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SPIRIT OF ISLAM

THE HUDAIBIYA METHOD
Secret of Supreme Success

LIVING IN THE PAST
Psychological Suicide

ON MARRIAGE
Intellectual Partnership

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Towards Spiritual Living

SPIRIT OF ISLAM

ISSUE 8, AUGUST 2013

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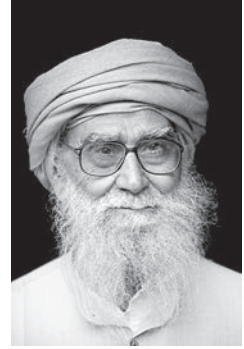
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FROM MAULANA'S DESK

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, born in 1925, in Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh, is an Islamic spiritual scholar who is well-versed in both classical Islamic learning and modern disciplines. The mission of his life has been the establishment of worldwide peace. He has received the Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian honour in India, and the Demiurgus Peace International Award. He has been called 'Islam's spiritual ambassador to the world' and is recognised as one of its most influential Muslims'. 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.



ISLAM AND HINDUISM

ISLAM and Hinduism both representing two great traditions, have coexisted for more than one thousand years. It is very important to understand the relationship between these two religions.

There are two divergent views on the subject of this relationship. One view is that both traditions are very similar to each other. I once happened to meet a Hindu scholar who with great enthusiasm said, "I don't find any difference between the two religions. When I read the Quran, I feel that I am reading the Gita and when I read the Gita, I feel I am reading the Quran." This is, however, an oversimplification of this issue. I don't think that this notion will pass academic scrutiny.

The second view is that Islam and Hinduism are both very different from each other and that their only meeting point is (heated) debates. This view was particularly widespread during the British rule in India and reached its zenith at that time.

It would be more intellectually and academically productive to assess the merits of the two religions in the context of intellectual development. Such development can come about only as a result of social interaction and intellectual exchange.

To illustrate this point, let me cite some historical examples.

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

Jawaharlal Nehru, in his famous work, *The Discovery of India* observed that when the Arabs came to India, they brought with them a brilliant culture. History testifies to this statement.

The Arabs came to India in the 7th and 8th centuries. At that time India was dominated by superstition. Most Indians worshipped nature. It was their belief that everything, from stars to planets, rivers and trees, was divine in nature.

According to Islamic belief, God is the creator and the whole of nature is His creation. This ideology was revolutionary at the time. It brought about a change in the Indian mind-set, introducing scientific thinking into Indian society. After the introduction of this ideology, the Indian people tried to explore nature, instead of worshipping it and treating it as divine.

The second impact of the advent of Islam in India was to introduce the concept of universal brotherhood. At the time, Indian society was dominated by the caste system. The Islamic concept of equality changed this system to a great extent. A more detailed understanding of this Islamic contribution can be gotten from Dr. Tara Chand's 1946 book, *The Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*.

We can see from these examples the positive influence and the healthy effect of Islam on Indian society.

Now let us take an example of the contribution of Hinduism to the Muslims of India. Not allowing oneself to be provoked in spite of provocation is a forgotten teaching of Islam. I have found a beautiful illustration of this teaching in the life of Swami Vivekananda, a great soul of India.

One of his friends wanted to put him to the test. So he invited the Swamiji to his home. When the Swamiji reached there he was asked to sit in a room, beside a table on which the sacred books of different religions had been placed, one on top of the other. The Bhagavad Gita, the sacred book of Hinduism, was placed at the bottom. Other religious books were placed above it. The Swamiji's friend asked him what he had to say about it.

This was obviously meant to be humiliating for the Swamiji but instead of being provoked, he simply smiled and said, "The foundation is really

good.” This incident is a beautiful illustration of the fact that if an individual simply refuses to be provoked, he becomes so strong that he can turn any negative situation into a positive one.

Then there is a *Hadith* in Al-Bukhari that tells us the general policy of the Prophet of Islam. Aisha, the Prophet’s wife says, “Whenever the Prophet faced any such situation and he had to choose between two courses of action, he always opted for the easier course, rather than the harder one.”

A successful example of adherence to this principle can be seen in the life of Mahatma Gandhi. In the pre-1947 period, India was struggling for her freedom from British rule. At the time, there were two options available to Indian leaders—violent activism and peaceful protest. Gandhi avoided violent confrontation with the British regime and opted to protest peacefully. He was able to achieve great success without any bloodshed.

This example set by Mahatma Gandhi is a very good illustration of Islamic principles.

In my experience, differences in religion are not an evil but a blessing. We require only an acceptance of these differences with a positive mind, so that we can learn from each other and live as partners, rather than as rivals. Life is all about cooperation and coexistence, and the relationship between different religions must be based on the acceptance of this principle. □

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan
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Healthy Society

*It is only when the individual is willing to step down
in favour of higher principles that society as a whole can benefit.
The sacrifice of the individual is the price to be paid
for the glory of the nation.*

IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

The account of the creation of the first man—Adam—is related in the Quran. In this connection the Quran says:

When your Lord said to the angels,

'I will create a successor on earth', they said,
'Will You place someone there who will
cause corruption on it and shed blood,
while we glorify You with Your praise
and extol Your Holiness?'

[God] answered,

'Surely, I know that which you do not know.'

He taught Adam all the names,
then He set them before the angels and said,
'Tell Me the names of these, if what you say be true.'

They said, 'Glory be to You; we have no knowledge
except whatever You have taught us.

You are the All Knowing,
the All Wise.' Then He said,

'O Adam, tell them their names.'

When Adam had told them the names,
God said to the angels,

'Did I not say to you: I know the secrets of
the heavens and of the earth,
and I know what you reveal
and what you conceal?'

THE QURAN 2: 30-33

This questioning of God's decision by the angels appears to be dissension. But God did not show any displeasure or anger at this.

Instead, God explained His intention to them after which their objections were all cleared and their doubts were replaced by conviction.

In this way, God by His own example in the beginning of the history

of mankind demonstrated the rules of behaviour for us in the face of differences. If anyone objects or disagrees with any issue then it should not be responded to negatively or with personal attacks; instead, the issue must be clarified and presented in such a way that the entire facts of the matter are clearly available and the truth can be established.

In this way, for all such issues that would appear later amongst mankind, an example was already established via this matter between God and the angels, so that we would be aware of what our practical behaviour should be in such a situation.

In this example there is another lesson for mankind—when an issue has been fully clarified and established, then we must immediately accept it willingly. There are thus, in this dialogue between God and the angels, two important lessons for us—a lesson regarding positive behaviour in the face of dissension or differences and the supreme lesson on the acceptance of the truth once it has been established. □



The End Result

*The perpetrator of violence
invariably suffers from remorse,
while the peacemaker derives
great satisfaction from his efforts.*

*If one were to think of the end result,
one would never indulge in violence*

TEN PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM

THE two basic source books of Islam are the Quran and the *Hadith*. The Quran is believed to be the word of God, and the *Hadith* is the compilation of the sayings of the Prophet of Islam. The Quran contains about 6,500 verses while the *Hadith* contains about 25,000 sayings of the Prophet of Islam. Islamic teachings cover almost all the aspects of human life like belief, worship, morality, spirituality, social structure, etc.

Here are ten references from the Quran and *Hadith* that may be considered universal principles suitable for every man and woman, irrespective of religion and/or culture. They are formulae for life or an art of life management.

Mutual Respect

How to live in a multi-religious society? The Quranic answer to this question is found in this verse: "For you your religion; for me mine." This principle is based on religious tolerance. It may be formulated in a sentence as 'Follow one and respect all.'

Reconciliation and Adjustment

How to behave at the time of conflict? The Quran says, "Reconciliation is the best." It means that at the time of conflict, we have to adopt a conciliatory rather than confrontational course of action.

Peace

The Prophet of Islam said, "God grants to non-violence what He does not grant to violence." In other words, peaceful methods are always far more effective than violent methods.

Practical Wisdom

According to a *Hadith* the general policy of the Prophet of Islam was that whenever the Prophet of Islam had to choose between two options he always chose the easier option rather than the harder one. This was the general policy of Islam in every matter.

Positive Response

A person once came to the Prophet of Islam and asked, "O Prophet,

give me some master advice by which I may be able to manage all the affairs of my life.” The Prophet replied, “Do not be angry.” It means that we must not react with anger even when provoked. Respond positively to negative situations. Always adopt positive thinking.

Modesty

The Prophet of Islam said, “God elevates the modest.” In other words, modesty is the way to high success.

Result-oriented Action

The Prophet of Islam said, “The beauty of a man is to keep himself away from futile activities, which produce no results.” Our actions should be always result-oriented.

Friendly Behaviour

The Prophet of Islam said, “He is not a believer who creates problems for his neighbours.”

Unilateral Good Character

The Quran says: “Good and evil deeds are not equal. Repel evil with what is good, then you will see that one who was once your enemy has become your dearest friend.” Our behaviour in society should not be retaliatory but good under all circumstances.

Universal Brotherhood

The Prophet of Islam said, “I bear witness that all human beings are brothers and sisters to each other.” This concept inculcates the feeling of universal brotherhood in all of us, and it is on this basis that a better society can be formed. □



Not a Passive Attitude

Patience is not inaction. Patience is the virtue needed for systematic, planned action.

MODERN ATHEISM: AN ANALYSIS

IDEOLOGICALLY, human history can be divided into two major phases—before the development of modern science and since the development of modern science. In the former, religion was the primary arbiter for most of humankind, but after the emergence of modern science this situation has completely changed.

Now it is science—without itself being either for or against religion—that has acquired the position of arbiter. Despite the unbiased role of science, due to various reasons, an atheistic ideology has come to dominate all intellectual disciplines. How did this happen? We present here a review of this situation.

Man, who has inhabited this planet for thousands of years, sees things such as the rising sun, the falling rain, and the blowing winds etc. on a daily basis. Traditionally, most humans believed that some divinity was instrumental in these happenings. This belief, for them, was certain. They believed it to be the established truth.

**It was atheist thinkers rather than scientists who,
by hijacking the concept of causation,
equated it to the denial of God.**

After the emergence of modern science, however, it was learnt that apparently there existed a material cause behind all happenings. For instance, in the apocryphal story of Isaac Newton (b. 1642) sitting in his garden, an apple fell from a tree. Newton began thinking about why the apple had fallen and after giving the matter deep thought succeeded in deducing the Law of Gravity. It was because of gravity that things fell downwards.

Scientific study has made great progress. Finally, scientists discovered that all the events happening in this world invariably have a cause. They thus formulated the principle of causation. This thinking—that all happenings were the result of some cause—continued to grow until it finally dominated all scientific and academic human activities. Prior to this, happenings had been explained with reference to God: now references to God were replaced with the reference to cause.

This scientific discovery initially had a purely physical meaning, and although natural phenomena were now explained with reference to cause instead of God, this did not amount to a denial of God. It was atheist thinkers rather than scientists who, by hijacking this concept of causation, equated this to the denial of God. From this point onwards, modern atheism began to hold sway.

By laying much emphasis on this scientific discovery, modern atheists sought to convince people that there was no longer any need to make any reference to God for an explanation of events. For if events were due to natural causes, they were not due to supernatural causes.

**If events were due to natural causes,
they were not due to supernatural causes.**

We will explain later how there is an irrefutable gap in the logic of this argument. This gap notwithstanding, this theory gained extraordinary popularity among modern scholars. Consciously or unconsciously, they began to regard the concept of cause and effect as a substitute for God. This way of thinking dominated all scientific disciplines. Here are a few examples to illustrate this point.

Materialism

Materialism is a philosophy as well as a culture. Looked at practically, materialism is the notion that there is now no need to wait for the next world where God will bless us with paradise, a world where all desires can be fulfilled, because the 'cause' by which paradise can be built right here on this earth has finally been understood. And this 'cause' is modern technology.

That is why 'paradise' on earth began to be 'constructed' by means of modern technology and modern industry. A whole civilization was brought into being in the name of materialism. Today's man, totally oblivious of God, rushed towards the acquisition of paradise in the concrete forms of modern civilization.

Houses were built and cities developed with the help of modern technology and a modern life style could be seen everywhere. This material paradise in the wake of modern civilization has yet to be completed. But the latest research has proved that it is impossible to build paradise on earth and, moreover, further studies in physical

sciences have shown that the law of entropy applies to our world. That means that in submission to this law, the world is irrevocably moving towards its end: a day will come when it will be extinct.

In the twenty-first century further research has been carried out which demonstrates that this period of the world's demise has come very close. Now it is believed that within fifty years all those resources will be destroyed with the help of which the supposed material paradise was being constructed. In other words, soon those 'causes' will no longer be there, on the basis of which the plans for a material paradise were conceived.

Darwinism or Evolution

For thousands of years man believed that all living species, including man, were created by God—that it was the Lord of the world who brought into existence all the living species by directly creating them. But Charles Darwin (d. 1802) supposedly managed to find a 'cause' here as well. According to him, this cause—'natural selection'—was responsible for bringing into existence all living species. That is, in the biological process, for various physical causes, many living species continued to evolve one from another. That is to say, all living species, including man, were brought into existence by a material cause rather than a non-material God.

Consciously or unconsciously, people began to regard the concept of cause and effect as a substitute for God.

This 'cause' discovered by Darwin has never been scientifically proven. It was only a supposition. Furthermore, even biologists have given it the status of a working hypothesis rather than an established fact. Charles Darwin himself had doubts about this theory in the last stage of his life. That is why he died in a state of frustration.

In spite of this flaw, Darwin's theory found general acceptance in modern academic circles. Even today this unsubstantiated theory is taught in universities all over the world.

Marxism

Another such example is provided by Marxism. Karl Marx (d. 1883) tried to apply this principle to the field of social economy. He independently constructed the theory that the cause of the revolutionary

changes in human society was an automatic process of material action and reaction.

Karl Marx called this 'historical determinism' or 'dialectical materialism'. He pointed out that, as a result of ineluctable factors inherent in society, two classes are produced. For historical reasons, there is a clash between the two classes which leads to the obliteration of one class, and thus one class is replaced by another. In this way, owing to these internal causes, human society continues to make progress.

According to the Law of Entropy, the world is irrevocably moving towards its end.

This 'cause' discovered by Karl Marx and his colleagues proved to be a mere supposition. Marx's predictions were disproved and attempts to translate them into reality in the long run proved abortive. It is common knowledge that a revolution was brought about by the use of force in the Soviet Union in 1917, under the banner of his communist ideology. But after attempts to put this ideology into practice on a large scale, it had to be finally discarded.

For further details, see the book *Marxism, Rejected by History* [Urdu Edition] by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan.

Modern Consumerism

Modern consumerism is another example of this nature. Man has a limitless desire to accumulate goods of all kinds which will bring him comfort and luxury. Industrial progress appeared to make this feasible. It was as if modern industry was the cause which could result in all kinds of instant gratification.

People all over the world then rushed to shopping centres to buy goods only to find that this 'cause' again proved to be a supposition. They did not take into consideration the fact that the production of these goods was never going to bring them paradise, as the preparation of consumer goods came at the cost of making the present world uninhabitable for man. For instance, cars and aeroplanes made travelling very easy, but their functioning resulted—to an unmanageable extent—in the carbon emissions known as greenhouse gases. Scientists the world over have failed to find a solution to this problem. Air-conditioning and the refrigeration of perishable goods have also

contributed to tearing a large hole in the life-giving ozone layer of the upper atmosphere.

This has proved to be an insoluble challenge to all life forms, human and otherwise. This shows that industries have to be pollution free so that consumer goods may be produced in a non-injurious way. But it has proved well-nigh impossible for man to rid industry of its pollutant factors.

Buddhism

Buddhism, which has gained great popularity among the educated classes of the present day, is another such example. The secret of this popularity is the same as that described above under the heading of causation, i.e. Buddhism applied the principle of cause and effect to the phenomenon of life and death. People of the mindset formed under the influence of modern science felt justified in upholding this principle.

All the resources on which a material paradise were conceived will soon be destroyed.

In present times we find that some are born in poverty, others in affluence; some live in difficult circumstances, some have a life of comfort. Buddhism supposedly discovered a cause for this—that everyone was inevitably suffering the consequences of his actions in his previous birth. Because this explanation was apparently based on the principle of 'cause and effect' it appealed greatly to the modern mind. It was as if the non-material God had been replaced with a material cause.

But, according to scientific research, this explanation given by Buddhism was entirely without foundation. Research conducted in the field of psychology has proved that the human memory is an inseparable part of the human personality. This means that when a person is 're-born', thus entering upon a life which he merits exactly in terms of the deeds of his previous lifetime, he must surely retain memories of his previous life. For, according to this theory of reincarnation, re-birth means that it is his previous personality which has reappeared in the form of a new body. But, as we all know, no one remembers what happened during his previous life. If we are to believe the ideology of Buddhism, all

men and women living today, irrespective of the religion or community to which they belong, are purely reincarnations of their previous selves. Yet not one of them remembers his or her previous life.

Individual Hindus, both men and women, have been known—quite unaccountably—to recapitulate the happenings of their previous lifetimes. But this kind of ‘miracle’, with its aura of mystery, cannot serve as an argument.

For, academically, such narrations could be held as sound arguments only if all Hindus and non-Hindus—rather than just a few obscure individuals—remembered the events of their previous lives. It is also believed that when Gautama Buddha went into a *samadhi*, he travelled into his previous lives and saw all his births. But this claim is wholly baseless. It has not been proved on the basis of historical records, that Gautama Buddha ever said anything about this. It is later interpreters who have made this inference.

**The truth is that the ‘cause’ does not explain anything.
The ‘cause’ itself is in need of an explanation.**

The truth is that the principle of causation was based originally on supposition. It was not an academic argument. But from day one people, in their haste, were willing to give credence to a ‘concept’ which was a mere supposition rather than a reality. And indeed, its popularity was due less to its academic weight than to its sentimental value.

In this argument put forward by modern atheists, there was clearly a great logical flaw. It did not take into account the fact that according to science the ‘cause’ of any event was not the final word. Even after that the question remained to be answered: How did the cause come into existence? The truth is that the ‘cause’ does not explain anything. The ‘cause’ itself is in need of an explanation. □

For further details, see the book *God Arises*, by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan.



LIVING IN THE PAST

WHEN you speak to people, you will find that the majority of them live in a negative state of mind, bearing some grudge or the other against someone else. Perhaps it is difficult to find a positive thinker in the complete sense, in today's world.

Negative thinking produces a negative personality, which can lead to psychological suicide. If you scrutinize people, you will find that their grievances are based on some happenings in the past. If anything unpleasant happens in their lives, they continue to mention it to others and perpetuate it in their own memory. This habit is highly destructive and is the greatest cause for the formation of a negative personality.

A wise man is one who deliberately forgets the bitter memories of his past.

Everyone should be made conscious of this so that whenever any unpleasant happenings take place in their lives, they know that they must cast those thoughts into oblivion. They should never mention them to others, but they should try their best to discover some pleasant aspect of these unpleasant experiences and convert whatever is negative in them into something positive, just like a traveller who immediately removes the thorns from his feet when pricked. He does not then make this a part of his living memory.

A wise person is one who deliberately forgets the bitter memories of the past, and who does not let his mind become a jungle of bitter thoughts. There is no other way to lead a successful life in this world. □



Delay, not Defeat

Failure is delay, but not defeat.

THE HUDAYBIYA METHOD

DR. Michael Hart's well-known book, *The 100*, was perhaps first introduced to the Muslim world through our Urdu monthly *Al-Risala* in October 1978. In it, the author selected one hundred of the most distinguished people in history and added accompanying articles about their lives and achievements. He placed the Prophet Muhammad at the top of his list. He wrote that Muhammad was the most supremely successful man in history.

After the publication of this article in *Al-Risala*, we received many letters from Muslims enquiring about a source from where they could order this book. A number of them even inquired whether an Urdu translation was available. On reading their letters, it was obvious that they were interested only in the supremely successful man, rather than in the secret of his supreme success as well.

**Our entire knowledge of human history tells us that
people find it much easier to give up their lives,
than to suspend their egos.**

There is a general tendency on the part of present-day Muslims to continue this sort of hero worship. Present-day Muslims have accorded the Prophet and his companions the status of heroes rather than taking them as examples to be followed in their lives. This is precisely the psychology of those who have failed to achieve anything substantial in their lives. Such people find solace in the glorious description of historical personalities. History is often the refuge of those who have done little themselves worth celebrating.

When the Muslim community is in a vibrant state, the Prophet's life serves as an example to them. The Muslims of today are in a state of stagnation. For them, the Prophet of Islam has become a symbol of pride. And this feeling of pride can be perpetuated only when one's hero is acknowledged as supremely successful. The Quran has presented the Prophet of Islam as an example rather than as a cause for pride, and it has this to say:

You have indeed, in the Prophet of God, a good example.

THE QURAN 33: 21

Present-day Muslims explain it differently, claiming that they have in the Prophet of God a great source of pride.

According to the teachings of the Quran, what is most important for us is to find out the secret of the supreme success of the Prophet of Islam. Only by learning this secret can we take Islam once again to the position of supreme success. When we read the Quran with this question in mind, we first come across Chapter 48 'Al-Fath' (Victory). The first verse of this chapter reads:

We have granted you a clear victory.

THE QURAN 48: 1

What Dr. Hart called supreme success, the Quran calls a clear victory.

How did the Prophet of Islam achieve this supreme success or clear victory? This verse of the Quran tells us that this extraordinary success was achieved through the Hudaybiya Peace Treaty. The Quran tells us that the secret of this success lay in the particular method that was employed—the 'Hudaybiya Method'.

The Prophet of Islam actually returned from Hudaybiya without achieving his objective. So when the chapter 'Victory' was revealed on his way from Hudaybiya to Medina, one of the companions remarked, "This is no victory. We were even stopped from entering the House of God." The Prophet replied, "It is indeed the greatest victory."

Muslims have accorded the Prophet and his companions the status of heroes rather than taking them as examples to be followed in their lives.

Albara ibn Aazib, a companion of the Prophet, said to Muslims of later times, "you regard the conquest of Makkah as a victory, but we (the companions of the Prophet) regard Hudaybiya as the real victory." Ibn Shahaab Zuhri said that the Hudaybiya Agreement has the status of a great victory. (As-Seerat an-Nabawiya, Ibn Kathir, 3/324)

All of these accounts make it clear that the secret of great success achieved by the Prophet and his companions lay in the Hudaybiya Peace Treaty. The 'Hudaybiya Method' is the only way for Muslims to attain supreme success or a great victory.

Let us now consider what the Hdaybiya Method is. This method entailed the greatest of all sacrifices. The Prophet of Islam, along with his companions, decided to make a pilgrimage to Makkah. The Quraysh prevented the Muslims from entering the city, even though they wore the garb of pilgrims and bore no arms. To resolve the tension, the Prophet of Islam agreed to a treaty between the Quraysh and the Muslims that was heavily in favour of the Quraysh. He also agreed to return to Medina without completing the pilgrimage and to make the pilgrimage the next year.

Accepting a clearly unfair treaty was a difficult sacrifice to make, but most of the Prophet's companions returned with him to Medina, on his express insistence. These were the very companions who sacrificed their lives and their wealth during the battles of Badr and Uhud, without hesitation.

The question is what the difference is between the issues at Badr and Uhud, and Hdaybiya. Why did these dedicated companions, who were willing to make sacrifices at Badr and Uhud, find it so difficult to make such sacrifices on the occasion of Hdaybiya?

**Instead of using the Prophet as an example,
Muslims claim the Prophet as a symbol of pride.**

The answer is that during Badr and Uhud, people had to put their lives at stake, whereas at Hdaybiya, they had to sacrifice their prestige and their ego. Our entire knowledge of human history tells us that people find it much easier to give up their lives than to suspend their egos.

This is because people recognize that sacrificing their lives will make them heroes, whereas sacrificing their prestige doesn't seem to get them anything. The achievement of heroism is considered a victory, whereas the loss of it is defeat. Dying for a cause is considered a matter of honour, whereas losing ground or prestige is disgraceful. The sacrifice of life, made to further a cause believed to be just, is an act willingly undertaken, whereas the sacrifice of prestige, appearing to be an act of retreat, is balked at and not willingly undertaken.

It is a matter of axiomatic knowledge that the greater the sacrifice, the greater the success. Since the Prophet and his companions made the greatest of sacrifices, they deserved the greatest of successes.

What was the special power of the Hudaibiya Method that unlocked the doors to a clear victory? The Prophet's march to Makkah eight years after he moved to Medina gives us a clue. When the Prophet had undertaken the journey to Makkah two years earlier, he was accompanied by 1,400 companions. This time, however, he was accompanied by 10,000 companions. On the occasion of his first journey, the Makkans had forced him to return to Medina; they did not allow him to pass beyond Hudaibiya. On the occasion of this second journey, the Makkans were so awestruck upon seeing the huge number of the Prophet's people that they accepted defeat and put up no resistance.

The secret of supreme success, or clear victory, of the Prophet lies in the Hudaibiya Method.

From this incident we learn that the Hudaibiya Method is the pacifist method of conquering people. The military option or the violent method causes death and destruction, while the Hudaibiya Method conquers the hearts of people. What characterizes the method of war is hatred, while what characterizes the Hudaibiya Method is love.

The events of Hudaibiya took place twenty years after the Prophet Muhammad attained prophet hood. Why was there a delay in adopting this method? The companions of the Prophet were told that God could have given them His permission to wage war upon the Quraysh, and that they would have been victorious. However, they were denied this permission on account of the innocent people of Makkah who would have been in danger. The Quran says:

It was they who were bent on denying the truth, and who debarred you from the Sacred Mosque and who prevented your offering from reaching its place of sacrifice. And had it not been for the believing men and believing women [in Makkah] whom you might unwittingly have trampled underfoot, and on whose account you might have, unknowingly, become guilty, [God would have commanded you to fight it out with them; but He ordained it thus] so that He may bring whoever He will into His mercy. If they [the believers] had been clearly separated, We would have punished those who were bent on denying the truth with a painful punishment.

THE QURAN 48: 25

These innocents, potential Muslims, would have been killed along with the Quraysh. Verse 27 says:

God knew what you did not.

THE QURAN 48: 27

In the light of this divine knowledge, this guidance was given to the Muslims on the occasion of Hudaibiya—they had to arrive at a peace agreement, even if they had to accept all the conditions of the Quraysh leaders. This was to give the potential Muslims an opportunity to declare their allegiance to Islam.

What characterizes the method of war is hatred, while what characterizes the Hudaibiya Method is love.

The Arabs were a simple people. Even their polytheistic beliefs were not deep-rooted. This is why, in the early period of Islam, we find innumerable instances where someone comes to the Prophet, asks some simple questions and then, immediately or a short while later, accepts the truth of his message, recites the *kalima* (Islamic creed) and accepts Islam before the Prophet.

For example, Amr ibn Abasa, a companion of the Prophet, came to see the Prophet before he had accepted Islam. He said to the Prophet, “Tell me of what God has told you.” The Prophet gave him the message of monotheism, gentleness, kindness, good character, etc. He immediately said, “O, how good are the things which God has told you” (Hayat as-Sahaba, 1/72), and accepted Islam.

There are many such instances in the books of *Hadith* and *Seerah* (the Prophet’s biography). These show that the perversion in the ancient Arabs was only superficial. Their real personality was unspoilt and they had not lost the ability to recognize the truth.

It was as a result of the simplicity of the ancient Arabs that, except a few tribal leaders, most of the Arabs accepted the Prophet. The denial of the Prophet by the Arabs was mostly based on misunderstanding, rather than on insolence or arrogance. This is proved by a prayer they said before the battle of Badr (THE QURAN 8: 32). We learn from history that the Makkans, before leaving for Badr to wage war against the Prophet and his companions, visited the House of God (the Kabah) and while holding its cloak they prayed, “O God, grant victory to whichever

one out of the two religious groups that is rightly guided” (Aljame le Ahkam al-Quran, 7/387). When the two groups went to war—and the believers were victorious and the Quraysh were defeated—the Quran, addressing the Makkans, said:

If you were seeking a judgement, a judgement has now come
to you. If you desist, it will be the better for you.

THE QURAN 8: 19

Due to this uniqueness of the battle of Badr, it has been called “the Decisive Day” (THE QURAN 8: 41). With this clear-cut distinction between who was right and who was wrong, the Arabs, except a few leaders, had grave doubts about whether or not they were on the right path. They seriously considered that they did not have the truth on their side.

The truth is that the Arabs were already potentially of the faith, thanks to their simple lifestyle. On the occasion of Badr, when their entreaties to God proved counter-productive their inclination towards Islam turned into a strong urge. They were at the threshold of Islam.

The greater the sacrifice, the greater the success.

Only one problem remained, and that was the obstinacy of the tribal leaders of the Quraysh. They had waged war with the Prophet of Islam only to maintain their superiority and leadership and were unwilling to end the war without putting an end to the monotheistic mission of the Prophet. It was this fear of the arrogant Makkan leaders that made the Arabs of Makkah and the surrounding areas afraid to accept Islam.

The militancy on the part of the Quraysh was a floodgate preventing the river of guidance (Islam) from rushing into people’s hearts.

Continuing the war would have meant continued bloodshed. Putting an end to the war would require a sacrifice, of prestige, instead of soldiers. War can never be brought to an end on a bilateral basis. The Hudaibiya Peace Treaty was a far-sighted solution based on the idea that peace was more important than prestige and gave the Arabs the opportunity to embrace Islam.

The situation that prevailed at the time was that the Muslims had a genuine grudge in their hearts against the Makkan leaders, who had expelled them from their homes, appropriated their houses and

property, waged war against them, and made their women widows and their children orphans. The Makkans did not even allow them to enter Makkah to perform their pilgrimage. This grudge encouraged them to fight with the Quraysh.

The Muslims had to forgive and forget the Quraysh for their actions and sign the peace treaty. In the environment of peace that would follow, the work of spreading the message of Islam would proceed rapidly. Those who had developed a soft corner in their hearts for Islam could now enter the fold of Islam, finding no obstacles in their way. *Qital*, meaning war, is to defend Islam by putting one's life at stake. The Hudaibiya Method has become symbolic of opening the doors of God's religion for God's servants by sacrificing one's honour. This goes to prove that the sacrifice of honour is far greater than that of life.

**History is often the refuge of those who have done
little themselves worth celebrating.**

Imam Muslim recorded a saying narrated by Abu Hurayrah, the Prophet's Companion that the Prophet of Islam once said, "I wish to see my *Ikhwan* (brothers)." The companions said, "Are we not your brothers, O Messenger of God?" The Prophet replied, "You are my companions. Our *Ikhwan* will come later." Ad-Darimi, a traditionist of the 9th century, narrated that Abu Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah once asked of the Prophet, "O Messenger of God, are there any of the Muslims better than us? We believed in you. We did *Jihad* with you." The Prophet replied, "Yes, those Muslims are better who will believe in me without even seeing me."

(Jame Al-Usool fi Ahaadith Ar-Rasool, 9/206-7)

The expression he used for such people was *lam yarauni*, meaning 'they who did not see me.' But this cannot be taken in just the literal sense. For when a prophet becomes a legendary personality in later periods of history, believing in just the existence of such a glorious personality cannot be a matter of great credit. Therefore, it is necessary to take these words in the sense of their contemporary relevance. This means that while the people of the Prophet's time accepted his mission by seeing and listening to him, the *Ikhwan* would accept his mission without meeting him personally.

History is now repeating itself for the Muslims. There are a large number of people today in non-Muslim environments, who are nevertheless

ready to accept the religion of truth. Conflict between Muslim and non-Muslim factions, however, is rife all over the world. Without a state of peace such as the one that followed the Treaty of Hudaibiya, it is not possible for non-Muslims to look at Islam with open unbiased minds.

The sacrifice of honour is far greater than that of life.

Muslims today have to make the same sacrifice which the companions of the Prophet made on the occasion of Hudaibiya, when they had to forget the grudges they held. The only way to establish normal relations between Muslims and non-Muslims today is to adopt this admirable and far-sighted policy of forgiveness and peace.

The companions of the Prophet made a sacrifice by remaining patient as the Prophet asked them to. Muslims today have to make this same sacrifice by remaining patient in their belief in the truth and light of the life and teachings of the Prophet, without having seen him. If the Muslims of today can make such a sacrifice, according to the Prophet's tradition, they will be held deserving of being acknowledged by God as the *Ikhwan* of the Prophet. Without a doubt, for Muslims, there can be no greater blessing on Judgement Day than being acknowledged as the brothers of the Prophet. □



The Psychology of Success

*The conviction that one's goals are worthwhile,
the observation of discipline with no contradiction
between words and thoughts, cool thinking even in times of crisis
—all these are qualities of mind and heart which determine success,
and obviate failure in the wider field of life.*

THE FAILING OF INTELLIGENCE

IN today's world, we see that most intelligent people shy away from devoting themselves to religion. What is the reason for this? It is the attraction of immediate gain. As the Quran says:

Truly, you love immediate gain and neglect the Hereafter.

THE QURAN 75: 20-21

Intelligent people easily find profitable jobs in worldly fields, whereas profit of the religious kind is linked to the next world. In this world, we can see wealth and honour and fame within our reach, whereas in espousing a religious cause, we feel that we have to wait for the reward in the next world.

Religious work is based on modesty rather than on pride or superiority.

Considering this, it would not be wrong to say that this idea of intelligence is quite different from that of wisdom. Such people, keeping their eyes on their immediate profit, overlook eternal profit. In exchange for the false and ephemeral happiness of this world, they deprive themselves of the true happiness of Paradise.

Another trait associated with this kind of intelligence is egoism, which has no place in religion. Religious work is based on modesty, rather than on pride or superiority. People who consider themselves intelligent in this way find it difficult to suspend their egos, and so they cannot reconcile their personal desires with religious work. Religious work can only be done by those who have surrendered fully to God. Even the slightest shortcoming in this regard renders them incompetent to perform religious work. □



For the Sake of the Future

Forget what you have lost so that you can achieve what still remains.

ON MARRIAGE

THE coming together of a man and a woman in marriage is one of the most unique events in the universe. All the things created in the universe are created in pairs, but the compatibility that exists between a man and a woman cannot be found in any other created thing. When a man and a woman come together as partners for life, it is evident that they have been made for each other through a conscious plan.

Marriage is not simply a social institution. In Islam, it has an importance far greater than this. According to the Islamic concept of life, God Almighty created an ideal world, Paradise. Paradise is a perfect and eternal world. God wants to select those women and men who may qualify to settle in this highly refined colony of Paradise. So God created men and women for the purpose of this selection or test, and settled them on Earth.

Men and women are two equal halves of a single unit.

Marriage is directly linked to this scheme of creation. Men and women are both born with great capabilities. It is their duty to turn these capabilities, this potential, into reality. Our present life offers us an opportunity for this purpose. This present world is like a ground where we live for a short time only for the purpose of preparing ourselves for the next world. We have to strive to develop our personality in such a way that we may qualify for our entry into Paradise. This process is called *Tazkia*, or the purification of the soul in the Quran. This purification or preparation is a lifelong process. Only through study, contemplation, introspection, and learning can we develop this kind of personality.

In developing our personality, the most important thing for us is to broaden our mind by awakening our consciousness. To awaken our consciousness, we require three things—study, observation and intellectual exchange with other people. Books are the greatest source of knowledge we can study that we have, the world of nature is the greatest source of knowledge that we can observe, and in the matter of intellectual learning, it is essential for us to form the habit of learning from others, and continue in this learning process. A spouse is an

immediate intellectual partner. From this point of view, marriage is a great opportunity for intellectual development, as both people can interact with each other and make intellectual progress together. Intellectual development is essential for everyone. Marriage offers just such an ideal opportunity for intellectual partnership.

According to a saying of the Prophet of Islam, men and women are two equal halves of a single unit. The best expression of this equality is that both serve as equal intellectual partners to each other. Husband and wife both are equal partners in carrying on this process of personality development through exchange. Husband and wife are full-time companions, and are available to each other for this purpose, day and night. Through every day intellectual exchange, they increase their creativity, they discover new things, and are partners in mutual learning. Thus they can develop their personality in terms of *Tazkia*, or purification.

**God wants to select those women and men who may
qualify to settle in this highly refined colony
called Paradise.**

To further boost this process, God Almighty created men and women with differences. We are different in terms of attitude, temperament, tastes and psychology. This difference is not an evil, or a problem. It is instead a boon or blessing. It is this difference of opinion that provides them with subjects of discussion. These discussions of diverse points awaken the mind, and through this awakening of mind, we realize our potential. It is this natural difference that gives us a chance to improve ourselves and attain higher levels of developed personalities. We then become supermen and superwomen.

This process of personality development along positive lines is not restricted to the life in this world. It continues into the next, and it is this personality development on positive lines that will enable us to find an entry into God's eternal Paradise.

If we ponder upon this reality, we will arrive at a most thrilling discovery, and find that our issues with each other are completely meaningless. Men and women are the masterpieces of God's creation. Marriage is the coming together of these two masterpieces of creation in a union that can lead them to Paradise. □

BELIEF IN GOD

STANDING in front of India Gate in New Delhi, I thought of what a beautiful specimen of architecture and sculpture it was. It is a structure that bears witness to our unique skills of design, construction and art. For humans to construct a thing like India Gate, we had to think creatively before it came into existence. We had to make plans and then give them a concrete shape.

If man were to reflect on the difference between him and the rest of the universe, he would be able to comprehend the difference between him and God.

All the stars, planets, trees and animals together would fail to make such a structure. It is a uniquely human achievement. Such is the case with all other human matters. All of our skills are unique, and are our exclusive privilege. No other creatures in the known universe can do what we can do by exercising our physical and mental faculties, whether it is the construction of India Gate or the operation of any complex machine.

God desires that we should realize Him on the conscious plane, through our intellect. That is why God created us with such distinctive faculties. Just as we are superior to all of creation, God is vastly more superior compared to us.

If we were to reflect on the difference between us and the rest of the universe, we would be able to comprehend the difference between ourselves and God. God is the first, last and ultimate form of this superiority that we experience over the rest of the universe. To understand God is as simple a matter as understanding ourselves.

The truth is that to believe in God is to believe in something that we already believe. To see God is to see something that is already there for us to see—an intensification of our experience of existence is belief in the existence of God. Humans are not the end in this universe. When a higher plane of existence is present in the form of us (for we belong to a far higher state than that of the universe) then why should the existence of another higher plane in the form of God not be a possibility? □

BUILDING A STRONG AND PROSPEROUS INDIA

THERE are some people who consider Indian Muslims a liability. This is a view opposite to the role that any creative minority is destined to play in accordance with the infallible law of nature.

The British historian Arnold Toynbee, in his famous book *Study of History* theorises that it is always the creative minority that plays a revolutionary role in any civilization or society. The creative minority is the one that reacts creatively to solve problems affecting the society as a whole, generating growth and progress. There is no reason why the Muslim minority in India cannot occupy this position.

In one of the prophecies of the prophet of Islam (Jami-ul-Usool Fee Ahadeeth-Al-Rasool-Part IV; 202), it is said that a group of people would spread the message of Islam peacefully in India. It is predicted in this *Hadith* that a day will come when the Muslims of India will perform an important constructive role in this country and will be instrumental in taking this country to a position of true glory and progress. I think that time has finally arrived.

Muslims in India should give up a life-style marred by agitation and protests and learn to live as a creative group.

What should the Indian Muslims do to fulfil this prophecy? They should simply give up a life-style marred by agitation and protests and learn to live as a creative group. In this country, they should not be a 'taking group' but a 'giving group'. Such is the requirement of Islam. And then a new era will dawn in our country, when India will emerge as a developed nation and will attain that position on the map of the world which it deserves.

Swami Vivekananda said in 1889 that the India of the future would be a glorious India and this glorious India would be built by Hindus and Muslims together. This is undoubtedly true. But, Hindus and Muslims shall both have to prove that they are capable of performing this historic role. Without the necessary capability, it will not be possible for either of them to do so.

Certain Hindus think that this country is meant specifically for them. This is a very dangerous misunderstanding. With this mentality it will not be possible for them to discharge the requirements of the role they are expected to play. The Hindus undoubtedly enjoy the position of the majority community in this country. But every majority is ultimately subject to certain infallible laws of nature. In this world, every majority is as much subject to the laws of nature as a minority.

A day will come when the Muslims of India will perform an important constructive role in this country and will be instrumental in taking India to a position of true glory and progress.

The Hindus on their part shall have to take care that they do not look upon Muslims purely from the view-point of their numerical ratio, but consider them their natural partners in work. They should accept Muslims as the second wheel of the Indian cart. Without this approach, the real process of progress in the country cannot even begin.

Similarly, Muslims should also realise that the essential condition for the fulfilment of the above mentioned prophecy is their proving capable of cultivating in themselves that talent which is known as creativity.

A truly creative group is one which is free from a negative mode of thinking and looks at matters from a positive view-point; which in its relations with others treads the path of broad-mindedness; which keeps an eye on its duties rather than its rights; which respects others' feelings rather than its own feelings; which knows the difference between issues and non-issues and devotes its attention only to those matters that are relevant to issues in the process of development.

A creative group is one which is free of any groupist mentality and looks at things from the humanist point of view; which in its heart wishes others well and feels no hatred or contempt for them; whose tolerant temperament so elevates it that it does not become provoked in spite of annoying circumstances; which leads a life of high purpose and does not act in its own personal interest.

A creative group is one which, due to its noble qualities, is in a position to make continuous progress in its thinking. It should be able to find

new and superior solutions to problems. It should, by opening every closed door of life, manage to reach the desired goals. Nothing should prove to be an impediment in its way.

These are the qualities which have been described in the Quran (Chapter 4, Al-Qalam) as 'superior character' (*Khulq-e-Azeem*). It is people who are broad-minded and noble in character who perform the greatest tasks in this world. In this world it is a law of nature that people of ordinary character perform everyday tasks and people of high character perform great tasks.

A truly creative group is one which is free from a negative mode of thinking and looks at matters from a positive view-point.

The gift of God bestowed on the people of Islam in the shape of religion is not the property of any one group. It is the common asset of the whole of humanity. Passing on this wealth to other people is the fulfilment of a Divine Trust. And it is solely in this spirit that this task can be properly performed.

History shows that the people of ancient times could not make any real progress in the field of knowledge, culture or civilization for thousands of years. All notable development started after the advent of Islam.

The world of those days was bogged down in the worship of God's creations. The people of Islam raised it above the worship of creation and showed the way of the worship of the Creator. People used to treat the phenomena of nature as holy and imagined that it was sufficient to offer obeisance and homage to them. Islam put an end to such misconceptions and opened the door to harnessing nature for human needs. People had given wealth and power the position of a deity and considered them their everything. The people of Islam put wealth and power on the list of man's needs and services and thus exalted man's position. People at that time were immersed in different types of superstitions due to beliefs based on false presumptions. The adherents of Islam pulled them out of baseless presumptions and superstitions and made them come to grips with realities.

For details, see the author's book *Islam the Creator of the Modern Age*.

This revolution in human thought came about for the first time through the influence of the followers of Islam, i.e. those believing in the unity of God. This revolution of thought opened to humanity the door of constructive activities and development, which had remained closed to it for thousands of years.

Islam taught the world the lesson of realism freeing people from superstition and causing humanity to enter a new era of progress.

Man in ancient times was living in the group of polytheistic thinking. Every department of life had become subordinate to polytheism. In reality, polytheism is another name for believing in superstitions. And where people are of a superstitious temperament or, in other words of an unscientific temperament, there can never be real progress. In the shape of the Islamic people, the world for the first time had the experience of a human group whose thought was based on the pure unity of God. It was completely free of polytheism and superstition. Accordingly, through Muslims, the world learned the lesson of realism for the first time. It became possible for people to free themselves from superstition and construct their lives on the basis of the laws of nature. This is the special gift of Islam which caused the history of humanity to enter a new era of progress.

While that new era of progress began for the rest of the world fourteen centuries ago, progress in this country had come to a standstill. Indeed, it is still waiting for the Islamic people to spread the message of the unity of God, so that history may repeat itself. Only then can true progress be made. □



Welcoming Failures

*If you want to be a success in this world,
the first thing you have to do is
display enough courage to welcome failures.*

SCIENTIFIC INTERPRETATION OF THE QURAN

MANY Muslims believe that the Quran contains a lot of scientific information and that a scientific commentary of the Quran can be written. They go to such extremes to further this viewpoint that they become unscientific. For example, some say that the verse "Have We not lifted up your heart" (THE QURAN 94: 1), refers to the anatomy of the heart, and that the verse "You were heedless of this, but now we have removed your veil, so your sight today is sharp" (THE QURAN 50: 22), gives us ophthalmological insights, etc.

This theory is baseless. The Quran is not at all a book of science. As the Quran itself says, it is a book of guidance (THE QURAN 2: 2). However, it is true that modern scientific research facilitates our understanding of the Quran. For example, a verse of the Quran says, "... We have made every living thing out of water" (THE QURAN 21: 30).

This was known to earlier readers of the Quran, but a present-day reader studying this verse in the light of scientific discoveries becomes all the more convinced of the truth of the Quran.

Likewise, there is a verse in the Quran that says:

The sun cannot overtake the moon,
nor can the night outpace the day: each floats in (its own) orbit

THE QURAN 36: 40

Clearly, the conviction of present-day readers is increased on comparing this with scientific discoveries. In this way, we become more convinced of the truth of the Quran.

Similarly, there are many other verses of the Quran regarding God's creation: nature, the heavens, mankind etc., the understanding of which has become much clearer with the insights that science has provided. Science has enlarged the canvas of God-realization through the Quran. In our scientific interpretation of the Quran, we have to differentiate between reality and exaggeration. □



ARE MUSLIMS THE CHOSEN PEOPLE?

MUSLIMS today generally believe that they are the 'chosen people'. This belief is completely alien to Islam. According to the true teachings of Islam, every man and woman is equal in the eyes of God. No one enjoys a special status. God's blessings in this world are given to people to test them, regardless of their beliefs, race or sex.

**God's blessings are given to people on the basis of merit,
not on the basis of group or race.**

This concept of the 'chosen people' is a phenomena of degenerated societies. This is just wishful thinking; it has no base in the religion revealed by God to Muhammad. Those who claim such special positions for themselves will be asked by God as to where they derived this notion from.

The Quran refutes this kind of thinking, and clearly says:

It is not your desires, nor the desires of the People of the Book,
that shall prevail. Anyone who commits evil will be rewarded
accordingly. He will not find any protector
or patron for himself besides God.

THE QURAN 4: 123

This Quranic verse tells us without any ambiguity that those who do wrong will receive the results of their bad deeds, with no mention of any qualifying beliefs, race or sex. It is only merit that will determine who are the blessed and who are not. Salvation in the hereafter will be given to those who prove, in terms of their actions, that they are deserving candidates for it. These people are the ones described in the Bible as 'rejected silver' (Jeremiah, 6: 30).

The Quran is very clear about this. For example, the Quran says:

And that man shall have only that for which he strives.

THE QURAN 53: 39

Clearly, only the deeds of a person count before God. Every man and woman will be judged by Him according to this criterion. No self-invented criterion will be accepted in His court.

According to the Quran, salvation will not be awarded generally to any group, but on the basis of personal merit. This Quranic verse makes it very clear:

The believers, the Jews, the Christians, and the Sabaeans
—all those who believe in God and the Last Day and
do good deeds—will be rewarded by their Lord.

THE QURAN 2: 62

This verse of the Quran refers to four religious groups—the Muslims, the Jews, the Christians and the Sabaeans, and says that none of these groups will be awarded salvation as a whole. Salvation depends on every individual's deeds. It is notable that in this verse, the Quran brackets Muslims in with other religious groups, denying them any special status.

There are many verses that make this point clear. For example, in another verse the Quran says:

Paradise is for those who purify their souls.

THE QURAN 20: 76

Again, there is no mention of qualifying beliefs, race, or sex.

Salvation in the hereafter will be given to those who prove to be deserving candidates for it.

The fact is that God created men and women, and then He settled them on this planet and gave them complete freedom. We have different options—good behaviour or bad behaviour, negative responses or positive responses, adopting a disciplined way of life or living in indiscipline and anarchy, following the divine path or going astray. In all these situations, if we follow the right path, we purify our souls and if we deviate from the right path, we pollute ourselves.

This is the scheme of things set by God—those who purify their souls will be settled in paradise, and those who pollute their personality will go to the eternal Hellfire. □

THE REMEMBRANCE OF GOD

THE Quran exhorts believers to remember God often (THE QURAN 33: 41). Some people understand the command *dhikr* to mean the frequent repetition of the name(s) of God; to keep repeating even just the word 'God' or 'Allah' thousands of times while counting them on a *tasbeeh* or rosary beads. In reality however, this has no connection with the actual Quranic command. In the Quran, *dhikr*, does not mean merely the repetition of words. It means to think about God often.

Another verse of the Quran says:

So remember Me; I will remember you.

THE QURAN 2: 152

In this verse, God promises to remember us if we remember Him. Remembrance does not mean the repetition of words. God is certainly not going to repeat our names over and over.

**Remembrance of God is not a repetition of words,
but a spontaneous discovery of the glory of God.**

Similarly, there is a *Hadith* of the Prophet that tells us to remember death often. Again, in this *Hadith*, remembrance does not mean a repetition of the word death. Obviously, in this *Hadith*, remembering death means to think about death.

Abu Musa, a companion of the Prophet had a beautiful voice. Whenever he recited the Quran, people would become engrossed listening to the recitation. Once, when the Prophet heard Abu Musa reciting the Quran, he said, 'Abu Musa has been given the enthralling voice of the family of Da'ud (David).' It is said that whenever Omar met Abu Musa, he would say, "O Abu Musa, make us remember our Lord."

In this saying of Omar also, remembrance does not mean the repetition of words. Omar did not wish to be seated beside Abu Musa listening to him saying the word God over and over. Here also the meaning of the word remembrance was to 'think about'. What Omar wished was for Abu Musa to recite some verses of the Quran that would make him think about God.

In the Arabic lexicon, *dhikr* means, to remember, to think about. This is the meaning that we must use in Islamic teachings. *Dhikrullah*, then, means simply to remember God. It is not a formalised act of worship, but a spontaneous one that will come as naturally to us if we come to know God, as singing does to a bird. It means to remember and to think of God. We should develop such an intense relationship with God that we feel His presence in our very souls.

A spiritual upheaval of the utmost intensity will occur in us if we discover God in all His power and glory. God will be forever in our hearts and thoughts. We will think about God every moment. Our constant remembrance of God expresses itself in many ways. Sometimes it is an inward experience—a tingle of joy, a shiver of fear that creeps down our bodies as thoughts of God fill our minds. Sometimes we enter into a spontaneous outpouring of thanksgiving and adoration. It is this state of mind that constitutes remembrance of God, whether it is expressed in the form of words of praise or in silent thoughts.

**A spontaneous outpouring of thanksgiving and adoration;
such a state of mind constitutes
the remembrance of God**

Sometimes we look at space in all its vastness, and ponder on the stars and the constellations spread out across the sky. How great must be God, who arranged this marvellous display, and runs it with such superb finesse? Such is our reaction to the sight spread out before us. Sometimes, we gaze at rivers, trees and mountains, and our hearts are touched by their beauty, by the meaning of their existence. If we have discovered God, everything around us reminds us of Him, sparking off a never-ending line of remembrance in our minds and hearts.

Then we look critically at ourselves and realize our own errors and shortcomings. Moved to seek the Lord's forgiveness, we pray to Him for salvation from eternal punishment — "Lord, admit me into the shade of Your mercy on that Day when there will be no other place to take refuge." And in our helplessness and powerlessness, we see the power and majesty of God. We cry out, "Lord, assuage my fears with Your Almighty power!"

When these feelings of the Lord's presence enter our hearts, and when we put these feelings into words, that is when we are remembering

God; that is when we engage in *Dhikr*. *Dhikr* is to remember God, the greatest of all realities. Remembrance of such a being is bound to be the greatest of all human experiences; there are no words that fully express the profundity of such a feeling. □



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THE WORD OF GOD

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

Translated from Arabic and commentary
by **Maulana Wahiduddin Khan**

VICTORY

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

Truly, We have granted you a clear victory so that God may forgive you your past and future sins and complete His favour to you and guide you to a straight path, and so that God might bestow on you His mighty help. 48: 1-3

In the sixth year of the *Hijrah*, the Prophet Muhammad left Medina for Makkah along with his companions, so that he could perform the rite of pilgrimage there. He had reached Hudaybiya when the pagans of Makkah came forward and barred his way, saying that they would not allow him to enter Makkah. Mutual negotiations followed, as a result of which a peace treaty was drawn up and signed by both sides.

This treaty was executed apparently on the unilateral terms and conditions dictated by the polytheists. As a consequence, the companions of the Prophet Muhammad were very disheartened: they considered it a degrading treaty. But on the way back from Hudaybiya, this verse was revealed: 'We have granted you a clear victory.' The reason for this was that according to this Treaty it was agreed that for ten years there would be no war between the Muslims and polytheists. The end of fighting was in fact synonymous to the opening of the door of *dawah*. After the *Hijrah* (migration to Medina), due to incessant fighting, *dawah* activity had stopped. Now, the truce had created an open atmosphere in which there could be a free exchange of thought between the opponents.

In this way, this treaty changed the sphere of combat. Formerly, the competition between the two sides had been held on the battlefield where the Muslims' antagonists had the upper hand. Now rivalry shifted to the field of intellect and in this, the theory of the one God clearly triumphed over polytheism. Here now was the 'straight path', i.e. the way which made the victory of the flag-bearers of monotheism an absolute certainty.

It was He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers, to add faith to their faith—the forces of the heavens and earth belong to Him; He is all-knowing and all-wise—and so that He might admit the believers, men and women, into Gardens through which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever, and so that He may remove their evils from them—that is, indeed, a supreme triumph in God's eyes—and so that He might punish hypocritical men and women as well as the polytheists—men and women who think evil thoughts about God; an evil turn of fortune will fall upon them, for God has become angry with them, and has rejected them and prepared Hell for them. How evil is such a destination. The forces of heavens and earth belong to God; He is almighty and all wise. 48: 4-7

Here tranquillity (*sakinah*) means not becoming irritated despite provocation. At Hdaybiya the opponents of Islam tried to goad Muslims in different ways into taking such action as would provide them with sufficient justification for aggression. But the Muslims for their part tolerated every attempt at provocation. Right to the end, they were firm on the policy of overlooking and ignoring such attempts.

Had God desired it, He could have subdued the forces of falsehood by means of His direct power and granted dominance to the Truth. Then, why is it that God created Hdaybiya Treaty-like conditions and made the Faithful undertake this journey? The purpose was to enhance the Faith by testing the Faithful. If a man curbs his urge to take revenge and enters into a treaty with an arrogant people simply because that is required by the task of disseminating the Truth, he does so by a conscientious decision. In so doing he makes his mind rule his heart. In this way, he increases his Faith-consciousness. He makes himself the recipient of such divine emotions as cannot be achieved in any other way. The advantage of this is that the people of Paradise and the people of Hell are separated in the process.

We have sent you forth as a witness and a bearer of good tidings and a warner, so that you may believe in God and His Messenger, and may help him, and honour him, and so that you may glorify God morning and evening. Behold, all who pledge their allegiance to you indeed pledge their allegiance to God: the hand of God is over their hands. Hence, he who breaks his oath, breaks it only to his own loss. Whereas he who remains true to what he has pledged to God, shall have a great reward bestowed upon him by God. 48: 8-10

The real work of the Prophet is to be an exponent of the truth (*shaahid*, as translated by Shah Waliullah). He should clearly show who will be entitled to God's Grace and who will deserve punishment from God in the eternal life after death.

The rising of such a '*shaahid*' or witness of Truth poses the greatest trial for his addressees. They have to hear God's voice in the voice of a human being. They have to see a representative of God in the shape of a human being. While giving their hand into the hands of a man, they have to think that they are giving their hand into the hands of God. For those who prove to have this superior insight, God has great rewards in store, but to those who fail in this test, God will mete out the most severe punishment. □



Receptive Intellect

*There is nothing that can take
the place of a receptive intellect.*

*One who remains open to instruction will look
on the whole world as living proof of divine realities.*

*One who goes through life with a closed mind, however,
is like an animal that hears and sees all, but understands nothing.*

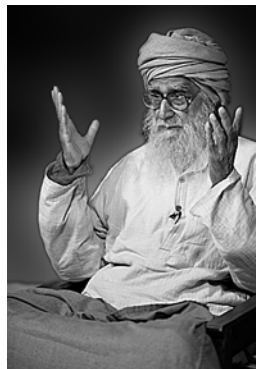
ASK MAULANA

What is Zakat?

Zakat, or the alms-tax, is one of the five basic tenets of Islam. Its payment is obligatory, at the rate of 2.5%, on all wealth that is subject to growth. Eight categories of people, eligible to receive *Zakat*, have been specified in this verse of the Quran:

Alms are only for: the poor and the destitute, for those who collect *Zakat*, for conciliating people's hearts, for freeing slaves, for those in debt, for spending for God's cause and for travellers in need. It is a legal obligation enjoined by God. God is All-knowing and Wise.

THE QURAN 9: 60



So, as is clear from this verse, one of the ways that *Zakat* can be spent is 'for the cause of God'. Though the words of the Quran are general, the consensus of Muslim theologians is that they refer to holy war: it is those who are voluntarily engaged in holy war, and have not been appointed any salary by the government, who should receive alms given 'for the cause of God'. (Fiqh-us-Sunnah, Vol. I, p. 393)

If we accept this interpretation, then it means that the instruction to give *Zakat* 'for the cause of God' may, to all intents and purposes, be misapplied. This form of voluntary participation in wars was only possible in ancient times; under modern conditions there is no question of it. In the present age, war has become so complicated and technical that only those who have received regular training are able to take any real part in it: to allow untrained people to enter the field of battle is tantamount to inviting defeat. In other words, only those who are employed by the government can participate in war. According to this interpretation, the above injunction is really no longer applicable.

The words 'for the cause of God' are general in their application. They include any task that is performed for God's cause, being especially applicable to that work which the Quran calls 'calling to the service of God'. The true objective of Islam is preaching, not fighting. Calling

people to submit themselves to God is the Islamic point of departure; war is only resorted to when the other party starts hostilities, and forces the preachers of Islam to take up arms to defend themselves.

The Egyptian scholar, Rasheed Raza Misri, has noted in his commentary of the Quran that the words 'for the cause of God' are equally applicable to those who strive to spread the word of God.

The best way to give alms 'for the cause of God' in the present age, is to contribute to the training of preachers, and to their dispatch by Islamic organizations to other lands, and to continue to give financial support to these preachers. (Tafseer Manar)

What is Thanksgiving?

Thanksgiving for man is to acknowledge the blessings of God. This acknowledgement first arises in the heart. Then, taking the form of words, it comes to the lips of the grateful person.

From birth, man has been superbly endowed in body and mind by his Creator. All his requirements have been amply catered for, every object in the heavens and on earth having been pressed into his service. All the things necessary for his leading a good life on earth and the building of a civilization have been provided in abundance.

Man experiences these blessings at every moment. It is, therefore, incumbent on man to thank God for His blessings at all times. His heart should be eternally brimming with gratitude for these divine blessings.

Thanksgiving is the most comprehensive form of worship: gratefulness is the essence of the godly life. The best expression of that gratefulness is the expenditure of time and money in the way of God. It is God after all, who has given man the reason to worship Him and the means to do so. □

Please send your questions to
askmaulana@thespiritofislam.org



Glossary

- Abu Bakr Siddiq**, (573-634 AD) a close companion of the Prophet; also the first Muslim Caliph.
- Abu Hurayrah**, (603-681 AD) a companion of the Prophet.
- Ad-Darimi**, a traditionist or compiler of *Hadith*, 9th century.
- AH**, Islamic lunar year of Hijrah.
- Aljame le Ahkam al-Quran**, Arabic commentary of the Quran by Shamsuddin Al Qurtubi (1671 Hijri)
- Al-Risala**, Urdu monthly publication of Maulana Wahiddudin Khan (Delhi).
- As-Seerat an-Nabawiya**, Prophet's biography; book written by Ibn Kathir.
- Badr**, is a town in Saudi Arabia, where the famous Battle of Badr took place, between the Quraish of Makkah and the Muslims of Medina in 624 AD.
- Bhagavad Gita**, is a 700-verse scripture that is part of the Hindu epic Mahabharata.
- Dawah**, calling people towards God.
- Hadith**, sayings and deeds of the Prophet of Islam.
- Hayat as-Sahaba**, (English: Lives of the Sahabah) is a known collection (2000+ pages) about the companions of the prophet, by Muhammad Yusuf Kandhlawi. (1917-1965 AD).
- Hudaybiya**, place in Saudi Arabia, where a treaty was signed between Muhammad, representing the state of Medina, and the Quraish tribe of Makkah in 628 AD.
- Ibn Kathir**, (1301-1373); Islamic scholar, traditionist, *Hadith* compiler, commentator, and interpreter and translator of Quran and *Hadith* literature.
- Imam Al-Bukhari**, (810-870 AH); Islamic scholar who authored the *Hadith* collection known as Sahih al-Bukhari, regarded as the most authentic collection of *Hadith*.
- Imam Muslim**, (204-261 AH) a traditionist or compiler of *Hadith*.
- Ismael**, also (Ishmael), firstborn son of Abraham, born to him from his wife Hajira (Hagar). Ismael was also a Prophet and ancestor of Muhammad, the last prophet of Islam.
- Ismaelites**, of the family of Ismael (or Ishmael), son of Abraham.
- Jame Al-Usool fi Ahaadith Ar-Rasool**, book of sayings of the Prophet by Ibnul Atheer (606 Hijri).
- Jihad**, struggle in the way of God.
- Kabah**, the sacred house of God built originally by prophets Abraham and Ismael.
- Kalima**, the Islamic creed — 'There is no god but God and Muhammad is His messenger.'
- Omar**, also (Umar) or Omar bin al Khattab (579-644 AD); a close companion of the Prophet; the 2nd Muslim Caliph.
- Qital**, armed warfare.
- Quraysh**, the dominant tribe of Makkah during the time when Prophet Mohammad was born; genealogical ancestry traced to prophets Abraham and Ismael.
- Umrah**, minor pilgrimage to the Kabah (sacred house of God).
- Samadhi**, a state of deep meditative contemplation which leads to higher consciousness. (World English Dictionary).
- Uhud**, the valley located in front of Mount Uhud, Saudi Arabia, where the second battle was fought in 625 AD, between the Makkans and the Muslims.
- Zul Qadah**, 11th month of the lunar calendar.

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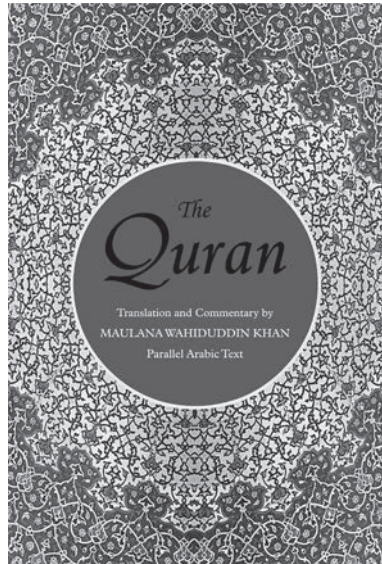
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