on:

www.spiritofislam.co.in

002, HM Wimberly,
6, Berlie Street Cross,
Langford Town, Bengaluru - 560 025
+91 9060555757 (WhatsApp)
subscription@thespiritofislam.org

*Al-Risala: India - ₹ 300
Overseas - US \$ 20*

Al-Risala

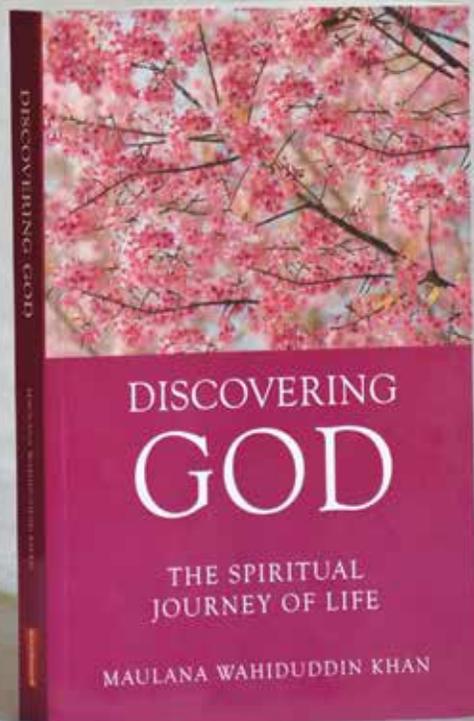
1, Nizamuddin West Market,
New Delhi - 110013
011-45760444
+91- 8588822679
+91- 8588822674 (SMS Only)
cs.alrisala@gmail.com
www.goodwordbooks.com

Bank transfer: 'Al-Risala Monthly'

A/c No. 0160002100010384
Punjab National Bank, New Delhi
IFS code - PUNB0016000

DISCOVERING GOD

The author, 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. This kind of spiritual and intellectual endeavor of remembering God and recognizing His majesty and glory in everything around provides nourishment to the soul. Such a person develops strong affection for His Creator, Sustainer and Benefactor, a feeling which reflects in his character and behaviour. Discovery of the noble and merciful God makes a person rise above negative thinking; his heart becomes free of hatred, anger, and vengefulness. He develops the ability to engage in positive thinking even in unpleasant situations. The personality that undergoes this spiritual process is deserving of being settled in Paradise in the Hereafter.



www.goodwordbooks.com



Printed, published & owned by

Fathima Sarah, 002, HM Wimberly, 6 Berlie Street Cross, Langford Town, Bengaluru - 560025
Printed at COSMOS Printers and Publishers, 450, 3rd Cross, Wilson Garden, Bengaluru - 560027