The background of the cover is a vibrant sunset over a tropical beach. A tall palm tree stands on the left side, its silhouette dark against the bright sky. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of orange, pink, and purple. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the calm water. A small boat is visible on the water in the distance. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

THE FINAL JOURNEY

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

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Translated by:
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Foreword



The Twenty Fifth Hour is the title of a book which has been published in France, analyzing the current state of the world. According to its author this 'twenty fifth hour' is the hour of doom, an hour which could arrive *at any moment*. Why? Because the world is divided into two groups, both of which are committed to the total annihilation of the other. Inevitably this will mean the annihilation of the whole human race. The blind arms race of these two blocs has turned the world into a vast storehouse of lethal weapons and is leading the world to the brink of destruction.

We certainly seem to be rushing towards it on a terrifying parallel with the final earthquake with which God will bring this world to an end. The period of trial which God has ordained for man is then to be over and an eternal, perfect world will replace the present one. But only after God's final earthquake. Then will come God's Judgment of all human beings. Then it will be known, with terrifying certainty, whether one is to be sent to paradise or to be consigned forever to the everlasting flames of hell. The moment is upon us. The twenty-fifth hour, the decisive hour, must be expected at any moment. Each morning we must ask ourselves if we are going to live until the evening. And each morning we must ask ourselves if we are going to live until the next morning.

The Final Journey

People are rightly apprehensive of nuclear warfare. But what they should most fear is the Last Trumpet with which God will announce the end of the world. Nuclear war may or may not be a certainty, but the advent of the Day of Reckoning (*Qiyamat*), the Final Day is as sure as its consequences are eternal. Eternal bliss will then be the reward for good deeds, while for bad deeds there will be nothing but eternal damnation.

I advise people to prepare for their Final Journey in preparation for this Final Day.

Wahiduddin Khan

January 1, 2021
New Delhi

On Death's Doorstep



Of all the stages through which man shall have to pass, death is the most certain. It is possible for one not to be endowed with life at all, but one who is alive is sure, also, to die. Everyone who is alive now will be dead sometime in the future. One day the eyes of those who see will fade and their tongues will freeze into silence. Every human being will one day find himself standing at death's doorstep, with this world behind him, and ahead of him the eternal world of the hereafter. He will be leaving this world, never to return, and entering a world which he will never leave. In the world which he is entering, there will be no opportunity for action; there will be only salvation or damnation in accordance with one's actions on earth.

While life is indefinite, death is absolutely definite. We are only alive because we have not yet died, and there is no fixed time for death. We are forever advancing towards it; death is closer to us than life itself. People consider themselves alive, but it would be truer to say that they are dead. No one can be sure when death will come; it might strike at any instant. Death, then, is not some future event; we are already as good as dead. For this reason, Prophet Mohammad, may peace be upon him, has told us to think of ourselves as lying in the grave. (*Tuhfatul Abwazi*, Hadith No. 2333)

Death nullifies everything. It is the most terrifying event of our lives. But the prospect would not be so formidable if

death were just the end of life. If all that death meant was the end of man - the moving, seeing, hearing being who lives on earth – then it would still be an event of frightful proportions; but it would be a temporary calamity, not a permanent one.

The gravity of the situation lies in death not being the end of life, but rather the beginning of a new, eternal life, a world of everlasting reward or retribution.

Everyone is on a journey from life unto death. Some have set their sights on the world, others on the hereafter. Some dwell on what meets the eye, others on what lies beyond the superficiality of human vision. Some strive to satisfy their own desires and egos, while others bestir themselves in love and fear of God. Both types of people appear the same in this world: they both take rest when night comes, and in the morning once again pursue their chosen paths in life. But in relation to the life after death, there is a world of difference between the two: those who live in God and the hereafter are redeeming themselves, while those who live in worldly pleasures and selfish desires are condemning themselves to eternal punishment.

We are in God's Country



An American lady went on a tour of Russia. There, she saw pictures of the Chairman of the Communist party hanging everywhere she went. She took offence of this, and gave vent to her feelings in the presence of some Russians.

Her companion whispered in her ear: "Madam, you are in Russia now, not America."

A person can live as he likes in his own country, but when he goes to a foreign country, he has to abide by its laws. If he does not do so, then he will be considered an offender.

The same is true, in a broader sense, of this world. Man has been born into a world which he did not create himself. The world in which man lives is entirely of God's making. Man, then, is not in his own country: he is living in the country of God.

This being the case, the only way that man can prosper is by understanding God's scheme and living in the world according to that scheme. If he contradicts the scheme of God, then he will be considered as a rebel. He will be liable for punishment in the sight of God and stands to be deprived for all time of the blessings of the Lord.

The question is: how should man live in the world in order to conform with the will of God? It was to provide an answer to this question that God raised up His prophets. The prophets showed man, plainly and in terms that he could understand, exactly what the Lord requires of him; they defined the scheme of God with which man should comply.

The Quran is an authentic collection of this prophetic guidance. Whoever wishes to be counted among God's faithful servants, and granted a share in His eternal blessings, must read the Quran and be guided by it in his life.

Whoever does not do this will meet a similar—though more severe fate—than that of Americophiles in Russia or Russophiles in America.

The Stage of Death



The moment of death is more serious than any imaginable or unimaginable moment. All other difficulties that human beings encounter, pale into utter insignificance in the face of the enormous difficulty which assumes the form of death.

Death is the journey towards the most severe stage in life. It is to enter that stage where one has no control whatsoever, where one is entirely empty-handed and completely helpless. Every difficulty in this world has a limit, but death takes us into a world whose torments have no limits whatsoever.

In this world, too, human beings are actually in the same sort of condition. They are in themselves so weak that they are unable to tolerate even a minor unfavourable condition or situation. If you are poked by a needle or have to face hunger or thirst for a single day or do not get sleep for a few days, your anguish will know no bounds. But because in this world we have all that we need, we have forgotten how vulnerable we really are. We are unaware of our own reality.

Suppose this world were snatched away from us, this world where there is air and light and so on, and where, by using the bounties of Nature, human civilization is made possible, in such a situation, it will be impossible for human beings to create a similar world elsewhere in the cosmos.

When human beings face difficulties, they start making a big hue and cry about it. But if they knew about the impending Day of Judgment, they would cry out, 'O God! What is going to happen then is much more severe than what is happening now, here in this world!'

Because in this world human beings revel in honour and comfort, they are overwhelmed by pride. But if they knew what is going to happen on the Day of Judgment, they would cry out, 'O God! This honour and comfort have no value at all if they do not last after death!'

Death is not the end of our lives. Rather, it is the start of a new stage of Life. This stage will, for some, be a dungeon, where they will face the deadliest of all possible torments, while for others it will be the door leading to the highest of all possible comforts.

How Strange That Life Should End Like That



Nandini, daughter of Govind Narain, the former governor of Karnataka, was just 38 years old when she passed away in New Delhi on September 16, 1981. Thus, a young, vibrant life came to a sudden halt; a cheerful face was removed from the scene of life.

Nandini was an intelligent and healthy person. After receiving higher education in India, she acquired a degree in journalism from America. She then became a senior reporter

with *The Hindustan Times*. Her versatile and dashing talent made her a popular figure with her colleagues. As one of them put it: “She loved life to the full and wanted to live it to the full.”

Several of her colleagues contributed to a commemorative article published in *The Hindustan Times* on September 17, 1981. They concluded their article with these words:

“It is a cruel reminder of the fact that there is a deadline for everyone.”

How strange it is that the flame of life should suddenly be extinguished, a laughing face suddenly grow still to be buried beneath the earth; how strange that a spirit full of hope and aspirations should be removed from the scene of life, leaving all its hopes and aspirations behind in the world!

How meaningful life appears to be and how meaningless it is rendered by its conclusion! How free man appears to be, but how helpless he is before death! How dear he holds his desires and ambitions, only for fate to ruthlessly stamp them out!

Remembrance of death would alone be enough to cure man’s rebellious nature. Peace and harmony on earth can only come from man learning his limitations, and resigning himself to them. There is no better way of learning this lesson than by remembering death.

The Beginning, Not the End



On July 18, 1981, a railway guard by the name of Jabir Husain set off on his very last official journey on the railways. On the following day, his long period of service would be over. It was with a great sense of pleasurable anticipation that he contemplated the life of retirement which now stretched out before him—a life of ease with the freedom to do exactly as he pleased. As he was setting off on this last journey, he said with great satisfaction to his colleagues, “From tomorrow I shall be starting out on a new life!” Prophetic words, for this journey was to be his last in more senses than one. The express train on which he was travelling was a mere sixty kilometers away from its destination when it collided with a goods train and Jabir Husain was killed outright. A railway officer, commenting on this irony of fate said, “Just another sixty kilometers and it would have been the end of his official journey.” (*Indian Express*, 18 July 1981).

Who does not picture to himself a long and eventful life? Everyone thinks that he will reach some great and interesting turning point in his life in just “another sixty kilometers”. But before the sixty-kilometer mark can be reached, the angels of death swoop down upon him, and catching him unaware, bear him off to another world. Everyone is constantly making plans for the life he will lead tomorrow, but it is only when death strikes with lightning speed that he quite finally understands

that his 'tomorrow' will be—not in this world—but in the next, eternal world. Where he had believed implicitly that he was nearing the end of some agreeable terrestrial journey and approaching some highly coveted goal, he was, in fact, upon the brink of eternity—at the beginning of things, not the end.

The End of Life's Journey



One fateful day in April, 1981, when a Delhi-bound train from Allahabad stopped at Ghaziabad, it was discovered to the consternation of the passengers that one of their number had suffered a massive heart attack and had died right there in the train before medical aid could reach him. No ordinary passenger, it transpired that he was Mustafa Rasheed Sherwani, the noted industrialist and Member of Parliament, also formerly a famous freedom fighter. He was only 59 and in his prime. But this had not mattered. The time had come for God to take him away and take him away He did.

Such events are commonplace. Everyday large masses of humanity enter the gates of death. Every day, tens of thousands of ordinary human beings set off for their worldly destinations but are seized by God's angels on the way. It makes no difference whether they are in their prime, at the peak of their careers or are doing yeoman service to humanity; their earthly journey is cut short, and they are ushered into their final abode.

We all dream of scaling unprecedented heights of honour and glory and build ourselves palatial houses as worldly symbols of

our status in which we intend to enjoy a life of ease, comfort and pleasure. These are the material ends to which all of us strive. But sooner or later comes the realization that what really awaits us is the grave. It is a cold and desolate prospect, and very far removed from our dreams of the immediate future. But we should not think of the grave as being the end of everything. It is certainly the end of our material existence, the reduction of our successes to so much dust, but it marks the stepping-off point for us into eternity. For those who have laboured only towards material ends, this is the most terrible prospect. For it can mean eternal damnation. But for those who have prepared themselves throughout their lives to meet their Maker, the prospect is one of eternal joy.

Every day God is carrying some “passengers bound for Delhi” to the grave. But who pays any heed? People are still convinced that they “are going to Delhi” and that while the grave may be the ultimate destination for others, they themselves are somehow privileged and it is not so for them.

When will the realization come to them that the grave is the ultimate destination of *all*?

Beyond Death



Louis XI (1423-1483), the king of France, ruled the country from 1461 to 1483. His reign had been a long one, but death was the last word that he would allow to be uttered in his presence. He did not want to die. During the last days

of his life he went in seclusion in an enclosed fort where only selected people could enter. Around the fort was dug a deep trench so that no one could gain access to it. All of the twenty-four hours, forty archers remained on duty, over and above which forty horsemen patrolled the fort night and day. Whoever was seen making any unauthorized effort to enter the fort was arrested and executed on the spot. All kinds of luxuries were provided inside the fort so that the king never became melancholy.

Louis XI was so eager to live as long as possible that he had given orders that the word 'death' should never be uttered before him. An expert doctor attended him day and night. This doctor drew a monthly salary of 10,000 gold crowns. In those days in Europe no military officer earned such a salary even with forty years' experience to his credit.

However, none of these precautions saved the king from weakness and old age. During his final days, he became so weak that he could hardly pick up his food and put it in his mouth by himself. But his will to live was indomitable. When he was told that tortoises lived for 500 years due to their possessing some life-giving properties, he dispatched three ships to Germany and Italy to bring them for him in huge quantities. These tortoises were then kept in a big pond near him so that they might pass on the gift of life to him.

Finally, paralysis attacked him on 30 August 1483; death at last conquered him. The last words uttered by him were: "I am not as ill as you people suppose."

All his efforts went in vain. Finally the king of France had learnt that no one could conquer death.

From Affluence to Ashes



Ghanshyam Das Birla (1894-1983) was the greatest industrial magnate of modern India. He led an extremely principled life, which was the secret of his success. Starting his career with paltry resources at the age of twelve, he reached such a height of success that his family now has wider commercial interests than any other single family in India.

Mr. Birla would always rise at five in the morning, and remain engrossed in his work until 9 p.m. He led a very simple life, often cooking his own meals. He drank coffee instead of liquor and would take nothing but water in between meals. Whether in India or abroad, he never missed his morning walk. On June 11, 1983 when he was in London, he went out after breakfast for a walk in Regent Street. After a while he felt some discomfort and informed his aides. Alarmed, they brought him back home immediately. No sooner had he reached home than he collapsed. He was taken to London's Middlesex Hospital, where he regained consciousness for a while. "What is wrong with me, Doctor?" he enquired. The doctors told him that they would be able to say within five minutes after a check-up. But he died before the doctors could complete their examination. It was Mr. Birla's wish that his last rites should be performed at the place of his death. Accordingly, he was cremated at an electric crematorium in London, and his ashes were brought to India to be scattered in the rivers of his homeland.

Mr. Birla wrote many books. The Hindi title of one of them is '*Rupaye Ki Kahani*' ('Money Story'). Mr. Birla's 'money-story' became a story of ashes in the end.

So it is with everyone in this world. Everyone is busy recording his success story, ignorant of the fact that what awaits him at the end of his life's journey is nothing but total destruction.

When the Journey Ends



After a long journey, the express train was approaching its destination. The view from the train indicated that the final station was near. Hundreds of passengers were filled with new life. Some were fastening their bedding; some were changing clothes; some were just peering expectantly out of the window. All were excited, eagerly awaiting their journey's end.

Suddenly, there was a violent thud. The express had collided with a train waiting in the yard. One can easily imagine what happened then: happiness suddenly turned to grief, and vibrant lives were faced with violent death; hope was transformed into despair. A story, which seemed to be heading for a happy ending, became a tragedy at the final moment.

So it is with life. Man strives to make himself comfortable in this world, to see his ambitions fulfilled and his life a successful one. But death comes just as his dreams are nearing completion. He leaves his lavish mansion for the desolation of the grave, his glistening body to be devoured by earth and worms. His life's

labour vanishes without trace as if there was no connection between him and all that he had strived for on earth.

Visions of greatness had occupied his mind, but he is forced to enter the grave, and from there proceed to God's court of justice. This world is quite different from the one he had sought to construct for himself on earth. Here he is destitute, without money to fulfill his needs or clothes to hide his body. All his worldly earnings come to nothing. His friends desert him. He is left powerless, with nothing that he had depended on in the world to help him.

Just as life's journey is nearing completion, it is struck by disaster. What a tragic outcome to such a long, arduous journey!

Door, Not Grave



I was given this news: "Hafizji's son died. The funeral prayer is about to be held. I have come to call you."

Hearing this, I closed my book, and, after making my ablutions, I set off with him.

When I reached the graveyard, I found a few other people standing there. I counted them—they were 17 people, young and old, including people from the family of the deceased. I remembered an incident from a month ago, when a relative of Sheikh Fazl Ali had died and his body had been brought to this same graveyard and had been buried in a special part of it.

That day, there had been so many people that it was difficult to count them all. It was as if the entire Muslim population of the locality had gathered there.

A few minutes after I got there, the Imam, the prayer-leader, of the locality stood up to lead the funeral prayer. I also stood in line with the others and made the intention of praying. The Imam read the prayer so fast that I could not read even a dua or supplication fully. I heard the phrase 'Allahu Akbar!' (God is Great!) being uttered rapidly, and shortly after, the Imam finished the prayer. People put on their shoes and got up to go, in such a way as if they had completed a formality in the name of attending a funeral prayer.

The grave was close by. I went towards it. When I got there, I found that it was still being dug. A few people stood around in small groups. Some were relating stories of communal oppression. Someone complained about the severity of the weather. Someone else offered his knowledge about the prices of things in the market. In other words, people were talking about this and that.

I stood by the grave, silently. My mind was churning with verses from the Quran and Hadith reports that talk about the Day of Judgment, Heaven, Hell and so on. It seemed as if this grave was an open door that I was standing in front of, and that, through it, I was witnessing the sights of the other world through my own eyes. My heart turned restless, and I uttered these words:

The real problem of Life is not the one in which people are entangled. Rather, the real problem is the one that will appear after Death. If only people knew what this person in the grave is facing! He has left this makeshift world and is heading towards the real world. This grave that is being dug before us

is not really a grave, but, rather, a door that has been opened for him to enter the other world. Passing through this door, he will cross over to the other side.

Whenever someone dies, it is a special moment. It is as if at that moment, the door leading out to the other world, which is hidden from us, is opened for a short while. If you possess eyes that can truly see, you can clearly view through this opened door this other world where all of us, one day or the other, have to go to. But the sights of the present world have so bedazzled people that even when they stand before this opened door, they see nothing of what is on the other side. Even though they stand so close to Reality, they remain totally unaware of it.

Over the Edge



“A thoroughbred professional and a dashing, innovative manager with fire in his belly and ideas in his mind—an astute general.” It was in such glowing terms that an official journal described Mr. P. V. Venkateshwaran, the chief marketing engineer of a certain government organization.

On May 29, 1982, an important meeting was held on the eighth floor of the Gopala Tower building. Mr. Venkateshwaran had obviously displayed those natural talents for which he had been so justly praised, for when the meeting was over, he emerged, flushed with the success of the decisions he had pushed through, and, talking with great enthusiasm to his colleagues, began walking briskly towards the gates of the

lift. These being open and his mind still being on the happy turn of events at the meeting, he stepped over the threshold of the lift without noticing that there was no lift there. He stepped straight into the empty lift shaft—the lift was still at the ninth floor—he fell down eight storeys and was killed instantaneously. The irony of it was that his personal doctor had been with him at the time, but there was absolutely nothing that the doctor—or anyone else—could do for him, except declare him dead.

At the age of 51, and, at a moment where his career had seemed at its brightest, his life had been snuffed out without warning—a unique and poignant tragedy, that is, in terms of everyday life. But from the point of view of the hereafter, the manner of dying, although extraordinary and horrifying, is irrelevant; for death, its point in time, its circumstances, accidental or otherwise, are all dependent upon God's will. What is all-important in the afterlife is the virtue of one's actions throughout one's life in this world.

Everyone, confident of his own wisdom and the worldly success it brings, walks straight ahead, fearlessly, paying scant attention to the fact that at any moment he may plunge headlong to his doom. Oppressing the weak and innocent, hurling insults, indulging in corrupt practices, scorning the failures of others, arguing on false premises, all such reprehensible acts can plunge man into the yawning abyss of destruction—just like stepping into an empty lift shaft on the eighth floor.

Neither friends, nor any of the material attributes of his worldly successes—and certainly not wishful thinking—will save him at that particular juncture.

There is no one in this world who is not on the brink of that lift shaft. This is a point which is little understood: all are convinced

that they are standing on such firm ground that there is no power in heaven or earth which will dare to touch them.

But, at any moment, at any second, they may find themselves toppling right over the edge.

The Vanity of Human Wishes



Dr. Uttam Parkash, head of the department of Surgery at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi, so excelled in his field that he was awarded the coveted title of Padma Bhushan.

This distinction, however, was not enough to satisfy his ambitions. On the 17th of February 1982, he was to preside over an International Congress on Surgery, the success of which would give an even greater impetus to his career. He took special pains with all of the arrangements, even managing to persuade President Sanjiva Reddy to inaugurate the function. But, at the eleventh hour, when he was congratulating himself that the arrangements were now perfect, a message came from the Rashtrapati Bhavan Secretariat saying, that the President could grace the occasion only if the Health Minister were also present. It was a matter of strict protocol. The situation now became extremely awkward, because the Health Minister had not originally been included, and his name did not appear on any of the programmes. But it now being absolutely essential to invite him, Dr. Parkash began to make Herculean efforts to make sure that he would not decline the invitation out of

pique. But it was all to no avail. The Minister did, indeed, consider it beneath his dignity to accept an invitation which had been sent to him at the very last minute, and he refused to participate in the function. This was a great shock to Dr. Parkash, and obviously more than he could bear, for three days before the inauguration, on 14th February, he succumbed to a massive heart attack. He was just 54 years of age. A Hindustan Times reporter very aptly described him as “the most worried man in town before he took the long road.” (*Hindustan Times*, February 1, 1982)

Today people find it beyond them to put up with even the slightest indignity. But what will their fate be in the next world when they are hungry and thirsty and there is no food to allay the pangs of hunger, and no water to slake their thirst? What will they do in the blazing heat when there is no shade to retreat to? How will they endure the terrible, engulfing wrath of God when there is no one at all who can save them? If a man is unable to bear being hurt by so much as a pebble today, will he be able to bear a mountain of suffering tomorrow?

A Happy Ending to the Tragedy of Life



Calcutta was initially the capital of British India. In 1911, King George V announced the transfer of the capital to Delhi. The British architect, Sir Edwin Luytens (1864-1944) was commissioned to design the new capital. Construction

work commenced in 1913, and eventually the magnificent city of New Delhi came into existence.

This was a time when the whole world was being swept by a new political wave: nationalism. Progressive trends in political thought had rendered the colonial system of government untenable. The freedom movement in India was fast gaining momentum. It was apparent that British rule in India would not survive for long. The completion of New Delhi thus coincided with the decline of the British Raj.

After the construction of New Delhi, a French political leader visited India. When he saw the glittering palaces and spacious mansions of the new capital of British India, he expressed his reaction in the following words: “What a magnificent world they built to leave.”

This is not only true of the British in India: it is true of all of us in this world. We come into this world full of desires and aspirations. We exert all our efforts on constructing a “magnificent world” for ourselves on earth. Then, just as our dream world begins to take shape, the angel of death visits us and takes us away from the world we have worked hard to construct for ourselves. We are then taken to what Arthur Koestler called an “unknown country.”

Life is a tragic story indeed if that is all there is to it. But this world, like everything else in the universe, can only be complete with its counterpart. The counterpart of this world is the hereafter. For those who have forgotten the next world, this life is certainly just a tragedy; but for those who look forward to the life to come, and build for the hereafter in the present life, this world will become an invaluable step towards a new, more successful existence in the next world.

Life is a tragedy when seen without the hereafter. This tragedy can only be given a happy ending with addition of the life to come.

Death's Lesson



A criminal was told that the court had passed a sentence against him and that he was to be hanged the next day. When he learned about what was going to happen to him the next day, it was as if he had already been hanged. Life, for him, suddenly became totally valueless. He stopped laughing and even speaking. He was drained of all his strength. He could not even move his hands or feet.

Death informs us that this is what is going to happen to all of us. Every person who appears to be alive today is going to be taken to the 'gallows' to be 'hanged' tomorrow. Yet, no one wants to think about this at all. Everyone is engrossed in his today. No one thinks of his tomorrow, when death will strike. Here, every person is a 'criminal', and very few know this.

We move about, see, talk, hear and so on. We spend our lives engrossed in material pursuits and in relationships with others. Then, suddenly, something really strange happens. Without our being asked, death overtakes us. Our feet stop walking. Our eyes lose their sight. We are separated from everything we possess and enter into the solitude of the grave.

Death indicates to us our reality. It tells us that we are moving from a situation where, in this world, we think we have control

over things, to another situation, in another world, where we will have no control over anything at all. It tells us that we are moving from light to darkness, from everything to nothing. Before death, humans are in a world where they think they are the masters of their destiny. But after death, they are taken to a world where they are compelled to accept being completely subordinated to Someone Else.

If you keep this reality in mind, your life will be totally transformed. It will make you realize, for instance, how absurd it is to trouble others, because you will have to answer for it after death, when you yourself will be under Someone Else's control. It will make you ashamed of thinking yourself to be superior to others, because you will realize that the superiority that will one day be taken away from you is absolutely unreal.

The Greatest Teacher: Death



Once when Julius Caesar had occasion to pass by a statue of Alexander the Great in Spain, he paused to gaze upon it and, tears coming into his eyes, he said, "In the whole of my life I have not been able to achieve even one tenth of the feats performed by Alexander in the space of a single decade."

Alexander the Great (356-323 BC), the son of the Greek King Philip, conquered the greater part of the known world of his time in a mere ten years. Taking up a project entertained by his father, Alexander decided to attack the huge Persian Empire, marched in 334 BC into Asia Minor and quickly subjugated

the cities in that region. He then conquered with comparative ease Phoenicia and Syria, and although he met with serious resistance at Tyre, he overcame this with the help of a fleet and the city was destroyed. Next, he went to Egypt, which submitted to him without a struggle. To this day the city of Alexandria, which he founded, still exists as a monument to his victory in Egypt. Setting out on a further career of victory, he passed through Syria into Persia (now Iran) and marched up the valley of the Tigris through Mesopotamia (now Iraq). He captured Susa, Persepolis, Ecbatana and other Persian cities with their treasures and advanced as far as the Caspian Sea. The barbarian tribes dwelling on the coast of this sea were promptly brought under his rule. Alexander did not tolerate opposition, always pursuing a policy of nipping it in the bud. The new empire was organized, into provinces, each keeping its own traditions and institutions. About this time, he crushed a rising led by Bessus, the successor of Darius. He next entered India, crossing the Indus near Attock in 326 BC and winning a great victory. After some further conquests, he returned through Baluchistan to Persepolis, then set himself to organize the great empire he had conquered.

Alexander was a great administrator as well as a great soldier and spread the influence of Greece throughout the empire he had won. But what did fate have in store for him? In the midst of this tremendous task and while planning a fresh expedition into Arabia, he died in the ancient city of Babylon— as defenseless in the face of death as any poor man in his miserable hut. Although he started out on a career of conquest that has few, if any, parallels in world history, his life was too short for his empire to be welded together. And his only son having been killed in battle, none of his acquisitions could be handed down to a long line of heirs. His vast empire was then divided up between three military officers, none of whom was

in any way related to him, and there being no further cohesive or unifying force to hold it together, it was not long before his hard-won empire had disintegrated.

When death comes, it impresses upon the immediate beholders of its ravages just how helpless man is before his Maker. Death strikes all around him, sparing, neither the high nor the low, yet people who are not directly affected fail, sadly, to understand its significance. It has a lesson to teach, but man ignores it. And if he has paid no heed to the most urgent realities of life, death will certainly leave him no respite to cogitate upon them at that time, and there will be no breathing space for him to learn lessons which he should have learned long before.

Death is the greatest teacher, but man lives out his life as if there were no such thing awaiting him at the end of life's journey.

The Gathering Storm



On 11th August 1979, a flash flood struck Maurvi in Gujarat, leaving total devastation in its wake. Due to heavy rain, the water level rose so high in a huge dam on the bank of the settlement that the dam broke. In the words of one who witnessed it, "About 20 feet high walls of water entered the settlement with such high velocity that no one could escape from their onslaught. In a few hours' time, this flood water having destroyed all animate and inanimate objects receded

as suddenly as it came.” It is estimated that, out of a total population of about 40,000, as many as 25,000 died in this flash flood. The extent of the destruction can be gauged from the fact that, besides public contributions, the central government immediately released rupees 5 crore as aid to the government of Gujarat.

Arun Kumar, a reporter of the *Hindustan Times*, published an eye-witness report in which he said that the survivors had a woeful tale to tell. Still in the grip of the shock and suffering that the flood had inflicted upon them, “Some have lost their speech and look absolutely dazed and blank” (19 August 1979). Another report (20 August 1979) recounts how overjoyed a ruined landlord was when he was handed over Rs. 18,000 in cash and gold ornaments weighing 225 grams which had been restored to him from his house by government officials.

Such events occur frequently on earth to remind man of the day of judgment. The great flood to herald the end of the world will overtake us suddenly. The destruction will be such that people’s tongues will fail them. They will be absolutely dazed. There will be those who, realizing their eternal doom, will be struck dumb. But there will also be those who will be given the good tidings that the encompassing flood of death and destruction will leave them unscathed. Not only will God restore to them what is theirs but will shower them with even greater blessings. The flash flood of that Day will condemn some to hell fire while it will usher others to the gates of eternal happiness. Before the “flood”, man could easily find eloquent excuses to justify his cruel ways. But, on seeing the “flood of destruction”, all his strength will desert him and he will have no words to justify the unjust actions that he perpetrated in the world he has left behind him.

The Great Happening



Prophet Mohammad once asked his companion, Abdullah Ibn Masood, to read him a part of the Quran. “Me, read the Quran to you, when unto you it has been revealed?” Ibn Masood asked. “Yes,” the Prophet answered, “I like to hear it read by someone else.” So Abdullah Ibn Masood started reciting Surah Al-Nisa. When he reached this verse, the Prophet asked him to stop: ‘How will it be when we produce a witness from every nation and call upon you to testify against them?’ (*The Quran* 4: 41). Abdullah Ibn Masood looked at the Prophet and saw that tears were flowing from both his eyes. (*Sabih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 5050)

What an awesome event the setting up of God’s court of justice will be! There will be no occasion for contumacy or denial. Those whom people disregarded in this world, will be the ones to be brought forward as God’s witnesses; for they were God’s witnesses on earth, warning mankind of the impending Day of Judgment. They were thought of as the most insignificant people on earth, but it will be their testimony that will decide people’s eternal fate.

Think of the state of those who are loquacious in the world but find themselves without words on that day; and of those who wield power and prestige, only to be divested of all traces of might. Superficial veils will be rent asunder, and those who feigned false piety will be exposed for the hypocrites they

were. The tables will indeed turn on that day, when many who are last in the world will be the first in the sight of God, and the filth and pollution of what had seemed pure and attractive will be revealed before the eyes of man. Much that man looks upon with relish now; he will turn away in horror from then.

People's real natures are concealed in this world. For some, attractive words have hidden their inner states and for others, material splendour. But in the next world these things will be taken away from man; he will be brought forward in his real state. What a calamitous day that will be! If one were to gauge the severity of that day, then one would cease to talk so ferociously, or be so allured by worldly things; worldly honour would seem just as meaningless as worldly disgrace.

The Mirage



I would like to narrate an incident of Mr. R.N. Pandey, a second lieutenant in the Indian Army, when he mistakenly boarded the Jammu Tawi Express, thinking it was the Utkal Express. It was only as the train steamed out of the station that he realized he was on the wrong train. When the train was nearing Okhla, in desperation he opened the door and jumped out of the train, which by then was hurtling along at full speed. He never reached the platform. He fell down under the train on to the railway track and was cut to pieces by the wheels. And so, on 12th November 1985, at the promising age of 35, death came to claim him for its own. (*Hindustan Times*, 13 November 1985)

The successful man who runs a lucrative industry, owns a palatial mansion, drives where he wills in limousines and possesses all kinds of status symbols including a circle of wealthy and elegant friends, has all the things which add up to success in this world. Yet he is no more immune to misfortune than Lieutenant Pandey. At any moment his factory can close, his house can crumble around him, his cars can skid with him to destruction and his friends can one by one desert him. Those self and same things which are such glittering symbols of success can become like so much dross under his feet, and under whose deadweight he may be buried forever.

As soon as the true nature of material things is laid bare, they appear no more attractive than tombstones. To all intents and purposes, material progress leads one to the splendid mansions of success. But, if we were to face up to the reality, we would see that it takes us only as far as the graveyard—and not one step beyond.

The real pleasures are those of the next world, while the pleasures of this world are only a mirage. The greatest mistake man can make is to pursue what is superficially attractive in this world, while neglecting what is to be achieved in the next; in this way, he will have success in neither.

Rose-Coloured Spectacles



On 30th May, 1981, the former president of Bangladesh, Ziaur Rahman (1936-1981) paid a visit to Chittagong. That night, as he lay asleep in the official rest house, he was

attacked and murdered by one of his own officers, Major General Manzoor. The latter hoped that by eliminating President Ziaur Rahman, he himself would be able to take over the reins of the government. But he had made a fatal miscalculation. With the exception of one loyal Squadron, the common soldiers did not extend their support to him, and just two days later, on 2nd June, he was shot dead by his enemies.

General Manzoor met the same fate which is eventually to be that of all mankind. Some are carried away, when their time has come, by the angels of death, while others have the misfortune to meet violent and untimely ends. Death is inevitable, but no one learns a lesson from this. No 'General Manzoor' thinks that after having done away with his enemy, he too will be done to death the very next day; that after casting others down into the pit of death, he will meet an identical fate.

This world is a formidable testing ground. Everyone has been given a free hand in the sphere allotted to him so that he may either prove his mettle or reveal himself for the unworthy person that he actually is. But, sad to say, life is full of cruelty and irresponsibility. And ironically, those who are the guiltiest of these lapses are the very ones who complain of others' misdemeanour. Everyone is a 'General Manzoor'—engaged in the annihilation or oppression of others. Everyone wants to set himself up on the ashes of other men. Everyone wrongly supposes that by destroying others, he will be able to step into their shoes. He ignores the fact that what awaits him is not the high and splendid positions of this world, but his own dreary grave.

Woe betide those who perpetually see themselves through rose-colored spectacles, for life will ultimately force them to look directly at the plain, unvarnished bleakness of their own moral failures. No one stops to give thought to this aspect of

the future, so engrossed is he in the present. Everyone is fully conversant with what is happening today but is oblivious of the blows that will fall tomorrow.

What man must finally come to terms with is not the ‘here and now’ but all eternity.

The Illusion of Freedom



In December 1983, a severe drought brought the Ivory Coast’s hydro-electric stations to a standstill. Since they had supplied ninety-two percent of the country’s electricity, this meant that sometimes there was no power for as many as 18 hours a day. Computers, electric typewriters, refrigerators and other gadgets ceased to operate. Diners in luxury hotels were forced to eat by candlelight, while houses, shops and offices were lit by lanterns. For fear of being caught in lifts, many businessmen simply gave up going to their offices. One commuter be-wailed his lot to a *New York Times* correspondent:

“For years I had gone from my air-conditioned villa in my air-conditioned car to my air-conditioned office. I never realized how hot it really is here.”

All this in a country which at one time had been called the “Showcase of Africa” because of its glittering array of residential and commercial centres. It was only when there was an unprecedented drought that people realized what an artificial world they had been living in. It was only then that they realized how disagreeable the reality was.

The same is true of life in general. Just as the inhabitants of the Ivory Coast took for granted their electricity supply and all the comforts it gave them, so do the denizens of this world take their freedom as a right—and as a right that can never be terminated. But when they pass beyond the grave, their composure will suddenly be shattered by the discovery that their so-called freedom was just an illusion. They will find that their freedom of action had been given to them as a test of their worthiness to enter the gates of Paradise. They will learn, too late, that throughout their lives, God had held them responsible for every thought, word and deed, and that on the Final Day they will have to give an account of themselves.

On coming to grips with this reality, they will suffer mental discomfort a million times more acute than any physical discomfort suffered on the Ivory Coast due to a power failure.

Just Short of the Summit

Climax and Anti-Climax



A veteran of World War I, Maurice Wilson had always cherished a dream of standing on “the roof of the world”—the top of Mount Everest (at 29,028 feet, the highest peak in the world). His keenness to realize this ambition was so great that he walked out of a successful family business, spent all his money on a second-hand aeroplane and flew six thousand miles from England to India, finally touching down at Purnia on the borders of Nepal. Having been refused permission

to proceed beyond this point in his aircraft, he sold it, and approached the Everest by way of Darjeeling and Tibet.

On the last leg of the journey, he carried with him only a small tent, some rice, an automatic camera and a few other small items. He planned to stand on the summit on his 36th birthday, 21st April 1934, but, when he was just a few days away from making that birthday the most memorable one ever, he was overtaken by a violent Himalayan storm and was forced to descend to his previous base. One year later, the famous Sherpa guide, Tenzing Norgay, found Wilson's body and next to it, his diary in which he had written, "only 13,000 feet more to go. I have the distinct feeling that I'll reach the summit on April 21". He had hoped that his automatic camera would record his moment of triumph for posterity. But that moment never came. And no one was ever able to find out the actual cause of his death.

That was the first serious attempt to conquer Mount Everest, and it ended in failure. The saga of Maurice Wilson, divested of its elements of high drama, is, if we could but realize it, the saga of many of the world's less illustrious, less daring millions. There are few of us who do not, in a lower key, strain after some cherished dream, some gilded ambition, full of thoughts of the happiness that awaits us at some imagined point in the future. But death can come at any moment and may forestall the ripening of well-laid plans. This is an eventuality, which, in the struggle to achieve an ambition, many of us completely lose sight of. Yet it is an ever-present reality, for which all of us must prepare ourselves, sooner or later. We must never lose our awareness of the fact that our ultimate destination lies not in the realization of dream, but in the abode which we finally take up in the afterlife. We shall better be able to come to terms with the anti-climactic nature of human existence, if we keep our minds firmly fixed on the notion that the greatest climax lies beyond the grave.

The Other Side of Death



The Greek king Alexander conquered many lands, but when his time to leave this world arrived, he lamented, ‘I wanted to conquer the world, but Death has conquered me. I couldn’t get even that peace that an ordinary man is able to enjoy.’

Napoleon Bonaparte’s last words were on these lines:

“I thought despair was a crime, but today there is none in the world who is more utterly in despair than me. I was hungry for two things: power and love. I got the former, but it did not remain with me. I searched a lot for love but never found it. If human life is what I got, then it is absolutely meaningless, because its final result is nothing but despair and destruction.”

The Caliph Harun al-Rashid was the ruler of a vast dominion. At the end of his life, he commented:

“For my whole life, I tried to run away from my sorrow, but, yet, that sorrow still remained. I have led a life of great sorrow and worry. Not a single day of my life have I spent without worrying. Now, I am at the verge of death. Very soon, my grave will eat up my body.”

This is what is going to finally happen to every human being. Yet, every one of us is oblivious to this. When the time came for the Abbasid Caliph Mansoor to die, he rued:

“If I had stayed alive a few days more, I would have destroyed this rulership that has repeatedly taken me away from truth. The truth is that one act of goodness is better than the whole of rulership. But I realized this only when Death took me in its grip.”

Most people who are conventionally thought of as ‘successful’ in this world, have died feeling that they were the most unsuccessful of all. If whatever happens to a man when he nears death happened before, his life would have been totally transformed. Whenever anyone stands near death, the dazzling delights of the world, which he was so taken up with that he had no time for anything else, appear to him as even more unreal than a heap of ashes. Behind him is a world that he has lost and has left forever, while in front of him is a world for which he has made no preparations at all.

There is absolutely no use remembering death only when it is about to overtake you. The time for remembering death is before this, when you are capable of doing evil and trying to legitimize it as good. But people are not willing to think about death then. At that time, they will do everything to satisfy their egos that they ought not to do. But when they lose all their strength and when they realize that they are in the grips of the unrelenting Angel of Death, they finally remember their mistakes. But the time for such remembrance is not while facing death, but, rather, it is when they are making those mistakes and are not ready to listen to anyone’s counsel.

Five Seconds to Go



Once when I was on a visit to Meerut, I went for a stroll one evening with my host, Maulana Shakeel Ahmed Qasmi. We were walking along the Sadar Baazaar, when, all of a sudden, the whole front of a house just a few yards ahead of us, collapsed without warning, blocking the entire width of the street with debris.

We were hardly five seconds away from the scene of this tragic accident. Had we been five seconds faster, or had the house caved in five seconds earlier, there was no way that we could have escaped the accident. Our deaths would have been instantaneous. While we happily imagined that our final destination lay far ahead, our journey would have been cut short in the middle.

It occurred to me at that time that man is separated from death by a mere five seconds. At any point in time there is the chance that man will make this five-second journey—and find himself in another world.

If only man could quite finally grasp the enormity of the fact that the distance between him, at any given point in his life, and death, could be so infinitesimally short, he would undergo the most amazing metamorphosis; he would continue to live in this world, but his thoughts would then become firmly focused on the life to come. If man could appreciate that he is standing on death's doorstep, he would then leave the

strongest of incentives to lead an upright life, for he should then have to come to grips with the fact that, immediately after death, he would, in the words of the Prophet, either enter the garden of paradise or plunge into the pit of fire. Each step that man takes in this world leads him relentlessly towards one of the two extremes. But man has become so insensitive to this reality that he seldom sees fit to give it any serious consideration.

People put their trust in false ideals, and worship them as if they were holy, but in the life hereafter, only the humble reverence that man has for God in this life can be of any avail in his final salvation. True worship means fearing God in such a manner that He comes to dominate one's thoughts entirely. He becomes the supreme force in and monitor of all one's affairs. Whatever is done then is for the sake of God, for the love of God, out of fear of God, and for no other. In short, man's total concern becomes for life in the world to come. Given such concern, life's mundane affairs should pale into insignificance.

A Strange Deprivation



If you give a one rupee coin to someone and tell him that somewhere ahead there is a heap of ten million such coins and that if he runs quickly he can obtain all that money, what do you think he will do with the one rupee coin that you have given him? He will forget about it and run after the ten million rupees!

The issue of this world and the Hereafter is somewhat similar. This world is an introduction to the Hereafter. Here, people obtain an initial recognition of those blessings and joys that God has arranged for in their full form in the Hereafter. This is in order that man can understand the whole from the part, that he can gauge the ocean from a drop.

If someone truly realizes what this world is, for him it will seem like the one-rupee coin mentioned above. He will leave aside this small joy and rush after the much bigger one. Forgetting this world, he will run towards the Hereafter. On the other hand, someone who does not understand the true nature of this world will take it to be everything. Forgetting the Hereafter, he will remain completely drowned in the things of this world.

The sun exists in order to introduce to man the life of the Hereafter that is filled with light. But on seeing the sun, man starts taking the sun itself for a deity. The beauty of flowers and trees is in order to convey to people the beauty of the Hereafter. But man takes them to be the ultimate things and wants to create a paradise for himself amidst them, here in this world. The delights of this world exist in order to make people desire the joys of the Hereafter. But man so loses himself in these worldly joys that he forgets the Hereafter.

A person who loses himself in the deceptive pleasures of this world, has lost his Hereafter. When he will reach the Hereafter and see its eternal joys, his heart will turn into a graveyard of regret. How foolish he was, he would tell himself, that for the sake of false comforts, he lost all the real comforts; that for the sake of false joys, he lost all the real joys; and how, being deceived by false freedom, he caused himself to be deprived of true freedom.

The Eternal Journey



Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi (1859-1943) was on his way to Azamgarh by train. A railway guard, who was a disciple of his, came to meet him at a station. Just then a villager appeared and presented the Maulana with a bundle of sugarcane. The gift was accepted, and the Maulana asked one of his companions to have it weighed, and book it in the luggage compartment. “There is no need to have it booked,” the guard volunteered; “I’ll speak to the guard on this train. He will look after it.” “But the guard will only accompany this train,” the Maulana replied, “And I am going on further.” The guard thought that Maulana Thanawi would be changing trains at some station. “Never mind,” he said. “I will tell the guard to inform the guard on the next train. You won’t have to bother about it.” “But I am going on still further,” the Maulana repeated. Astonished, the guard asked: “Where are you going? You told me a moment ago you were going to Azamgarh.” Maulana Thanawi remained silent for a moment or two, and then replied: “I am going on to eternity. Which guard will accompany me there?”

The same is true, not only of rail journeys, but of all matters in life. Every affair should be looked at in its eternal context. A “guard” may give someone temporary support in this world, but when he reaches the next world, there will be no one to lend a helping hand. If he keeps in mind that he is on the way to the hereafter, then he will consider everything which will become

worthless there as being worthless now, no matter how great a worldly price it may seem to command. He will give weight only to those things which will be of consequence in the next world, no matter how inconsequential they may seem in this world.

In this world, a person may have command of impressive words which he uses to defy the truth; but in the next world he will find himself lost for words. He may wield his power unjustly, being content that his victims will never be able to avenge his wrongs; but in the next world he will be divested of all power. Beguiled by wealth, he may become proud in this world, but in the next world he will have nothing to be proud of; he will have left his wealth behind in this world.

This is the basic difference between a man of true faith and a disbeliever. A disbeliever lives on earth as if he is going to stay here forever, while the hallmark of true faith is the belief that one is on the way to the next world. Basically, then, the distinction between belief and disbelief is a psychological one; but these two different attitudes to life make for vastly different practical lives—so different, in fact, that one leads to hell, while the other paves the way to the gardens of paradise.

Showing One's Mettle



An elderly couple, B.K. Rama Reddy aged 90, and his wife, Phula Bai aged 80, were sleeping peacefully in their home at Banjara Hills, Hyderabad on 21st September, 1981, when they were ruthlessly attacked and killed by their fifty-

year-old servant, Ramaya. Now master of the house, he broke open their boxes and stole jewels worth about rupees one lakh, then escaped into the darkness.

As he went furtively on his way, he passed by two policemen on night duty. Sensing something suspicious in his movements, they detained him for interrogation. On being threatened with dire consequences, he broke down and confessed to his crime, handing over the stolen goods to the two policemen, Sheikh Mahboob and Sheikh Rasheed. They then took him and his entire loot to the police station.

The police officers on duty greatly appreciated the honesty of these two policemen who could so easily have felt tempted to enrich themselves, in such a situation. In addition to giving them a cash reward, they also had them promoted, Sheikh Mahboob becoming Station Officer and Sheikh Rasheed becoming Head Constable.

How opposite were the implications for different people involved in a single event! Virtue was rewarded and crime was punished. But there is nothing accidental in the one event simultaneously giving rise to such different consequences: such events are the divine instruments by which God puts different individuals to the test. Where one man would bring discredit upon himself, another man would cover himself in glory. In each case, the individual concerned would reveal himself in his true colours. Where Sheikh Mahboob and Sheikh Rasheed evinced the sterling qualities of strict honesty and dedication to duty, Ramaya revealed himself for the base, unprincipled scoundrel that he was, and was rightly sentenced to life imprisonment. The world is like a divine stage where human beings are given the opportunity by God to reveal their true natures. Human caliber can be discerned all too clearly from the way people respond to different types of situations.

Yet it should be borne in mind that man has no intrinsic power. No one can, by himself, give anything to anyone, nor can he deprive anyone of anything. All human acts take place according to the will of God. Man exists in this world to be tested, and the test is as much concerned with his intentions as it is with his actions and their outcomes, for man can only desire that an event should take place and strive to cause things to happen in the way he wishes, but if God wills otherwise, there is no way that man can see his wishes come true. Ramaya might well have escaped under the cover of darkness and enjoyed the fruits of his hideous crime, but he had failed the supreme test and God willed that his punishment should be immediate.

He Is Listening



Many years ago, in 1982, the Times of India published a report titled 'Careful, Uncle Sam May be Listening'. It was about a book by a former officer in the NSA, the American secret service agency. The name of the book was *The Puzzle Palace*.

The book contains some very interesting anecdotes and information. It relates that the number of telephone calls and telex and telegram messages (this was before the age when email became popular) sent every day from America is enormous. These messages are first received by what is called an Earth Station. From there, they are sent to a satellite, which revolves around the earth at a height of some 2300 miles. This entire process is over within less than a second!

This means that every such message that is sent out from America or that enters America from elsewhere, reaches an American government agency before it gets to the intended recipient. If you were to make a telephone call from Washington to someone in Delhi, an American government agency would hear your words even before your friend in Delhi could! And so, if the American secret service agencies want to intercept the messages someone is getting, all they need to do is to supply that person's number to the office of the Earth Station, where all the telephonic conversations and messages of the person are being automatically recorded.

Developments like these are signs of God. They happen so that people can learn how to control their tongue and use it in a controlled way. If someone says something wrong or bad to someone else, he imagines that he is speaking to just one person.

But he should know that even before what he says reaches the person he is addressing, it has already reached God.

This story should serve to alert us that we ought to be careful and aware, for God is listening to each and every word that we utter.

The Day of Judgement



There was a headline in the Bangalore edition of *The Indian Express* (September 9, 1983), which read: GLITTER IS NOT GOLD.

The story was about Miss Sybil D'Silva, who lives in Artillery Road, Bangalore. She was visited in her home by a woman aged about 35, holding a child of about six months in her arms. She told Miss D'Silva that her husband was seriously ill, and that she needed rupees 5000 urgently for his treatment. "I am not begging from you," she said, taking a golden necklace out of her pocket. "All I want to do is sell this golden necklace. Dear as it is to me, my husband's health is dearer. It would sell for rupees 10,000 in the market. But, because I need the money, I will give it to you for just 5000."

Miss D'Silva said she was not interested, but the woman kept pleading the desperateness of her case. Eventually, she persuaded Miss D'Silva to give her the money, and buy the necklace.

Next day, Miss D'Silva took the necklace to a goldsmith on Bangalore's Commercial Street. He tested it on his touchstone. After examination, its reality came to light. Recounting her story to the Bangalore police, Miss D'Silva said: "He told me it was brass."

So will it be in the next world. In this world, everyone is delighted with his deeds; everyone thinks of what he has done as gold. But gold is only real when it is shown to be such on the goldsmith's touchstone. In the next world, God will judge everybody's actions on His own touchstone.

The value of gold will only be attached to those actions which are proved to be made of gold when put on God's touchstone. If one's 'golden actions' turn out to be made of brass, then they will only mean disgrace and doom. Actions which people attach so much value to that they are never ready to forsake them; they will seek to be rid of these very actions. They will disown that which was dearest to them in the world. But

on that day, there will be no disownment. That which they were proud of in the world will cause them only disgrace and humiliation when they come before God.

O Man!



Around a dozen eggs were kept on the table. They all seemed okay. But when they were broken, one after the other, they all turned out to be rotten! Not one of them was good, even though they all looked fine from the outside.

The same is happening with people these days. Externally, everyone seems to be a ‘decent’ human being. They wear good clothes. They speak wonderful things. They all have a long list of stories of their doings that they love narrating. But if you really experience them, you will discover that from the inside, they are actually very different. They are beautiful from the outside and not quite so from the inside.

When a difficult situation arises, when there’s a question of a business transaction, when there’s some complaint or bitterness, when it is a matter of someone’s interests being hurt, and so on—on such occasions one discovers that a person’s inner reality is not the same as what appears from the outside. Ugliness is hidden under a beautiful garb. Selfishness, superficiality, show, pride, jealousy, opportunism, prejudice, exploitation—all these are hidden under people’s exteriors. Everyone seems like a ‘good egg’, but the reality is very different if you break the ‘egg’ and see things for yourself.

This is how the world is today. If you deeply examine things, you will hear either the sadistic laughter of the oppressor or the pathetic cries of the oppressed. You will see people driven by the most terrible impulses to fulfill their selfish desires in a state of total unawareness and insensitivity.

But this is not going to remain forever. Very soon, the time will come when man will find himself in another world, a world where the power to make decisions will be God's and not man's.

The Virtue of Mercy



The famous hunter, Jim Corbett, was particularly interested in shooting tigers. To justify this cruel act, he had an explanation ready: "I hunt tigers to protect my townsmen from man-eaters." Most hunters find some justification or the other for the cruelty of their acts. But some, like Colonel Jaipal, whose memoirs, *"The Great Hunt"*, were published by Carlton Press, New York in 1982, see no need to justify themselves.

Colonel Jaipal freely admits what others fight shy of. He makes no bones about the fact that killing crocodiles gave him an intense pleasure. He would creep up on these creatures, fire at them and watch exultantly as they fled into the water where they writhed in pain, beating their tails grotesquely, and jaws agape, gasped for breath. All this gave him "quite a lot of thrills."

It is perhaps intrinsic to the human mind to want to go after others, to make plans to trouble them. And when people succeed in these plans, they revel in what they think is their

‘success’. But little do they realize that in the Hereafter they shall be held accountable for their deeds. In contrast, someone who controls this urge and lives in the world in such a way that he becomes a source of mercy for others will find that the doors of Heaven will be opened to him in the Hereafter. We have to root out the evils of callousness and cruelty within ourselves to prove ourselves eligible of entering the gates of paradise.

These Sleepers!



In a tradition Prophet Muhammad wondered: “That those who should be running away from hell are sleeping and those who should be striving to attain such a precious thing as Paradise are sleeping.” (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 2601)

The punishment of Hell will be terrifying, yet man remains oblivious of this. The blessings of Paradise will be utterly delightful, yet man does not show any interest in them.

This, without doubt, is the strangest thing in the world.

People are fast asleep, only to wake up when the sparks flying out of the fires of Hell make further sleep impossible. People are oblivious of what is going to happen on the Day of Judgment, only to be shaken awake when devastation will strike them, and they cannot escape from it.

Everyone seems to be unconscious. Every person is so completely lost in his own self that it is as if there is no power

that is superior to him, although death daily announces that everyone must face a reality someday that nothing can counter. Truly, man is totally dependent, although he imagines himself to be immensely powerful.

People make promises but promptly forget them. They neglect to fulfill others' rights. They decline to acknowledge the Truth when it appears in front of them. They constantly blame others while refusing to recognize their own mistakes. They ignore the 'small' and flatter the 'big'. They subordinate their life to their desires, rather than to principles. They are crushed by those more powerful than themselves, and, in turn, they oppress the weak. They make themselves, instead of God, the centre of their concerns and attention. Instead of living in the desire for heaven and the fear of Hell, they live in the desire and fear of this world.

Doing all this, man forgets that he is leading himself closer to Hell and that he is proving himself unfit for Paradise.

Man has no interest in what should be for him the matter of greatest interest. He is the least fearful of what he should be most fearful of!

What Will Happen That Day?



God is the Lord of everything. Whatever anyone receives is given by God. No one but God has anything to give to anybody. And so, if someone were to snatch away something

from somebody else that the latter has legitimately acquired, it is, as it were, snatching something given by God. By doing so, that person tries to go against God's plan.

Suppose someone gets a house, and some other people plot to make him houseless. He has a legitimate source of livelihood, but some people want to destroy him economically. He leads a respectable life, but they want to rob him of his respect. He is at peace with his surroundings, but they institute false cases against him in order to destroy his peace. All such actions are an interference in what God has arranged. It is a war against the All- Powerful God by absolutely powerless creatures.

What do such actions amount to? God wants something, but these people do not want it. God decided to arrange for the allocation of livelihood among people in a particular way, but these human beings do not agree to this. These people's defiance of God appears to work in this world, but this apparent success is only because in this world, people have been granted freedom in order to test them. As soon as the period allocated for this test is over, people will find themselves so utterly bereft of power that they will not have even words to utter against others or the capacity to harm them.

In this world, human beings have freedom. Here, people have the freedom to go against what God has laid down as proper for human beings to do. They have the freedom to try to condemn the allocation of livelihood among people that God has arranged. But what will the condition of such people be when this freedom, linked to the test of life, comes to an end after death? Then, whatever will happen will be what God wants. Then, it will not be possible for anyone to change what God wants.

On that day, God will say that He gives to whoever He wants, and that no one can overturn His will, try as hard as he might.

Keeping One's Mind on Tomorrow



In 1898 Lord Curzon was appointed the Viceroy of India. He had two daughters. When Lady Curzon was expecting their third child, both she and her husband were hoping that it would be a boy. Their hopes were dashed, however, when in March 1904, another baby girl was born to them. The couple were staying in Naldara at the time of the birth, and they named their daughter Alexandra Naldara Curzon after the place. Later on, Lady Curzon returned to London. In one of the letters that Lord Curzon wrote to her from the summer capital, Shimla, he consoled her with these words: "After all, what does sex matter after we both of us are gone."

It is possible that these words were merely an attempt on Lord Curzon's part to hide his frustration. Be that as it may, adopting such an attitude can solve most of life's problems, if one becomes conscious of the value of doing so.

Man desires money, offspring and power more than anything in this world, and he does his utmost to acquire them. But if a person reflects upon this, finally he is going to leave all these things behind. What is the good of having something which he is bound to lose? If people were only to realize this, they would become content with what they have. It would put a stop to the oppression and cruelty that is perpetrated in this world out of sheer greed.

There is little difference between finding and losing in this world, for no value can be attached to finding something once it is accepted that he is only going to lose it again. How much effort man puts into acquiring wealth in this world; yet the inevitable result of his efforts is that he leaves everything behind. Every life eventually ends in death. When death comes, it tears man away from the things he is most attached to on earth.

People who live for the present, with no thought for the future, think that they can build happy lives for themselves at the expense of others. They seek to ruin others by bringing lawsuits against them in human courts, but it is they themselves who are heading for ruin; it is they themselves who will be tried and condemned in the divine court of the hereafter. They imagine that they can revel in their own glory, having wrought havoc in the lives of others. But they ignore the well-being of others at their peril. For soon their material props will vanish into thin air—who in this world is not bound for the grave?—and they will be exposed for the helpless creatures that they really are.

The Danger of Hell



The Quran (95: 4-6) tells us: “We have indeed created man in the best of mould, then We cast him down as the lowest of the low, except for those who believe and do good deeds—theirs shall be an unending reward!”

God has made man with a heavenly psyche. Then, He placed him in this world, where conditions are such that they stir a hellish psyche in people. Now, he who, while living amidst ‘the lowest of the low’, takes himself to the level of ‘the best of mould’ (or, in other words, who reawakens the heavenly psyche that is hidden deep within him amidst the hellish environment in which he finds himself) will be blessed by God after death. All other people will be left to suffer the punishment of Hellfire.

This world is a testing-ground. That is why it has been made in such a way that conditions repeatedly arise which serve as a test or trial for people. Here, one is faced with issues of profit and loss, and situations that stoke emotions such as greed and selfishness. There are superficial attractions here that attract people towards lust, addiction and worldly delight. Here people compete with each other, leading to selfishness and egotism. Here there are constant clashes of interest, which stir emotions such as anger, hatred and depravity.

This is ‘the lowest of the low’ of this world. The task before man is to lift himself above this and take himself to the level of ‘the best of mould’—which, in terms of his very birth, is his real or authentic level.

Whether a fruit is good or bad can be decided when it is cut open and its inside is seen. The same is true with man. Someone has a heavenly psyche, while someone else’s psyche is hellish. This reality of people can be discovered when they are ‘cut open’—when they are faced with difficult or unfavourable situations, which is when their real or inner reality is expressed. The way people react at such times indicates what their mindset is—heavenly or hellish. When people start fighting over money and property, when people

who think differently start quarreling about their respective views, when people start squabbling over a post that they each want to grab—these are the sorts of occasions when their reality can be discovered. On such occasions, if people express hatred, selfishness, injustice and egotism, they prove by their actions that their mindset is hellish and that they are neighbours of the devil. On the other hand, people who respond in such situations with love, unselfishness, justice, and humility prove that their mindset is heavenly and that they are close to God and the angels.

He who is a neighbour of the devil in this world will be so in the Hereafter, as well. He who lives in this world in the neighbourhood of God and angels, will live in the same way in the Hereafter as well.

When Death Will Expose Everything As False



What a strange moment will it be when people realize that whatever they did in this world, thinking it to be some very worthy action, is actually inaction of the lowest sort!

In this world, people think highly of themselves and strut about, puffed up with pride, whereas actually the only thing that they can take ‘pride’ in is to submit before God’s commandments.

People think that they are being very successful in trying to rationalize or explain away their misdeeds, while their success actually lies in openly acknowledging their misdeeds. They have been given the power of speech so that they can use it to praise God, but they employ it instead to shower praises on fellow human beings. Fine emotions such as fear and love have been placed in them so that they can devote these to God, but they have made created things the objects of their fear and love. They think accumulating wealth is the most important thing, whereas actually, the highest thing for them is to spend their wealth in God's path. They should have consideration for the weak, but they ignore them and flatter the strong. They should devote themselves to searching for and discovering the meaningfulness of life, but they drown themselves in furious agitation instead. The secret of their true progress lies in engaging in constant introspection, but instead they are busy inspecting and criticizing others. They should consider worldly wealth and respect as unreal and have no attachment to them, but they begin thinking these to be the biggest thing!

Today, people are obsessed with critiquing the oppression of others, taking this to be 'bravery'. Imagine their condition when they will come to know that true bravery is to realize the oppression that they themselves are guilty of!

People seek the support of some thing or being besides God, imagining it to be a powerful refuge. Imagine their condition when they will learn that besides God, there is no one who can be a refuge for anyone!

People accumulate worldly wealth and fondly imagine that they have obtained what needs to be accumulated. Imagine their condition when death will expose everything of theirs to be false and when they will realize that they have acquired nothing at all!

People prepare long lists of other people's mistakes. Imagine their state when angels will present them with a list of their own misdeeds!

People think this life is the be-all and the end-all. Imagine their state when they will discover that the real issue was death, and not this life that lasts for just a few days!

People use criteria that they have invented to convince themselves that they are in the right. Imagine their state when they will realize that only those who were right according to the criteria that God has established were right indeed!

Finding a huge crowd to welcome them, people think that they are very fortunate. Imagine their condition when they will come to know that the only fortunate person is the one whom God and His angels are waiting to welcome!

Every person has built a fantasy world of his own, and is happy living in it. But the Day of Judgment will destroy all these make-believe edifices. At that time, only those who have taken refuge in the 'edifice' of God and are in God's shade, will be safe.

This Hell-Bound Caravan



Contemplating on man's case I thought, 'Everyone is in search of Heaven, yet everyone is searching for his Heaven in Hell.' Thinking further on the issue I analyzed that 'People are searching for flowers among thorns. They are reducing their lives to rubble, while imagining that very soon a big palace of their own is going to emerge!'

Everyone is busy trying to beautify his life. Someone is busy in the field of trade or employment. Someone else is busy in the field of politics, trying to glorify his name. Someone is a clever wordsmith, using his skill with words to attract crowds. Everyone carries with him a beautiful dream of his future, and is busy, day and night, trying to make this dream a reality. But if you closely examine them, you will realize that for this dream to be realized, the only asset they possess is a stock of wrong actions.

Ignoring their relatives' rights, people want to build their children's future. They trouble their neighbours and at the same time, think of bringing joy to people who live far away. They do not hesitate to use unjust means when it comes to their personal affairs, but in the outside world they turn into flag-bearers of justice. They will not tolerate even a word being said against them, but they think they can do whatsoever they like to others, imagining that they are God's soldiers.

God has placed in this world everything that Man needs—in fact, even more than this. But the means to acquire every good thing in this world is good actions. God rewards those who fulfill the rights of others, who do not harm their neighbours, who deal justly with people, who lead their lives in devotion to God, rather than in devotion to themselves, who bow down before the Truth, even if it is against them, who surrender their egos to God and who agree to live their lives without egos in this world.

People think they are prancing among beautiful flowers, but actually they are leaping into the flames of Hell! They imagine that very soon they will enter the gardens of Heaven, while actually they are racing down the road leading to Hell-fire!

O! That caravan that bears no wealth other than empty fantasies!

O! The people who want to build in this world another world whose permission God has not granted!

Fear God



Today, there is no place anywhere where there is no oppression. Whom do people oppress? They oppress those who they think are weak, who do not know how to boss around, who do not have companions to come to their rescue, who want to stay away from the police and the courts. People turn bold in front of the weak and become meek in front of those who appear stronger than them.

This is like seeing with a blind eye. If people truly had eyes that see, the people they would fear most would be those whom they consider to be powerless, because God stands behind the powerless.

Whatever happens in this world is according to a plan to test people. This test aims to identify both God-fearing people as well as those who do not fear God.

God has made some people to be powerless and bereft of any status and has placed them among others and sees how the latter behave with them. Those who fear being unjust with such people, fear God. Such people will be destined for Heaven. But those who do not fear dealing unjustly with the weak, do not fear God. And so, they shall be pushed into Hell.

When Truth is Revealed



Some people have not, in their hearts, bowed to God. Their outward prostration is a mere pretense. In the next world, they will be told to bow down before the Lord, but they will not be able to do so. (*The Quran* 68:42)

Prostration is not just a ritual and time bound physical action; it is to surrender oneself to sublime reality. It is to make oneself follow truth in one's whole life. So, this verse of the Quran does not just refer to prostration in a limited sense; it indicates a truth which pertains to the whole of one's life.

In this world, people – both on an individual and national level—do not in their hearts bow to the reality; they do not adopt the path of truth. Yet in their outward demeanour, they pretend to be on the side of truth; they speak words which make it seem that they are in the right and are not wronging or exploiting others.

But such deceit is only possible in this world of trial. In the next world, everything will change. Fake notes can be passed on the streets, but banks will not accept them. In the same way, in the next world there will be no possibility of making lies appear true, and unjustness appear like justness.

In the next world words will refuse to take on false meanings. No one will be able to call injustice as justice and disguise falsehood as truth. The difference between outward and inward will

disappear. One will only be able to express what is in one's heart. Man will appear exactly as he was in relation to reality, rather than in the manner which he used to contrive in front of others.

If people can convince others that they are in the right, then they are sure that they have been proved right. But, in fact, only those who are proved right in God's sight are truly in the right. In the next world, only those who are truly right will be proved right. Falsehood will be exposed as nothing but false. This verse, then, does not only refer to hypocritical prostration; it gives us an indication of the outcome facing both individuals and nations.

Ray of Hope



The world beyond death is, as Arthur Koestler (1905-1983) put it, an “unknown country”. We are all travelling towards that unknown country. The strangest and the most mysterious event of our lives is death. Everyone is anxious to know what will become of him after death.

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

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

has lost all meaning. I am ready to take a fateful leap into the unknown. Young man, can you give me a ray of hope?”

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

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

It is this ray of hope that God’s prophets have come to provide to the world. The prophets have taught man that there is another world—one that is both eternal and ideal—after death. Those who will be admitted to this perfect world in the afterlife are who, in this life on earth, prove themselves worthy of it by their righteous actions. This message has been summed up in these words of the Quran:

“And God calls unto the home of peace.” (The Quran, 10:25)

The Result of Reaction



Mr. G.D. Birla (1894-1983), besides being the topmost industrialist in the country, was also a very close associate of Mahatma Gandhi in the freedom struggle.

How the idea of national freedom took shape in the mind of Mr. Birla, is reproduced here in his own words: “When I was 16 years old, I started my independent business as a broker in Calcutta. During this period, I came in contact with many Englishmen, who were either my customers or my superior officers. I also saw their organizational capability and other qualities. But one thing I could not bear was their racial pride. I was not permitted to use the elevator to reach their offices. Neither was I allowed to sit on their benches, while waiting. This humiliation was very painful. As a result of this, I got interested in politics, which started in 1912 and continues till today.”

The editor of *The Hindustan Times* (12 June 1983) comments on this event: “This was the beginning of his nationalism.” Mr. Birla’s nationalism was inspired by intense feelings of dislike. Similarly, the Islamism of the present-day Muslim leaders is born out of hatred for an opponent or enemy, whether real or imaginary. Both these sentiments are the results of reactionary forces, even though they speak in different languages. Neither of them could be termed a positive case.

To act on the strength of a positive incentive is one thing. But to be spurred on by a negative incentive is quite another thing. The former is ‘action,’ the latter ‘reaction.’ A satisfactory result can flow only from right action. Reaction being negative, no positive result can be expected from it.

The Precipice



One day a friend of mine came to see me unexpectedly, at an odd hour, and he did not even accept the offer of a cup of tea. He hurriedly said, "I have to reach home soon. My wife must be waiting for me." And then, in a hurry, he started his scooter and set off. Barely half an hour later, the telephone bell rang. It was his wife. In a greatly agitated tone, she stammered, "Your friend..." I could hear her sobs and cries, and the meaning of the sentence could be guessed. Putting the receiver down hastily, I rushed to her house. Having said goodbye to me he had reached home, but while climbing the stairs he had stumbled and fallen down. Some people had carried him upstairs and the doctor was immediately called, but he could only declare him dead.

When he rode off on his scooter, he had apparently set off for his home but, in truth, he was heading towards death. This is not an unusual event. Such events take place every day and in all kinds of places.

On 25th May 1979, American Airlines Flight 191 took off from O'Hare International Airport, Chicago. Shortly afterwards it crashed and burst into flames. All 271 passengers were burnt to death. This particular accident happened with a small number of people, but such is going to be the fate of all human beings. All men who are on the move are actually heading towards death and destruction. Death is closer to man than life itself.

Everyone is standing on the verge of death. Everyone is in danger of having come to the end of his period on earth and of being taken off at any moment to the next world from where he will never come back. Then his existence will be one of either eternal hell or eternal heaven.

When a blind man comes across a well on his way, everyone knows that the greatest thing at that moment is to warn him of it. How strange it is that the whole human race is standing on the brink of the most dangerous precipice, yet one never feels the need to give warning of it! When a servant of God gives a danger signal, far from being appreciated, he is ridiculed and labeled a traitor. He is accused of wanting to lull the nation into the comfortable sleep of cowardice, of trying to dampen the spirit of holy war among the Muslims, of wanting to shift the emphasis from real issues. He is vilified as being not the messenger of life but of death and doom. Humanity stands on the brink of a precipice, but people are so disinclined to look in front of them that they have the illusion of being safe at home. People are heading towards death but are happy in the thought that they are advancing on the journey of life.

The Impending Day



In the present world, when someone believes in God, he does so on the basis of evidence. But in the Hereafter, those who will accept God will do so on the basis of His power. And

so, it is as if in this world evidence is the representative of God. In contrast, in the Hereafter, God will appear with His complete Being in front of people to enable them to accept Him.

From this we learn who those people are who really believe in God and who do not. Someone who believes in God is one who accepts the weight of evidence, who bows before the Truth when it comes along, with nothing but verbal evidence. In contrast, someone who is not affected by something simply by its truth, who accepts the truth only when he is in some way compelled to do so, and who is not willing to accept the truth which does not involve an element of compulsion to accept it, will not believe in God.

God wants us to believe in Him while He is invisible to us, while people want to believe in Him only if they can visibly see Him. God wants people to bow down before the Truth, but Man is willing to bow down only before Power. God wants people to behave justly only out of the fear of Him, but people are willing to act justly only when they are compelled to do so. Where there is no compulsion, immediately they become defiant.

This world is a testing ground. Here you are given the freedom to conceal your reality. But the Hereafter will expose every person for what he truly is. On that day, many people who appeared to be devoted to God will be made to stand in the company of people who were not devoted to God. Many of those who presented themselves as followers of the Truth will be shown to be guilty of not following the Truth. Many people who think that they have been allotted a place in Heaven will find themselves on Hell's doorstep.

How utterly bereft of fear man is, although what an enormously frightful moment will he soon confront!

The Greatest News



A young man I know is a government employee in Delhi. I have known him for a long time. One day, I had gone out for some work, and when I came home at night, I was told that he had come several times to my house to meet me.

Just then the bell rang. It was the very same man. Seeing me, he burst into a smile and said, 'I've come to give you some good news.' And then he told me that he had been promoted at work and had received a raise in his salary.

I thought to myself, 'If someone has some important news, he just can't keep it to himself. He simply has to share it with others. In fact, sometimes he goes out of his way to find someone whom he can share his news with. If someone buys a new car or builds a new house, he just can't help talking about it. If in a gathering, his car or house does not become a subject of discussion, he turns the ongoing conversation in such a direction that he can tell others about his car or house. This is human nature. There's no human being who isn't eager to tell others his important news!'

Today, uncountable voices compete with each other for attention. Everyone has some message or the other which he wants to convey to others. But in this enormous crowd of people desperate to say something or the other, there is no one who is eager to convey news about the Hereafter, to make others aware of Heaven and Hell. There is no dearth of speakers and

writers, but none is concerned about the Hereafter. Everyone has news about something or the other to do with this world. But no one has news about the Hereafter that they want to tell others about. If they had such news, they would obviously share it with others. In fact, given the enormous importance of the Hereafter, all other news would be no news at all which people would want to share with others. They would spend all their energy and time only in sharing with others the news about the Hereafter. They would see no work as work other than the work of making people fearful of Hell and conveying the good news of Heaven.

If people come to know that in the next few moments, an earthquake will strike or a volcano will erupt, they will talk only about that and nothing else at all. They will forget everything else and will talk only about the impending devastating event. But speakers are carrying on with their speeches, and writers are carrying on with their writings, and all these speeches and writings are so utterly empty of mention of the Hereafter that it is as if people have no news at all of this impending terrifying Day.

People are generally entangled in the problems of their immediate environment—such as their personal or community issues of an economic, political and social nature. Experiencing these all around them, they begin to think that they are the matters of real importance. And so, they get involved in discussing and debating such issues. However, the biggest issue is the issue of the Hereafter. The Hereafter is hidden from our sight, but it is the biggest of all impending events, and is so much more deserving of being talked about than all other events.

A Call



Prophet Muhammad was given the responsibility of calling people to the Truth. He gathered the inhabitants of Makkah near the hill of Safa and said to them that they would die in the same way as they slept, and that they would be brought back to life in the same way as they woke up from sleep. After that, there would be either eternal Heaven or eternal Hell. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 4770)

When the Prophet became the head of Madinah and entered the town, he delivered a similar speech. On this occasion, too, the biggest thing that he had to talk about was about people saving themselves from the punishment of Hellfire. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1413)

Our work at the Centre for Peace and Spirituality is to carry on with this mission of the Prophet of Islam. There are many people who are actively involved in issues related to the manifold problems of life in this world. We focus, instead, on issues related to the problems of what happens after death. Is there anyone who would like to join this mission?

People are concerned about war and strife and riots in this world. Is there anyone who is concerned about the leaping flames of Hell and who would like to support us to warn humanity about this fire?

People's sights are fixed on the delights of busy cities, but we are looking for those people who can see the solitude of the graveyard.

There are millions of people who are greatly agitated because they were not given admission into some particular institution.

We want people who fear that they may not be given admission into Heaven.

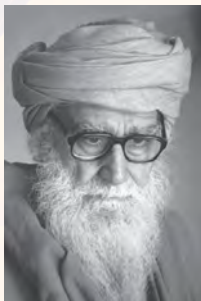
People bemoan loss and destruction in this world. We are searching for people who are overwhelmed by the fear of facing loss and destruction in the Hereafter.

Everything is happening today in this world of God, except for one thing. And this is the thing that God desires the most. And that is, to make people aware of that impending, terrifying Day. If people do not stand up for this work, then the Angel Israfil's trumpet, announcing the Day of Resurrection, will call them. But that will be an announcement of their destruction, not an alarm for them to wake up!

Prophet Muhammad was given the responsibility of calling people to the Truth. He gathered the inhabitants of Makkah near the hill of Safa and said to them that they would die in the same way as they slept, and that they would be brought back to life in the same way as they woke up from sleep. After that, there would be either eternal Heaven or eternal Hell. (*Sahih al- Bukhari*, Hadith No. 4770)

Everything is happening in this world of God except for one thing that God desires the most—making people aware of that impending, terrifying Final Day—The Day of Resurrection. If people do not stand up for this work, then the Angel Israfil's trumpet, announcing this Final Day will call them. But that will be an announcement of their destruction, not an alarm for them to wake up!

Our work at the Centre for Peace and Spirituality is to carry on with this mission of the Prophet of Islam, of making man aware of the Creation Plan of God and the inevitable Final Day, so that he may prepare for 'The Final Journey'.



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925-2021) was an Islamic scholar, spiritual guide and an Ambassador of Peace. Having received international recognition for his work, the Maulana authored over 200 books and recorded thousands of lectures giving the rational interpretation of Islamic concepts, prophetic wisdom and the spiritual meaning of Quran and Islam in the contemporary style. His English translation of the Quran is widely appreciated as simple, clear and in contemporary style. He founded *Centre for Peace and Spirituality International* in 2001 to re-engineer the minds of people towards God-oriented living and present Islam in the modern idiom based as it is on peace, non-violence and spirituality.

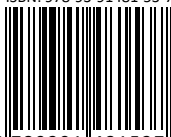
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