

ENGLISH MONTHLY ISSUE 96 DECEMBER 2020

# SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living



Wise is one who realizes that one does not need to change the situation; rather he needs to change himself.

# A MAGAZINE FOR THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

## Spirit of Islam monthly...

- ▶ Presents Islam, the religion of nature, in the contemporary idiom to help Muslims rediscover Islam from the original sources
- ▶ Explains Creation plan of God for humankind
- ▶ Enlightens people on the subject of global peace
- ▶ Addresses contemporary issues
- ▶ Assists the readers to deal with life's challenges
- ▶ Offers Spirituality to a wider circle of spiritual seekers
- ▶ Fosters greater communal harmony through religious understanding

United in prayers  
SOI Editorial Committee

# SPIRIT OF ISLAM

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Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living

ISSUE 96 DECEMBER 2020

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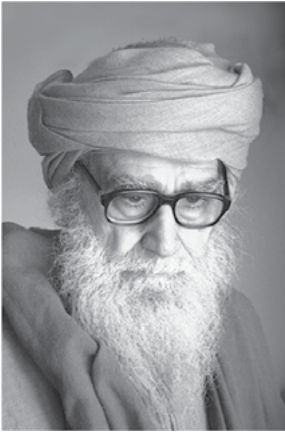
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## FROM MAULANA'S DESK



*Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, born in 1925, in Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh, is an Islamic spiritual scholar who is well-versed in both classical Islamic learning and modern disciplines. The mission of his life has been the establishment of worldwide peace. He has received the Padma Bhushan, the Demiurgus Peace International Award and Sayyidina Imam Al Hassan Peace award for promoting peace in Muslim societies. He has been called 'Islam's spiritual ambassador to the world' and is recognized as one of its most influential Muslims<sup>1</sup>. His books have been translated into sixteen languages and are part of university curricula in six countries. He is the founder of the Centre for Peace and Spirituality based in New Delhi.*

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## FACEBOOK: A STUDY CLUB

**M**ANY new communication opportunities have arisen in recent times. One of them is social media. Social media is a method of electronic communication. It serves as a means of social communication through which a person builds a community on the Internet, through which they can exchange information, ideas and personal messages, etc. with each other. Some of the prominent social media platforms are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Facebook is a popular social media platform. It was launched in the United States in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg (b. 1984) along with his friends. Initially, the aim was to provide an opportunity for faculty and students from the university and the school to interact with each other. It was opened to the public in 2006.

Facebook is, in fact, a study club. On Facebook, a person can establish a relationship with another person as a friend. He can discuss and receive notifications of other people's activities. In addition to these, he can join a group based on his preferences and interests, which include individuals from school, workplace, and other fields. It is like a great

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1. The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims 2020, Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, Jordan.

*Everything in this world could be used to develop oneself positively or can be used to bring negativity. One should make responsible choices as these choices will dictate whether one will succeed or fail in life.*

platform to avail the intellect and experiences of others. Without doubt, it is a resource that can be used to great advantage. Nowadays, Facebook is being used extensively as it is virtually free.

However, people who do not have a fine taste use it more for destructive purposes than for constructive purposes. They use it to spread complaints and baseless or unverified news. Thus, it has become practically useless for them.

For that matter, everything in this world could be used to develop oneself positively or can be used to spread negativity. One should

make responsible choices as these choices will decide whether one will succeed or fail in life. □

**Maulana Wahiduddin Khan**  
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*Positive thinking makes one free from all manifestations of hatred.*



## FROM THE EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

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## THE BEAUTIFUL NAMES OF GOD

**E**VER since the pandemic has happened, quite a few acquaintances have called me to find out which name of God should they recite often to protect themselves from Coronavirus. This led me to think about the prevalent culture of chanting the names of God or verses from the Quran as solutions to problems. I present here the spirit behind calling upon God by His names.

Calling upon God is a great form of worship. According to a *Hadith* (record of the sayings and deeds of the Prophet), calling upon God or supplication is the kernel of worship. (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*)

It is an act of very personal nature. Everyone has to pray for themselves, just as everyone has to perform their own worship. According to chapter *Prostration* of the Quran, this is one of the virtues of a believer: they forsake their beds calling upon their Lord in fear and hope. (32: 16)

The general concept regarding the names of God is that they are some mysterious words. It is believed that some miraculous effect is hidden in these words and our task is only to remember and recite them repeatedly. And then mysteriously we will receive miraculous benefits. This is what people think of divine names.

This is not the right understanding. The names of God are in no way mysterious words. They represent a known and meaningful reality. It is a blessing which can be fully explained rationally.

God's names, known as *Asma-e-Husna* in Arabic, are the known doors of God's mercy. These doors have been opened, as we learn from the

Quran, so that man may discover them and passing through them may reach the mercy of God in this world. *Asma-e-Husna* are like the gates of the divine mercy. They are the means of connecting us to God. They are a God-given key to God-realization which awaken our hearts and minds and take us from darkness to light.

It is very important to understand the spirit behind calling out to God with His names. It is a fact that a human being is a truth-seeking being by nature. Very soon there awakens within him a feeling that some superior being must exist who will grant him the light of guidance. At that moment he calls out, "O God of guidance, grant me guidance by Your special mercy."

***One should discover the attributes of God and call upon Him with the attribute. Such calling will instil the faith and trust in the person calling out to God that God is all powerful and the owner of the attribute which he is in need of.***

In this present world, man repeatedly faces such situations in which he feels himself helpless. At that time, under the influence of his latent feelings, he wants to call upon a superior being. Then of the best names he finds a divine name of the Superior Being such as relates to that particular situation in which he finds himself and with that in mind, he calls out, "O God, You alone are my helper, help me in all ways possible."

Take another situation where one fears some danger, then one may call upon God in these words: *Al Wali*, which means a protecting friend. Thus, a person would call out thus: "O Protecting Friend, protect me from what I fear."

One should discover the attributes of God and call upon Him with the attribute which will invoke God's mercy for the situation he is in. Such calling will instil the faith and trust in the person calling out to God that God is all powerful and the owner of the attribute which he is in need of. It is not about chanting, it is about understanding and discovering the attribute and beseeching God to help us in a particular situation. □

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# THE EXPLANATION OF MEANINGFULNESS OF THE UNIVERSE

## *Belief in God-ordained Universe*

**A**MONG many aspects of the debate over the existence of God, one relates to the meaningfulness of the universe. Belief in God is not only the explanation of the existence of the universe, but belief in God also makes the universe completely meaningful. Disbelief in God means that this universe will have a meaningless end, while believing in God means that the universe will eventually reach a meaningful end.

The concept of justice and injustice is innate in man. Man is born with a desire to be rewarded for living his life according to the principles of justice, and to be punished for adopting the method of injustice. This natural urge can find fulfillment if we believe that the universe has been created by God. There is no answer to the fulfillment of this natural requirement in the theory that denies the Creator of the universe.

Every human being is born with an ocean of desires within him. In today's world, fulfillment of these desires is not possible. In the theory of 'universe without God', man is destined to have a tragic end and his natural desires will never be fulfilled. But in the theory of 'universe with God', there is a possibility that man will find the perfect satisfaction of his desires in the post-death stage of life.

### **The Consciousness of Time**

The study of human psychology shows that man is a time-conscious creature. His sense of time is divided into the present and the future. However, it is a fact that every man gets to live only in the present. Every man, without exception, dies in despair of an unfulfilled future. He utilizes his present for a better future, but in his limited lifespan, he fails to achieve the better future and leaves this world in despair.

An Internet search to find out the names of great people who became depressed in their last years and died in a state of depression leads to quite a lengthy list. One can go to the search engine and see this list under the title 'Risk factor Depression'. Thus, man's natural urge can be fulfilled in the theory of universe with God, but there is no answer to this question in the theory of universe without God.

## The Principle of Pairs

A study of the universe reveals that everything here has been created in pairs—pair of negative electric particles with positive electric particles, male and female in the fruit of the tree, male and female in the animals, and man and woman in humans. This is a universal law. Everything here complements itself with its partner.

In this sense, human life must have a pair, that is, a perfect life after death must be the pair of an imperfect life before death. Human life has its complementary pair in the theory of the universe with God. In the theory of universe without God, this complementary element does not exist.

*In the theory of the universe without God, man is destined that his natural desires will never be fulfilled, but in the theory of the universe with God, man could find the perfect satisfaction of his desires in the post-death stage of life.*

## The Failure of Idealism

All philosophers and thinkers have considered the present world to be eternal. Their idea was that in this present world, they would one day create the world they cherish. The concepts of Ideal Society, Ideal State, and Ideal System were born from this idealism. All such thinkers remained enamoured by these concepts till their very end.

For people, the culmination of civilization was realization of this human dream. After the industrial feats, people thought that they would finally reach the destination where they could build their paradise in this present world. However, this idea proved to be completely false.

## End of the World

After studying the laws of nature, the founder of modern science, Sir Isaac Newton (d. 1727) predicted in 1704 that the present world would end in 2060. (*The Times of India*, June 18, 2007) Based upon pure observations, scientist all over the world are now stating that as a result of global warming, the end of the world has become certain. Further evolution of civilization is not possible here at all.

Alvin Toffler's book, *Future Shock*, was first published in 1970. Alvin Toffler had predicted that the world is moving from an industrial to a super-industrial age. The next era of civilization will be the era of complete automation. The push-button culture will progress to the

point that everything will start happening automatically. But the problem of global warming arrived with the message of end of history, instead of culmination of history.

This predicament of human history is undoubtedly the biggest question of today. A satisfactory explanation can be found only in the theory of universe with God. From the point of view of 'universe without God', a satisfactory explanation for this question is entirely impossible.

Such examples clearly prove that there is a great void in the theory of universe without God. If this theory is followed, a very meaningful universe seems to end in an extremely meaningless end.

The theory of universe with God is completely devoid of this flaw. Believing in this theory means a meaningful culmination of the meaningful universe. This fact is a strong proof for the theory of universe with God; it completely satisfies demands of both reason as well as logic. □

***The certain annihilation of the world human inhabits today is undoubtedly the biggest question of today. A satisfactory explanation can be found only in the theory of the universe with God.***



# TOWARDS GLOBAL PEACE

*We often talk of peace in the context of war. But this is a very narrow and restricted notion of peace. Peace is deeply linked with the entirety of human life. Peace is a complete ideology in itself. Peace is the only religion for both—man and the universe. It is the master-key that opens the doors to every success. Peace creates a favourable atmosphere for success in every endeavour. Without peace, no positive action—small or big—is possible.*



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## POLITICAL INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM

**L**IFE is a collection of various parts or aspects. These are separate from each other but yet are interlinked. They can also be ranked or placed at different levels. Because of this feature there is a chance of different explanation and description depending on a person's perspective. For instance, some thinkers have given an economical interpretation of history. This is because in their understanding of life, the economic factor dominates everything else. On the same lines some Muslim scholars have projected Islam in such a way that every aspect of it seemed to acquire a political hue, thereby creating an impression that the goal of Islam is to establish political power. This is far from the truth.

***Political power is a test paper from God. Political power is given to someone to see how he behaves after gaining power.***

The religion of Islam has various parts or aspects or dimensions and there are different ways of explaining and describing them. Highlighting only one aspect is erroneous. For instance, if someone were to say that the main goal of a student who is admitted to a prestigious university is to get elected for an administrative post in the student committee will be sneered at and not a single person will accept this as the goal of a student. These

activities are just one aspect of one's term in the college and only few will have this opportunity. But every student will have the opportunity

to study and learn and they will benefit from other activities even if they are not directly involved in them.

According to the Quran, granting of political power is a matter of putting man to the test, just as wealth is a means of testing a person. Wealth and riches are tests for human beings, which is why wealth keeps changing hands, because God has to test every human being. If wealth is permanently given to a single individual or group, then other people cannot be tested. Putting wealth in someone's possession permanently is contrary to God's creation plan.

Same is true of political power. Political power is also a test paper. Political power is given to someone to see how he behaves after gaining power. Precisely for this reason, political power does not rest in the hands of one individual or a group, but rather it keeps circulating among different people. This principle is explained in these words in the Quran: 'We bring these days to men by turns.' (3: 140)

The study of the Quran shows that the real purpose of the Prophet's mission was to prepare people of such lofty and noble character who would be considered worthy of being settled in the eternal Paradise of the Hereafter. The purpose of the teaching of the prophets was not to create a world for people in this world, where they could have a 'paradise' to live in before the Hereafter and the Day of Accounting.

This political dominance, according to the Quran, is granted only by God. He bestows it upon whoever He wishes, and withholds it from whoever He wishes. The Quran says:

Say, 'Lord, sovereign of all sovereignty. You bestow sovereignty on whom You will and take it away from whom You please; You exalt whoever You will and abase whoever You will. All that is good lies in Your hands. You have the power to will anything.'(3: 26)

*The Prophet's life abounds with such examples that unequivocally show what his mission was. The Prophet would go to any length in order to make people hear God's message.*

### **The Mission of the Prophet of Islam**

It is narrated in the books of *Hadith* (sayings and deeds of the Prophet) that one day, while the angel Gabriel was sitting next to the Prophet of God, another angel presented himself before the Prophet. He informed the Prophet that he had come at the behest of God. God had sent him to ask the Prophet a question. The question was whether the Prophet

desired to become a Prophet king or a humble servant and a prophet of God Almighty. The Prophet immediately replied: I want to be a humble servant and a prophet.

This *Hadith* shows the mission of the Prophet. Taking a clue from the timely guidance of the angel Gabriel, the Prophet Muhammad chose a life of service to God and calling people to God over political rule and leadership. This aspect seems to be the most prominent in his life. Reading his biography also shows that the mission of the Prophet was *dawah* (calling people to God).

On another occasion, the people of Quraysh threatened the Prophet's uncle Abu Talib of dire consequences if the Prophet did not stop his mission of calling people to God. Abu Talib called his nephew and said, "O my nephew! The people of your tribe came to me and said such and such things. Now have mercy on me and on yourself. And do not burden me in this matter beyond my means."

***In perceiving and understanding something and forming an opinion about it, our perspectives play a very important role. When we read something, we never read it as it is. Rather, we read it through the prism of our perspective.***

On hearing this, the Prophet thought that now his uncle would also desert him. He feared that his uncle would withdraw his support, and that his uncle had become too overburdened trying to support him. It was a critical moment. Despite the fear and apprehensions, the Prophet replied with full conviction, "Uncle! By God! Even if these people place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand, I cannot stop this mission until God makes this religion prevail, or I will perish in this way." After that his eyes moistened, and he cried.

The Prophet's life abounds with such examples that unequivocally show what his mission was. The Prophet would go to any length in order to make people hear God's message.

After giving adequate proofs and logic for something, one can never be sure that it will be accepted as valid. Something that appears white to everyone else may appear as black to someone, and no matter what proofs you provide, one may refuse to budge from their position. It happens because in perceiving and understanding something and forming an opinion about it, our perspectives play a very important role. When we read something, we never read it as it is. Rather, we read

it through the prism of our perspective. This is why two people who have very different mentalities or mindsets do not see the same thing in an identical way or form the same opinion about it.

Keeping the above in mind, it is pertinent to know the result which has ensued from the erroneous political interpretation of Islam. Those who consider this as the goal of Islam divide the people as 'the rulers and the ruled'. This fosters a very different attitude as compared to those who consider the goal of Islam as preparing an individual to be a spiritual person, a person eligible for God's Paradise.

For the spiritually-oriented, the world is a place to work towards helping oneself and others develop spirituality, which means conveying the message of God peacefully. This attitude inculcates in a person good character, gives him a peaceful mission of being a true well-wisher for others, makes him tolerant and patient in the face of provocation and when others do not reciprocate in a positive way. Such spiritually-inclined people have neither any economic interests behind their well-wishing nor any personal agendas behind their mission of peace and spirituality.

The other mindset of looking at the world as a political arena and seeking the establishment of one's political power fosters a character that treats everyone as one's rival. In such cases, self-interest will dominate behind every plan and dealing with others. This mindset further creates a complaint culture against the government leading to protests, demonstrations and riots. This leads to mayhem in the society. Lack of trust, accusations, false propaganda, and fake news further add fuel to the fire.

Wisdom demands that people compare the result of following Islamic teachings as laid down by God and His prophets, and the result of following the ideas presented through the prism of a person's own mindset. Those who take the latter as their guide must think for themselves about the futile actions they are engaged in since past several years.

To truly comprehend anything and to form a correct opinion about it, one needs a proper mindset. If that is absent, then, no matter how obvious a thing may be, one will fail to understand it properly. □

***Wisdom demands that people should compare the results of looking at the Islamic teachings as it is given by God and His prophets, and at the results of the teachings presented through the prism of their own perspective or mindset.***

# ISLAMIC LITERATURE: AN ANALYSIS

## *Finding the Cause of Muslims' Deviation*

ISLAM is a religion whose original text is completely preserved. This text (Quran and *Sunnah*) is the only source to know the teachings of Islam. Islam possesses historical authenticity. In the subsequent generations after the advent of Islam, thousands of books were produced in the Arabic language as interpretation of the Islamic texts. Gradually, the corpus of these books, consciously or unconsciously, assumed the status of original source of Islam. Now these are the books being taught in *madrasas* (religious seminaries), academic institutions and are found on library shelves. These are the most talked about books everywhere to the extent that the Quran and *Sunnah* (model set by the Prophet) have been practically relegated to a secondary place. The literature produced after them has assumed, unannounced, the status of primary reference.

Present-day Muslims do not take ideological guidance from the revealed religion. They have effectively adopted the explanations of Muslim scholars as their source of guidance. The current situation of Muslims is a confirmation of the saying of the Prophet of Islam: "One of the signs of the coming of Doomsday is that evil people will be exalted, virtuous people will be degraded, and there will be prevalence of *muthannath* among people, and there would be no one to counter it." The Prophet was asked, "What is *muthannath*?" He answered, "All the books with the exception of God's Book." (*Hadith al-Mustadrak ala al-Sahihain*)

In this *Hadith*, the state of decline of the Muslim community has been described. When a nation suffers decline, its condition follows the pattern of other nations that have already suffered degeneration. The community, as a whole, only follows external forms. These people fail to see deeper meaning and realities, but they are sure to observe superficialities. Due to this distorted temperament, worldly-oriented people take centre-stage among them, and people whose orientation and thinking are towards the Hereafter fail to command attention. Those who feed this distorted public taste stand out and gain popularity, and those who, due to their seriousness, do not make allowance for the popular temperament, lose their popularity.

At this time, such people emerge who, although spiritually void, are elevated to positions of glory through their magnificent religious garb. Their eloquent words, artificial style and fiery rhetoric appeal to the



masses. Such people, in fact, are 'mischievous', but due to the distorted taste of the public, receive the status of 'pious people'. These are the people whose speeches and writings are alluded to as *muthannath* in the above *Hadith*.

The books except the Book of God which are mentioned in the *Hadith* under discussion are not the books in common use. These books were written in the later period of Muslim history to serve as commentary on and explanation of the religion of God. In other words, these books were produced in the period after 'the one that has been unanimously agreed upon as the best period'.

The books written in later times can be of two types—one that offers true explanation of the Book of God after a thorough and deep reading of the Book; second that are written by making allowances for the distorted tastes of people in their phase of degeneration. The books that are referred to as *muthannath* belong to this second category. In the later period of Muslim history, this literature was produced when Muslims had ceased to exist as an ideological group. Therefore, one common flaw of their literature is that it depicts community-based mindset of the Muslims, not the true principles of Islam.

In later times, Muslims began to ignore their duty of conveying God's message to others and started treating them as political subjects. It resulted into omission of the chapter on *dawah* or 'calling people to God' in the literature that was produced in those times.

When Muslims established a political empire, a general political mindset developed among them. The idea of fighting (war) in the name of *jihad* became predominant among Muslims as a result of this political mindset. Armed warfare became a part of religious belief for them, whereas it was adopted under the law of necessity in the time of the Prophet of Islam.

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The political domination that Muslims enjoyed in the later period produced a psychology of pride in them. They began considering themselves superior to others. This mentality caused them to use the terminologies of *Dar ul-Islam* (Abode of Islam) for the land they ruled, and *Dar ul-Kufr* (Abode of Disbelief) for the land ruled by other religious communities, though according to the Quran the whole world

was equally *Dar ul-Insan* (Abode of Humankind). The definitions of *Dar ul-Islam* and *Dar ul-Kufr* constitute an innovation devised in later times. This attitude led Islam to be looked upon as only a collection of commandments and statutes.

Study of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) gained the pride of place among Muslim scholars, and the study of Quran and *Sunnah* (model set by the Prophet) was done in the light of *fiqh*. In the age of decline and degeneration, the importance of the religious spirit is forgotten, and emphasis is laid on the externals or the form of religion. The result of this difference is that all academic discussions and debates on religion centre on technical and legal aspects. It paves the way for greater evil—emergence of many religious sects. As a result, a unified community is broken into a community of various different sects.

***When Muslims established a political empire, a general political mindset developed among them. The idea of fighting (war) in the name of jihad became predominant among Muslims as a result of this political mindset.***

Events show that the Muslim community was beset by all these evils in the later period. The underlying cause of these evils is *muthannah* as mentioned in the above *Hadith*, which is the literature that was produced when the community was in its age of decline. The ideological problems facing present Muslims emanate directly from this situation.

Now there is only one solution to this problem: the books that Muslims themselves have produced in Arabic language after the period which is unanimously agreed upon as the best in Muslim history should be accorded the status of classical literature. This is the time to study the Quran and *Sunnah* with an

open mind, and then such literature should be prepared which would address the modern mind. The literature produced in later times would always enjoy its historical status, but so far as the source of religion is concerned, it will always be the Quran and *Sunnah*.

An educated Muslim once said: 'The Quran should be re-revealed today.' This is a wrong statement. What is really required is an explanation of the Quran in contemporary idiom. The teachings of the Quran have to be reapplied in the present circumstances.

In order to address the modern mind, new explanatory literature is required that would take into account the modern conditions. All the teachings of the Quran are eternal, but the style and idiom of its various passages take into account the people to whom it was

revealed in seventh century Arabia. The idiom used to express an idea undergoes changes in every age. Now it is required to explain the eternal teachings of the Quran in a contemporary idiom so that they become comprehensible for today's people and situations.

Today, the *dawah* mission of Islam needs an explanatory literature which is according to the spirit of the age. Only such a literature can address the modern mind and restore people's confidence in Islam as a religion that possesses reliable guidance for the present day just as people in ancient times were able to find guidance from it.

The explanatory literature that is required for Islam in modern times needs to have these features: the first being that for its arguments, it should be reason-based. The traditional style is not useful today. The second feature is that it should have universal approach. The old-fashioned sectarian approach is not acceptable to people today. The third feature is that this literature should be completely peaceful. Any literature that directly or indirectly advocates an ideology of violence cannot be acceptable to present-day societies. An enviable position will be granted in the Hereafter to that group who performs the duty of calling people to God in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in accordance with these requirements. CPS International, founded by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, has been working for the past two decades to fulfill this pressing need. □

***In order to address the modern mind, new explanatory literature is required that would take into account the modern conditions. Now it is required to explain the eternal teachings of the Quran in a contemporary idiom so that it becomes comprehensible for today's people and situations.***



# HOMESCHOOLING

## *A Hub of Intellectual Activities*

HERE is a story of a family from Hyderabad. It was a religious family in the traditional sense. However, it was not religion that was the topic of discussion in their home. All of their discussions centred around complaints, as is the case in most homes. It was then that the head of the family was advised by a senior religious cleric to immediately get rid of the complaining mindset, and make his home a homeschool. Homeschooling is the practice of educating children at home. He was advised to learn English along with his wife and children, and read books on positive thinking with them.

***The atmosphere of home should be free of negative talk. Instead, topics related to positive thinking and God-realization should be discussed. Children should be taught about the role they play in a household.***

They assiduously followed what they were told to do. A few days later, he described his situation over the phone. He said everyone's life in his house had become meaningful. Everyone in the family, parents as well as children, was beginning to understand their role. This was not the case before. An experience in this regard was that he wanted to read an Urdu book in English, and so he asked his children to translate it. The subject of the book was the creation plan of God. The children translated the book with total devotion and earnestness. This is how the father got the English translation, and the kids learned God's creation plan. His wife said that

she had not come across any home where children understood their role. She also said that parents always complain that their children do not listen to them. But with this new beginning, there is a new trend that helped children to understand their positive role.

Now the atmosphere of negative talk and complaining in their house has become a thing of the past. Instead, topics related to positive thinking and God-realization are being discussed. Thus, the atmosphere of the home has changed completely. The children have adjusted to the new environment. In this way their knowledge has increased, and they have developed constructive and positive thinking. This example exemplifies an extension of this verse of the Quran:

“Set aside for your people some houses in the city and turn them into places of worship, and be constant in prayer!” (10: 87) □

# RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MESSENGER OF GOD

## *Never Losing Sight of Inner Spirit*

**A** VERSE from the Quran concerning the relationship with the Prophet of Islam is as follows: Say, 'If you love God, follow me and God will love you and forgive you your sins. God is most forgiving, and most merciful.' (3: 31)

In this verse of the Quran, following the Prophet means making the Prophet one's guide. This verse shows that whoever wants to follow the path of God, it is necessary for him to seek guidance for himself from the exemplary model of the Prophet. The traveller on the path of God-realization cannot afford to remain aloof from the guidance of His Messenger.

The case of the Prophet, on one hand, is that he was a seeker of God. Then God guided him to His way. He showed the Prophet through revelation what the authentic way to follow the path of God is. This example of the Prophet has been recorded in various books of *Hadith* (compilation of the sayings and deeds of the Prophet). This model is the only authentic guide for the seeker on the path of God-realization till the Day of Judgement.

A human being learns divine wisdom through study of *Hadith* and *Sunnah* (model set by the Prophet). When a person practises this wisdom, he becomes deserving of God's mercy. He begins to receive God's help at every stage. He walks on the path of God without straying until he reaches the final destination, which is another name for Paradise.

Following the footsteps of the Prophet is as much required in the present age as it was required in the previous times. However, it is necessary for the follower of the Prophet to discover the reapplication of the model of the Prophet according to his changed circumstances so that he can follow the Messenger with true spirit. It is not difficult for a sincere seeker to rediscover this kind of reapplication. □

*Following the Prophet is as much required in the present age as it was required in the previous times. It is necessary to discover the reapplication of the model of the Prophet according to the new circumstances so that one can follow the Messenger with true spirit.*

# FAULT-FINDING, EULOGIZING

## *Reviving a Community*

**M**USLIM writers and speakers today know only of two cultures: fault-finding or slandering and eulogizing. They have a knack for extolling and eulogizing their great leaders, whether they are alive or dead; and then for others all they have is slandering or fault-finding. This culture is so common among Muslims today that there is hardly any exception. However, neither their eulogies nor slandering is based on any solid arguments. They know only the language of praise for those whom they consider their own, and the language of criticism for those whom they don't consider their own.

***Those who plan a group-based political or social revolution in a degenerate community are utterly ignorant of the laws of nature. Such reformers themselves need reform. They are unfit to become reformers of the community.***

This phenomenon is a manifestation of the decline of a community. When a community is in its heyday, it tests a person on the basis of merit. It forms a non-partisan and unprejudiced opinion about everyone on the basis of merit, whether one is from its own circle or someone outside its circle. But when a community reaches a state of decline, then its condition is such that it divides human beings into its own and others. The community has only good words about its own people, and critical words about others.

When it becomes customary in any community to judge human beings on merit, it should be understood to be alive and thriving, and when the writers and speakers of a community

begin to speak the language of verbal praise and verbal slander, that community should be considered to be declining and stagnant. When this state of decline sets in, there is only one thing left to do: individual-based reform. When the community is alive, group-based reform can be useful, but when the community is in its state of degeneration, one should look for individuals and focus on reforming individuals. There is no other way to get positive results. Those who plan a group-based political or social revolution in a degenerate community are, of course, utterly ignorant of the laws of nature. Such reformers themselves need reform. They are unfit to become reformers of the community. □



# EDUCATION, ANCIENT AND MODERN

## *A Paradigm Shift*

**I**N ancient times, it was a norm to acquire knowledge for the sake of knowledge. In ancient times, the relationship between knowledge and education was less about earning livelihood, and more about life. In ancient agrarian society, earning livelihood was more through physical labour, and less through mental labour. This situation linked knowledge to knowledge itself rather than to livelihood. However, in modern times the situation has changed.

In ancient times, education was not about preparing oneself, but the main purpose of education in modern times is to prepare oneself for the demands of the times, so that man can continue his journey in the race of progress. In ancient times, education was practically a static discipline. Nowadays, education is a creative activity. In ancient times, education was confined to a limited number of people. In ancient times, the scope of education was limited to society and tribe, that is, to maintain the tradition of one's own society or tribe. In modern times, education has become relevant to all walks of life. In ancient times, education did not aim at discovering new things, so that they could be used in the evolution of civilization. Education is a revolutionary process today.


In modern times, the impact of education has spread all over the world. The purpose of modern education is to develop the capacity of science and technology in man, to make him creatively active, so that he can impart something to the world. In ancient times, education was based on speculation, in which social values and manners were passed on to children through fictional stories. The modern age is the age of education based on scientific experiments. Instead of these fictional stories and examples, the emphasis is on education based on real events and experiences.

The importance of knowledge and education has become fundamental for the development of any field in the present age. The reason for this importance of education is the advancement of science and technology in the present times. The development of technology has completely changed the old traditional era. In ancient times, for example, mules, horses and camels were naturally present in large numbers in the forest. Man would catch them and use them for riding and carrying loads. But today rides means machine rides, and machine rides cannot be made without knowledge, nor can they be used without it.

In modern times, as a result of scientific research all branches of knowledge have been rewritten. For example, in ancient times it was thought that the stars in the sky were as big as they appeared with the naked eye. But in recent times, far-reaching studies have shown that the stars in the sky are much larger, and they are more numerous than they appear. In this way, a lot of information has been obtained in present times. Knowledge is required to know the world in the light of this new information. Today, the ignorant man is not just an illiterate man, but he is also ignorant of the real world.

***The purpose of education should be to equip man with the need of the hour; to enable man to build life according to today's conditions. Being aware of the changing times is also important to understand religion in terms of changing times.***

Education needs to be updated in the present times, namely to adapt the knowledge according to the demands of the times. The purpose of education should be to equip man with the need of the hour; to enable man to build life according to today's conditions. Being aware of the changing times is also important not only for the ordinary affairs of life but also to understand religion in terms of changing times. This fact has been narrated in a *Hadith*. It was narrated by the Companion of the Prophet Abu Dhar al-Ghafari in the following words: It is necessary for the believer to be aware of his time. □



**Do not let any loss make you  
lose your peace of mind.**



# SUBMISSION TO GOD

## *Islamic Perspective*

**E**VERYTHING in the universe submits itself to the will of God. Therefore, submission to God is the true religion for both man and the universe. Everything or being in the universe, including man, must strictly obey the commands of God without any deviation or alteration.

Indeed, the central characteristic of all followers of the Islamic faith is their belief in the one God. The word Islam literally means 'surrender' or 'submission' and those who follow the religion of Islam are called Muslims. A Muslim then is one who surrenders or submits completely to the Will of God. Submission to God, however, is not a passive but a positive act of bringing one's likes and dislikes, attitudes and behaviour into harmony with God's Will. Correct belief and action together are absolutely vital. One is worthless without the other. Furthermore, a true Muslim believes that submission and obedience to the Will of God is the only way in which an individual can ever achieve real peace of mind. The knowledge he needs to have of the Will of God must inevitably be derived from the Quran, the last of the divine books revealed by God to His Final Prophet Muhammad.

Following Islam also means living in harmony with nature. And this in turn means that at all times man must unfailingly do as God desires. Moreover, he should lead his life acknowledging the greatness of his Creator and showing appreciation of His favours.

He should focus all his attention on God alone, who is the Creator of everything on this Earth and in the universe. He should entirely subordinate his intention and thinking to the Will of God.

Doing as God enjoins creates harmony, earns God's favour and banishes evil. It follows, therefore, that a society of those individuals who follow the teachings of the Quran and the teachings of God's last Messenger will be free of social ills. The fear of accountability to God is the secret of all good. A believer should bear in mind that one day he will die and shall have to give an account of himself to God. There can be no better rein upon an individual's actions than the thought that God will one day call upon him to give an account of his deeds. □

***The fear of accountability to God is the secret of all good. A believer should bear in mind that one day he will die and shall have to give an account of himself to God.***

# FROM THE SPIRITUAL TREE

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



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## CALLING UPON GOD WITH HIS GREATEST NAME

THE following teaching of the Prophet calls for an understanding of what is meant by calling upon God with His greatest name, which in Arabic is referred to as *Ism-e-Azam*. One of the Companions of the Prophet reported that once the Prophet of Islam heard someone saying: "O God, I beseech You. All praise is for You. You are the object of worship, You have no partner. You have done great favours to man. You have created the Earth and the heavens without any model. Greatness and honour are Yours." On hearing this, the Prophet of Islam said: "You have called God with *Ism-e-Azam*. When He is called out in this way, He will certainly answer your call; and when He is asked for anything in this way, He grants it." (*Musnad Ahmad*)

Generally, people think *Ism-e-Azam* refers to a special name of God's. From the above *Hadith* we can understand that it is not one particular name. There are many names of God which reflect various divine attributes. This shows that *Ism-e-Azam* cannot be a particular name. Had it been a specific name, the above prayer of the Prophet's Companion would have also referred to that name. But there are several names of God in this prayer. In spite of this clear indication, considering *Ism-*

e-Azam to be a particular name of God, and making every effort to find that name, is without doubt a futile exercise.

The truth is that *Ism-e-Azam* is not just one great name, but is rather a great state or feeling. In the above prayer the Companion did not repeat some words by rote, but rather in a great state of emotion, some particular words fell from his lips, and this is what is meant by calling upon God with *Ism-e-Azam*. *Ism-e-Azam* relates in fact to spiritual or divine feelings. Calling upon God with such words as are full of feelings is calling upon God with *Ism-e-Azam*. □

*Ism-e-Azam is not just one great name, but is rather a great state or feeling. Ism-e-Azam relates in fact to spiritual or divine feelings. Calling upon God with such words as are full of feelings is calling upon God with Ism-e-Azam.*



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# THE HISTORY OF KNOWLEDGE

## *A Pointer to World's End*

IT is generally regarded that the early phase of philosophy began in ancient Greece. Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato (4<sup>th</sup> century BC) believed that matter was eternal, that is, matter has always existed and will remain so forever. Later, many great minds were born who achieved high renown in the field of philosophy. However, all of them regarded matter to be eternal in one form or another. But by the time scientific progress reached the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this material concept of matter lost favour. New scientific developments could best be described in the words of the English physicist and astronomer, Sir James Jeans (1877-1946) as, "the stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality; the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine." (*The Mysterious Universe*)

Under the material interpretation, the doctrine was developed that held there was no need to believe in the existence of an all-powerful creator like that of God. The existence of God that was hitherto accepted as an intellectual or theoretical need was redundant. This need was now being fulfilled by the eternity of matter itself. This implied that matter had created itself and the existence of everything else was the result of the physical and chemical activities of matter.

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, the Big Bang theory was formulated and its development over the following years has made it the currently accepted model of how the universe began. According to this theory, the universe as we know it today began from an extremely dense, small and hot point of energy some 13.8 billion years ago. Matter, space and time all began when that point—a primeval super-atom—suddenly expanded violently and exponentially in an event known as the Big Bang inflating to the cosmos that we know today. The Big Bang put an end to the ancient material interpretation of the universe. Now, from a purely academic or scientific point of view, it became possible to believe that there is a Creator of this universe and it is He who is controlling it and it is He who is responsible for its exceptionally purposeful functioning.

Sir Isaac Newton (1643-1727) is regarded as the founder of modern science. In the years after Newton, there have been many discoveries in science that have both vindicated and rejected his work. One of these is the second law of thermodynamics also known as the law of entropy.

Entropy is a measure of disorder in the universe and according to the law of entropy, the net entropy of any system will always increase with time. According to this law, it is not possible that the universe could have existed without a beginning and that the universe is not endless but is heading towards a collapse. The universe had a beginning in the Big Bang and it has a limited age, after the completion of which it will come to an end.

The law of entropy proves that there is a continuous natural flow of heat from warmer to colder bodies, and that this flow cannot be reversed without the addition of a power source. Energy is the ability to do work and entropy is a measure of energy that is unavailable to do work. As entropy in the universe continues to increase, heat will continue to spread until the system has reached maximum equilibrium. The universe is headed for a time when the temperature will be universally uniform and there will be no more useful energy. This will be the heat death of the universe. There will be no more physical and chemical processes and life itself will cease to exist.

***Under the material interpretation of the universe, the doctrine was developed that held there was no need to believe in the existence of an all-powerful creator like that of God.***

For the last several thousand years, philosophers, thinkers and scientists have dreamed of bringing into existence a technologically advanced heavenly civilization. But, by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the situation had changed radically, and this dream was shattered. According to the latest developments in the world, there is no further possibility of a realization of this dream.

Over thousands of years man had dreamed of building a better life for himself in this world. It is this human desire which resulted in the civilization we now live in. The journey of civilization began with the discovery of the wheel. After a long process, civilization made rapid progress following the industrial revolution and man was able to travel with great speed over land and sea and then out into space.

Alvin Toffler published his book *Future Shock* in 1970. In this book the writer argues that human civilization was undergoing an enormous structural revolution going from an industrial society to a super-industrial society. This would be the final stage of man's civilizational journey where all of man's material dreams would be fulfilled. Here, man would find all the material comforts he desired. However, very

soon the phenomenon of global warning emerged and this dream of a near perfect civilization came to an end.

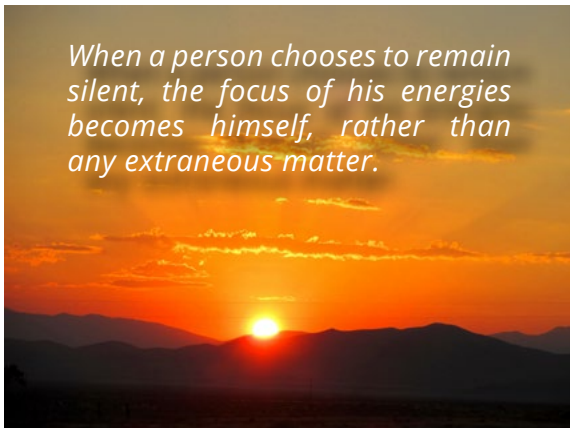
All the material progress of civilization came about through industrial and technological developments following scientific discoveries. This progress was possible through mechanization. Earlier man's life was based on the produce of nature. The industry of nature bestowed man with its products without creating any problems. But the human technological industry required a continuous supply of fuel to keep its machines turning resulting in the new problem of carbon emission. In the beginning this problem did not appear to be serious, however, with the advent of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it has assumed extremely serious proportions.

***The industry of nature bestowed man with its products without creating any problems. But the human technological industry required a continuous supply of fuel to keep its machines turning resulting in the new problem of carbon emission.***

In ancient times, man would travel on horses and camels provided by nature. These horses and camels did not create any issues for man. They were the products of the pollution-free industry of nature. In contrast, the cars and aeroplanes of modern times have been manufactured in the factories of

human civilization. These factories unavoidably generate atmospheric pollution as a by-product. This continuing pollution has now increased to dangerous levels from where a return to normalcy is not possible. Now, the next stage of history for humankind is only one; that is, moving on from this present world onto the next eternal world. □

*When a person chooses to remain silent, the focus of his energies becomes himself, rather than any extraneous matter.*



# ASKING FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE

## *Know Your Limitations*

**O**NE day a washerman set out for the riverbank along with his donkeys. The local residents told him that they would let his donkeys pass through their area on one condition, i.e. they should not bray, because they did not like the noise they made.

The washerman replied, "I could have fulfilled your condition if you had asked me to stop my donkeys from kicking anyone, but it is not in my power to stop my donkeys from braying."

This story aptly illustrates the issue of communal riots. The root cause of most of the riots that occur in India is that whenever one community's procession passes through a neighbourhood populated by another community, the latter makes the condition that the procession must go on its way without any provocative slogans being raised. But this is a condition which can seldom be met. There are always certain participants who feel compelled to raise provocative slogans which in turn, incite the other community to retaliate, generally by stone-throwing. This starts off a chain reaction of hand-to-hand fighting and sometimes even shooting. The result is the kind of large-scale riot, which brings in its wake death and destruction for the entire locality.

*So far as the spoken words are concerned, we must show patience, for the damage done by the spoken word is purely psychological. But so far as actions are concerned, we should apply restraints, for actions are largely aimed at physical harm.*

There is no doubt about it that leading processions through the streets is a shallow business. It is only shallow people who participate in such activity. Serious, educated people seldom join in. In other words, a procession is much the same as a string of donkeys, except that it is made up of human beings. To demand that such people should refrain from raising slogans is totally unrealistic. This is because they are constitutionally incapable of maintaining discreet silence.

The crowd that is gathered in a procession or any such public enterprise possesses some distinct characteristics. Gustave Le Bon has studied notable features of crowd in his scholarly work *Crowd: Study of the Popular Mind*. He writes: A crowd is not merely impulsive and mobile.

Like a savage, it is not prepared to admit that anything can come between its desire and the realization of its desire.

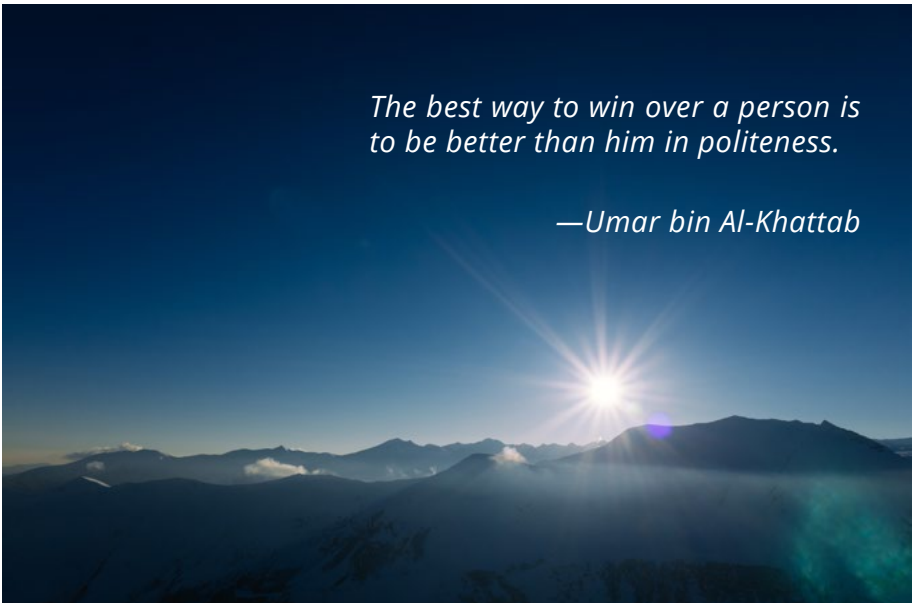
We must understand the difference between what is practicable and what is not. We should learn to demand only what is practicable. What is the point of demanding something, which has been proven impracticable?

So far as the spoken words are concerned, we must show patience (74:10), for the damage done by the spoken word is purely psychological. But so far as actions are concerned, we should apply restraint, for actions are largely aimed at physical harm. Whenever slogan-raising is likely to become an issue, we should ask the administration only to ensure that the participants in a procession do not engage in any violent activities. If we could but adopt this policy, we would have found a way of putting an end to communal riots forever. Demand the possible in this world, and you will meet with success. Why expect the impossible? □



*The best way to win over a person is  
to be better than him in politeness.*

*—Umar bin Al-Khattab*





# THE CHRISTIAN MODEL

## *A Model worth Emulating*

**C**HAPTER 61 (Ranks—*Al-Saff*) of the Quran presents to the believers the Christian example as a model worthy of emulation. This can be understood with reference to two events from the history of Christianity.

The first incident took place during the early centuries after Jesus Christ. In this period, the followers of Christ were subjected to severe persecution and oppression, but they did not adopt a method of retaliation. Instead, they followed the teaching of Jesus Christ elucidated as, “Love thy enemy”. This meant that even when faced with enmity from others, whilst saving yourself from negativity, continuing to convey God’s message to people in a unilaterally peaceful manner.

The second Christian model is their response after the defeat in the Crusades. This was a change in their field of action, after failure in the fields of battle. When they found their efforts in the field of armed Crusades were in vain, they chose the method of diversion—redirection to a different course. They abandoned the fields of battle and diverted their efforts towards the peaceful fields of scientific research.

It is quite strange that the readers of the Quran did not follow the advice given in Chapter 61. The readers of the Quran were required to adopt the model of the Christians as envisioned and instructed to them in the Quran. It was this same peaceful model that was adopted by the Prophet of Islam on the occasion of Hudaibiyah Peace Treaty. But Muslims as a community remained ignorant of this model and failed to adopt it. Here are two examples of this failure from Muslim history.

The first example is from the times of colonial rule. During this period the colonial powers of Europe destroyed the Muslim empires ending their political domination. Following this, Muslims fell victim to negative reaction. They harboured feelings of revenge, hatred, and resentment. Some Muslims even took to violence.

***It is quite strange that the readers of the Quran did not follow the advice given in the Quran. The readers of the Quran were required to adopt the model of the Christians as envisioned and instructed to them in the Quran.***

Whereas, according to the Christian model as mentioned in the Quran, Muslims should have adopted the peaceful method. They should have abandoned the battlefield of violence and adopted the peaceful field of *dawah* (conveying the message of God). They held these colonial powers as their enemies and engaged in violent confrontation against them. Instead they should have considered these powers as their *madu* (one to whom the divine message is to be conveyed) and peacefully conveyed the divine message to them. Had they done so, without doubt the prediction of the Quran with respect to the Christians would have come true for them as well. "We supported the believers against their opponents and they triumphed over them." (61: 14)

***Modern technology and communication have rendered the propagation of Islam possible at a global level. There are innumerable such developments that are totally in favour of Islam and they have all been the products of Western civilization.***

The second model set by the Christians ensued after the Crusades. After their defeat in the Crusades, the Christians had devoted themselves to the peaceful field of scientific research and for the first time in the world, the laws of nature were uncovered bringing modern civilization into existence. As a result, all of humankind benefited in countless ways.

Muslims failed completely in following this second example also. In the Christian model related in the Quran, there was a message for the Muslims that if their efforts in confronting the Western powers was proving futile, they should have revised their policy. It is this revision which is referred to in the Quran as, "Turning to God in repentance, every one of you." (24: 31) This act of revision

would require Muslims to turn away from the field of confrontation and devote themselves completely in constructive activities. However, Muslims in their extreme hatred for the West failed to comprehend this constructive thinking.

Had Muslims shed their negativity and developed positive thinking, they would have discerned that the accomplishments of the Christian nations were precisely in their favour. The resulting modern civilization that has come into existence has opened the doors to the service of religion and dissemination of the divine message of Islam. The Prophet of Islam had predicted that in times to come, God would make secular people play a supporting role in favour of His religion. These feats of the Western Christian nations must be acknowledged as such a supporting

function. At this time, Muslims ought to have put a complete end to their policy of hatred and violence against the West. Then, a fresh positive mindset would have developed in them and they would have realized the great supporting work done in their favour by the West.

One aspect of this support has been mentioned in the Quran in these words: *We shall show them Our signs in the universe and within themselves, until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth.* (41: 53) 'Signs of God' in this verse refers to the scientific truths that have come to human knowledge through efforts of the West. These scientific discoveries are immensely beneficial to Islam and Islamic *dawah* in a number of ways.

In some respects, the Islamic revolution that came about in the seventh century was the beginning of a new process in history. This process continued through many phases. The revolutions brought about in Europe following the Renaissance was the culmination of this historic process. For instance, intellectual openness of thought, religious freedom, irrelevance of the method of violence, replacement of monarchy with democracy, the age of the printing press, etc.

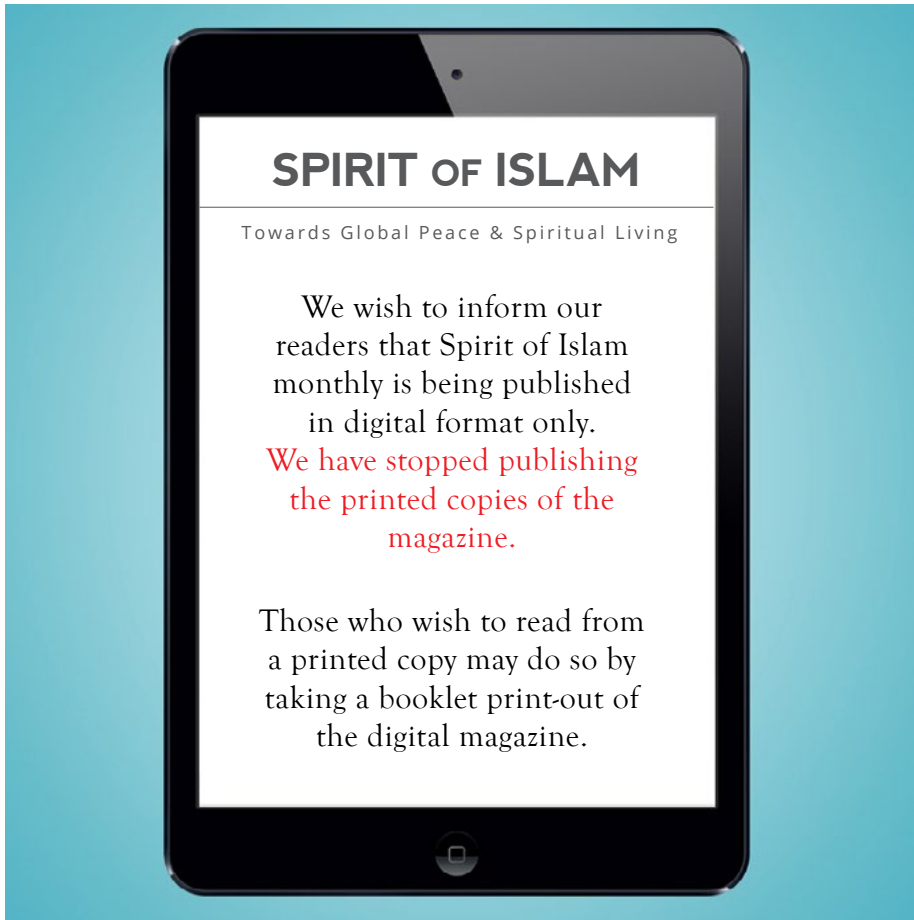
These developments, introduced in the world through Western civilization, were all beneficial to Islam. Through them it became possible to provide purely rational arguments to prove the veracity of Islam. Modern technology and communication have rendered the propagation of Islam possible at a global level. There are innumerable such developments that are totally in favour of Islam and they have all been the products of Western civilization.

## **Conclusion**

The history of the Muslim *ummah* is now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Now, the time has come for the entire Muslim community to change its mindset and 'turn all together towards God in repentance' as mentioned in the Quran. They must change their internal approach. This is the only solution to the problems of the Muslim *ummah*. There is no other possible or desirable solution. The circumstances produced over the last few centuries have resulted in a negative mindset amongst all the Muslims of the world. As a result, Muslims have forgotten their position, that they are *dayees* of God's religion, while the position of all other peoples is that of *madu*.

In reality, the relation between Muslims and others is that of *dayee* and *madu*. But owing to the negative mentality of Muslims, this relationship turned into one of rivalry and enmity. The most urgent task to be done today is to improve the relationship between Muslims and others.

A new mindset must be inculcated among Muslims as a group that they are the *dayees* and all the others are *madus*. It is only in this realization that Muslims will find success both in this world as well as in the Hereafter. □



# FAITH AND GUIDANCE

## *Man's Permanent Need*

A verse from the Quran, chapter Victory, *Al-Fath* (48: 28) says:

He is the One who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the true religion, so that He may have it prevail over all [other] religions. God suffices as a witness!

**T**HE style of this verse indicates that the event referred to here is not some human affair, rather it is an outcome of a definite and certain decision of God. God has determined that it should be so. This divine decision is related to the ending of prophethood with the Prophet Muhammad. Because the message of the Final Prophet will remain valid till the Day of Judgement, this decision's purpose and function too must necessarily remain till the end of time. The verse does not talk about the mission of the Prophet or of the Muslim community; it is about a decision of God that is sure to transpire in human history.

The second aspect of this verse refers to God's guidance—guidance sent by God through revelation. It is God's decision that His revealed guidance should remain fully preserved in every way—in its Arabic text, its language, its style of writing, its accent, and so on. The Quran was revealed in the seventh century CE. History testifies that the Quran has remained fully intact, in every sense, right till today. With the invention of the printing press and modern means of information storage and communications, the preservation of the Quran in its pristine form is now forever assured.

The 'prevailing of religion' indicated in the above verse refers to the triumph of the *faith*, and not of anything else. It does not refer to political power or the establishment of a social system. It means that the message of Islam as presented in the original sources will always retain its ideological dominance. This dominance will be based on account of the evidence that testifies to its veracity and not as any political or social system. To retain the ideological dominance of Islam is an extremely difficult and historic plan. This is because it must be achieved in such a way that human freedom remains whilst the ideological dominance of the religion of Islam continues to prevail. This sort of intricate plan is not possible with human effort. The fulfillment of the plan must be done whilst managing history in such a way that human freedom remains unscathed.

For this purpose, God adopted a certain method. He arranged that whenever some people developed their own edition of Truth, such causes and conditions would appear in history that would put an end to it. In this way, the veracity of the Truth would remain intact. History tells us that from the emergence of Islam until now there have been three major occasions when people invented their own edition of the Truth. But later, in line with historical processes, such conditions were produced that destroyed these alternatives through evidence. In this way, the ideological veracity of the Truth remained intact in history.

The first such example from history was the phenomenon of nature worship. In the language of religion, this is referred to as *shirk*. Nature worship means to believe that there are divine attributes within natural phenomena and accordingly, to worship these things. In ancient times, this worship of natural phenomena remained in existence for thousands of years.

***The message of Islam as presented in the original sources will always retain its ideological dominance. This dominance will be based on account of the evidence that testifies to its veracity and not as any political or social system.***

After the advent of the Prophet Muhammad, God arranged for such revolutionary developments to occur in history the result of which ushered in the Age of Science. Through modern science, an objective exploration of the phenomena of nature was undertaken, which showed that there is no divinity at all in nature. It was now understood that nature is just a created thing and has no divine attributes. In this way, the fact that God's religion is indeed the religion of Truth remained authenticated.

The second instance of an alternative to the revealed religion emerged in earlier times in the form of 'personality cults'. The political expression of personality cults came about in the system of monarchy. It was believed

that the kings possessed some form of mystical supremacy over other people. As a result, the king was given the status of a deity. Monarchy or the political personality cult continued in history over thousands of years. In the age of monarchy, the focus of human thinking revolved around the king. It was generally accepted that the 'religion of the king' must be the religion of all his subjects.

During the age of monarchy, the mainstay of the economy was agriculture. Considered the owner of all the land in his kingdom, the

king was the sole controller of the economy. The king became one who could give to whoever he wished, and he could grab from whomever he wanted. In effect, the king enjoyed the status that should have been of God alone. The king was the ruler and everyone else were the ruled.

In this way, the king had become a political alternative to God. But this state of affairs was not what God willed. And so, a new process was set in motion in history that began in the seventh century CE. At this time, a system of tribal chieftainship existed in Arabia which was surrounded by two mighty empires—the Sassanid Empire and the Byzantine Empire. According to the Bible, these two empires were like mighty political peaks. Through the Prophet and his Companions, these peaks were destroyed and a new political process began in history which continued its journey through the centuries, finally arriving in Europe. The culmination of this process occurred in 1789, in the form of the French Revolution.

Following this revolution, a new age dawned in the world—the Age of Democracy. Democracy demolished the idea of monarchy and ushered in the rule of the people, whose slogan was a ‘government of the people, by the people, for the people’.

This democratic revolution destroyed the old system of dynastic monarchy, first in Europe and then elsewhere in the world. In this way, the ‘religion of the king’ also ended and at the ideological level the religion of God, *deen* in Arabic, was re-established in the world. This re-establishment was not in the sense of political power or governmental system. It was at the level of intellectual exposition of the religion of Truth.

These developments did not happen by mere chance. Rather, it was actually the result of a grand divine operation in history. Democracy was not just a political ideology. Rather, an important aspect of it was that it had put an end to the concept of political divinity on the basis of which kings of the past had established their claims to greatness and power. After the democratic revolution, political power was reduced to mere administration. Its position as a divine institution had come to an end.

In this matter, the third example is of Humanism. Humanism is a modern philosophy that can be summed up as the ‘worship of man’. This is the last alternative to the *deen* of Truth and it emerged in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, soon acquiring widespread popularity. Similar is the case of Existentialism—the ideology founded by French

philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre who died in 1946. Existentialism is in essence a philosophic edition of Humanism.

Humanism is a non-religious philosophy that has no place for God. It is a philosophical outlook or system of thought attaching prime importance to human, rather than to divine or supernatural matters. Many modern-day philosophers became proponents of the ideology of Humanism: for example, the German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach (d. 1872), who claimed that 'God is nothing other than man himself'. Another such thinker was the American philosopher William James (d. 1910). English philosopher Julian Huxley (d. 1975) has written a book in support of Humanism, titled *Religion Without Revelation*. In this

book, Humanism has been described as the 'transfer of seat from God to man'.

***Global warming is actually an announcement of the death of the philosophy of Humanism. In this philosophy, man was believed to occupy the central position in the whole universe. If man truly had this exalted status in the universe, he should put an end to the impending destruction of the world's life-support system.***

A general introduction to Humanism can be understood from the book, *Humanism: A Very Short Introduction*, by Stephen Law, 2011.

Humanism gained widespread popularity in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. People believed they now had an alternative to divinity. Non-religious advocates of Humanism declared 'man to be the measure of all things'.

However, at this very same time another powerful phenomenon emerged that effectively demonstrated that the concept of Humanism was a failure. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as 'Global Warming'. Global temperatures began rising at an alarming speed, posing a grave threat to the very possibility of human life on Earth. Global warming began to throw life in the world into complete chaos.

Global warming is the heating of Earth's climate system to levels that have become harmful to life on Earth. Technological developments in the modern world led to rapid industrialization. These factories of the world that run by the burning of fossil fuels, pump harmful gases into the atmosphere known as carbon emissions. The Earth's atmosphere is now dangerously polluted with these carbon emissions.



Global warming and the resultant climate change now pose a great many insoluble problems for humankind. As a result, there is an unprecedented and rapid melting of Arctic ice shelves, mountain glaciers, polar ice caps and icebergs causing a rise in sea levels. This is leading to significant ecological damage including the extinction of many plant and animal species. The entire life-support system on Earth is now being rapidly destroyed. Scientists now tell us that Earth will soon become completely uninhabitable for man.

For all this to have happened is no minor matter. It is actually an announcement of the death of the philosophy of Humanism. In the philosophy of Humanism, man was believed to occupy the central position in the whole universe. To accept this status for man it was necessary to hold man himself as the font of all power and the master of his own destiny. If man truly had this exalted status in the universe, he should put an end to the impending destruction of the world's life-support system that is taking place through global warming. Instead, man's failure in halting global warming has put an end to the philosophy of Humanism completely.

When the phenomenon of global warming came to the fore, governments and scientists from around the world were actively concerned. Many meetings and conferences were held to discuss the issue. The United Nations Climate Change conferences are held every year to assess progress made in arresting global warming. An enormous amount of research has been undertaken on the subject. But in terms of practical results, all this has proven to be a total failure. The threat of global warming continues to rise.

Today, it has reached extremely dangerous levels, and efforts of man to try to stop it are proving to be completely ineffective.

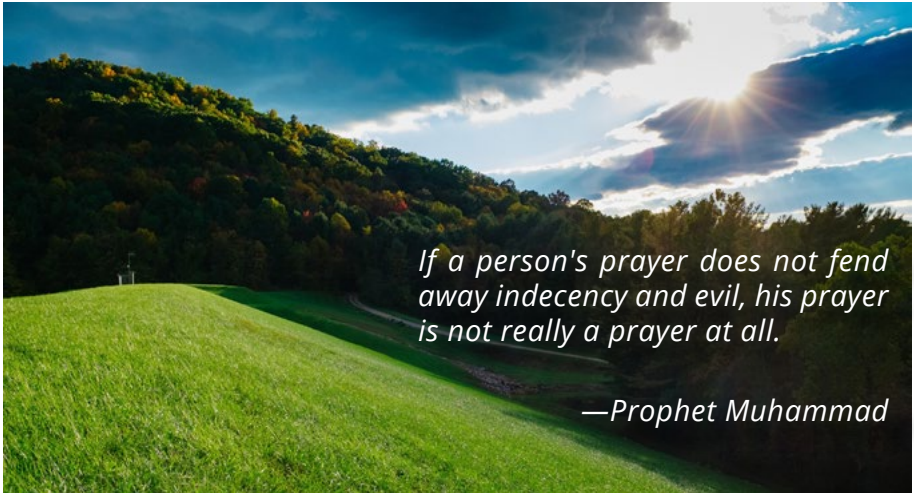
This phenomenon of global warming forebodes destruction of all life on Earth. It is actually a total negation of the ideology of Humanism. The truth is that global warming has nullified the philosophy of Humanism, in just the same way that science had nullified nature worship and democracy had demolished monarchy earlier.

***It is God's will, that whenever man framed alternative plans against the creation plan of God, such causes would emerge in history that would prove these alternatives ideologically and rationally unreliable.***

## Summary

In the seventh century CE, the Quran had announced that the guidance sent by God is the authentic guidance. God had decreed that the guidance that He had sent through the Prophet Muhammad (the Quran) would remain fully preserved forever. History testifies that with regard to this guidance, God's decision was completely fulfilled.

The second issue discussed in this article is that the creation plan of God will prevail. It is God's will, that whenever man framed alternative plans against the creation plan of God, such causes would emerge in history that would prove these alternatives ideologically and rationally unreliable. History has repeatedly witnessed the expression of this decision of God. Now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with all the results of misuse of God-given freedom clearly before us, man is left with no other choice but to submit to God's guidance and creation plan which was revealed through the Prophet Muhammad. □





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# THE KEY TO SUCCESS

## *Plan the Best Use of Your Resources*

**D**ELIVERING a speech at a public function in New Delhi, Admiral S.N. Kohli, former Navy chief said, "Success is wholly a thing of the mind. When one has the will, one will find ways and means to achieve one's goals, but in its absence one will simply say: It's just not possible." The principle so aptly mentioned by Admiral Kohli applies to individuals and nations alike. Success comes to those who, firstly, have the determination to achieve their ends and who, secondly, put the resources at their disposal to the best use. In the process much care, intelligence, ingenuity and farsightedness are vital. Conversely, failure often results not so much from a lack of resources as from available resources having been under-exploited or wrongly used.

***Failure often results not so much from a lack of resources as from available resources having been under-exploited or wrongly used.***

Take the case of the villager who decided to build himself a brick house in his village. Unmindful of the fact that his resources were severely limited, he dug the foundations of his modest dwelling so deep that people began to wonder if it was a house he was building or a fortress. Friends began to express their doubts about his ability to complete it, and unluckily for him, they proved to be right. So much building material had been used in the base that there was little left for construction

above ground level. With great difficulty, he managed to build the walls, but then there was nothing left to roof them over with. Finally, he managed somehow or the other to provide a roof for just one room so that he could start living in it, but the rest of the rooms remained forever open to the sky. Had he not squandered precious materials in the foundation, he would have had enough material to complete his house. As it was, his bad planning had left him almost without a roof over his head.

Success comes to those who have the determination to achieve their goals and put the resources they have at their disposal to the best possible use. □



# ON PRIDE AND ARROGANCE

## *A Deathblow to Spirituality*

**A**NDREW MURRAY, the South African writer, teacher and pastor (d. 1917), has brought about the spiritual benefits of humility quite beautifully in these words: "Pride must die in you, or nothing of Heaven can live in you."

The most sinful attitude that man can adopt before God is one of pride. Other sins may be forgivable, but for pride there is no forgiveness. Pride, whether overt or covert, is at the root of many of the wrongs and injustices perpetrated by man. It is pride, which prevents the wrongdoer from acknowledging his guilt: to do so, would detract from his personal status. He forgets that in denying, or ignoring what is true, he places himself above truth. It is folly to do so, for truth rides high, far and above everything and everyone else in this world. There is no mortal creature who can take precedence over it.

It is only the individual who lives out his life in consonance with the true nature of things who will receive God's blessings. Mr Murray again puts it aptly: "Humility is nothing but the disappearance of self in the vision that God is all." To attain to this state of blessedness, he

must realize that truth transcends all, and that he should bow before it. But those who are puffed up with a sense of their own importance are seldom capable of doing so. Instead of bowing before truth, they want truth to bow before them. Instead of living in harmony with reality, they demand that reality should harmonize with their wishes. This is as unrealistic as it is egoistic, for things can never happen in this way in this world. The perpetually proud man—without his ever realizing it—is doomed to moral bankruptcy and can never find favour in the eyes of God. □

*The most sinful attitude that man can adopt before God is one of pride. Other sins may be forgivable, but for pride there is no forgiveness.*

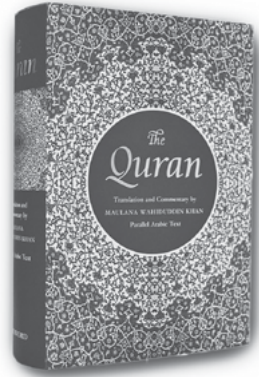


# THE WORD OF GOD

*From The Scriptures*

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

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



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***Say, 'If your fathers and your sons and your brothers and your spouses and your tribe, and the worldly goods which you have acquired , and the commerce which you fear will decline, and the homes you love are dearer to you than God and His Messenger and the struggle for His cause, then wait until God fulfills His decree. God does not guide the disobedient people.'*** (9: 24)

For human being, their families, their wealth and their economic interests have the greatest value. They consider these things the most important. They prefer these things to all other things and sacrifice their all for them. This sort of life is of the worldly type, and whatever the worldly person receives, he receives only in this world. There is nothing for him in the eternal life after death. As opposed to this, the other type of life is that in which a man gives the greatest importance to God, His Prophet and to efforts for the cause of God and, for the sake of these things, he is ready to leave everything else. It is the latter which is the God-worshipping life and for God's worshippers, the doors of Paradise will remain eternally open in the Hereafter.

The first sort of life is based on worldly connections and worldly interests. The second is based on Faith. Whatever a man chooses to adopt as the basis of his life, it is always at the cost of having to leave all other things for its sake; he has to develop relations with some people and break off relations with others. Certain losses are absolutely unbearable to him and at the risk of his life and at the cost of the greater part of his wealth, he tries to avert them, but as regards certain other losses, he is not perturbed by their occurrence. Those who invest their all in

worldly affairs, achieve worldly success. Similarly, the Hereafter will be the achievement of those who sacrifice everything else for its sake.

Giving up a materially advantageous thing in favour of something apparently less advantageous is a serious matter. It is such a grave matter that a man's belief or disbelief comes to be determined on that basis. Just as in this world of God, open infidels are not destined to succeed, similarly there is no possibility of success for those who make tall claims of faith, but when faced with a critical situation, give preference to the world-oriented way. If such claimants of faith have any misconceptions about themselves, they will come to know of their fate at the time God pronounces His verdict. □



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# ASK MAULANA

*Your Questions Answered*

***The remedy for ignorance is asking questions. (Prophet Muhammad)***

***The spirit of enquiry is the hallmark of an open society and the above saying of the Prophet aptly illustrates this principle. A culture of curiosity and open-mindedness will foster development in any society by motivating its members to learn enthusiastically and enrich their knowledge. This is because awareness of one's ignorance is half of knowledge, as it becomes a stepping-stone to seeking and finding answers. A questioning mind is like a flowing river that is replenished with fresh thoughts and ideas and continues on its journey.***

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***Nowadays it has been observed that most people suffer from tension (stress). People consult psychiatrists for this problem. I have recently had an experience in this regard. A person who was suffering from tension went to a psychiatrist. After spending a considerable sum, the advice he got from the psychiatrist was that he should worship according to his religion. The patient said, "But I already worship!" What is the solution to this problem? Please explain it in the light of the Quran.***

The usual approach of the psychiatrists is to guide the patient towards a technique that will relieve tension. According to my assessment of the matter, this theory is wrong in itself. Tension or mental stress is a product of the system of nature. It necessarily follows that what is a product of the system of nature cannot be eliminated by any means. Thus, the solution lies in accepting what is inherent in nature, not trying to eliminate it.

It is stated in the Quran that God created man into a life of toil and hardship (90: 4). It is a common human experience that life is not free from hardships. The same has been proved by scientific research. The Russian psychologist Anton Nemilov rightly wrote in his book *The Biological Tragedy of Woman* that:

Human life is unthinkable without tragedies, without the tragic element. The more highly developed and nearer to perfection man is, the greater are the possibilities for tragic conflicts. (pp. 13-15)

When toil is an essential part of human life according to the law of nature itself, we must accept it as such. We should not deny it. When it rains in the rainy season, it creates many problems for human



populations, but no one thinks to stop the rain. Rather, everyone thinks about how to protect oneself despite the rain.

This is the way we deal with the problem of tension. We cannot end the tension. However, if we consider tension as an inerasable reality, we can definitely protect ourselves from becoming its prey. This is the natural solution to this problem. The fact is that the only successful formula for a tension-free life is to accept the tension as an essential part of human life.

***Are mental abilities God-gifted or acquired by one's efforts? Is the human brain limited or unlimited? Can a person store all knowledge in his mind? What exactly is the human brain? Please enlighten me about the function and capabilities of the human brain in the light of your study.***

The human brain is still a mysterious reality. Despite 5,000 years of research, little is known about the human brain. In my experience and study, the human brain is a treasure trove of infinite potential. This mental capacity is bestowed almost equally to every human being. But research shows that the capacity of the human brain remains latent. Knowledge and experience awaken this ability. In the present age, the ideology of brainstorming shows that the greatest stimulus in awakening the latent potentialities of the brain is 'mental shock', provided it is not so severe as to crush a person's personality.

However, in the light of my experience, acknowledgement and gratitude are the greatest source of mental development. A person should look at the facts with an open mind and accept them without any reservation. There are very few people in the world who reach the stage of high mental development. The biggest reason for this is that people usually spend their lives with a closed and prejudiced mind. Due this, they do not understand any concept other than those that are familiar to them, and therefore they fail to adopt it.

***On page 27 of Al-Risala December 2001 (Urdu monthly), you write that God has created the present world for the purpose of test. If we consider this sentence, we have to believe that God is not the Knower of the unseen, nor does He know what is in anyone's heart. Because the advantage of the test is that what we did not know before becomes known after the test.***

It is not the purpose of the test that God Himself should know the outcome of the test. The purpose of the test is selection. This test is not in relation to God, but in relation to man himself. Namely, human

beings, good and bad, should be separated from each other. In other words, the purpose of the test is to make something that is a theoretical reality a known and visible event.

***I suffer from a problem that has made me very sad. The problem is that I suffer from hair loss. In spite of medication, my hairs continue to fall and they do not grow back. Is the Lord of the universe not able to stop hair fall? Why is it that God bestowed beautiful hair to someone and made someone bald?***

Your feelings are worthwhile indeed. The answer to what you have written about hair is that the present world is a place of testing. Everything here serves the purpose of test. Whatever one gets, or what is taken from one, or not granted at all, is all part of the test. In the same way, the growth of good hair on the scalp, hair fall or hair turning white is also a test. In order to pass this test, one must attribute all these conditions to be from God. He should not behave proudly if he receives something, nor should he become dejected and disappointed if something is not given to him.

You should treat the hair loss condition, but do not get frustrated under any circumstances. Rather, pray to God: O God, I am pleased with your decision, so decide for me good compensation. Give me Paradise in the Hereafter where there will be no sickness and no deprivation.

Man should not ask for himself any trouble in the world, but if any trouble befalls him, then he should adopt the method of perfect patience. This is the way of the believer and this is the price of Paradise. □



*O God! I seek from you a tongue that  
speaks truth and a heart which is pure  
and clean.*

*—Prophet Muhammad*



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