

ENGLISH BIMONTHLY ISSUE 101 JULY-AUGUST 2021

SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living



The only secret to gaining respect for yourself is to prove your usefulness by fulfilling the needs of others.

A MAGAZINE FOR THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

This is a current magazine. Its articles are based on sound principles of reason and science with a particular emphasis on the spirit of Islam rather than the form or the ritual. All the articles have been either written by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, translated from his Urdu writings, or based on his writings developed by a team trained and guided by him.

Spirit of Islam bimonthly...

- ▶ 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 seekers
- ▶ Fosters greater communal harmony through religious understanding

United in prayers
SOI Editorial Committee

SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living

ISSUE 101 JULY-AUGUST 2021

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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S DESK



Prof Farida Khanam is an author, editor, translator, public speaker and former professor of Islamic Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Among her books are 'A Simple Guide to Sufism' and 'A Study of World's Major Religions'. She has translated into English many books authored by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. Currently the chairperson of CPS International, she is a regular contributor of articles to various publications. Dr Khanam has edited Maulana's English translation of the Quran and has also translated his Urdu commentary on the Quran into English. She can be reached at thecentreforpeace@gmail.com

CARRYING ON THE LEGACY AND MISSION OF MAULANA

On the night of April 21, my father, mentor, and spiritual guide Maulana Wahiduddin Khan passed away. It has been the most difficult time of my life to be without him. I know I have to accept death, a part of the creation plan of God, gracefully. It will take time for me to get used to his physical absence. In spirit, he is not just with me, but with all the CPS missionaries.

What a visionary he was! Before his death he had recorded a message to guide our response in the situation after his loss. He lived in constant remembrance of death. He said: *"If tomorrow you receive the news, Maulana is no more, what should be your reaction? You should immediately exclaim, Maulana is no more, but God is still alive!"*

In the same video, Maulana goes on to advise his disciples thus:

This is what Abu Bakr, a Companion of the Prophet of Islam, said at the time of the death of the Prophet. You must remind yourself that God alone is the eternal being. You should not react in any other way. If you do say this, then God Himself will become your companion. You will not be sad about being separated from anyone. After I am gone, you have to devote your lives to God's mission. This was the spirit of

the Companions of the Prophet. You must follow the example of the Companions. You must say as they said: God is always with us and He is the Ever-living.

This message of Maulana gives me an immense sense of responsibility to take forward this mission along with the strong team he has built over a long period. He has nurtured this orchard with utmost love and care. It is our responsibility to take care of it. May God grant him forgiveness and give him the highest rewards!

This issue of *Spirit of Islam* is the 101th Issue. It comes to you now packed with new features. The addition of these features was necessitated after surveying the needs of the readers and the present situation of the pandemic. Maulana's passing away also made us change some previous features. From the 100th issue onwards, *SOI* was converted into a bimonthly and it included many new columns such as *Letters and Opinions* and *Children's Corner*. From this issue onwards, we have replaced *From the Spiritual Tree* with *Journey towards God-realization*. Other new columns include *Maulana's Personal Experiences* and *From the Archives*. Realization and discovery of God was a topic most dear to Maulana. We will publish his writings on this subject from the rich storehouse of his literature spanning over 50 years. CPS Missionaries all over the world are disseminating the peaceful message of Islam. These activities will be featured in *SOI*.

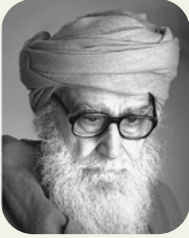
It is our responsibility to take forward this mission along with the strong team Maulana has built over a long period. He has nurtured this orchard with utmost love and care.

With prayers for all the readers for their well-being, we present to you this issue which we earnestly hope will inspire, motivate, enlighten and enrich you all in your contributions to global peace and spirituality. □

Prof. Farida Khanam
thecentreforpeace@gmail.com



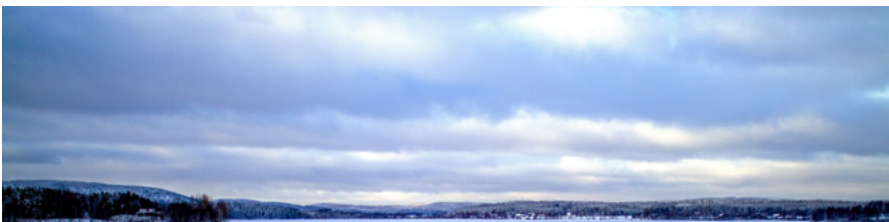
IN FOCUS



We bring you two articles every issue under the headings of '*Journey towards God-realization*' and '*Personal Experiences*' of our mentor and founder of CPS International Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925-2021). Though he is no more with us, we feel the presence of his guiding spirit motivating us through his teachings and his advice.

Maulana, through his study of science, religion, psychology and the experiences of his own life, enlightens about the path to discovery of God through one's journey of life. A discovery of this kind involves pondering on the Word of God, converting one's material experiences into spiritual insights, constant introspection, and contemplating on the numerous phenomena of the universe.

The journey of realization begins with a questing spirit. Seeking is an intellectual journey. If a person is sincere and honest in his discovery of God, if there is no negativity in his thinking, if he is free from prejudices, if he has become a completely complex-free soul, attainment of God-realization is as certain as the dawn of light after the rising of the sun.



Practical wisdom means opting for the less than ideal when the ideal is not achievable.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

The Message of Pilgrimage

I performed *hajj* (pilgrimage to Makkah) in 1982. My knowledge of *hajj* prior to this had been limited to what I could gain from books. When at last in that year I had the privilege of performing this religious duty, I felt singularly blessed. Although the rites of *hajj* are spread over only a few days, as symbolic guidelines they stand a man in good stead for the rest of his life. The message of *hajj*, as I now comprehend it from the study and performance of it, is that man should make the Almighty the very pivot of his existence, hastening at His call to do His every bidding.

Once the pilgrim's train of thought has become God-oriented, he begins to ponder over deep issues: God's act of creation, particularly His creation of human beings.

When a man leaves his home and country to go on such a pilgrimage, he brims over with all the emotions aroused by the thought that he is embarking on a course which will lead him directly to God. He is, in effect, sloughing off his own world, leaving it behind him, and reaching out for the world of the Almighty. He is on his way to the House of God, a place where the great deeds of God's messengers and their followers have been preserved for all eternity; where we find the hallowed impressions of the lives of those who lived and died for the cause of God. The *haji* (pilgrim) is

then filled with the realization that he is bound for that very destination which God had specially chosen for His Last Revelation. Once launched on this course, the pilgrim is imbued with the awareness of God, His creation plan, as well as the feeling that it is imperative that he become God-oriented. If up till then, he had been self-centred in his thinking, he now turns his thoughts to God, and his entire behaviour is moulded and transformed by these new thought processes.

Once the pilgrim's train of thought has become God-oriented, he begins to ponder over deep issues: God's act of creation, particularly His creation of human beings. He now realizes how God afforded him diverse opportunities of bettering himself in this world and His very benevolence which makes it possible for him to set forth on this journey to the House of God. The pilgrim also gives his mind to the day when he will meet his death and be summoned to the court of God. This thought turns the physical journey of the pilgrim into an intense, spiritual venture.

When the time nears for his entrance into the *haram* (sacred territory), every pilgrim divests himself of his clothing in order to don a new kind of 'uniform'—an unstitched, plain, white garment which serves to heighten his consciousness of entering a new world. The very act of shedding his normal clothes (and with them all signs of status and ethnicity) signifies that he is separating himself from the way of life peculiar to his environment, and is now ready to become suffused with such emotions as are desired by God. In this way, thousands of men, in casting off their hues, take on the hue of the Almighty. After clothing himself in *ihram* (a specific raiment), the pilgrim finds his tongue of itself beginning to utter these words: *Labbayk! Labbayk!* And he continues as if hastening to answer God's call, to repeat the words *Allahumma Labbayk*, "O God, I am here, I have come!"

Labbayk (I am here) does not just narrowly mean that the pilgrim has come to stay in Makkah. It means that in leaving his normal abode, he has cast aside his whole way of life. It means, 'I am here, at Your command, and, with all my heart and soul, I am ready to obey You.' While on their pilgrimage, pilgrims simply give utterance to the word *Labbayk*, but when they return to their own countries, they must put it into practice in their everyday lives.

On reaching Makkah, the pilgrim must perform *tawaf* (circumambulation of Ka'ba). To do this, he enters the House of God (*Baitullah*), the great mosque in whose spacious central courtyard stands the Ka'ba, which was erected by the Prophet Abraham in ancient times. Then, he goes round the Ka'ba seven times to demonstrate his willingness to make God the pivot of his whole existence.

After the *tawaf*, there comes the ritual of *sa'i*, which entails brisk walking from the hill of Safa to the hill of Marwa and back again. This procedure is repeated seven times in symbolic enactment of a promise, or covenant, to expend all of one's energies in the path of God. The form which this ritual takes can be traced back to the Prophet Abraham's wife, Hagar, running from one hill to another in a frantic search for water for her young baby when they first arrived there.

The most important period of worship during *hajj* is the day-long sojourn on the plain of Arafat. It is, indeed, an awesome spectacle,

The pilgrim also gives his mind to the day when he will meet his death and be summoned to the court of God. This thought turns the physical journey of the pilgrim into an intense, spiritual venture.

with people from all over the world, clad in identical, simple, white garments, chanting, "Lord, I am present; Lord, I am present." This serves to impress upon the mind of the pilgrim how great a gathering there will be in the presence of God on the Day of Reckoning. Once he becomes aware of its true significance, all his problems fall into their true perspective, and his life cannot but take a turn for the better.

The day of Arafath serves to impress upon the mind of the pilgrim how great a gathering there will be in the presence of God on the Day of Reckoning.

Another practice during *hajj* is the casting of stone at *Jamrat-e-Uqba*. This is a symbolic act through which the pilgrim renews his determination to drive Satan away from him. In this way, he makes it plain that his relationship with Satan is one of enmity and resistance. The next step for the pilgrim is to turn his symbolic acts into reality, so that he may be purged of all evils, for all the evils besetting man result from the instigation of Satan.

After this, the pilgrim sacrifices an animal to God, an act symbolizing the sacrifice of the self (This is referred to in the Quran as *sha'airullah: signs of God*). His faith is such that even if it comes to any kind of sacrifice he will not hesitate to do so in the service of God. ◻

To believe in God is to see the invisible force behind visible objects.



JOURNEY TOWARDS GOD-REALIZATION

The Sublimity of Spiritual Experience

GOD does not manifest Himself physically in our world. The joy, therefore, that comes from the realization of His existence and putting faith in Him is, in consequence, abstract in nature. But, in the next world, God will manifest Himself in all His glory and the joys which God's true servants will experience in Paradise will be a materialization of the joys they experienced in their worship in this world. According to the Quran, the Paradise which believers will enter in the next world will be a "known provision" (37: 41). It will be in no way strange to them, for they will already have become acquainted with it in this world through their devotions, "God will admit them to the Paradise He has made known to them," or as the Prophet put it, "The people of Paradise will know their dwellings even better than any one of you knows his dwelling in this world."

The inner states that one experiences when carrying out the will of God are not in one's power. One cannot of one's own volition create these states. Where, then, do they come from? They are the 'provision' of God without which the believing aspect of one's personality cannot survive. When the Prophet Zakaria saw this 'provision' in the person of the Virgin Mary, which enabled her to know God and to do His will, he exclaimed, 'Mary, where did this provision come from?' She replied, 'This is from God.' (3: 37)

The inner states that one experiences when carrying out the will of God are the 'provision' of God without which the believing aspect of one's personality cannot survive.

Such states of mind are God's rewards for good deeds, provided they have been the result of our own efforts. God does not hold back His supreme blessings, He grants them to us here and now. They descend upon us as soon as we prove ourselves worthy of them.

The sublime spirituality we experience when God approves of our actions is an introduction to the Heaven that God has promised to true believers. It is like being able to savour the fragrance of Paradise while yet hovering on its threshold. □



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.



ISLAM AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE WORLD

MAN faces a number of challenges—intellectual, political, economic, etc.—which are universal in the modern world. A major issue confronting man is whether humankind can continue to live in peace on this planet. This is a matter of great importance because man's very existence is in peril. It is the future of humankind which is at stake.

Various sets of adverse circumstances have together produced a state of unrest throughout the world. At different places, groups of people are engaged in violent clashes with other groups. This state of affairs is such as to render our scientific progress meaningless, and it must be acknowledged that our very civilization is in jeopardy.

Unfortunately, in this baneful sequence of events, the name of Islam has come to be linked with violence. Due to the foolish and imprudent acts of certain Muslims, Islam and violence have come to be regarded as interchangeable terms.

But the truth about Islam is the very opposite. The word Islam itself means peace, having been derived from the Arabic root '*silm*' meaning peace. And the Prophet of Islam is described in the Scriptures as a "Mercy to the world." The Quran has this to say: "And God calls you to the home of peace". The lesson that is imparted through *hajj*, a course of training for a Muslim for the whole of his life, is not to harm a single human being, not even an animal. To call such a religion as one of violence is therefore highly inappropriate.

Islam came to humankind in an age when violence was an integral part of every nation's culture and, as such, was prevalent all over the world. Violence, it was thought, was the most dependable means for the achievement of all ends.

It was at this point that Islam brought to the world the message of peaceful coexistence, not only in theory, but also in practice. The truth is that Islam is a peaceful way of life. It was so for the man of the past, and it is so for the man of today.

But mere casual talk about peace will not, of itself, produce peace for humanity. It is essential rather to formulate a concept of peace in such a manner as to explain and underline its importance. Furthermore, such a concept must be accompanied by a methodology which will facilitate its practical realization.

Simplifying One's Difficulties

The concept presented by Islam for peaceful living is based on the idea that, in this world, adversity is always accompanied by some positive, simplifying factor. That is to say that disadvantages will always be accompanied by advantages. The common man is nevertheless of the view that whenever any difficulty presents itself, the only solution is to fight. And it is this mentality which breeds violence. If, however, he could be convinced that whenever the path to success seemed barred to him, there would always be something inherent in the situation to ease his difficulties, his whole manner of thinking would change.

He will then direct his efforts towards seeking whatever advantages lie in store for him. Only after securing these advantages will he start his struggle anew. In this way, on the ideological plane, this concept strikes at the very roots of violence. In addition to this conceptual approach, Islam offers a new methodology based on nonviolence rather than on violence. This topic is dealt with briefly here:

Willingness to Accept the Possible

The first principle of the nonviolent method is to show willingness to accept what is possible. A fine, practical example of this principle was personally demonstrated by the Prophet of Islam at the outset of his missionary career in Makkah. At that time, many deities were worshipped in Ka'ba, the house of One God. The ritual of *hajj* had been distorted. For instance, the solar instead of the lunar calendar was being used for its observance. Drinking and other evils were rife.

The Prophet had, at that juncture, formulated an important principle of peace. Presenting it to the world, he put it into practice himself. The principle he followed was to make one's starting point from what was possible. That is to say, to confine one's activity to the field in which opportunities are available under the prevailing system. The rest had to be left for the future.

Moving Away from the Point of Confrontation

Another principle formed by the Prophet in this regard was to move away from the point of conflict. This principle took practical shape in the *Hijrah* (emigration). It was in adherence to this principle that the Prophet emigrated to Madinah, leaving his hometown, Makkah, in the thirteenth year of his prophethood.

Hijrah literally means 'to leave'. It means that if the other party comes to the point of aggression in order to stop whatever peaceful work is being undertaken, one must move away from that place rather than take to fighting.

The concept presented by Islam for peaceful living is based on the idea that, in this world, adversity is always accompanied by some positive, simplifying factor.

Indeed, *Hijrah* is just one of the strategies employed to avoid confrontation, but if it proves the best method, it must be resorted to, even if it entails leaving one's homeland, property, and relatives.

The Hudaibiyah Principle

When the Prophet of Islam emigrated to Madinah, he did not launch any military campaign from there. His adversaries, the Quraysh, however, made military preparations and launched an onslaught without any provocation from the other side. It was due

to this aggression that some defensive battles had to be fought. At this juncture, in order to avoid further bloodshed, the Prophet followed an excellent principle which can be termed the Hudaibiyah principle.

The superior strategy employed on the occasion of the conquest of Makkah was quite simply this: to achieve one's end, not by the use of force, but by the demonstration of strength.

What the Prophet of Islam did with regard to the Hudaibiyah treaty was to accept all the demands of the other party in return for their agreeing to his demand that no battle be fought between them, directly or indirectly, for a period of ten years. The Hudaibiyah treaty was, in

fact a no-war pact. The Hudaibiyah principle can thus be summed up in these words: unilateral acceptance of all the demands of the opposite party in order to obviate any risks of further clash and confrontation.

The Demonstration rather than the Use of Force

In spite of this no-war pact, the Prophet's opponents reopened hostilities—thus committing a breach of their agreement. This time the Prophet adopted a different strategy, with the result that Makkah was ultimately conquered. Very few lives were lost, however, for, beyond minor skirmishes, no armed struggle between the opposing forces took place.

The superior strategy employed on the occasion of the conquest of Makkah was, quite simply, to achieve one's end, not by the use of force, but by the demonstration of strength.

Refraining from Revenge Psychology

The initial strategy adopted by the Prophet after the conquest of Makkah was one of remarkable leniency. After the victory, men who had been his deadliest enemies were now brought before him. Today, we would call them war criminals of the worst kind. The only possible fate for such criminals in those days was summary execution. But the Prophet granted them all an unconditional amnesty.

The greatest advantage of this general amnesty was that the country was spared a counter-revolution and all the bloodshed that would have ensued. Had the Prophet punished these men, the fire of revenge would most certainly have been ignited in the tribes all over Arabia. The shedding of Arab blood would then have reached a new peak.

Rising above the Psychology of Reaction

If a peaceful atmosphere is to be maintained in society while one goes about achieving one's ends, albeit in a peaceable manner, a great sacrifice is required. The Prophet himself set such perfect examples for the building of the nation on the basis of nonviolence.

One example of such a sacrifice can be seen in the Battle of Badr. In this battle, 70 Makkans were taken as prisoners of war. All of them belonged to the nobility of Makkah and all were well educated by the standards of the time. Considering that in Madinah, where the Prophet

The word Islam itself means peace, having been derived from the Arabic root 'silm' meaning peace. And the Prophet of Islam is described in the Scriptures as a "Mercy to the world."

was staying, the people lacked such an education, the Prophet did not order the execution of the Makkans, but instead set a 'ransom' for each of them. That is, each one had to teach ten children of the Ansar (Madinan inhabitants) how to read and write. After that they were to be set free.

At that time, one great risk was involved in setting these prisoners of war free. They being leaders of hostile tribes, there was the genuine fear that, once back in Makkah, they would use their freedom to incite the citizenry to prepare for another war. This fear became a reality when they succeeded in provoking their fellow Makkans to fight the Battle of Uhud.

Islam teaches conflict resolution in a peaceful manner.

The history of Islam shows that its message of peace is not just a utopian dream, but is a fully practicable programme.

Fully aware of the risk involved, the Prophet had, nevertheless, set these Makkans free. This instance not only demonstrates his love of peace, but also underlines the importance he attached to education. He felt that its importance was so great that it had to be acquired— even at the risk of a future war.

Conclusion

These few points, though brief, show that Islam has a great role to play in countering the deadly challenges, namely violence and conflict, which haunt the world today. This scheme of Islam is not based on mere ideology, but has a genuine history of practical success to back it. The history of Islam shows that its message of peace is not just a utopian dream, but is a fully practicable programme. It is a historical fact that the Prophet of Islam adopted such a well-considered strategy that all his successes were achieved with surprisingly little bloodshed. The toll of casualties in the revolution he brought about in Arabia amounted to only about a thousand on both sides. This number is comparatively so low that this revolution can rightly be termed bloodless. Thus Islam teaches conflict resolution in a peaceful manner. □



CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF MAINSTREAM MEDIA

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan addressed many press conferences in his lifetime. He also wrote a good deal about the role of media in shaping public opinion. In this article, Maulana enumerates the challenges the media faces. He also provides some guiding principles.

AS part of our mission for constructive work, we seek to communicate our message to every section of the community. Therefore, we thought it would be a good idea that our message gets communicated to our friends of the press as well. For the press is, in our day and age, like the public's eye with which they see; it is like the public's mind with which they think.

Although journalism is not very advanced in our country, still—in theory at least—the press is the greatest power in the modern age. In western countries, the press has become an independent force, parallel to governments. If the press in these countries turns against a president or prime minister, then its opposition cannot be ignored. The political eclipse of Richard Nixon in 1973 provides us with an example of the power of the press in western countries.

However, I would like to say that the power of the press has not yet been channeled in the right direction. Man today holds this power in his grasp, but as yet it has not been effectively implemented for the improvement of humankind.

For the media, a piece of good news is no news. A news item has no appeal if it has no sensational value. Modern journalism makes a thing, which in real terms is worthless, appear as if it is of the greatest worth.

Steven Pinker is a cognitive scientist and a celebrated author of many best-selling books. *Enlightenment Now* is perhaps his most famous book. In this book, the author argues on behalf of reason, science, humanism and progress. An adapted article from this book appeared in *The Guardian*, February 17, 2018.

“News is about things that happen, not things that don't happen. We never see a journalist saying to the camera, “I'm reporting live from a country where a war has not broken out”— or a city that has not been bombed, or a school that has not been shot up. As long as bad things have not vanished from the face of the earth, there will always be enough incidents to fill the news, especially when billions of

smartphones turn most of the world's population into crime reporters and war correspondents."

He also writes: "Plane crashes always make the news, but car crashes, which kill far more people, almost never do. Not surprisingly, many people have a fear of flying, but almost no one has a fear of driving. People rank tornadoes (which kill about 50 Americans a year) as a more common cause of death than asthma (which kills more than 4,000 Americans a year), presumably because tornadoes make for better television."

What we ask of the press is that it should attach importance to real value, not to news value. Attaching importance to real value makes one realistic, and realism is the source of all human virtues. Attaching importance to news value, on the other hand, leads to insincerity, and insincerity is, without doubt, the cause of all human evils.

Attaching importance to real value makes one realistic, and realism is the source of all human virtues.

The press can play an important role in the sincere and constructive society. But at present, it is proceeding in a direction quite contrary to this aim. Islam seeks to train people to attach importance to realities.

While on a foreign trip, I met a gentleman from Canada. He asked me the meaning of Islam. "Islam means realism," I replied. In fact, Islam is the science of life, and this science is founded on the principle that one should be a realist in this world; in every matter, one should adopt a realistic attitude which is the secret to every success in life, and lack of realism is the prime cause of all failure.

In the present age, there are two departments which are particularly important in fashioning life. These two departments are science and journalism. Science is connected more to the physical world and journalism to the human world. Science studies events in the universe, and journalism deals with the events in the world of man. But the strange thing is that these two departments are at severe odds with one another.

Science is founded fully on realistic principles; it proceeds in compliance with the reality that there is a world outside us that rests solidly on firm laws. Water, for instance, has a law of its own; so does land, and so does the atmosphere. Ships come into being by virtue of conformance

with the laws of water; motor cars result from conformance with the laws of the land; airplanes develop from the conformance with laws of atmosphere. This complete conformance with the outside world is what every triumph of science basically is.

But in journalism or the world of man, the very opposite is the case. One chapter of a book I read on journalism showed the principles that a journalist observes when compiling a story. These principles have been illustrated by a special term in journalism: Inverted Pyramid. For instance, a building, 21-storeys in height, is being constructed in town. When a journalist makes a story out of this, his first sentence will be: '21-storey building constructed'. Clearly, the 21st storey was the last thing to be built. First, the plan was laid; then the ground was prepared; then the foundations were dug, and construction started from the base until finally the top storey was erected. But, in the news report, it is the 21st storey that comes first.

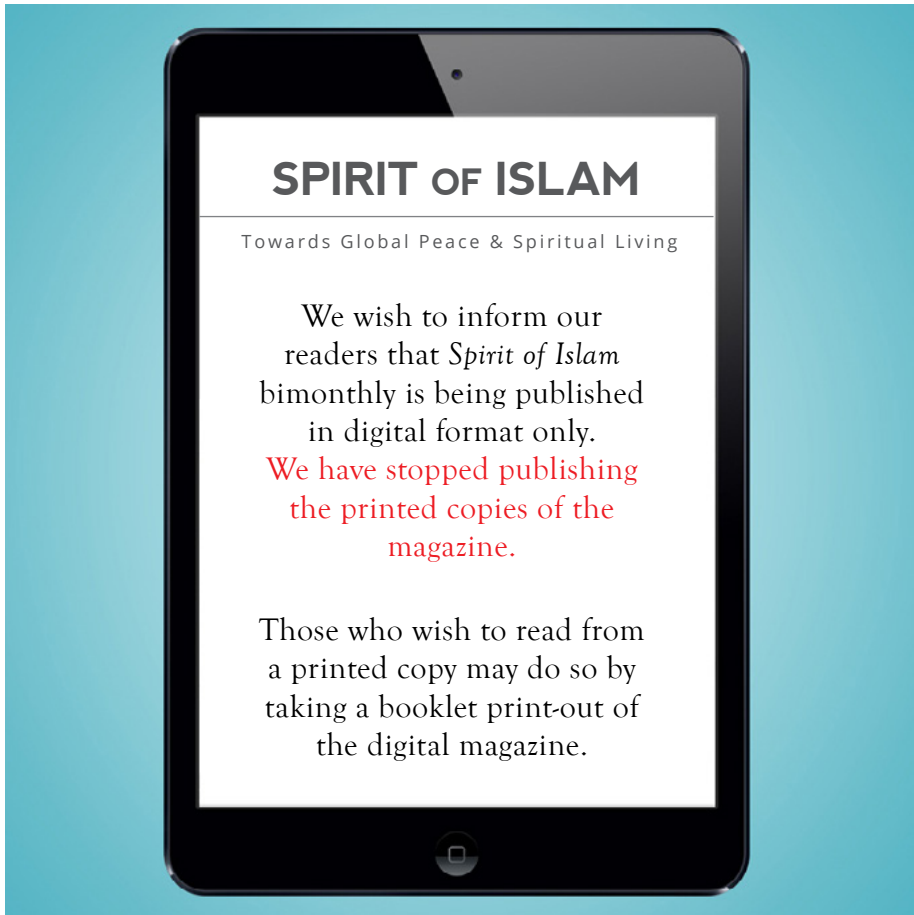
One can say that if science attaches importance to real value, then journalism attaches importance to news value. This contradiction in the two major departments of life has caused chaos on earth. The principles which we adopt in science with successful results, we fail to adopt in the rest of our lives; here, we put the contrary principles into practice. The result of this contradiction is that the success which we have obtained in science, we have not been able to obtain in ordinary life. We can, by scientific means, construct a superbly planned town, but in this same town, we cannot live superbly planned lives. Science has enabled us to manufacture machines which work with technical perfection, but we cannot make man fulfil his duty with the same technical perfection.

The thing which is flashed most in the newspapers is that which has the most news value. The most successful press conference is one which is convened on some major public issue. We would like this situation to be changed. We would like to see the same realistic posture that is adopted in the world of physics, adopted in the world of man also. We must never forget that news items not only shape our opinions, but they also affect our mental health. Sensational or negative news items produce many untoward traits in humans.

We must never forget that news items not only shape our opinions, but they also affect our mental health. Sensational or negative news items produce many untoward traits in humans.

Steven Pinker enumerates these effects: "Consumers of negative news, not surprisingly, become glum: a recent literature review cited "misperception of risk, anxiety, lower mood levels, learned helplessness, contempt and hostility towards others, desensitization, and in some cases, complete avoidance of the news."

Islam holds that the Quran is God's light to man, guiding him on the path to this life of realism. The summary of its teachings is that man should adopt the religion that the whole universe has adopted. □



HUMILITY: A COMMENDABLE VIRTUE

Cutting Man to Size

ON April 8, 1984, Squadron Leader Rakesh Sharma, the first Indian spaceman, gave an interview from space which relayed from the mission control centre in Moscow. It was telecast live on the national Indian TV network. Part of the conversation went like this:

Question: How do you pass your time when there is no work?

Sharma: I just peep through the window and watch the timeless space.

Question: Don't you feel like a tiny human being up there, dwarfed by the endless space?

Sharma: Certainly, it's mind-boggling.

Humility is the greatest quality that man can have, and arrogance is undoubtedly the worst. Humility is the result of realistic thinking; for it is a fact that man is an extremely small and insignificant part of an extremely vast and fathomless universe. Arrogance, on the other hand, is the result of superfluous thinking, for when one thinks of the tiny place one occupies in the universe as a whole, there can be no room for arrogance.

Thinking of oneself in relation to other men might lead to arrogance, for one may be better off than them; one might hold a higher status in life. But when one thinks of oneself in relation to the vast universe, arrogance disappears, for one sees how small and insignificant one is. God has created the universe so that we may observe and ponder over it; so that realization of its greatness may lead us to a realization of what a small part we occupy in it; so that we may be imbued with the quality of humility, which is the greatest and most realistic quality that man can have. □

*Humility is the
greatest quality
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and arrogance is
undoubtedly the
worst.*



THE BOSS AT HOME

Status of Woman in Islam

ON a journey to the USA, I learnt of an American lady who, after embracing Islam, got married to a Pakistani Muslim, one Naseer Ahmad Mirza. Her present name is Jeanine Aisha Mirza, and she lives in Utah. In the course of an interview she gave to an American journal, she made the following observation:

While most Americans are under the impression that Muslim wives are oppressed, Mirza said she has not found that to be true. "It's just a different division. Outside the home, my husband's the boss. But in my house, I'm the boss."

A number of such incidents have come to my knowledge. Certain American women are wary of marrying for fear of divorce taking place at any time. This is why some women prefer marrying Muslims, preferably those who come to America for education. In this way, such marriages have become a means of conveying the message of Islam. When the newspapers ask them about Islam, they defend their newly acquired faith excellently, as quoted above.

Islam does not degrade the status of woman as compared to that of men. Instead, on the principle of equality, the system of separate workplaces has been established.

Islam does not degrade the status of women as compared to that of men. Instead, on the principle of equality, the system of separate workplaces has been established. Islam has divided the affairs of life into two fields, one outdoor and the other indoor. According to Islam, man is in charge of the outdoor departments of life while woman attends to indoor matters. Jeanine Aisha Mirza very aptly represented this principle of Islam in the light of her own experience.

This division is very appropriate for both genders. In this way, the man is free to devote his maximum energy to one department while the woman is free to give her full attention to indoor affairs. This makes for greater efficiency in both spheres.

This division, while giving independent status respectively to the husband and the wife, makes them both cogs in the great wheel of the family machine. And unless the wheels all smoothly interlock with each other, the machine will come to a standstill. This means for the

family to function as an efficient unit, there has to be full cooperation between husband and wife. Otherwise, it would mean the end of family life and, ultimately, of all social relations. Humanity as a whole would suffer.

The division of labour relates not only to men and women but is also a general principle upon which the whole system of nature is based.

When you establish a business house where many people work, you have to assign some people to look after the office work, while some people have to be sent out to look after the fieldwork. This division of labour is necessary to run any business efficiently and successfully. If the workers of any factory or organization are not willing to accept this arrangement, that enterprise will certainly fail.

The division of labour relates not only to men and women but is also a general principle upon which the whole system of nature is based.

The same is true of everyday life. God has planned things so that men and women together will make them work. Then He has created men and women with the special abilities necessary to perform the jobs assigned to their sphere.

Now both reason and Islam demand that each gender should be willing to remain in their sphere and perform the assigned tasks. Man should not try to imitate woman, and vice versa.

Those men and women who show their willingness to make this arrangement a success will, by the help of God, be rewarded in this life as well as in the next. □



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

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's writing career spanned about seven decades. His early writings date back to 1955. Promulgating the eternal teachings of religion, providing divine guidance from the Quran and the Hadith for the ever-changing world and academic discussion of the teachings of religion were his main concerns. Through this column, we take our readers across memory lane to read the timeless wisdom of a revealed religion through his writings. He wrote this article in 1984. It calls for total dedication of the members of CPS towards the Mission. It also enumerates the qualities of a CPS missionary.

A GRAND ADVENTURE

“**M**EN wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success.” —Sir Ernest Shackleton

This is an advertisement published in *The Times*, London, 1900, by Sir Ernest Shackleton. He required a team for exploration of the Antarctic. As a result of this advertisement, Shackleton's epic voyage to within 100 miles of the South Pole (1907-1909) took place. No commercial stunts or slogans, just a few lines of type pulled applications that far exceeded the requirement, so Shackleton had to make a selection from among them in order to form a team.

It was neither the subject of the advertisement nor the personality of the advertiser which produced such a great response; it was the nation to whom the appeal was made. It is a historical fact that during the 19th century, the British nation was the most ambitious and adventurous in the world. On account of this, it established an empire which extended over such a vast portion of the globe that the sun never set on it. Indeed, it was not only for the Antarctic exploration but for any adventure whatsoever, that this nation could produce highly dependable people. Nothing great was ever accomplished without making sacrifices.

Centre for Peace and Spirituality (CPS) through its periodicals *Spirit of Islam*, *Al-Risala Urdu* and *Al-Risala Hindi* breathes the same spirit as the above advertisement. Our appeal, then, is addressed to those who have the same spirit of adventure and self-sacrifice as those who responded to Shackleton's appeal. Our aim is to form a team which will set out, as

Shackleton's team did, on a grand adventure requiring self-denial and courage. This team, however, will have its sights set not on any worldly goal but on an eternal cause: it will strive to communicate the true message of Islam a religion of nature to the people of the world. The Muslim world today is engaged in all manners of activities, but it has neglected this all-important task.

This is a mission which demands highest level of sacrifice; it calls for suppression of desires and ambitions; it requires one to rise above the thoughts of visible gain in this world for the sake of invisible gain that is promised in the life to come, for God has promised Paradise to those who come forward to serve His cause. Eternal blessing and eternal comfort: they are there for the asking. Will anyone come forward? □

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*Endure with patience. Truly,
your patience is possible only
with the help of God.*

(The Quran 16: 127)



THE LIFE FORCE

The Greatest Motivation

A creeper growing in a courtyard once had the misfortune of having its roots and branches buried under mounds of earth and rubble when the house was undergoing repairs. Later, when the courtyard was cleaned up, the owner of the house cut away the creeper, which had been badly damaged, and even pulled out its roots so that it would not grow again. The whole courtyard was then laid with bricks and cemented over.

A few weeks later, something stirred at the place where the creeper had been rooted out. The bricks heaved upwards at one point as though something was pushing them from below. This appeared very strange but was dismissed as being the burrowing of rats. The riddle was solved when some of the bricks were removed, and it was discovered that the creeper had started growing again, although in a sadly distorted form. As it happened, not all of its roots had been pulled out, and when the time of the year came around for them to grow, life began to stir

Life-force is the great moving force in this world. The sense of being alive is the greatest motivating factor for any person. A person should never lose hope despite any shortcoming and hurdles. If one is alive, this is motivation enough to succeed.

within them and they pushed their way up through the cement to the sunlight. It is one of nature's miracles that these tender leaves and buds, which can be so easily crushed to a pulp between finger and thumb, can summon up such strength as to force their way through bricks and cement.

The owner of the house then regretted having attempted to take the creeper's life. He remarked, "It is just as if it were appealing to me for the right to grow. Now I certainly won't stand in its way." And so saying, he removed some more of bricks so that it would grow unhindered. In less than a year, a fifteen-foot creeper was flourishing against the courtyard wall at the exact point from which it had been so unceremoniously 'uprooted'.

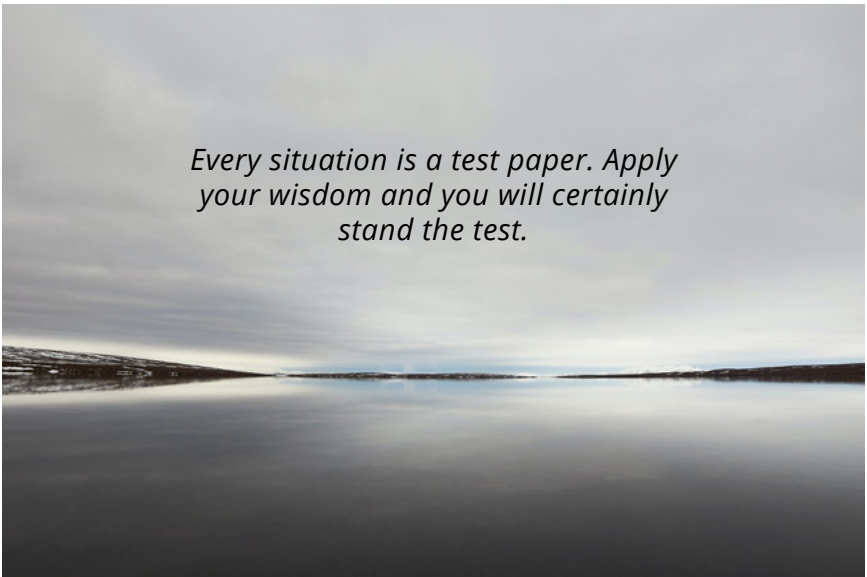
A mountain, despite its great height and girth, cannot remove so much as a pebble from its flanks. But these tiny, tender buds of the tree can crack a cemented floor and sprout up through it. Whence such power? The source of its energy is the mysterious phenomenon of our world called life. Life is an astonishing, ongoing process of this

universe—a force which will claim its rights in this world, and, even when uprooted, it continues to exist, albeit dormant, at one place or the other and reappears the moment it finds the opportunity. Life-force is the great moving force in this world. The sense of being alive is the greatest motivating factor for any person. The above example makes it quite clear that a person should never lose hope despite any shortcomings and hurdles. If one is alive, this is motivation enough to succeed. Precisely when people have come to the conclusion that, because there is nothing visible on the surface, life must be at an end, that is the moment it rears its head from the debris. □



If you encounter any issue regarding the presentation of material on the Spirit of Islam website (www.spiritofislam.co.in), please mail in your suggestions or questions to usman_888@yahoo.com.

Every situation is a test paper. Apply your wisdom and you will certainly stand the test.



PROPHETIC MODEL OF SUCCESS

Believers must not Despair

THE followers of the Prophet of Islam should always keep in mind that the Prophet Muhammad has been acknowledged by historians to be the most successful individual in the entire history of the world. According to the Quran, he came into this world to set 'a good example' (33: 21) to all human beings. It would be quite correct to say that not only was he the most successful human being but that he also showed the secret of unparalleled success through the example of his life.

By being supremely successful himself, he set a model of supreme success for his own and succeeding generations.

Did not the Prophet, despite all manner of setbacks, achieve the greatest success in history? In the same vein, the believers should always remain hopeful. They should never allow their hearts to be weighed down by despair.

It is a matter of historical record that the Prophet of Islam was faced with the severest of difficulties. Beset by hardships, not to speak of persecution, he nevertheless scaled the heights of personal success. An orientalist has aptly written of him that "He faced adversity with the determination to wring success out of failure."

This is what the Quran means by saying that "Surely with every hardship there is ease." (94: 5) This Quranic teaching, along with the example of the Prophet's life, shows that there is no justification for the believers to feel bowed down by frustration no matter what the circumstances. When the Creator of

the universe has Himself declared for all eternity that 'every hardship is followed by ease,' it is a sure indication that every disadvantage is invariably accompanied by an advantage. That being so, what is there left to fear?

The truth of this message of the Quran has been proved right to a remarkable extent. Did not the Prophet, despite all manner of setbacks, achieve the greatest success in history? In the same vein, believers should always remain hopeful. They should never allow their hearts to be weighed down by despair.

The believers should realize that they are standing on the threshold of a very bright future. This is the eternal message the Prophet has conveyed to them in words and in practice. □

GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START

Substance over Shadow

“**H**ERE are my entire life’s savings.” So saying, an elderly scholar, who had spent his whole life reading and writing, in the utmost simplicity placed a cheque for Rs. 10,000 in the hands of his newly-wed daughter and son-in-law. He explained that he had been able to save this amount out of his meagre income by living frugally and never wasting anything. “I could have spent all this on lavish wedding celebrations,” he added, “but I preferred to hand it over to you young people so that you could make a good beginning in life.”

The young couple were extremely grateful for this decision and lost no time in investing the money in a small business. To begin with they had to work very hard to make a success of it and passed through various difficult stages. But they never lost courage, and a time eventually came when they had considerably increased their profits and were able to live a happy, comfortable life, knowing, too, that their children’s future was assured. But without the scholar’s initial providence, foresight and courage in resisting public opinion, they might never have had the wherewithal to make a start in life at all and might well have ended their days in penury.

One’s wedding is a very serious event in life, not just an occasion for senseless showing off. It is rather a day to shoulder life’s responsibilities as mature, grown-up people and future parents. It is a day for a man and a woman to enter into a ‘firm contract’ (4: 21), not just an opportunity to impress friends, neighbours and relatives with one’s spending ability. It is at all events advisable that the marriage ceremony should be simple and straightforward, thereby avoiding pointless expenditure. Before anyone spends his entire life’s savings on gaudy displays—for money, after all, is hard-earned and difficult to accumulate—he should reflect seriously on the above-mentioned incident. All things considered, would it not be better to avoid ostentation altogether and to think of how best one can help the young couple concerned? If this practice were to become widely adopted, it would not only benefit young people in general but would actually make a positive contribution to national construction. The millions of rupees which are habitually lavished on short-lived magnificence could then be channelized into areas of the national economy which are at present unfairly neglected, thus creating favourable conditions for general economic uplift. □

THE SPIRIT OF SELFLESS DEVOTION

Be Ready to Lose Yourself in a Great Cause

THE people of this world can be divided up into two distinct categories. On the one hand, there are those who want an immediate reward for all that they do, with their recompense exceeding the work they have put in. Then there are those who are not out to get any material reward at all. Just the knowledge that they have contributed in some way to a worthwhile cause is sufficient reward for them. If they receive no recompense for their efforts, it does not cause them concern or arouse their anger. They play their part, but forget about their personal contribution, so engrossed are they in the cause for which they are working.

Outwardly, both groups appear to be the same, but, in reality, there is a world of difference between the two. The first group, one might say, keeps the markets of the world turning over, while the second group turns over new pages in human history. Such is the extent to which the two differ.

It is the second group who make meaningful, valuable contributions to the betterment of humanity, for it is they who are able to join in a common struggle, without which no worthwhile work can be achieved in this world. Whenever a number of people work together for a common goal, it is inevitable that some should receive more credit than others. Some are hailed for their achievements, while others are denied all recognition. This is true of all movements, whether popular or prophetic in nature. There is only one way for a common effort to prosper, and that is for people to forget about their rights, and remember only their responsibilities.

Unless there is a spirit of selfless struggle among those participating in a common cause, it is not only those who receive no recompense who will feel ill-treated, even those who are rewarded for their contribution will feel that they have not been done justice. Seldom does the reward a person receives for his efforts live up to his expectations. It is a case of either being satisfied with nothing, or never being satisfied at all.

Those who are destined to perform great deeds in life are those who do not seek any reward for what they have done; the very fact that they have done something worthwhile is sufficient reward for them. The knowledge that they have played their part is enough to make them content, even more so than those who have been abundantly rewarded for their efforts. □

TRAIN YOUR THINKING

Looking at the Brighter Side

Frederick Langbridge, an English poet, was born in 1849 and died in 1923. One of his couplets reads:

Two men look out through the same bars:

One sees the mud, and one the stars.

The same theme has been more exquisitely expressed by a Persian poet in this couplet:

The difference between you and me is one of hearing. You hear the sound of a door being shut, while I hear the sound of a door being opened.

If a bush has thorns, it also has flowers. The same is true of social circumstances. The adverse and the favourable will always exist side by side. A man who sets his sights on mere appearances is likely to see only what is unfavourable. He is likely to see the thorns, but not the flowers. It takes a man with insight to go beyond appearances and to discover what is inherently favourable in any given situation.

In this world, mud and stars exist side by side. What is important is who sees the former and who sees the latter. The sound of the movement of a door on its hinges is differently interpreted by a wise man and a foolish man. To the former, it is the sound of a door opening, whereas to the latter it is the sound of a door closing.

All such misconceptions originate in the mind. The mind itself can rid itself of them. It is just a question of embarking on the right course of thinking.

The truth is that the world is a test of intelligence. One who uses his intelligence will win through against all odds, while one who fails to do so can expect nothing but disappointment.

A man who crosses the seas in a boat can seldom do so without being lashed by the waves and buffeted by high winds. But if he wants to reach

A person must learn to cope with things and live with circumstances he cannot change. He must learn to sidestep the stones in his way. He must learn to settle matters by strategy rather than becoming provoked by antagonism.

his destination, he has to learn to brave these difficulties. Similarly, the animals of the forest have to learn to live among thorny shrubs and predatory enemies, for no forest is without these adverse factors.

The case of the individual in society is very similar. There is no end to the unpleasantness between people because of clashes of interest. There will always be differences. This is a permanent situation and simply has to be lived with.

In such circumstances, the only way for a man to lead a successful life is to follow the 'in spite of' principle. That is, in spite of all opposition, he must attempt to incline people in his favour; in spite of there being a great deal of unpleasantness in this life, he must learn the secret of harmonious living; in spite of the plots being hatched against him, he must forge ahead with conviction. He must learn that he can nullify all that is negative by being one hundred percent positive.

In this world, man has to reach the flowers despite the thorns. He has to make himself healthy and sturdy despite the presence of innumerable germs. Similarly, he should not become depressed in the face of unfavourable circumstances. Neither should he waste time in protests and complaints.

He must learn to cope with things and live with circumstances he cannot change. He must learn to sidestep the stones in his way. He must learn to settle matters by strategy rather than becoming provoked by antagonism. He must learn to be patient with his adversaries, so that they may become his future friends. □



*Wishing others ill is a poison, half of
which one has to drink oneself.*

SUPER PERFORMERS

Sense of a Mission

A book published in America in 1986 entitled *Peak Performers: The New Heroes of American Business* makes a study of the lives of a number of individuals in modern America who played a heroic role in business. The writer Charles Garfield especially emphasizes on the point that sense of a great mission can trigger in man the powerful urge towards superior effort which ultimately leads him to exceptional achievement.

America sent its first manned spacecraft to land on moon in 1967. The launching of the rocket had been the result of the combined efforts of a large number of experts who had been engaged to work for this mission. One of this team, a computer programmer, said that something extraordinary began to happen as the work got under way. Thousands of ordinary men and women, who were working to make the space programme materialize, had all of a sudden been transformed into super achievers. They had started performing with an efficiency that they had never in their whole lives been able to muster.

What inspires a man more than anything is to have a great mission before him. This arouses a man's hidden potential and makes him capable of all manners of sacrifices.

Within the short period of 18 months, all of the work had been accomplished with exceptional rapidity.

"Want to know why we're doing so well?" our manager asked me. He pointed to the pale moon barely visible in the eastern sky. "People have been dreaming about going there for thousands of years. And *we're* going to do it."

It is an undeniable truth that what inspires a man more than anything is to have a great mission before him. That is what arouses a man's hidden potential and makes him capable of all manners of sacrifices. It makes him, in short, a peak performer.

Nothing is achieved out of fear. A man who is satisfied no longer strives, he does not dream, he does not create. Great success awaits those who are propelled to go an extra mile in anticipation of something bigger than themselves. □

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Selections from Best-Loved Quran Stories

Goodword is an award-winning publishing company with a splendid range of Islamic Books in many languages. It offers innovative products for children, including Quran stories, moral stories, craft and activity books, gift packs, Islamic games, Arabic and Islamic readers for home and school. **Best-Loved Quran Stories**, authored by Dr Saniyasnain Khan, is a collection of Quran stories to read, love and cherish. With full-colour illustrations on every page, this book is a perfect way to introduce the little ones to the stories, prayers and teachings of the Quran. We present here two stories from this beautiful volume.



THE KING'S DREAM

LONG ago in Egypt's distant sands, there lived a king who ruled the desert land. One night, the king tossed and turned in his bed for he had had such a strange dream. His sleeping mind had conjured up seven large cows grazing in a field of grass. These thin cows were eaten up by seven fat cows. Soon after, seven green ears of corn appeared before him. Then in time, the green ears of corns turned yellow.

These strange visions began to worry the king, so he called for his wise men. Surely they would know the meaning of his dream. Curious questions filled the royal court, but nobody could answer them. Nobody knew the meaning of the dream at all.

Soon the king grew desperate. There had to be somebody who could tell him what his dream had meant.

One day, a thought struck a servant in the court. He was the king's cupbearer. His job was to pour wine for his Royal Highness. The cupbearer thought deeply about a memory he had. He thought deeply of a promise he had made long before. The servant told the king how he himself had met a wise man.

His name was Yusuf. Perhaps the man was still locked away. Perhaps he was still there forgotten within those prison walls. Soon the king invited the Prophet Yusuf to his royal palace. Eagerly, the ruler asked him about what his dream could mean.

The Prophet Yusuf truly was a wise man. He was wiser than those in the king's court.

"Seven fat cows means seven years of good harvests. After the first seven years, there'll be seven more years of drought," Yusuf explained. "Seven green ears of corn turning yellow means the same. There'll be seven years of good harvests. After those seven years, there'll be seven years more of drought."

The king's mind was finally calmed. He now understood what his dream had meant.

In return, the king made the Prophet Yusuf minister of his court. The Prophet Yusuf was finally a free man again.

So for seven long years, the kingdom enjoyed good harvests. The new minister made sure that the extra wheat was saved and stored. When the water dried up and the drought finally came, the kingdom was safe once more. The corn didn't grow, but the kingdom was prepared for Prophet Yusuf had plenty in store.

My Quranic Prayer

My Lord, You have given me power and taught me the interpretation of dreams. *(Yusuf 12:101)*

THE VALLEY OF ANTS

A long while ago in the land of Jerusalem, there lived a grateful king by the name of the Prophet Sulayman or Solomon. He was a ruler like no other for he had a great kingdom on the earth.

This king did not only protect his people in this world, he prepared them for the next world too. This was because he was a prophet of Allah and the son of the Prophet Dawud.

The Prophet Sulayman's Lord gave him many gifts. These were special gifts that no one else could ever give him. He could control the winds.

He knew how to speak to animals and he controlled the jinn too. Nobody on the earth could be compared to the Prophet Sulayman.

One day, the Prophet Sulayman and his grand army marched through the land. These soldiers passed the dusts of the deserts and stretches of green grass. In time, they neared a valley that needed to be crossed.

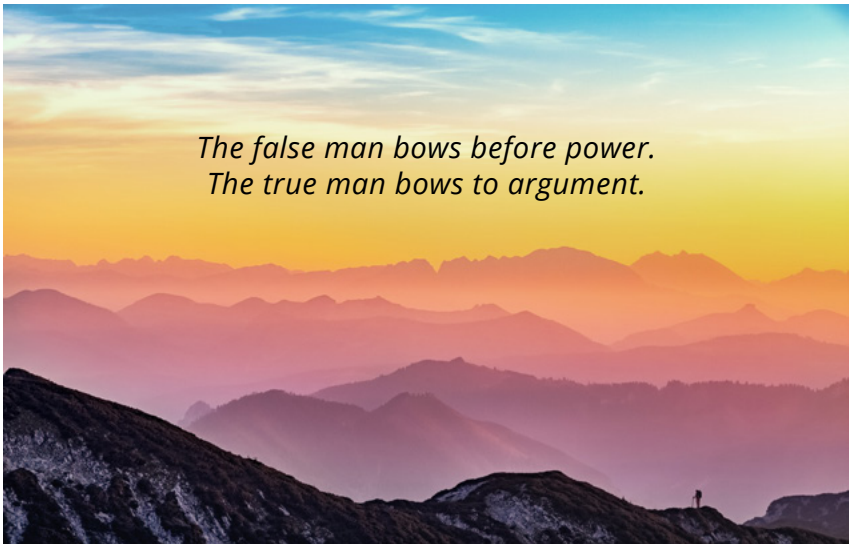
Suddenly, the Prophet Sulayman heard a tiny voice in the distance. "O ants, o ants," the creature called. "Run! Quick! Go before Sulayman and his army crush you by mistake!"

But the Prophet Sulayman simply smiled. He stopped his army so the ants could scatter to safety. He realized again how lucky he was. Because of this, he could look after even the tiniest of creatures that walked the earth.

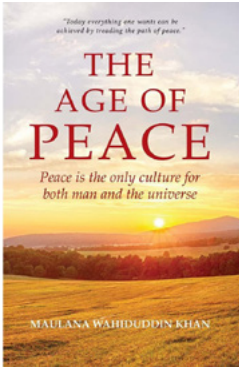
Then the Prophet Sulayman thanked Allah for the gifts that He had given him. It was because of his Lord that he was so blessed. It was because of his Lord that he could be so wise.

My Quranic Prayer

Lord, inspire me to be thankful for the blessings You have granted me and my parents, and to do good deeds that please You; and include me, by Your grace, among Your righteous servants! *(Al-Naml 27:19)* □



BOOK REVIEW



Name of the Book: The Age of Peace

Author: Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Published by: Goodword Books, New Delhi (India) (www.goodwordbooks.com)

Year: 2015

Pages: 192

ISBN: 9789351790716

Reviewed by: Somali K Chakrabarti

SOME books entertain, some educate, and some leave a lasting impression on the mind. *Age of Peace*, written by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, is one such book that falls in the latter category.

It is an enlightening and well researched book, which conveys the message of peace in a very rational, simple and convincing manner. The book has changed my perception that achieving social peace will always be an ever elusive condition that finds mention, perhaps only in mythological stories.

Age of Peace not only upholds the need for peace, it also provides the rationale for establishing peace, and outlines the general principles based on which it is possible to establish peace in the society.

The author, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan is a noted Islamic scholar and the founder of *Centre of Peace and Spirituality* in New Delhi, who has been internationally recognized for his contribution to world peace.

Peace, the author says, is a pre-condition for progress and social development. It is the 'summum bonum' or the greatest good that is devoid of any negative effects. The author writes about individual peace (peace of mind) which results from self-management, and social peace, for which social management is needed.

Negating the general perception that peace would ensue from social justice, the author says, that this is an obscure theory, for as long as we think of peace as a derivative of social justice, it will remain elusive. The key, he says, is to accept peace as the status quo.

Just like most of us recognize the contribution of our family in shaping up our lives, similarly if we recognize the contribution of humanity at

large and its role in providing us with the comfort and luxuries that we enjoy, then gratitude and compassion would replace negativism and serve as an intrinsic check to violence.

Peace brings normalcy, it throws opens the door for opportunities, which when availed increase the chances of success. With peace one can achieve what one cannot achieve with violence.

This very thought changed my perception of peace. Accepting peace as the status quo, the present for what it is rather than what it should be, not living in denial and working calmly towards the goal is a very balanced approach, which is advocated by all religions.

Backed by innumerable examples from different parts of the world, from the past centuries to the modern age, the author advocates the use of non-confrontational method, peaceful activism, and spreading the message of peace through education and awareness.

The author touches upon sensitive issues such as the menace of terrorism, political dichotomy of Muslims and issues facing the Muslim community, militancy, misinterpretation of 'jihad' to legitimize militancy, and suicide bombings. Stressing upon the need for a counter ideology, the author says that the present militancy has no sanction in Islam.

He also talks about the futility of wars, and stresses upon the role of third party in putting an end to wars. Fighting, he says, is an archaic and outdated concept in the present age that provides people with alternatives to fulfil their ambitions without resorting to violence.

Quoting some excerpts from the book:

- The human mind has greatest potential, but it can only work in a peaceful atmosphere. In the absence of a peaceful environment for work, the mind's capability will remain unutilized.
- The secret of success in life is not to make others suffer losses at your hands. The secret of success in life is to plan one's time and energy wisely to avail of the opportunities within one's reach.
- History tells us that war is like a rootless tree. A storm can completely uproot it. But a peaceful plan is like a tree which stands upright on its own strong roots and remains unaffected by storms.
- Violence or terrorism is a negation of God's creation plan.
- Terrorism is an unnatural act. Neither reason nor conscience can ever sanction it. Terrorism always ends in repentance.

I had received a copy of this book from a blogger friend and after going through it; I found that it is a very relevant book for all particularly the youth in the turbulent times that we are living in.

The book has reinforced my belief that no religion can preach violence. Extremism, terrorism and wars are all fallout of greed of a few, who misinterpret religion and use it to their convenience.

It is a book that I would like to read over and over again. ☐



CPS NEWSLETTER

CPS International aims to promote and reinforce the culture of peace through mind-based spirituality. It is engaged in promoting peace and spirituality through interfaith efforts. Drawing inspiration from the Quran, and the biography of the Prophet Muhammad, the Centre seeks to share the spiritual principles of Islam with the world and to reveal its true face, based as it is on peace, tolerance and coexistence. We present a selection of CPS activities during May-June, 2021.

1. Four English books of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan released: *Spirit of Islam*, *Ramadan: A Month of Purification*, *Re-planning of the Islamic Mission in Modern Times*, and *Realization of God*.
2. An Urdu book of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan *Paighambar-e-Inquilab* has been released.
3. Bimonthly digital magazine *Al-Risala Hindi* launched by Mr Khurram Islam Qureshi.
4. 80,000 copies of the Quran distributed free of cost across the globe
5. Chairperson of CPS International, Prof. Farida Khanam, has started conducting LIVE classes every Sunday.
6. Writer, speaker and sub-editor of Spirit of Islam, Dr. Maria Khan, live streamed 10 sessions on various Islamic topics.
7. Ms Fahmida Khan (Urdu classes) and Ms. Fathima Sarah (English classes) conduct weekly LIVE sessions on the Facebook channel of CPS International.
8. 145+ videos uploaded on our YouTube channel.
9. Regular short videos and messages are broadcast to thousands of our subscribers on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp.
10. Members of CPS regularly write for various publications. 50+ new articles uploaded on our website cpsglobal.org. Our articles feature in *The Times of India*, *The Sunday Guardian*, *Soulveda* and *Yours Positively*, etc.

CPS GLOBAL ACTIVITIES

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

CPS Global Network



TRIBUTES TO MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

Noted personalities from India and abroad continue to offer condolence and pay tribute to Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. Maulana passed away on April 21, 2021.

On the night of April 21, 2021, the world not only lost an eminent thinker, scholar and guide but one of the most ardent advocates of peace. Padma Vibhushan Maulana Wahiduddin Khan was an intellectual giant and an erudite scholar who devoted his life to the pursuance of principles of peace.

His lifelong and unswerving commitment to peace was based on his underlying belief that “peace cannot be sacrificed for anything whilst everything can be sacrificed for peace.” His quest for peace started from a small village called Badhariya (near Azamgarh) and took him around the globe. Wherever he went, he highlighted how “Peace is the summum bonum” (Latin for ‘greater good’) and therefore a prerequisite to everything good! And for nine decades, he used every available opportunity to contribute to peace-making, in India and abroad.

As a fervent well-wisher of humankind, Maulana's singular mission was to transform the minds of people and develop them into positive and spiritually awakened members of society. This mission has now devolved upon all of us, in our individual or collective capacity, to take forward.

The Maulana was the epitome of the principle, ‘Simple Living, High Thinking’. His goal was to be a lifelong learner and he chose to lead a modest life, free of all distractions. Those who had met him in his New Delhi house were often surprised by the austerity of his Sufi lifestyle. Each day, he used to get up at dawn break and step out to sit on his balcony. This ‘Spiritual Corner’ was his way of being in nature and it served as an inspiration for him. He drew lessons from the simplest everyday

events and conveyed meaningful spiritual principles through them in his unforgettable and powerful baritone. As a scholar, he dared to stand for truth, criticize what he saw was wrong and tear apart the influence of the traditional framework he grew in, to develop an objective and analytical bent of mind.

He was of the view that challenges shape the character of man. Having become an orphan very early in life had taught him to not succumb to

despair and disappointment but to consider every untoward experience as a challenge and keep hope alive.

As per the Maulana, education is the very foundation of nation-building. He believed that acquiring education was not a means of outperforming one another in material wealth, rather it was a means of strengthening character and becoming a responsible member of society. Such a society, which is an aggregate of virtuous individuals, becomes the first unit of a peaceful nation.

He remained a lifelong learner and encouraged the spirit of enquiry and curiosity in all his discussions. He held that spirit of enquiry was the bedrock of intellectual development. He always took examples from the world around us and urged everyone to do the same. He often loved sharing a poem on “cow” which he had read long back in his school textbook. His favourite stanza from the poem was “*kal jo ghas chari thi ban mein, doodh bani who gaaye ke than mein*” (The grass which the cow ate yesterday is now converted into milk). He used to share this to explain how the cow was a divine example of converting a negative event into a positive one. He used to say that a cow presents a perfect example for us to emulate: it never asks but only gives. Similarly, a successful member of society is one who never asks but only gives and discharges his societal duties diligently.


A Gandhian by nature, his life is full of examples of how he contributed to ensuring peace in society even during the direst circumstances. He took his guidance and inspiration from the original texts of Islam: Quran and *Hadith* and dedicated his life to present it in the modern idiom. The focus of his writings was to promote interfaith dialogue, interactive exchange and fraternity. He established *CPS International* with the sole aim of spreading peace and harmony in society. His relentless efforts transformed the minds of thousands of youth who were previously engaged in violence at different levels.

As a fervent well-wisher of humankind, his singular mission was to transform the minds of people and develop them into positive and spiritually awakened members of society. This mission has now devolved upon all of us, in our individual or collective capacity, to take forward. In doing so, we shall not only pay our heartfelt tribute to his remarkable efforts but also honour his life and decades of making a difference!


Ramish Siddiqi: Islamic Thinker and Writer




I have high regard for Maulana. We have appeared on many occasions together. He has always spoken with great wisdom and understanding. My message to him is only one of high regard and respect. - **Dr. Karan Singh: Indian Politician**




Well, I have got regard for Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Ji, He is like my mentor and I feel inspired whenever I have few moments to spend with him. He is one person who is trying to transcend narrow religion and religiosity. And for that he is being accused by many of his community people. But he is not afraid, I want that type of courage for myself. I want to withstand all criticism with a loving smile on my face and with compassion for all people whoever is criticizing me. - **Swami Agnivesh: Founder of Arya Sabha & Socio-political Activist**



Well I am encouraged by the work that he is doing in particular the emphasis on the primacy of peace. It is so important in our world and particularly in this 21st century when there are so many different religions all intermingling with one another, so many other different perspectives of life. It is extremely important that we learn how to live together well and that means we need to work actively for peace. Peace is not a concept a thing that happens without people doing things, you need to work for peace, to promote peace and certainly the work that Maulana is doing. I would encourage him and people in all religions to work for that deep peace and that deep understanding which I think is the way forward for our work in the 21st century. -**Bishop Richard Ian Cheetham: Bishop of Kingston, Church of England**



A great champion of interfaith dialogue and harmony, he believed in the power of dialogue (rather than debate which provokes strife and negativity). -**Amithabh Mattoo: Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University**



It was after a terrorist attack in the late nineties that a meeting was held in India International Centre, New Delhi. Among the speakers was the name of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. I went to listen to him. What would he say?

I found a tall, majestic looking man with a beautiful turban and a grey beard telling me, "The word Islam means peace." His eyes filled up and

his throat tightened as he said, "Let us not misunderstand a religion on the basis of the acts of some miscreants...."

That was my first meeting with Maulana Wahiduddin Khan.

That was my first discovery of Islam.

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan was a gentle compassionate teacher of Islam, he looks at the world and its living beings as a beautiful creation to be enjoyed, respected and learnt from. We had the pleasure of learning from him. **-Sudhamahi Regunathan: former Vice-Chancellor, Jain Vishwa Bharti Institute**





Dear readers,

The website www.spiritofislam.co.in is equipped with an excellent search engine. You will find SEARCH tab on the top right corner of the webpage as shown on this page. Click here and type your key search words. Every article that carries the search words will appear from the rich archives of *Spirit of Islam* magazine. You can also set the preference of browsing through the newest as well as the oldest articles.

Trying to understand Islam, prepare notes, speeches, presentations, or just wish to gain some perspective on any given topic about Islam, the SEARCH engine www.spiritofislam.co.in/spiritnew/index.php/search is here to help.

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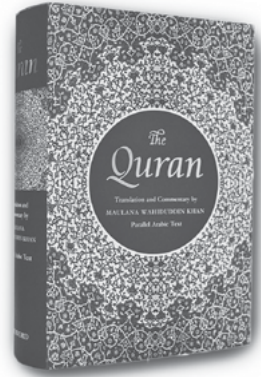
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- ▶ Spirituality
- ▶ *Talaq* (Divorce)
- ▶ Atheism
- ▶ Islamic Literature
- ▶ Muslim Leadership
- ▶ *Dawah*
- ▶ Contribution of the West
- ▶ Prayers
- ▶ Prophet Muhammad
- ▶ Arguments for the Hereafter
- ▶ Quran

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



THE ASCENDING STAIRWAYS

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

A doubter once demanded that punishment be immediately meted out, to those who deny the truth. No power can hinder God from punishing them. He is the Lord of the Ascending Stairways, by which the angels and the Spirit will ascend to Him in one Day which will last for fifty thousand years. Therefore, [O believers] behave with seemly patience. They see it [the Day of Judgement] to be far off, but We see it near at hand. On that Day the heavens shall become like molten brass, and the mountains will become like tufts of wool, and no friend will ask about his friend, though they shall be within sight of each other. The guilty one will gladly ransom himself from the torment of that Day by sacrificing his own children, his wife, his brother, and his kinsfolk who gave him shelter, and all the people of the earth, if that could deliver him. (70: 1-14)

The scenes of Doomsday cannot either be revealed in reality or truly described in the present world. However, in the Quran, these have been allegorically conveyed by allusions and examples, so that man should have a brief idea of their significance. When Doomsday arrives, it will be so terrible that man will forget his relations and the interests to which he gives the utmost importance today and for which he ignores the Truth.

But no! There is a raging blaze stripping away his skin, and it will claim all those who turned their backs [on the true faith] and turned away [from the truth], and amassed wealth and hoarded it. Indeed, man is born impatient: when misfortune touches him he starts lamenting,

and whenever good fortune comes to him, he grows niggardly. But not so the worshippers who are steadfast in prayer; those who give a due share of their wealth to those who ask [for help] and to the destitute; and those who believe in the Day of Judgement and are fearful of the punishment of their Lord; for none may ever feel secure from the punishment of their Lord; those who preserve their chastity except from their spouses and those whom they rightfully possess [through wedlock], for which they incur no blame but those who go beyond that limit are transgressors; and those who are faithful to their trusts and to their pledges; and those who stand by their testimony and are steadfast in their prayers. They will be honoured in the Gardens of Bliss. (70: 15-35)

These verses give a brief description of the qualities of two types of human beings: those who will be treated as entitled to enter Paradise and those whose deeds will cause them to be thrown into Hell on Doomsday. □



*Man can come closer to God
only through humility.*

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.

(The following is a part of the Question & Answer session of an Interfaith programme)

We believe in the personhood of our God. Since he is a person, we enjoy communication through his self-revelation. He can be also considered as another person. According to human logic, communication is possible between two people. Therefore, what is your understanding of the personhood of God? In other words, what is the teaching of Islam about the nature of God?

Chapter 112 of the Quran titled *Oneness* says the following about God:

Say, 'He is God the One, God, the Self-Sufficient One. He does not give birth, nor was He born, and there is nothing like Him.'

Chapter 2 of the Quran titled *Heifer* says this:

God: there is no deity save Him, the Living, the Eternal One. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belong whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth.

Who can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows all that is before them and all that is behind them. They can grasp only that part of His knowledge which He wills. His throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and their upholding does not weary Him. He is the Sublime, the Almighty One! (2: 255)

There are many other verses like these about how God describes Himself in the Quran. One can see the index given on the back of the English translation we have produced and go through the verses which describe God.

We have a hierarchy in our church. They are the custodians of our faith and teachings. They are called the magisterium of the church. Please explain the hierarchical order of Islam? How the faith and principles are taken care of or explained? Who is officially keeping the authorship?

We have a working hierarchy in the religious institutions for the administration and the work involved.

However, for the teachings of Islam, the authorities are the Quran and *Hadith* (teachings of the Prophet). For an explanation of these two, there are commentaries by the learned scholars. For the present times, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan is considered Islam's ambassador to the world. He is the Islamic scholar who has been writing and speaking on the correct understanding of Islam from the original sources of the Quran, *Hadith* and the Prophet's life.

Quran is believed to be a preserved book and there are many authentic books of *Hadith*.

What is the understanding of mysticism in Islam?

There is no mysticism in Islam. All aspects of Islam are explainable.

Every religion in its ultimate sense keeps the sentiment of 'conversion in their core reality. Hence what is the Islamic understanding about the conversion of a person from another religion? What is the missionary method for that?

There is no concept of conversion in Islam. Islam believes in discovery. Quran addresses an individual thus: There shall be no compulsion in religion. (2: 256) We are commanded to convey the message of Islam in a peaceful manner. □



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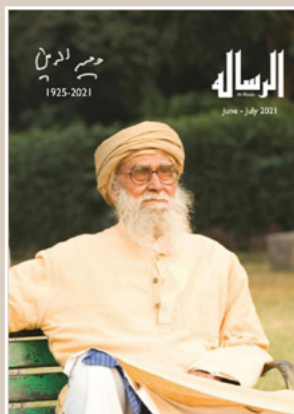
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