

SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living



An untroubled mind becomes intellectually stagnant.

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!



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Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living

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A MESSAGE FOR THE NEW YEAR

Dear Readers,

Greetings of Peace!

They are not thankful to God, those who are not thankful to their fellow men. —Prophet Muhammad.

B EING one of those to whom the spirit of Islamic teachings is close to the heart, I take this opportunity on the New Year to thank all the readers of our monthly magazine *Spirit of Islam*.

The beginning of the 7th year of the publication calls for an enormous gratitude to God Almighty for seeing us through every challenge which one faces in an effort to continue any endeavour in the way of humanity.

Through this opportunity I would like to convey the benefits I have received from this magazine. As per the teaching of our mentor Maulana Wahiduddin Khan we should only present to others what we ourselves benefit from.

It was my heartfelt desire to understand Islam in the contemporary idiom since my childhood. I had read many books and journals on Islam, but none gave me the picture of Islam in a language that I could understand. When I got involved with *Spirit of Islam* and Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's Centre, my mind found what it had been looking for all along. I felt this was the Islam that has been presented in the Quran and *Sunnah* as it is, but conveyed in the contemporary idiom so it could address modern minds. One-by-one I was able to understand the principles of Islam.

I find the articles given in 'From the Spiritual Tree' and 'Towards Global Peace' columns of particular relevance to me. Before getting involved in the magazine one question I often asked was, 'Is Islam a religion of peace or does it sanction violence?' The articles in these sections made me realize that Islam is completely a religion of peace. It in fact, gives an ideology of peace that is in perfect harmony with nature and with contemporary times. Reading the spiritual articles helped me find peace within myself while the articles on global peace helped me understand how to attain peace in society and the world at large.

I would like to add that the magazine gives a holistic picture of Islam after removing the misconceptions related to the religion. It makes one understand the deeper meaning of *jihad*, the difference between *jihad*

and *qital*, the status of women according to Islam, the place of peace and spirituality in Islam, the need for *ijtihad*, (re-application of Islamic teachings in changed times) etc.

The magazine has enabled me to apply Islamic principles to my daily life. Prior to reading *Spirit of Islam*, the religion of Islam to me was a set of commandments and rituals that I had to follow, but they had no relation to my real life. As such, I did not understand what importance these had to the building of my personality.

However much I tried, the pillars of Islam were not living parts for me. But after reading articles from the magazine I was able to discover a living Islam that had a direct bearing on my life. I would like to give one example. There is a verse of the Quran which states, "(Paradise) is for those who undertake *tazkiyah*" (20: 76). Previously this verse did not have any meaning for me. But when I understood the principle of conversion given in one of the articles of the magazine I realized that *tazkiyah* is another name for purification of the soul, a method to reform one's character and personality. In spite of having negative experiences from people I have the ability to convert the negative into positive in my mind, and respond to others in a positive manner. I try not to get angry or react in a negative manner. However, it is a day-to-day struggle.

As a result of my reading the various articles in the magazine I have discovered Islamic spirituality. It is nothing mysterious in nature. Islamic spirituality is based on a two point formula: *Simple Living and High Thinking*.

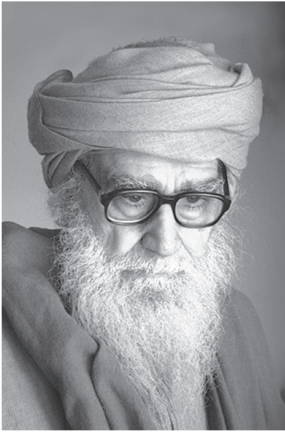
Dear readers, I wish that this New Year helps all of us start a new journey in life which is filled with wisdom and knowledge. Let us pray that this year brings us peace and well-being and empowers us with the ability to manage the day-to-day challenges of life. □

Thank you,

Dr. Nagma Siddiqi
Editorial Committee



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.

125 YEARS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN THE WEST

THE seventh convention of the Parliament of World's religions was held recently in Toronto, Canada. This reminded me of the first time the 29-year-old Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) took to stage at the Parliament in Chicago 125 years ago to share perspectives on diversity and co-existence with intellectuals from across the globe.

Swami Vivekananda made a sensational debut at the Parliament. He was initially nervous about delivering his speech but as he took the stage, he began by addressing his audience as *'Sisters and Brothers of America!'* The hall resounded with a long burst of applause at his words and he received a standing ovation from the delegates and the crowd comprising several thousand people from world over. Today, as we have become increasingly global, the expression takes a larger dimension and has transformed into *'Sisters and Brothers of the World!'*

The President of Parliament of World's Religions, John Henry Barrows later remarked about Vivekananda, calling him "the orange-monk who exercised the most wonderful influence over his audience." The media splashed articles and special features on him and he was labelled as

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

the 'most popular and influential man' at the Parliament! In a world of strangeness and separation, Swami Vivekananda had touched the chord of familiarity and proximity, awakening a feeling of unity amongst his audience.

The mission of the Parliament of the World's Religions is to cultivate harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities and achieve a just, peaceful and sustainable world. Swami Vivekananda became the ambassador of this message of universal brotherhood at the Parliament. He was the first to introduce Indian philosophy to the

***Follow one religion,
and respect all. I
can lead a life full of
love and compassion
devoid of any hatred
because in my mind
and in my heart,
I recognize every
person as a creation
of God.***

West in this manner and received support, leading to the establishment of Vedic centres in the West. In his interactions, he extensively discussed tolerance and cooperation between communities of the world.

In '*Letters of Vivekananda*,' Swami Vivekananda outlined the bright future of India as a nation, to be shaped by two forces: Islamic Body and Vedic Brain. I would modify this and say that in order to create the future we all aspire for, we would have to resort to a blend of 'Western Body, Eastern Brain'—this is the only way we shall progress in times to come!

Swami Vivekananda was an ardent advocate of religious diversity being the soul of universality. His formula was, '*Follow One, Hate None*'. This principle was based on an inherent understanding of the fact that this world is full of differences—family, society, religious communities and nations; difference is an integral part of each ecosystem. But differences are not evil; they are a blessing as they create challenges, which lead to development and progress in the world.

In my experience too, this is the simplest and most natural formula—to follow one religion, and respect all. As a nonagenarian, I can lead a life full of love and compassion devoid of any hatred. This is because in my mind and in my heart, I recognize every person as a creation of God. Since every one of us is created by God, how can I hate anyone? In this respect, there's no difference between us. It is acceptance of this reality that can pave the way for us to co-exist and that will enable us to meaningfully adopt and leverage differences, rather than trying to eliminate or remove them. □

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Follow Maulana at speakingtree.in

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 UNDERSTANDING ABOUT ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE

F*IQH* the Arabic equivalent to jurisprudence literally means an understanding and knowledge of something. At more than one place the Quran has used the word *fiqh* in its general sense of 'understanding'. In the early days of Islam the terms *ilm* (knowledge) and *fiqh* were frequently used to denote an understanding of Islam in general. This shows that in the Prophet's time the term *fiqh* was not applied in the legal sense alone. The Prophet blessed one of his Companions in the following words: "*Allahumma faqqih ho fiddin,*" which means 'O God, give him understanding in religion'. By these words the Prophet did not mean exclusively knowledge of law. He meant in fact a deeper understanding of religion.

Brief History of *Fiqh*

After the Prophet, the Companions settled in different parts of the vast Islamic empire. Here they were confronted with new problems, and they had no option but to exercise their personal judgement. The Prophet was no longer amidst them to turn to him for the solution of these problems. Therefore whenever any problem arose they first consulted the Quran and *Hadith* and only if they failed to find the solution there, they resorted, to the exercise of their personal judgement, while observing fully the spirit of the Quran and *Hadith*.

It was at this stage when the exercise of reason was done to deduce a law, that the term *fiqh* came to be frequently used for this endeavour. Towards the end of the seventh century a movement of collecting *Hadith* started. Large number of people devoted their entire lives to collect and record the teachings of the Prophet. There was another group of people who were interested only in those teachings from which some legal rule could be deduced. For this purpose they resorted to the exercise of reason and personal judgement. This knowledge came to be known as *fiqh* and those who were involved in this task came to be known as *fuqaha*.

During the age of successors the Arabs settled in different parts of the vast Muslim empire. Consequently they came into contact with different cultures and civilizations—confronting with problems they had never faced before. In their endeavour to solve these problems they made great advances in various fields of learning. Islamic law developed and towards the middle of the ninth century books began to be written exclusively on *fiqh*.

Whenever any problem arose they first consulted the Quran and Hadith and only if they failed to find the solution there, they resorted, to the exercise of their personal judgement, while observing fully the spirit of the Quran and Hadith.

Origins of Different Schools of Law

One should be clear about the fact that during the time of the Prophet there was no such science as that of jurisprudence. The only ideal for Muslims at that time was the conduct of the Prophet. They learnt by observing the Prophet's actions and under his instructions. On different occasions, cases were brought to the Prophet for his decision. Prophet's decisions were taken as models for

similar decisions in similar cases. During this period, people were not interested in unnecessary philosophical discussions or in meticulous details. Prophet's practice remained a general directive, interpreted by the early Muslims in different ways. Of course the Prophet laid down certain regulations but the jurists elaborated them with more details. The reason for this further addition 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.

The Prophet provided a wide scope for differences by giving instructions of a general nature, or by validating two diverse actions in the same

situation. Had the Prophet laid down specific and rigid rules for each problem, the coming generations would have been deprived of exercising reason and framing laws according to the need of the hour.

Thus whenever any problem arose the Muslims tried to solve it by first referring to the Quran; If no definite answer was found in the Quran then they would turn to the *Sunnah* (the practice of the Prophet); if there too the problem remained to be solved then they resorted to consensus of the scholars; and as a final recourse they drew an analogy with the Quran and *Sunnah*.

The Prophet provided a wide scope for differences by giving instructions of a general nature, or by validating two diverse actions in the same situation.

From the above points we can understand that the science of jurisprudence had come into existence with the advent of Islam, but it developed as an academic discipline in the eighth century. Imams or scholars have established four different Islamic schools of jurisprudence. There is no conflict between them and they are accepted by all the Muslims of the world. One could follow any school of thought one wants to. For example the *Maliki School* of law is dominant in the Arab west and is also found in southern Egypt and Sudan.

These four different schools of Islamic jurisprudence have been established by the following Imams and named after them.

Abu Hanifa Nu'man ibn Thabit (Hanafi School of Law)

Born in 699 CE in Kufa, Umayyad Caliphate
Died in 767 CE in Baghdad, Abbasid Caliphate

Malik ibn Anas (Maliki School of Law)

Born in 711 CE in Madinah
Died in 795 CE in Madinah

Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi (Shafi School of Law)

Born in 767 CE in Gaza, Bilad al-Sham, Abbasid Caliphate
Died in 820 CE in Egypt

Ahmad bin Hanbal (Hanbali School of Law)

Born in 780 CE in Baghdad, Iraq
Died in 855 CE in Baghdad, Iraq □

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DECEPTION ON ALL SIDES

Until the Day of Truth

THIS is a world of deception and delusion. People are free to do one thing in reality, but make-out that they are doing something quite different. They may be pursuing a policy of personal advancement and self-aggrandisement, but they use slogans which make it appear as though—far from serving themselves—they are only out to serve others. They make out that what they are doing is for the good of their nation, whereas in fact they themselves are the only beneficiaries of their policies. Everyone twists words to his own advantage, making the cruelty and injustice that he inflicts on others appear like justice and humanism. Those who have the law on their side have a licence to act as they please: if the law sanctions their misdemeanours, then no one can say that what they are doing is wrong.

This is the way with people of the world. As for people who call themselves religious, the course that they follow is not very different. They have attached the label “religion” to a few lifeless dogmas; they have assigned the highest rewards to menial, mechanical rites and ceremonies; they make ritual religion appear like real religion; they give themselves credit for practising religion, whereas in fact what they are practising is religion made by man, not the one revealed by God.

They have made religion a topic of argument and disputation, and have forgotten that religion is something to be practised, not just to be talked about.

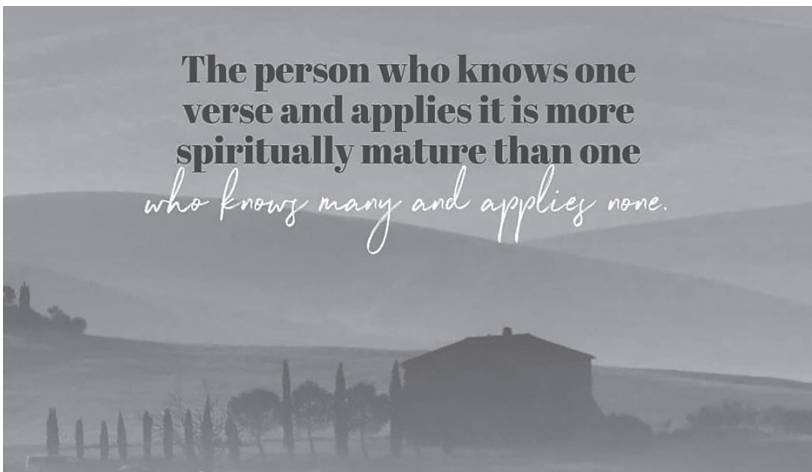
The “God” that they have invented for themselves is one that they do not need to fear. They have appointed for themselves a prophet who will intercede for them and save them from damnation, no matter how they act on earth. The afterlife that they claim to believe in is one where Heaven is for them

and Hell for others. When they pray they are a picture of humility, but their prayer does not prevent them from being proud and malicious when they leave the house of worship. When they fast, they assiduously abstain from food and drink, but they do not bother to refrain from lying, deceit, and injustice. They have made religion a topic of argument and disputation, and have forgotten that religion is something to be practised, not just to be talked about. Then, to crown it all, they claim that they are performing “missionary activity,” whereas in fact what they are doing is seeking to consolidate their own power and prestige.

But counterfeit gold is only considered gold until it has been put to the test of the touchstone. So it is with the deception that man practises in this world. It can only prevail until the Day of Reckoning comes to pass, when God's truth will eliminate all falsehood and His justice will put an end to all injustice. Man is free in this world because he is being put to the test. He can do as he pleases as long as his trial period lasts. When it comes to an end, he will find himself absolutely powerless. He will want to speak, but words will desert him. He will want to run away, but his legs will not be able to carry him.

That will be the day of truth. On that day man will shed the camouflage which hides his real state in this world. Everyone will appear as they really are. What a revelation it will be when the pretences that people put on fade away, and reality comes to the fore. In this world only God knows a person's true state; in the next world it will be plain for all to see. Those who appeared in a certain light in this world will be exposed in a completely different light there: they will be exposed for what they were, rather than what they pretended to be. □

But counterfeit gold is only considered gold until it has been put to the test of the touchstone. So it is with the deception that man practises in this world.



WEALTH

The Great Deceiver

ACCORDING to the Quran, wealth is only meant to fulfil man's needs. It is not a goal in itself. It can fulfil the physical requirements of man, but man is more than a physical entity. Man is an intellectual being, and as such can only find fulfilment in pursuing some alternative goal which is higher than accumulation of wealth.

Wealth is certainly useful for man, but it is a wrong option if one focuses on the acquisition and hoarding of wealth as the principal end in life. Wealth can give one material comforts, but it cannot give wisdom and learning. The best course for humankind is to live as seekers of truth, wisdom, learning and ultimately a goal that is elevated. It is exactly to bring about this understanding that the Prophet said:

"It is not poverty that I fear for you, What I fear for you is that you should have too much access to worldly wealth, as happened to communities that passed before you; and you become emulous of it, as was the case with them."

This *Hadith* has been propounded in both the main collections of the teachings of the Prophet, *Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim*.

What the Prophet warned of, we have seen happening in recent decades all over the Muslim world. Muslims have had worldly wealth lavished upon them and with it have been put to a severe test. Palatial houses to live in, advanced vehicles to drive, huge bank balances to keep them in luxury, all these and much else besides have come with the accumulation of worldly wealth.

The trouble with great wealth is that it is all too often bought at the price of personal integrity. All too often it proves the great deceiver tainting one's vision and preventing one from seeing things as they truly are. What is before our eyes today, we come to think of it as permanent; but it will be gone tomorrow.

For this reason, worldly wealth has no value in itself. Great expertise in worldly affairs will be of no avail when one stands before God in the next world. Then it will only be realities which count. What a pity it is that man is lost in his own illusions, that he is allowing himself to go astray in what is, after all, only a transitory phase of his existence, quite unmindful of the fact that what awaits him is eternity. □

A BELIEVER'S BEHAVIOUR

Prophetic Guidance

THE behaviour of a true believer in his environment is one of love, mercy and compassion. Here are some relevant references from the sayings of the Prophet of Islam in this regard.

- "A guardian of orphans (whether the orphan be of one's near or distant relation or of strangers) and I will be in one place in Paradise, like my two fingers", said the Prophet and his fingers were nearly touching each other at the time". (*Muslim*)
- Someone said: 'O Prophet of God, teach me something'. "Abuse no one", replied the Prophet, "and despise not anything good and speak to your fellow-men with open countenance". (*Tirmidhi*)
- God has no mercy for him who has no mercy for his fellows. (*Bukhari & Muslim*)
- A man came to the Prophet and said, 'How many times should forgive a servant?' The Prophet kept silent. The man repeated the question thrice. "Forgive your servant seventy times everyday", said the Prophet. (*Abu Dawud*)
- He who does not behave kindly towards younger people and does not show due respect to older ones is not of us. (*Tirmidhi*)
- Someone asked: 'What is Islam? The Prophet said: "Purity of speech and hospitality." (*Musnad Ahmad*)
- The Prophet said: "On the Day of Judgement God will question: 'O Man, I was sick and you did not visit Me'. 'My Lord', the man will wonder, 'How could I visit you when You are the Lord of the universe?' God will remind! 'My so and so servant was sick and you did not visit him. Had you visited him, you would have found Me there, with him?'" (*Muslim*)
- Visit the sick, feed the hungry, and help to relieve people's misery. (*Bukhari*)
- Muslims who live in the midst of society and bear with patience the afflictions that come to them are better than those who shun society and cannot bear any wrong done to them. (*Abu Dawud*)
- Every good deed is a charity, and it is a good deed that you meet your fellowmen with a cheerful countenance and you pour water from your bucket into the vessel of your fellow.

- Answering a questioner with mildness is charity. Removing that which is inconvenience to wayfarers, such as thorns and stones is charity. (*Tirmidhi*)
- The leader of a people is truly their servant. (*As-Suyuti*)
- Faith (*iman*) is to restrain oneself against all violence, let no believer commit any violence. (*Abu Dawud*)
- God has forbidden you disobedience of parents, miserliness, false claims, and the burying alive of female infants (female foeticide). (*Bukhari & Muslim*)
- Give the worker his wages before his sweat dries. (*Ibn Majah*)
- The seller is under obligation to disclose any defect in the article offered for sale. (*Bukhari*)
- Someone asked the Prophet, 'What fanaticism was?' and he replied: "That you help your people in wrongdoing". (*Abu Dawud*)
- That one will not enter Paradise whose neighbour is not secure against his mischief. (*Muslim*)
- He who believes in God and the Last Day must not put his neighbour to inconvenience. (*Bukhari & Muslim*)
- He is not a believer who eats to his fill while his neighbour goes without food. (*Ibn Abbas, Al-Baihiqi*)
- The Prophet said: "A person passing through a street carrying anything pointed or with a sharp edge should cover it up, so that nobody is exposed to the risk of injury due to his carelessness. (*Muslim*)
- Once when the Prophet was in retreat in the mosque he was disturbed by the sound of loud recitation. Raising the curtain, he said to the worshippers. "Look, you are all intent on beseeching God, but in so doing you must not trouble others. Don't raise your voices to outdo each other while reciting the Quran."
- He who eases the hardship of another, will have ease bestowed upon him by God in this world and the next... God goes on helping a servant so long as he goes on helping his fellow-men. (*Muslim*)
- The Prophet was very insistent upon kindness towards animals. On one occasion he noticed a dove flying around agitatedly, and discovered that somebody had caught its young. He was very annoyed and asked the person to restore the young to the mother immediately. (*Abu Dawud*)

- With regard to servants, the Prophet said: They are your brothers, and you must treat them as such. Provide them with the kind of clothes that you wear, and if you set them a hard task, join them in it to help them complete it. (*Abu Dawud*)
- The Prophet, during his night prayer, used to say, "O God! I bear witness that all human beings are brothers". (*An-Nasai*) □



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FROM THE SPIRITUAL TREE

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



THE TEACHER TREE

THE tree beside my house is my teacher, although a silent one. The previous summer, this tree, like many other trees, shed its green leaves. Gradually, it became just like dry wood.

I was doubtful whether it would ever again turn green. But in the spring, the whole scenario changed. My teacher tree again became a tree with lush green foliage. The rebirth of this tree was a great spiritual lesson. My teacher tree turned into a spiritual speaking tree. It gave me a significant message: 'Don't be hopeless in any situation. After every dry season, there is a good harvest. After every spell of hopelessness, there is new hope, and after every failure, there is a great success. After every dark night, there is a bright morning'.

My spiritual tree never left its allotted space. Neither did it ever protest against anyone; it never demanded that others find its new, living leaves. It remained at the same place and started a new process within itself. What was this process? The process was to get its food from below as well as from sunlight. The strategy worked. The whole of nature came to its aid and after some months, it gained its lost greenery once again. This is the lesson I learned from my spiritual tree.

No protest, no complaint, no demand, and no street or stage activism: simply trust your own natural abilities and work silently. Try to reshape your destiny. And very soon you will be glad to discover that you have regained your life.

What is a tree? A tree is an illustration from nature. Nature tells us of its scheme through trees—that after every winter, a new spring will follow.

What is needed is only to discover that you have the power to discover your potential. Discover the opportunities around you and then avail of all these opportunities by silent planning and action.

My spiritual tree creates no noise, no problems; it creates no unwanted situations. These are the secrets of a green tree. This is also the secret of human life. Adopt the tree culture and you will be a good member of society, just like a tree which is a good 'member' of the environment.

Moreover, my spiritual tree has never asked me for anything. It has never sent any bills to my office. Yet it gives me pleasant scenery, shade, green branches, fresh oxygen, flowers, etc. It also provides a perch for chirping birds who with their beautiful songs give me a lot of pleasure.

The culture of my spiritual tree is that it silently gives me a message: 'Adopt my culture and you will become a fitting ornament of the garden of the universe.'

My spiritual tree gives me the best definition of spirituality. Live as a complex-free soul and you will find a complex-free world to live in. Your destiny is in your hands. Never allow others to decide your destiny.

Utilize your opportunities, turn your potential into actuality and soon you will find that you have no complaints to register against others.

Every tree is an embodiment of spirituality; a silent lexicon. So adopt the tree as your teacher. The tree is a good teacher who is available at all times to every student. The only condition for learning from the tree is the ability to listen to silence. □

***After every dry season, there is a good harvest.
After every spell of hopelessness, there is new hope, and after every failure, there is a great success. After every dark night, there is a bright morning.***



TWO PICTURES

Return to Islam

A CERTAIN Jew lived near Shaykh Bayazid Bastami, the great Sufi saint. When this saint passed away, someone asked the Jew if he ever got attracted towards Islam during his interactions with the Sufi saint. The Jew answered; "I saw two Islams, neither of which I liked. On the one hand there was the Islam of Shaykh Bayazid Bastami, which called for extraordinary capacity to follow. Then there was the Islam of most Muslims, which I would be ashamed to make my own".

On closer examination of this opinion of the Jew we can understand that from the point of view of people of other faiths the religion of the Sufi saint appeared to be a life of renunciation, total retreat—from the world and unstinted devotion. Great feats of endurance are its hallmark; nights spent in vigil, days in lengthy recitations; arduous pilgrimages, punctuated by prayer at almost every step; memorized incantations, repeated over and over again, thousands of times.

*Islam is a simple,
natural religion,
possessing a
tremendous inherent
appeal to human
nature.*

The religion that would be apparent in the rank and file of Muslims in general, on the other hand might be one which appears far from the true Islam as presented by the Prophet. For instance they might talk about faith with great fervour but in action might keep to their self-interests. They might

prostrate before God, but behave arrogantly with people. They might recite the Quran but fail to follow the commandments given in it. They may even resort to violence in the name of Islam. Such actions when witnessed by others make them think, 'is this worth following'?

Islam is a simple, natural religion, possessing a tremendous inherent appeal to human nature. Because of the directness of this appeal, it spread over a large portion of the globe in the first phase of Islam in the time of the Prophet and his Companions. Later, however, contrived, innovatory versions of Islam began to appear, with the result that Islam lost its natural appeal. Islam is a preserved religion. For this to be restored, all artificial veils have to be removed from the face of Islam. Islam has to be presented in its original form, as it is presented in the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet. □

FEED YOUR STARVED INTELLECT

Beat Stress

THE problem of stress is very common. Almost all of us suffer from stress and so we need to find a method for destressing. Experience shows that there is no mechanical technique of destressing. Such a technique could be applied only to a robot, not to a living human being.

The first step is to diagnose the problem of stress. This is the beginning of the process of destressing. Stress is actually a problem of starvation. Just as our body needs food, without which we would go hungry, so also does our intellect need 'food'. When we have a feeling of stress what we are actually experiencing is intellectual or spiritual starvation.

A verse from the Bible which is part of the Lord's Prayer says: "*Give us today our daily bread.*" (Matthew 6: 11)

These words are meant to indicate to us the course we need to take in self-training. It tells us that we need to feed our souls and relieve our spiritual starvation. But this can happen only if we learn how to extract spiritual food from our daily experiences.

In nature, it is the honeybee which demonstrates this method by extracting nectar from flowers and making food from it for itself. Similarly, there is spiritual nectar for a person in every experience that one faces. This nectar has to be extracted on a daily basis from the experiences that we have. If we fail to do so, we shall suffer from spiritual starvation.

For example, while at work in your office, you may feel that you are being discriminated against. If you reflect on the matter, you will find that what you faced was not a result of the discrimination-factor, but of the quality-of-work-factor. That is, the reason was not discrimination but was rather your own deficiency in whatever qualities were required in your office. Discovering this is like extracting nectar. Once you have extracted this 'nectar' you will find positive lines on which to think. You will focus on improving the quality of your work and soon see that there will be no more 'discrimination'.

When we have a feeling of stress what we are actually experiencing is intellectual or spiritual starvation. Discover the art of feeding the intellect and you will never complain of stress.

People generally live in a self-centred world. They know about themselves, but remain unaware about others. Therefore every person tends to overestimate himself while underestimating others. This disparity in thinking results in stress. If you are able to eliminate this disparity and adopt a realistic approach, you will certainly be able to lead a stress-free life.

Every person tends to overestimate himself while underestimating others. This disparity in thinking results in stress. Adopt a realistic approach and you will be able to lead a stress-free life.

Stress is often due to recalling past failures and/or worrying about the future. A simple solution to the mental anguish caused by past failures is to forget them; similarly, a simple solution for worrying about the future is that you should think about the problem only if it becomes a reality rather than worry in advance. Frequently what one worries about does not become reality, so there is no need to worry about it beforehand.

There was a student who was so worried about the results of his exam that he fell sick and had to be hospitalized. But when the results came out, he had passed the exam with good marks. In this experience, there was nectar for the student—that is, he should have waited for the result rather than become worried in advance.

Stress may be equated with intellectual starvation. If you discover the art of feeding the intellect, you will never complain of stress. □



**Faith doesn't
make life easy.
It makes life**

possible.

Re-engineering Minds Towards Peace

The Way to Peace

CPS explains in all its activities that the practical way is to establish peace for its own sake, without linking it to justice and other conditions. As such peace is not desirable for the sake of justice. It is desirable to establish normalcy. When normalcy is established it opens all doors to opportunities, the peaceful availing of which leads to development, obtaining justice and all constructive initiatives. The formula for peace and development is:

**Ignore the problems,
and avail the opportunities.**

Peace Foundation Activities

The foundation is using all peaceful means to undertake the following activities:

1. CPS Programme to re-engineer minds towards peace.
2. Culture of Peace Programme to transform minds towards peace by ignoring the problems and availing the opportunities.
3. Countering Extremism to make stakeholders understand the issue of extremism and counter it.



4. Islam and Peace Programme to deradicalize extremist mindsets on Islamic lines.
5. Conflict Resolution and Peace-Building by using the non-confrontational approach.

The Need

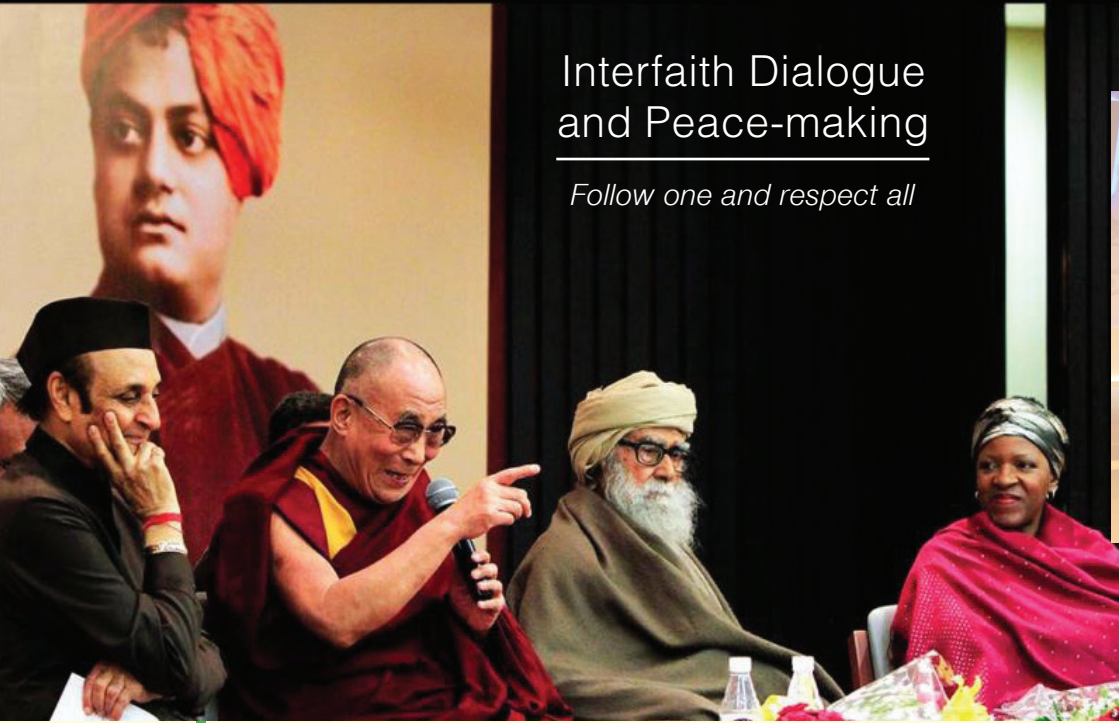
In a world of pluralistic societies with conflicts, confrontation, extremism, civil and global wars, there is a need to offer practical solutions for peace. Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Peace Foundation has been established under the aegis of CPS International to fulfill this need by offering solutions like countering extremism, peace-making, peace-building and re-engineering minds towards a culture of peace.



CPS Outreach at the New Delhi Peace Centre

Interfaith Dialogue and Peace-making

Follow one and respect all



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan in dialogue with leaders of communities.

AT the foundation we believe that peace in pluralistic societies can be maintained through interpersonal, interfaith, intercommunity and international dialogue. Such dialogue aims at learning from each other and arriving at mutual solutions to usher in a culture of peace. The foundation explains that 'differences' are a natural part of all aspects of life, including religion. Using the formula: 'follow one and respect all'

the Ambassadors of Peace (AoPs) at the foundation and the Peace centres globally undertake interfaith efforts to promote harmony, mutual learning and peace-making.

The Maulana and the foundation members are regular invitees to interfaith, peace and spiritual gatherings in which they spread the message of peace.

Awards and Recognition



In 2015, under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan the Maulana was awarded the Sayyidina Imam Al Hassan Ibn Ali Peace Award by the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies at Abu Dhabi in the presence of 350 Islamic Scholars and faith leaders.

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan has been nationally and internationally recognized for his contribution to world peace, having received, among others, the Demiurgus Peace International Award by the Nuclear Disarmament Forum AG; and the title of 'Ambassador of Peace' by the International Federation for World Peace, Korea. The Maulana was awarded the Sayyidina Imam Al Hassan Ibn Ali Peace Award by the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies at Abu Dhabi under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan. He has also received the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA).

On national front the Maulana has been awarded the Padma Bhushan,

the Rajiv Gandhi National Sadbhavana Award, the National Integration Award, the Communal Harmony Award, the Diwaliben Mohan Lal Mehta Award, the National Amity Award, the Dilli Gaurav Award, the FIE Foundation Award, the Urdu Academy Award, the Aruna Asaf Ali Sadbhavana Award and the National Citizen's Award presented by Mother Teresa.

He is considered as one of the most influential scholars according to the book, *The 500 Most Influential Muslims of 2017*, published by Georgetown University, Washington DC. Called "Islam's Spiritual Ambassador to the World", his approach, the book points out, is "popular among Indians, both Muslim and people of other faiths."

CPS Global Network



The foundation has a global presence. The **CPS Global Network** is being developed to act as a hub for networking through the New Delhi Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Peace Centre and Quran Foundation Centre with Peace Centres, institutes and partners worldwide to spread the message of peace. It will, further network with the Ambassadors of Peace globally through personal and e-Interactions, interfaith programmes, CPS programmes, CPS outreach, academic programmes, educational programmes and more...

EUROPE

Albania
Andorra
Austria
Belarus
Belgium
Bosnia
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Faroe Islands
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Gibraltar
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Iceland
Ireland
Isle of Man
Italy
Jersey
Kosovo
Latvia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Macedonia
Malta
Moldova
Monaco
Montenegro
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
San Marino
Serbia
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Ukraine
United Kingdom

MIDDLE EAST

Bahrain
Iran
Iraq
Jordan
Kuwait
Lebanon
Oman
Palestine
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Syria
Turkey
U.A.E.
Yemen

ASIA

Afghanistan
Armenia
Azerbaijan
Bangladesh
Bhutan
British Indian Ocean
Brunei
Cambodia
China
Christmas
Cocos
East Timor
Hong Kong
India
Indonesia
Japan
Kazakistan
Kyrgyzstan
Laos
Macau
Malaysia
Maldives
Mongolia
Myanmar
Nepal
North Korea
Pakistan
Philippines
Russia
Singapore
South Korea
Sri Lanka
Taiwan
Tajikistan
Thailand
Turkmenistan
Uzbekistan
Vietnam

AFRICA

Algeria
Angola
Benin
Botswana
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cameroon
Cape Verde
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros
Congo
Djibouti
Egypt
Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Gabon
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Ivory Coast
Kenya
Lesotho
Liberia
Libya
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Mauritania
Mauritius
Mayotte
Morocco
Mozambique
Namibia
Niger
Nigeria
Réunion
Rwanda
Saint Helena
Sao Tome and Principe
Senegal
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Somalia
South Africa
Sudan
Swaziland
Tanzania
Togo
Tunisia
Uganda
Western Sahara
Zambia
Zimbabwe

OCEANIA

Australia
Fiji
Nauru
New Caledonia
New Zealand
Niue
Norfolk Island
Northern Mariana
Palau
Palmira Atoll
Papua New Guinea
Pitcairn Islands
Samoa
Solomon Islands
Tokelau
Tonga
Tuvalu
Vanuatu
Wake Island
Wallis and Futuna

ANTARTICA

Bouvet Island
French Southern Territories
Heard Island
McDonald Islands
South Georgia
South Sandwich Island

Ambassadors of Peace Training



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan training Ambassadors of Peace.

The Ambassadors of Peace Training are facilitated at the New Delhi Foundation. It prepares Ambassadors of Peace (AoPs) as peace activists to organize the activities of the New Delhi Centre, Peace Centre, partner institutes and organizations as well as setting up new Peace Centres globally. The Programmes trains Ambassadors of Peace in:

- The ideology of life.
- The ideology of peace.
- The principles of peace.
- Peace activism.
- Interfaith dialogue for mutual learning and peace-making.
- Culture of peace.
- Countering extremism.
- Islamic ideology of peace.
- Conducting the activities of the Peace Centres.
- Setting up new Peace Centres.

Training through the Foundation Material

The Maulana says that this is a 'literature-based' movement. He has prepared more than 200 books and thousands of articles, videos, audios and online material explaining the ideology of peace based on the creation plan of God. This material has been used to transform the mindsets of thousands of people to make them Ambassadors of Peace. This group of people under the guidance of the Maulana are now training new Ambassadors of Peace through the Foundation material and the weekly training sessions with Maulana Wahiduddin Khan.



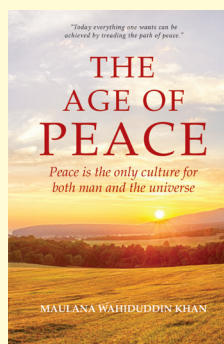
Monthly Spirit of Islam Magazine



Translation of the Quran



Online material of the Foundation



Peace material of the Foundation

The Ambassadors of Peace are trained through the material of the Foundation and the Weekly Sessions with Maulana Wahiduddin Khan.

Join Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Peace Foundation Project

Laying the foundation for global peace is a gigantic task. Presently the Ambassadors of Peace (AoPs) are volunteering and donating for the cause. To make peace a reality requires the support of many more peace activists. We invite you to join *Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Peace Foundation Project* by supporting:

Project 1. Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Peace Centre, New Delhi that is acting as a hub for networking for peace. You can donate and volunteer for the Centre.

Project 2. CPS Multimedia by supporting the development and publishing of print content like books, course material, e-books, audios and videos, apps, websites and social networking to spread the message of peace.

Project 3. CPS Programme by donating for/participating in the CPS Programme.

Project 4. CPS Academic Programme–Education by donating for programmes and running the courses in your institute or area.

Project 5. CPS Academic Programme–Research by facilitating and sponsoring academic researches and partnering with the Centre.

Project 6. Ambassadors of Peace Training by supporting the training of the Ambassadors of Peace and helping them set up Peace Centres globally.

Project 7. CPS Global Network by donating for the Centre's development and infrastructure and/or sponsoring peace material for free distribution.

The vision of the foundation is to introduce the message of peace into each and every home in the world to usher in an era of global peace and unity.

To partner with us contact:



**MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN
PEACE FOUNDATION**
RE-ENGINEERING MINDS TOWARDS PEACE

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www.cpsinternational.info | www.cpsglobal.org | www.facebook.com/maulanawkhan/

MAN'S FLIGHT

Every Dome Has a Grave

HOW grand and imposing the dome appeared from afar. Less so when the great edifice was entered and there appeared, lying as low as low could be, a solitary grave. What a contrast between that mighty dome—a symbol of human greatness and that lowly grave—testimony to man's utter helplessness. The two constructions presented a picture of the startling and agonizing discrepancy between what man seeks in this world, and what actually comes his way.

He seeks to consolidate his own position on earth, to establish his own greatness; but the most that he achieves in the end is a dome, concealing one devastated and done away with by death.

Man seeks to take his fill of worldly pleasures, but it is a mouthful of earth that is his final portion. He seeks to devour everything in sight upon this earth, only to be himself devoured by this very earth.

When he speaks, he seems to be defying God, but he cannot truly defy God, for God hears all that he says. By his own actions, he sets himself on an infernal course. If only he realized the consequences of his deeds! If only he saw the folly of condemning himself to a fate that he does not have the strength to bear.

So, clear is the picture of truth that appears before man on this earth, that one would not expect him to deny it; yet he does so. Wilfully and scornfully, he casts truth to one side, putting his own interests first. Sometimes his own faults loom before him, clear as the midday sun, yet he does not acknowledge them. Sometimes his attention is drawn to some home truth. Despite having no reasonable argument with which to defend himself, he finds words with which to cast blame on his admonisher.

What a strong stand he takes against oppression, but it is oppression perpetrated by others that he objects to, not to that of which he himself is guilty. Blissfully oblivious to his own corruption, he is quick to expose corruption, and take a stand against it, when he views others as corrupt. When it comes to fulfilling the rights of others, he is negligent

The two constructions—dome and grave—presented a picture of the startling and agonizing discrepancy between what man seeks in this world, and what actually comes his way.

Man seeks to take his fill of worldly pleasures, but it is a mouthful of earth that is his final portion.

in the extreme. He is quick, though, to take up the cause of those who have been denied their rights by others besides himself.

In order to consolidate his own power, man raises false slogans, not minding if a whole nation has to suffer as a result. He seeks to advance his own interests at the expense of others, not seeing that in his attempt to trample on the rights of others, he is in fact trampling on truth. He lives in a dream world,

though the only world worth living in is one based on truth and reality. If he were to remember death he would live a good life in preparation to receive the rewards of God in the eternal life of the Hereafter. □



*If you try to reckon up
God's favours,
you will not be able
to count them.*

The Quran 14:34

ISLAMIC VIRTUES

Model Character

FOR centuries the lives of the Prophet and his Companions have served as models of a truly God-fearing existence for all humankind, and will continue to do so. Hence God's preservation of this page of history with such exactitude that anyone, who is sincere about learning from their example can know, even today, every detail of how they lived and died. The following are a few examples worth emulating.

Running to Another's Assistance is a Great Religious Duty

Abdullah ibn Abbas, a Companion of the Prophet was in retreat in the Prophet's mosque in Madinah, when a man, who was in trouble, came and sat beside him. When Abdullah ibn Abbas asked him what the matter was, he said "I owe a man some money, and I am unable to pay him back." "Shall I speak to your creditor on your behalf?" asked Abdullah ibn Abbas. The man approved of this suggestion, and he at once set off. "Perhaps you have forgotten you are in retreat," the man called after him. "No, I have not forgotten," replied ibn Abbas, "but I have heard the Prophet say that running to the assistance of one's brother and doing one's utmost to help him is better than remaining twenty years in retreat."

Deceivers are Not True Believers

Passing through the marketplace, the Prophet noticed a man selling from a heap of grain. The Prophet ran his fingers through the grain whereupon his fingers became wet. "How is it that this grain is wet?" he asked the owner, who said that it was because of the rain. "Then why not put the wet portion on top, so that people can see it," said the Prophet, adding; "Those who deceive others do not belong with us".

For centuries the lives of the Prophet and his Companions have served as models of a truly God-fearing existence for all humankind, and will continue to do so.

Not Indulging in Vain Talk, or Wishing Anyone Ill

When people came to visit Abu Dujanah a Companion of the Prophet as he lay on his death bed, and saw that despite his sickness, his face was shining, they asked him how it was that his face was so radiant. Abu Dujanah replied: "I place reliance on two things more than on any

others. For one, I did not indulge in vain talk; for another my heart was free from ill-feeling towards others.

The Polite Way of Seeking Permission to Enter a House

Safiyah the wife of the Prophet relates how she was with the Prophet one day when Ali a Companion of the Prophet came and asked if he might enter his house. He knocked very quietly at the door and the Prophet asked for the door to be opened to him. On another occasion Saad ibn Ubadah, a Companion of the Prophet came to see the Prophet, and after asking permission to enter, he stood in front of the door so that he could see right inside. The Prophet signed to him to stand to one side, then, after a suitable interval, invited him to come in. "The actual reason for asking permission to enter is to avoid seeing inside the house," said the Prophet. □



LIVING IN A PROFESSIONAL WORLD

Reset Your Priorities

WE are living in a world of profession. In the present world, it is one's profession that defines one's identity. The profession-oriented life is the generally accepted lifestyle of every person.

Having a profession means living according to the dictates of the 'money market'. And everyone tries to develop a professional skill that enables them to be a sharing partner in the flow of money in the market.

This culture has resulted in a new phenomenon that was absent in former times, i.e., living in accordance with external requirements and setting aside internal requirements, that is, what is required by one's inner nature. The result is that while everyone is a developed personality in terms of his profession, in terms of his own nature, everyone is an underdeveloped personality.

Talk to anyone at random and ask him about his profession he will readily give you specific answers. If you speak to him about his professional subject, he will give you a detailed answer for every question. But, if you ask him about those issues, which pertain to human life that is, non-professional issues, you will find that he is not mentally prepared to discuss this subject.

Upon enquiry with a lady from Europe in a meeting about her profession it unravelled that she was well-disposed in sharing information about her professional field. But, in her personal life she was unhappy with her spouse and said that she had decided to separate from him. The main reason she cited was that her husband was an adamant person and she did not like this. She knew the

science of her profession but was quite ignorant of the science of life.

This is true of every person. Each one is living in a culture of duality. When it comes to their profession, everyone is well-equipped. But, as far as the science of life is concerned, everyone is ill-equipped. This is so common that finding an exception is very difficult.

It is not a question of balance, it is a question of priority. Everyone should set or reset their priorities right. The problem with this is when

We are living in a culture of duality. When it comes to their profession, everyone is well-equipped. But, as far as the science of life is concerned, everyone is ill-equipped.

you try to reset your priorities, you fear that you are going to damage your commercial interests, because when your mind is engaged in intellectual issues, it will not be able to engage in money-related issues. You gain one thing, but at the same time you lose another. But, this is not a genuine excuse. You should think in terms of intellectual development and not just in terms of material development. Intellectual development is so important that no excuse for neglecting it is acceptable. Adopt a simple formula: make intellectual development your first priority and then try to manage all other aspects of your life.

Make intellectual development your first priority and then try to manage all other aspects of your life.

A lack of intellectual development is not a simple matter. It is the lack of intellectual development which has resulted in all those problems that are common in our present age, for example, tension, unnecessary lifestyle diseases, lack of peace of mind and losing that very thing that man so desperately wants—happiness. □



We are grateful to the following for their efficient and sincere assistance in developing, designing, printing and publishing of our magazine *Spirit of Islam*. They go that extra mile to help us in our endeavour.

1. Raghavan Gopal - Cosmos Printers & Publishers—Printing
2. Mathews Chornewkar - Mascot Creative Designers for—Designing the Magazine
3. Sujith Krishnaiah & Team—At Designs-Developing, managing websites and digital promotion.

May God bless them with the best always.

FROM DENIAL TO BELIEF

Faith and Reason

PROFESSOR CHANDRA WICKRAMASINGHE is a Sri Lankan-born British scientist, mathematician, astronomer and astrobiologist. He headed the department of Applied Mathematics and Astronomy at University College, Cardiff, in Wales until his retirement in 2006. He has been conducting research into the origin of life since 1962 in the company of eminent English scientist, Professor Sir Fred Hoyle. The results of their research have been published in the form of a book entitled, *Evolution from Space*, (J.M. Dent, London, 1981)

When the two scientists commenced their research they both agreed on one point: that the notion of a Creator is inconsistent with science. But they were so shocked by the final result of their research that they had to revise their thinking. "From my earliest training as a scientist," Wickramasinghe says, "I was very strongly brainwashed to believe that science cannot be consistent with any kind of deliberate creation. That notion has had to be very painfully shed. I am quite uncomfortable in the situation—the state of mind I now find myself in. But there is no logical way out of it."

Both scientists made separate calculations into the mathematical chances of life having begun on earth spontaneously. Independently, they both arrived at the same conclusion: that the odds against life having begun accidentally on earth were staggering in mathematical jargon 10 to the power of 40,000. Add 40,000 noughts to the figure 1 and you have the figure. "That number is such an imponderable in the universe that I am 100 percent certain that life could not have started spontaneously on Earth," says Wickramasinghe.

As they write in their book: "Once we saw that the probability of life originating at random is so utterly miniscule as to make it absurd, it became sensible to think that the properties of physics on which life depends are in every respect deliberate."

"Sir Fred Hoyle was tending much more than I towards the higher intelligence Creator," Wickramasinghe explains. "I used to argue against it, but I found myself losing every argument. At the moment I can't

New evidence has again and again come to light, which makes belief in God a scientifically credible concept, rather than just a personally desirable creed.

find any rational argument to knock down the view, which argues for conversion to God. If I could have found an argument—even a flimsy one—I would not have been a party to what we wrote in the book. We used to have open minds; now we realize that the only logical answer to life is creation, and not accidental shuffling. I still hope that one day I may go back to favour a purely mechanistic explanation—I say 'hope', because I still cannot come to terms with my conversion."

"My being a Buddhist—albeit not an ardent one—was never a problem, because it is an atheistic religion which does not profess to know anything about creation and does not have a creator built into it. But I now find myself driven to this position by logic. There is no other way in which we can understand the precise ordering of the chemicals of the universe except to invoke creation on a cosmic scale."

Until recently, belief in God was considered to be just a personal creed, not backed up by rational thought. In recent decades, however, this situation has changed. New evidence has again and again come to light, which makes belief in God a scientifically credible concept, rather than just a personally desirable creed.

Science impresses on man the abstract reality of God's existence, but if there is a God, what should man's relationship with Him be? Science does not, and cannot, answer this question. This is a question that can only be answered by religion.

Basically every religion answers this question. We present here the concept from the Islamic perspective. The highlighting points being God being one who is the Creator, Sustainer of the entire Universe. A study of the cosmos shows that it operates in unity and harmony which corroborates His Oneness.

A further in depth study of Islam will present before the reader the creation plan of God for the humankind which is in accordance to the law of nature. Further the study will give a clear picture of the exact relationship of man with God. □



DELUSIVE GRANDEUR

Don't be Fooled

MAN is free in this world. God has not placed any curbs on him. But this freedom is for the purpose of putting man to the test, and is not meant to encourage him to lead a life of permissiveness and then just pass away one day. Rather its purpose is that man should lead a morally upright life of his own free will, thus demonstrating that he is of a high moral character.

One who conducts himself in this manner should be reckoned as God's special servant. One who, without any apparent compulsion, chose to be a man of principle; who, without being subjected to any external force, did of his own free will, what his Lord would have desired. This liberty accorded to man gives him the opportunity to gain credit for being the most superior of all God's creatures.

All the things in this world are God's subjects. The stars and satellites rotate in space entirely at their Lord's bidding. Trees, rivers, mountains, and all other such natural phenomena function according to the unchangeable laws of God laid down by Him in advance. Similarly, the animals follow exactly those instincts instilled in their species as a matter of Divine Will. Man is the only creature who has been given, exceptionally, the gift of power and freedom.

Man is free in this world. God has not placed any curbs on him. But this freedom is for the purpose of putting man to the test.

This freedom has opened doors of two kinds for man, one leading to success and the other to failure. If, on receiving freedom an individual becomes arrogant and insolent, it will mean that he has failed the test.

People usually take worldly success to be an indication of success in the life to come. But they are mistaken in this, for success in this life has nothing to do with eternal success.

Worldly grandeur is no true grandeur at all. Whatever the conditions of human existence, all men are the same in that they are being tested. A person's position on earth is not an indication of success or failure.

When one is raised in stature or in some way honoured in this world, one would be mistaken if one were then to look down on others, for all are equal in the face of death. Death puts the whole human race on

one level. Great are those whom God sees fit to make great, and lowly are those who are cast down by Him.

People usually take worldly success to be an indication of success in the life to come. But they are mistaken in this, for success in this life has nothing to do with eternal success.

The world being a place of trial, man can pretend to be great, but it will not be long before his real position is exposed. On that day many who have honour in this world will be debased before God; many who claim to be friends of justice and humanity will be exposed as enemies of the very causes they espoused; many who are acclaimed amongst the brave will be condemned as cowards; many who claimed to bow to the truth will be exposed as shams.

On the other hand, those who remain modest and humble, bowing to their Lord's will on all occasions, will have made the right use of their God-given freedom. They will, without any compulsion, have bound themselves by divine principles. Those who choose this course will succeed in the test of freedom. They will be handsomely rewarded by God as no other creature. Held to be the chosen servants of God, they will remain in an everlasting state of blissfulness and blessedness. □



WORKING TOGETHER

Hold No Grudges

*A hundred times have I fought with my beloved;
A hundred times have I befriended her.
She knew nothing of my fighting or of my befriending.*

— A Persian poet

THESE words may seem to belong to the world of poetry, but it also has enormous relevance to the real world. It gives us an insight into the type of people needed to achieve any great purpose in life, i.e., those who possess the quality, mentioned in this verse, of being able to bury within themselves the grudges that they feel towards others.

No great objective can be attained by lone individuals. Several people have to strive together even if the simplest things are to be achieved. But united effort, besides having many advantages, also presents one great problem—the problem of people differing among themselves.

Whenever people work together, it is inevitable that various disagreements and grievances should arise. Sometimes one will receive a smaller share of the credit, while the other receives a larger portion. Some attain to high positions while others have to be satisfied with lower ranks. At times, it is something which has been said which offends another; at others it is some ill-considered action which seems to hurt another's interests. Whatever the bone of contention may be, there are bound to be repeated occasions which lead to resentment. There will always be times when one feels anger, jealousy, vindictiveness and animosity towards some colleague.

There is only one practical solution in such situations. That is, every individual has to turn himself into a self-correcting machine. He must defuse within himself the antipathy which he feels towards another. The grudges which he harbours have to be forgotten. Only then will people be able to work and struggle on together.

This is what Khalid ibn al-Walid did when the Caliph of those days, Umar ibn al-Khattab, removed him from his post as the commander of the Muslim forces in Palestine. At that time, he felt extremely aggrieved. But then he resolved the issue in his mind by thinking that he was in that post for the sake of God and God will reward him abundantly so why should he be angry with Umar. In this way instead of airing his grievances, he settled them within himself. □

A NEW INDIA

Creative Mindset

AFTER 1962, India and China became hostile to each other. But now, the equation between these two enemies has completely changed, albeit without the issuance of any formal communiqué to that effect. Now, in reality, India and China have become business partners, not rivals.

This is on a parallel with the equation between the Muslims and Hindus of India. After partition, Hindus and Muslims in effect became not just each other's rivals but each other's enemies. One sign of this phenomenon was the communal riots that, after partition, were rampant all across India. But now, riots of this kind no longer appear in the headlines of our national dailies. They are no longer a burning issue.

It was the demolition of the Babri Masjid that changed the minds of both communities, leading to the development of a positive relationship between Hindus and Muslims, who had both ultimately come to the

Muslims have emerged as a self-aware community of India, whereas prior to this, they had been lacking in any appropriate sense of their own value to the country.

conclusion that the demolition of the Babri Masjid had actually led to the decimation of the Indian economy. The Hindu community had ultimately to acknowledge that the Muslims, rather than being their rivals, were indeed their customers. And vice versa. After this discovery, the thinking of both Hindus and Muslims underwent a total sea change and they performed a complete about-turn. They started applying to each other that well-known maxim: "The customer is always right." One sign of this change is that the Hindu community has bought up prominent Urdu

newspapers as Muslims bought up certain English newspapers after independence.

After partition, because the Muslim community regarded the Hindus as antagonists and rivals, they allowed their own development in all fields to come to a standstill and, as a community in India, they became directionless. But now, mostly under compulsion, Muslims have performed a U-turn, without any declaration of a specific policy. Indeed, Muslims have accepted Hindus as their brother community rather than as their rivals.

After partition, the Muslim community was driving up a blind alley, as it were. But now, with the complete change in the Muslim attitude, the Muslims are, according to my assessment, a truly fast growing community, in almost all walks of life in modern India, albeit unconsciously, rather than consciously.

History shows that great success is always the outcome of great shock. For Isaac Newton (1642-1727), "*apple shock*" led to a great discovery. That is, the law of gravity. This applies also to the case of the Muslims. The Muslims, by their way of thinking—which was unrelated to hard reality—took the partition of India to be a political shock for their future. But after 1971, everything changed greatly, a new process set in the Indian Muslim community, and now this process has reached its culmination and Muslims have emerged as a self-aware community of India, whereas prior to this, they had been lacking in any appropriate sense of their own value to the country.

One international survey shows that when two communities co-exist in one country—a majority community and a minority community—according to the law of nature, such a situation is bound to be fraught with tension. The pressure arising therefrom is bound to start a natural process by which the minority community, can do no other than enhance its creativity. If, at the outset it was uncreative in character, it will eventually re-build itself as a creative community. This is a law of nature that is bound to come into force, even without any declaration of intention, or obvious planning. This is an ongoing process in India, and according to the law of nature, it is impossible for any group to call a halt to it: it is bound, sooner or later, to come to fruition. The so-called Muslim intelligentsia is still intent upon proclaiming that Muslims are under siege, whereas the reality is totally different—the law of nature inevitably prevails, and certainly, Muslims are no exception to it. □

The so-called Muslim intelligentsia is still intent upon proclaiming that Muslims are under siege, whereas the reality is totally different—Muslims in India have started rebuilding themselves as a creative community.

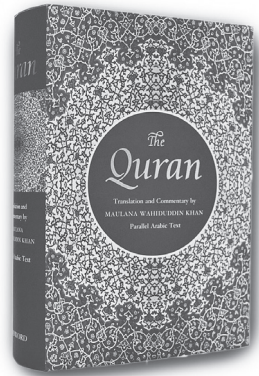


THE WORD OF GOD

From The Scriptures

The Quran is the book of God. It has been preserved in its entirety since its revelation to the Prophet of Islam between 610 and 632 AD. 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



Before you also, the Messengers We sent were but [mortal] men to whom We vouchsafed revelation. Ask the People of the Book, if you do not know. [We sent them] with clear signs and scriptures. We have sent down the Reminder to you, to enable you to make clear to mankind what has been sent down to them, so that they may reflect upon it. (16: 43-44)

The People of the Book' (*ahl az-zikr*), refers to those who have a knowledge of historical facts relating to past peoples and past prophets. What had to be ascertained from them was not about truth or untruth: they were to be asked about whether the prophets appearing in past ages were human beings or not. The fact that the Prophet Muhammad was a human being was treated by the people of Makkah as evidence of his not being the Prophet of God. They were told to ascertain from the communities among whom prophets had been appearing (just as in the case of the Jews) whether the prophets who appeared among them were human beings or angels.

A prophet appears for the purpose of 'reminding'. This reminding is, in fact, done with the help of arguments. However, it is also necessary for the preacher to prove himself to be absolutely serious in this regard. If a man makes people aware of Heaven and Hell, but at the same time engages in such activities as prove him to be flippant about Heaven and Hell, his *dawah* efforts will become ridiculous in the eyes of the people.

However, even if the call of the preacher is of a high standard and is presented in a perfect manner, it will benefit only those who pay

attention to it. Those who do not pay attention can never be benefited by the call of truth.

Do those who devise evil plans feel secure that God will not make them sink into the land, or that a punishment will not come upon them from where they least expect? Or that He will not seize them suddenly in their daily activities and they will not be able to frustrate Him? Or that He will not punish them by giving them a fright? Indeed, your Lord is kind and merciful. (16: 45-47)

This verse pertains to the last stage of the Makkan period when the opponents of the Prophet Muhammad were conspiring to kill him. The Prophet is God's representative on God's earth. Therefore, hatching such a conspiracy against a prophet must necessarily be the handiwork of such persons as are absolutely fearless of God's retribution. The fact is that God is the Possessor of such control over man that He can cause him to be buried deep in the earth if He so desires, or He may wreak vengeance on him at the very place which he considers safe; or God may seize him in the course of his activities and he will not be able to save himself. God may even seize upon him when he is conscious of the risk and fully aware of the situation.

In short, God may seize upon man at any time and in any situation. If He sees people doing mischief, yet lets them go unpunished, they should not become fearless, because His restraint is due to His consideration of 'test' conditions and not to His being powerless.

Have they not observed the things God has created, casting their shadows right and left, prostrating themselves before God in all humility? Everything in the heavens and all the creatures on the earth prostrate themselves before God, as do the angels, and they do not behave proudly: they fear their Lord above them, and do what they are commanded. (16: 48-50)

Man indulges in arrogance in a world where all the things surrounding him are teaching him lessons in obedience. For example, the shadows of material things. The shadow of a thing standing erect falls on the ground. In this way, it symbolizes kneeling down (*sajdah*). It shows symbolically how a man should bow down before his Creator.

Though angels are not visible to man, the running of this immense universe in the most regulated manner proves that the agents appointed by God to run it are extremely powerful. These angels, in spite of being extraordinarily powerful, are totally obedient to God. If they were not

so, the system of the universe would not function continuously with so much precision and uniformity.

In view of this, to be entirely correct in his behaviour, man can do no other than surrender himself to God, do obeisance to Him and become His most obedient subject.

God says, 'Do not take two gods. He is only One God. So fear Me alone.' To Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and on the earth, and obedience is due to Him alone. Will you then fear anyone other than God? (16: 51-52)

God has warned man through His prophets that he should not hold to any god except the one and only God. The God of this universe is only one. Man should fear only Him; he should be obedient to Him alone. If a man fully realizes that it is God who is the sole Creator and Lord of all, and that his life completely depends upon Him, the feeling that develops in him as a result of this realization is fear of God (*taqwa*).

Eternal obedience is the due of God alone in this heaven and earth. Everything here is completely bound by divine law. In such a world, to pray to or to worship or to repose hope in anybody else is absolutely irrational. The present universe is such that it completely rejects ascribing partners to God (*shirk*). □



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ASK MAULANA

Your Questions Answered

What is the role of a Mosque in Islam?

Mosque or '*Masjid*', literally means a place for self-prostration; that is, a place formally designated for the saying of prayers. According to a teaching of the Prophet, "The mosque is a house of God-fearing people". This means in effect, that it is a centre for the inculcation of reverence, where individuals learn what is meant by piety and are thus prepared for a life of devotion to the Almighty.

The *Masjid* is built so that people may visit it to read the Book of God, to remember their Creator, silently and in prayer, and to hear His commandments on how they should lead their lives, that is, how to conduct themselves according to His will.

The most important of all these activities is the saying of prayers, a ritual to be carried out five times a day as prescribed by Islam. The mosque, initially intended as a place of worship, has come to be built to serve other related purposes, such as housing a seminary, library, lecture hall, guest house, dispensary etc. The Prophet advised the building of mosques in a simple style, so that there should be no dissipation or dilution of the true religious and spiritual atmosphere.

What is the meaning of Azaan which we hear from the Mosque five times a day?

Azaan is the call for prayer which is used to notify the Muslims about the prayer times of the five compulsory prayers which are supposed to be observed by Muslims daily.

Following are the words of the *Azaan* in Arabic with their translation:

Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar

God is Great, God is Great, God is Great, God is Great

Aashhadu Allaa ilaaha Illal-Laah, Aashhadu Allaa ilaaha Illal-Laah,

I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, I bear witness that there is no god except Allah

Aashhadu Aanna Muhammadur Rasoolul-lah, Aashhadu Aanna Muhammadur Rasoolul-lah

I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah

Haiyya Alas-salah, Haiyya Alas-salah

Come towards Prayer, Come towards Prayer

Haiya Alal-falah, Haiya Alal-falah

Come towards Success, Come towards Success

Assalaatu Khayrum Minan Naum, Assalaatu Khayrum Minan Naum [only said during dawn prayer]

Prayer is better than sleep, Prayer is better than sleep

Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar

God is Great, God is Great

La ilaaha Illal-Laah

There is no deity but God.

When and why was this method of calling for prayer established?

In Makkah, the number of Muslims was small. They could gather for prayers without any call. When Prophet Muhammad arrived in Madinah, the number of Muslims started to increase. Prophet Muhammad built *Masjid Al-Nabawi* to offer *Salah* regularly. By the second year of Hijrath, (migration) the number of Muslims had increased. The people announced the call to prayer in a loud voice so that those who heard this call came to join the *Salah*. Muslims felt the need to find a way to inform people to come to the *Salah*. Prophet Muhammad asked his Companions for their advice.

Some of the Companions suggested that the Muslims, should blow a horn to announce the time for the *Salah*. Others said, the Muslims might ring bells. A few proposed that the Muslims, kindle a fire to call people to pray. Prophet Muhammad wasn't satisfied with any of these ideas. He waited to hear a better idea or to receive guidance from God.

One day, a Companion, Abdullah ibn Zaid came to Prophet Muhammad and said, "O Messenger of Allah! I had a beautiful dream last night."

"What was the dream you saw", Prophet Muhammad asked Zaid.

Zaid answered, "I've seen that a man wearing green garment taught me the words of the *Azaan* and advised me to call people to prayer with these words." He then recited the words of the *Azaan*.

The words were beautiful and full of meaning. Prophet Muhammad recognized that the dream of Zaid was true. He asked Zaid to teach the words of *Azaan* to Bilal, another Companion of the Prophet.

Bilal stood up and called the *Azaan*. The voice of Bilal resounded throughout the Madinah. People came running to *Masjid Al-Nabawi*. Umar ibn khattab was one of the persons who came and said: "O Messenger of God, an Angel taught me the same words in my dream last night." And Prophet Muhammad accepted this *Azaan* as the official call to prayers. □



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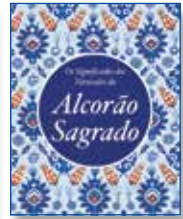
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