

ENGLISH BIMONTHLY ISSUE 116 JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024

SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living



Education is no way a mere employment certificate. Its true purpose is to bring intellectual awareness to the human mind.

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...

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- ▶ 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

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SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living

ISSUE 116 JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2024

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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S DESK



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NAVIGATING THE NEW YEAR WITH PURPOSE AND WISDOM

IN accordance with the Common Era (CE) calendar, the commencement of a new year occurs on January 1st, and consequently, New Year's Day is universally celebrated on this date across the world. The observance of New Year's Day is marked by a collective hope that the forthcoming year will surpass its predecessor. However, this aspiration can be realized only by individuals who maintain a meticulous account of their actions and choices, as opposed to those who lead lives characterized by heedlessness.

Embedded within the natural order of things is the inexorable passage of time. According to the laws of nature, each new day succeeds the previous one, resulting in the inexorable deduction of days from the finite span of human life. For instance, January 1, 2024, follows December 31, 2023, and inevitably, January 1, 2024, will too evolve into a historical footnote. In this transient world, novelty succumbs to antiquity, and every circumstance ultimately transitions into the annals of the past. While the past cannot be resurrected, it does hold within it a treasury of experiences from which one can glean invaluable wisdom. This immutable principle is ingrained in the very fabric of existence.

In light of this, it is incumbent upon every individual to engage in introspection as a primary duty. A truly successful person is one who conducts a continuous self-evaluation, taking stock of what was gained

and lost in the preceding year. This introspective exercise serves as a foundation for crafting a more refined and strategic plan for the approaching year. It is crucial to emphasize that this self-accounting is a deeply personal endeavour, and while guidance and counsel from others may be sought, the actual process of self-appraisal cannot be outsourced.

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A valuable tool in this endeavour is the practice of maintaining a diary. Maulana Wahiduddin Khan advocated the use of diaries as a means to cultivate intellectual skills. A diary, in essence, serves as a repository of an individual's lived experiences. When one commits to documenting their life journey in a diary, it transforms into a guidebook for their intellectual and emotional evolution, grounded in the light of past encounters and reflections.

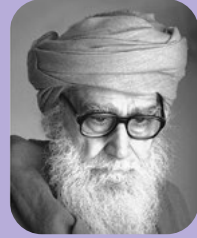
The celebration of New Year's Day symbolizes hope and renewal. Yet, the fulfillment of this aspiration hinges on a person's capacity for self-assessment and learning from the past. A diary, as suggested by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, can serve as a valuable instrument in this pursuit, aiding in the development of

intellectual faculties and fostering a deeper understanding of one's own journey in the context of life's ever-turning wheel. As we approach the dawn of each new year, it is this deliberate reflection and self-accounting that empowers individuals to navigate the path ahead with greater clarity and purpose. □



IN FOCUS

We bring you two articles every issue under the headings of 'Personal Experiences' and 'Journey towards God-realization' 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.

The greatest success in this world is to live life in such a manner that you should not have an iota of negative thought against any person. You should depart from this world with a totally positive mindset. This is my last discovery in this world.

-Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925-2021)



HYDERABAD DIARIES

TRAVELLING is a great source of gaining knowledge and perspective about the world we live in. I have been fortunate to travel around the world. The following is an account of one of my trips to Hyderabad.

When I reached Delhi Airport, it was bustling with the usual hectic activity. In the general mass of people, there were faces which shone with tranquillity, but there were many others which bore the stamp of misery. I thought to myself, that's life. Some are travelling beckoned by joy, others by tragedy. Some are heading towards material gain, others towards serious losses. At first glance, every wayfarer is bent on reaching a different destination, but as far as the ultimate lot in life, there is but a single destination—the grave. Death is the one certain goal in life, but it is the one of which everyone has the least awareness.

Today, the name, Hyderabad, denotes a town, whereas it was once a State the size of Italy, with a Nawab who was reckoned to be the richest man in the world. The founder of this State was Sultan Quli Qutub Shah, an officer of the Bahmani Sultanate. Leading a rebellion in AD 1512, he established his own independent kingdom, which later came to be known as the Qutub Shahi Sultanate. This Sultanate came to an end when it was annexed by Aurangzeb to the Mughal Empire in 1685 and placed under the rule of a Mughal Governor. A later governor, Nizam-ul-Mulk Asif Jah cut himself off from the Mughal Empire to establish an independent Sultanate. In undivided India, it was the largest state.

When India gained its independence, the then Nawab wanted to preserve the independent status of his realm, and he did succeed in obtaining a "Standstill Agreement" from the new Indian government, signed on November 29, 1947, which would have guaranteed Hyderabad a semi-independent statehood. But "his plan miscarried, largely because a local populist Muslim leader launched a militant movement (the Razakars: a private militia) that provided a motive for Indian military forces to intervene and restore order, in September 1948. Hyderabad accepted the same conditions as other former princely states and was later partitioned and disappeared from the map." (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 9/423).

Whatever the concomitant factors were, this is an oft-repeated tale in the history of Muslim sovereignty—the rebellion against central authority, followed by a temporary autonomy, which comes to a disastrous end, due to the folly and short-sightedness of the local rule. The birth and death of Hyderabad are both tragic aspects of this turbulence in the Muslim history.

Hyderabad now has about 70-lakh population, 41% of which is Muslim. But more than 80% of that number reside in the old city, with only a handful in the new city. The pattern is similar in most of the cities in India. It is symptomatic of Muslims having been outdistanced by others, whereas in former times, theirs had been the most advanced community. It is also significant that all communal riots to date have taken place in the old city, and never in Secunderabad or the new city. This can be explained in terms of the high level of literacy in the newer areas, as opposed to the general illiteracy of the masses in the older areas.

Experience has shown us that education acts as a buffer against communal riots. Therefore, well-wishers who genuinely wish to put a stop to riots should work towards educating the community.

One of old Hyderabad's more acute problems is the narrowness of the roads and the increase in traffic. Sometimes the streets are so jammed with vehicles that you almost feel you could reach your destination faster on foot. There is a standing joke that if you offer a pedestrian a lift, he will refuse, because he's in too much of a hurry to travel by car.

There are several places of historical interest in Hyderabad, which are a great attraction for tourists. The most prominent of these is the Salar Jung Museum, where a wonderful assortment of 40,000 beautiful and exotic items are on display. Built by the former Prime Minister of Hyderabad, it is believed to be the only one of its kind in the East. Seeing great artistry I felt that perhaps God had endowed man with this creative genius so that he would be eternally reminded of his Maker's superior creativity.

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When Hyderabad State was in its heyday, one of the great luminaries was Nawab Imad-ul-Mulk Maulvi Syed Hussain Bilgrami. Highly educated, he was fluent in English, French, Persian and Arabic, besides

his mother tongue, Urdu. He served in various capacities and later became the Head of the Education Department. In the course of his 30 years of service, various honours and titles were bestowed upon him. In 1910, he began working on an English translation of the Quran, but it was left unfinished.

Nawab Imad-ul-Mulk was renowned for his candour. In his book, *Some Contemporaries*, Maulvi Abdul Haq writes that once when the former Nizam of the Deccan, Mir Mehboob Ali Khan, enquired of his nobles what his subjects thought of him, they responded with exaggerated praise. Only Imad-ul-Mulk remained silent. When pointedly asked to give an answer, he said that people regarded him as a drunkard who paid no attention to the administration of the State or to the welfare of his subjects. The Nizam, impressed by such plain speaking, presented him with a priceless diamond ring as a reward.

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The Nizam's successor, Mir Osman Ali Khan, was less tolerant of Imad-ul-Mulk. Maulvi Abdul Haq relates how once, when Osman Ali Khan was discussing marriage, he said that Islam showed great leniency in the number of wives it allowed a man to have. Imad-ul-Mulk at once corrected him, pointing out that Islam, on the contrary had laid down such strict conditions (i.e., a man must be certain that he is in a position to give equal treatment to all of his wives. Otherwise, he should not contract further marriages), that no one would dare to have more than one wife. The Shah was upset at such forthrightness and had him removed

from the dinner table, where the conversation had taken place. Had Mir Osman Ali Khan but known that he himself would soon be removed from his throne; he might have shown greater tolerance towards his subordinate.

Ignorance of one's destiny is often responsible for many acts of arrogance. A foretaste of the future would surely cure one of this failing.

The pages of Hyderabad history have more than one vital lesson to teach us. During the regime, the Prime Minister's post was usually held by a Hindu nobleman. For example, in 1940, Maharaja Sir Kishen Pershad held this post, one of his assets being his fluency in Arabic, Persian and English. The lower echelons were usually composed of Muslims, for whom such posts were reserved, as it was a major source

of income for them in those days. This placed the Hindu majority at a disadvantage, but it turned out to be a blessing in disguise, for it forced them to turn their attention elsewhere. In this way, they began exploring the avenues of commerce. They proved so successful in business that they ultimately gained a monopoly of this sphere. This would appear to bear out the old saying that in every cloud, there's a silver lining. A loss can always be turned to good account, provided one is sufficiently determined about it.

The strangest incident of my trip took place when I was leaving the Public Gardens after delivering a speech. A young man suddenly forced his way through the group of people who had collected around me to shake hands with me. He asked me what I thought my best piece of writing was. I replied that the young man standing before me was my best work to date. At this he was silent for a moment, then vowed to live up to my high expectations of him. I was greatly moved by his ardour, and beseeched the Almighty to fulfill this youth's desire and to create many more such enthusiasts who would undertake my mission of peace and spirituality after me and carry it even further along the road to progress.

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The readership of *Al-Risala* (*Spirit of Islam* is the English version) is now quite high in Hyderabad. It is interesting that they have started a new venture called 'Bookstall' which involves the setting up of at least two bookstalls, one on a Friday in front of the Jamia Masjid and another on Sunday at the weekly function at the Public Gardens. This method of introducing the Islamic message has proved really effective, and I feel that in other towns this would be a good example to follow.

An industrialist whom I met there, Mr Prem Murarka, had received a copy of the English edition of *Al-Risala* from a Muslim friend of his. It seems that he had been so impressed by the two lines written on the front page, that he could not help but read on. He decided to become a regular reader. He told me that many others in his friend circle liked *Al-Risala* and wanted to subscribe to it. It is, in fact, thanks to him that *Al-Risala's* circulation has increased there.

Another regular reader of *Al-Risala* was Mr Mahadevan Reddy of Himayat Nagar, a retired government officer who is fluent in Urdu. He told me that he had read the first volume of the translation and

commentary of the Quran written by me five times and was in the process of reading it the sixth time. He said he was extremely keen to have the second volume.

A gathering held at the residence of an advocate, Mr Aziz Ahmed Khan, was attended by scholars and other luminaries. In the course of the conversation, one of the facts that I learnt was that when the Nizam's rule came to an end, local Muslims had been extremely worried, for, without the patronage of their old ruler, their government jobs, their sole source of livelihood, had suddenly ceased to exist. Their miseries were only temporary, however, for, finding all familiar doors closed, they turned of necessity to business, and now, after 40 years in this line, Muslims have a considerable share in the Hyderabad business community. From playing no part at all in the business world during the Nizam's rule, they managed to project themselves into the highest echelons of the successful.

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Personal failure can always be converted into success, and there are many who show great acumen in doing so, but sadly there are very few who can apply such personal experiences to community affairs.

In an issue of *Al-Risala*, an article entitled, 'This is not Islam' makes a critical appraisal of Muslims' overreaction to any overt criticism of Islam. The case in point was the misdirected attack by Muslims on an editor who had published what they considered a literary jibe at Islam. Quoting the Quran in support of restraint in such matters, the article castigates

those who, on the basis of insufficient evidence, go on a rampage, burning and destroying property. One reader raised objections to the view presented in this article but did not support his argument by referring to the Quran or the *Hadith*. I, therefore, explained to him that if there were to be any debate on points which already had the backing of the Scriptures, he should cite passages from those same Scriptures in order to support his viewpoint, for the truth of the Quran and *Hadith* could not be disparaged by personally concocted arguments. This is a common error made by the Muslims of today, that is, whenever any debatable point has to be defended, they pass over quotations from the Scriptures in favour of their own home-made reasoning, and this in spite of the fact that it is sheer heresy to do so. A Muslim must present

the Quran and *Hadith* in answer to questions relating to the Quran and *Hadith*.

Mr Kishan Jaywant Rao Patil, whom I had met before, had come to Hyderabad with some of his companions. I learnt that he had been reading *Al-Risala* in Urdu right from the beginning and that he had maintained a complete file of all the issues. The surprising thing in all this is that his mother tongue is Marathi, and that before our first meeting, he had not known a single word of Urdu. It seems that when I told him I would be bringing out a monthly magazine in Urdu, he was so impressed by our talks, that he promptly engaged an Urdu tutor so that he would be able to read the magazine as soon as it came out. And he has been faithfully reading *Al-Risala* in Urdu from that time to the present. A friend of his who had come along with him, Mr Ganga Dhar, did not understand Urdu at all, but liked to have *Al-Risala* read out to him and explained in Marathi by Mr Kishan Patil. When I asked the latter, what benefit he derived from *Al-Risala*, he claimed that his whole way of thinking had undergone a tremendous change for the better. He said that formerly he had been thinking of nothing but earning in order to make ends meet. But *Al-Risala* had changed all that by giving him proper objectives in life. Impressed by the pains he had taken to learn Urdu; and Marathi being quite dissimilar and by the obvious maturity of his thinking, I spent quite some time in conversation with him.

***How true it is that
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Habib Bhai, the Proprietor of Pioneer Dying and Printing Works, related an experience which I feel is worth reproducing here. He had gone to an office, where a picture of a beautiful natural scene hung upon the wall. It bore the caption, "If you don't understand my silence, you will never understand my words." What profundity! How true it is that very little of an inner reality can be expressed in words. It is only a man of acute perceptiveness who can go beyond words to the essential message.

Habib Bhai's grandfather used to advise him to learn at least one new thing every day, even if it were only a new way to tie a knot. This was a great piece of sagacity, for life is of such dynamism that one must always be on the alert to keep pace with it. It is possible, with effort, for a man to rise high in life, but it is all too easy to fall far behind. The only way, therefore, to keep on progressing is to remain in perpetual intellectual pursuit of whatever is new in the world around us.

The speeches delivered at Hyderabad were usually on specific topics, such as *The Awakening of the Spirit of Islam*, *Islam and the Present Age*, and *The Building up of Society*. Under this last heading, it was shown that the doors of progress, contrary to what is generally believed, are wide open to Muslims in this country. It is simply that the particular time and circumstances demand a judicious approach. The fourth topic was the all-important mission of *Introducing Islam*. In this, special emphasis was laid on the harmonious relationship between Muslims and other communities.

At a press conference, I began by touching upon the conditions in the country and specifying the aims of the **Islamic Centre** (now functioning as **CPS International**) I established in New Delhi. This was followed by a question-and-answer session of considerable duration, in the course of which I took the opportunity to point out that the image of the Indian Muslim projected by the national press was one-sided. For example, *The Times of India* calls Indian Muslims a 'clamorous group' (January 3, 1987). This is not entirely wrong, because there are a certain number of noisy troublemakers among the Muslims. But the press should

Many are those who fall by the wayside because, failing to appreciate the principle of gradualism, they try to achieve success in one gigantic leap.

refrain from giving them undue prominence and give more coverage to other members of the community who remain busily engaged in some work or the other of a constructive nature. The style of journalism nowadays is largely to blame for this state of affairs. Bad news is known to sell more newspapers than good news!

Over and above the meetings at Hyderabad, some were also held at Mahbubnagar. All these assemblies were quite successful, especially since they were well attended by the educated elite. This gave the impression that the intelligentsia had been giving serious thought to the message and mission of the Islamic Centre and *Al-Risala*. Detailed reports of each day's speeches and assemblies appeared in local Urdu newspapers such as *Rehnuma-e-Deccan*, *Siyasat* and *Munsif*. A reader of *Siyasat* told me that the headlines which appeared on February 15, 1987, issue of the newspaper '*The Need for Constructive Thinking Among Indian Muslims*' was entirely due to our centre's efforts for, otherwise, no such positive headlines on Muslim topics ever appeared in print.

One of the places of interest we visited near Mahbubnagar was what appeared to be a small forest of trees but was actually a cluster of off-

shoots from a single Banyan tree, which is said to be 400 years old. Its old name was Pir Laman, but now it is known as 'Pillalamarri'.

A businessman of Mahbubnagar took me along to see his rice mill, where he had had modern machinery installed. He explained that there were no less than seven stages in the process of producing polished rice from unhusked grain. I told him that this was nature's lesson to man—the lesson of gradualism, of doing things in a properly phased manner. Many are those who fall by the wayside because, failing to appreciate this, they try to achieve success in one gigantic leap.

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Another businessman being by profession of a practical turn of mind, expressed the view that one certain solution to the communal problem would be to establish better relations with our fellow countrymen. He felt that instead of making speeches against the government, and approaching the administration for solutions, it would be better to improve and increase our channels of communication. He gave many instances in support of this view. It is, of course, a fact, that if Muslims had exerted themselves to improve their relations with their neighbours, instead of squandering their time and energy in protestations and complaints, all their problems could have been solved long ago. In the course of the conversation, I laid emphasis on introducing Islam to all people. This sparked off the argument that when Muslims themselves are far from being truly Islamic in thought, word and deed, it is unlikely that they will encourage others to do so. I put forward the idea that this was the work of Satan. It was Satan who had engraved this misconception upon the modern Muslim mind, for Islam is not judged on the strength of Muslim behaviour, but by virtue of its own essential truth. In support of this, I cited the example of Yousuf Islam, an Englishman, and several other notable people, who had embraced Islam, knowing full well that the moral status of contemporary Muslims was seriously in decline.

Returning to Delhi by flight number 539, I found myself seated next to Mr D. P. Gupta, the General Manager of BHEL. From our conversation, I gathered that he was a competent, hardworking officer and an able administrator. Further questions on my part brought to light the fact that this was due to his religious background. His father, a highly qualified person, fluent in English, Hindi, Persian and Arabic, had learnt many verses of the Quran by heart, and often recited them. Mr Gupta

himself was fluent in Urdu. This conversation led me to conclude that a major cause of inefficiency in today's administration is the ever-increasing disassociation of modern employees from the moral and spiritual values of the past. The only way of curing today's workers of their sluggish inefficiency is to re-inculcate the religious and spiritual values which were formerly enshrined in the time-honoured traditions. There appears to be no other solution to this problem.

Another noteworthy fact which emerged from our conversation was excellence of Hindu-Muslim relations before the Partition. This relationship was so good that Hindus learnt Arabic and Persian, and even memorized verses from the Quran. It is true that there was occasional friction between the two communities, giving rise to untoward incidents, but such things happened no oftener than in any other composite society during any period in world history. Mostly there were incidents affecting individuals at a purely personal level, they should have been kept at that level—not blown up out of all proportion to the communal or national level as they were by ill-advised leaders. This is what destroyed the mutual trust between the two communities and set up barriers between them. □

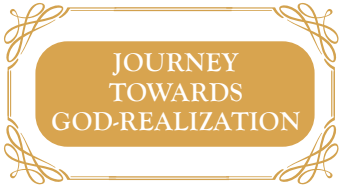


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LIVING FOR GOD

THERE are two ways of living in this world. One is a self-oriented life, the other a God-oriented one. An individual then will either worship himself or he will worship God. His attention will be focused either upon his being or upon God. His aim in life will either be to please himself or please God. There is no third way of living in this world. Therefore, our choice is to live either for ourselves or God.

The concept of living a self-oriented life versus a God-oriented one is deeply rooted in Islamic teachings. The Quran says, 'But you prefer the worldly life, while the Hereafter is better and more enduring.' (87: 16-17) This distinction can be found in both the Quran and *Hadith*, which offer guidance on how Muslims should approach their existence and purpose in this world.

In a self-oriented life, everything is centred upon one's being. You could call it a selfish life in which self-interest, personal ambition, greed, and lust are the dominating motive forces. One who lives such a life puts all he has into furthering his interests.

In a God-oriented life, everything centres upon God. One who lives such a life discovers God in all His greatness. He lives in awe of God, so much that everything else seems tiny in comparison. His thoughts centre on God, his hopes are in God; it is God that he fears. To him, God is everything, and he is nothing at all.

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This second type of individual lives for God alone. He is realistic, for the path he conforms to is the universal way of nature. There is only one true destiny for man in this world, and that destiny is God. Nothing less can satisfy the needs of man. Living a God-oriented life involves recognizing that one's ultimate purpose is to worship and please God, and that true contentment and fulfillment can only be found in a sincere and devoted relationship with Him. □

TRAITS OF A GOOD PERSONALITY

Well-wishing and Benefitting

THE concept of ensuring safety for others through one's actions and words, as well as being nonviolent and considerate in society, is deeply embedded in the teachings of Islam. It emphasizes the moral and ethical responsibilities that every Muslim has towards their fellow human beings.

Islam places great importance on the principle of ensuring the safety and well-being of others through one's actions and words. This includes refraining from causing harm, whether physical or emotional, to others. Islam teaches that believers should be a source of peace and security in society.

While refraining from causing harm is a fundamental aspect of being a responsible member of society, the highest standard of humanity in Islam is to actively support and benefit others. This includes acts of charity, kindness, and compassion towards one's fellow human beings, regardless of their faith or background.

True humanity, according to Islamic teachings, involves being sensitive to the impact of one's actions on others.

This quality of empathy is exemplified in the way Muslims are encouraged to treat others with kindness, patience, and understanding.

The Quran says, "And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive, [saying], 'We feed you only for the countenance of God. We wish not from you reward or gratitude.'" (76: 8-9)

True humanity, according to Islamic teachings, involves being sensitive to the impact of one's actions on others. This quality of empathy is exemplified in the way Muslims are encouraged to treat others with kindness, patience, and understanding. If a person unintentionally harms someone, Islam emphasizes the importance of feeling remorse and taking responsibility for one's actions.

Islam encourages Muslims to not only avoid causing harm but also actively contribute to the well-being of society by supporting and benefiting others. This ethos of empathy, accountability, and a commitment to ensuring the safety of others reflects the essence of true humanity as taught in Islamic principles. □

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SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living

Spirit of Islam bimonthly is being published in digital format only.

A revamped Spirit of Islam website will be launched soon.

To access the archives (January 2013 to August 2023) and to search the archives topic wise, please visit:

<https://spiritofislam.co.in/spiritnew/>

THE CHALLENGES OF THE LATER ERA

A Prophecy Proved True

PROPHET Muhammad said, "In the later times, a generation will arise characterized by youthfulness but lacking in wisdom. They will outwardly express virtuous words and engage with the Quran, yet their faith will remain superficial. They will forsake their religious beliefs as an arrow missing its mark." (*Sahih al-Bukhari*)

Within this *Hadith* lies a pivotal message that unveils itself subtly. Only by recognizing this message can the *Hadith's* true essence be comprehended. The core notion here is that forthcoming circumstances will permit individuals to attain elevated positions despite their dearth of knowledge and experience.

The pursuit of worldly success and fame can sometimes lead individuals to neglect their spiritual and religious responsibilities. This can result in a focus on immediate gratification and a disregard for the consequences in the Hereafter.

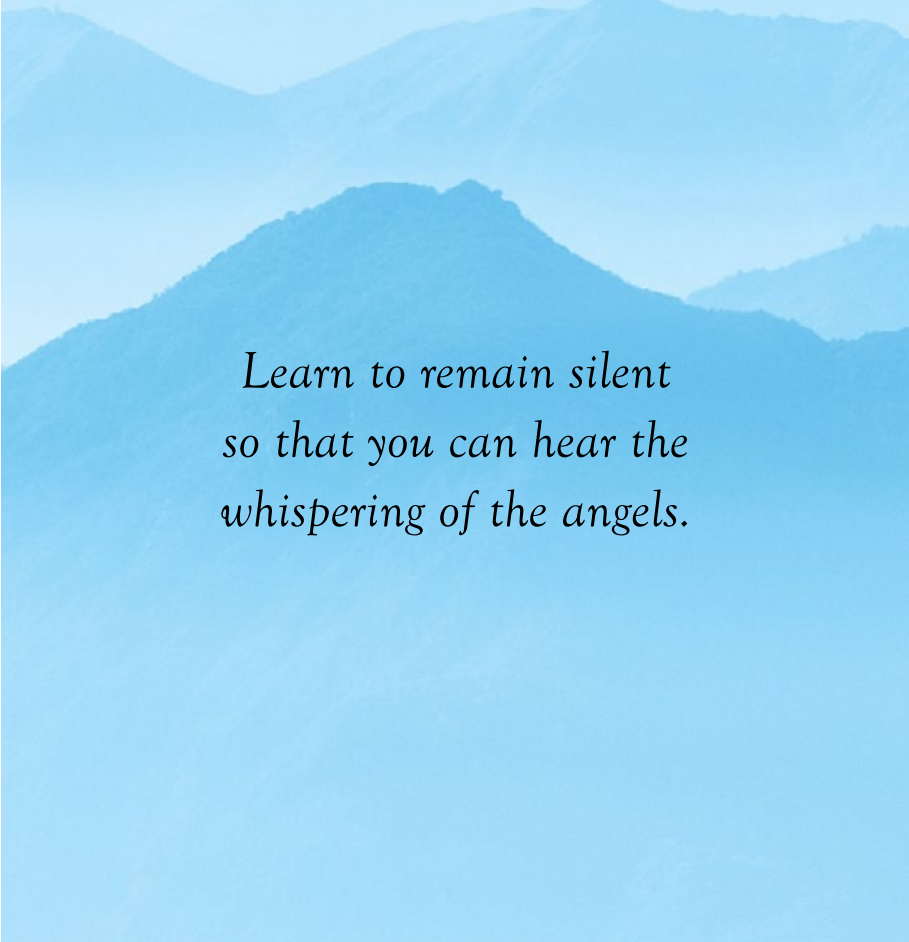
It highlights a generation characterized by youthfulness but lacking wisdom. These individuals may outwardly appear devout and engaged with religious practices, such as reciting the Quran, but their faith remains superficial. This can be seen as a warning against the danger of performative religiosity, where outward appearances do not reflect the depth of one's faith.

The contemporary era stands as the fulfillment of this prophetic *Hadith*. An observation of the present age illuminates the intended implications of the impending circumstances. This encompasses the influence of media, the theatrical stage, the prevalence of freedom and democracy, the abundance of wealth, the dynamics of protest-driven politics, the substantial Muslim population, and much more. The current scenario unmistakably demonstrates how these new factors have paved the way for individuals to ascend to prominence, even in the absence of aptitude, enabling them to occupy influential roles within society.

The influence of media and communication has created a platform where individuals can gain recognition and popularity rapidly. Social media, in particular, allows people to project themselves and their ideas to a wide audience, often without a deep understanding of the subjects they discuss. This trend is facilitated by outward appearances,

the ability to garner public endorsement through eloquent rhetoric, and the capability to instill confidence in others through persuasive speeches, even at the expense of neglecting reverence for God and the afterlife.

The pursuit of worldly success and fame can sometimes lead individuals to neglect their spiritual and religious responsibilities. This can result in a focus on immediate gratification and a disregard for the consequences in the Hereafter. All of this has been fostered by the opportunities ushered in by the industrial age. □



*Learn to remain silent
so that you can hear the
whispering of the angels.*

ROLE OF PROPHETS IN SHAPING HUMAN DESTINY

The Need for Divine Guidance

BOTH the material world and humanity share a common thread: the adherence to the laws of nature. They have the same Creator Who has established the rules governing both domains. However, a crucial distinction must be made. While the material world strictly adheres to its own set of laws, humanity possesses free will. Unlike other creatures, humans have the capacity to make choices, deciding their actions and refraining from undesirable ones. This fundamental difference implies that humans must discover their own code of conduct.

Yet, when humans embark on the journey to discern their path, they frequently encounter a significant obstacle: their inherent limitations. These limitations become a formidable hurdle in the pursuit of moral and ethical guidance.

It is precisely these human limitations that give rise to the concept of “divine inspiration” in shaping their lives. When humans, in their quest for guidance, find themselves unable to derive it solely from within, an alternative source emerges: one bestowed upon them by their Creator. What is naturally ingrained in other creatures becomes externally provided to humans. This external source is commonly referred to as a Prophet. Human limitations in knowledge necessitate external guidance, and the very need for the Prophet’s guidance underscores its inevitability as an external source of direction.

In order to lead a successful life, it is essential for humanity to master the art of Life Management. This art involves two critical components. First, individuals must gain an understanding of themselves, acknowledging their identity and capabilities. Second, they must cultivate an awareness of the world around them. With this knowledge, individuals can plan their lives realistically and make necessary improvements as circumstances evolve.

The ultimate criterion by which to assess the quality of one’s life plan lies in its outcome. A plan that yields negative results is deemed flawed, while one that yields positive outcomes is considered sound. Evaluating actions based on an ideal standard is not the wisest approach. True wisdom resides in assessing actions in light of their results, thereby determining their efficacy and appropriateness. □

TOWARDS MARITAL BLISS

Intellectual Partnership Between Husband And Wife

THE relationship between husband and wife is a delicate matter, because they are not related by blood. Therefore, the only way to make this relationship successful is to use reason, rather than allow emotions to take precedence. In a blood relationship, there is an emotional bonding. But even then, one has to make a conscious effort. The force of nature, existing in blood relationships, does not exist between husband and wife, which is why it is difficult to manage this relationship successfully without rational management. In short, a blood relationship establishes itself by the force of nature, while a non-blood relationship is established through conscious effort and rational management.

The important thing to know is the starting point of the rational management of this relationship.

Being Grateful

The coming together of man and woman in marriage is the most unique event in the universe. All the things created in the universe are created in pairs. But the compatibility that exists between a man and a woman cannot be found in any other created thing. When a man and a woman come together as life partners, it is evident that they have been made for one another through a conscious plan. Once life partners realize this, they will be overwhelmed with gratitude at having found each other. They will consider it a blessing. This happiness in each other will endure; they will feel as if they have found something priceless. This will make them grateful for each other's companionship.

When a man and woman tie the knot in marriage, it is a coming together of two opposite personalities. A woman tends to be emotional while a man tends to be egoistic. These traits are a part of their nature.

Being Educated

Education is important for both men and women. Without education both are incomplete. Education is a need which no one can afford to ignore. Ignoring it would mean depriving oneself of the means to attain a higher goal in life. Unable to reach any worthwhile goal, one would then leave this world in a state of frustration. Education refers to not

just vocational education. Vocational education ensures one a job, while a broader education transports one to the world of knowledge and wisdom. The acquisition of knowledge and wisdom takes the educated person to the highest pedestal of humanity.

To know the natural traits of men and women

When a man and woman tie the knot in marriage, it is a coming together of two opposite personalities. A woman tends to be emotional while a man tends to be egoistic. These traits are a part of their nature. These traits have positive as well as negative aspects. If they are put to positive use, it will prove to be a boon to humanity. But if they are put to negative use, it will prove to be a bane for humanity. The positive aspect of egoism in man is that it is one of the driving forces in working steadfastly for a cause. The negative aspect is that it will make him arrogant. The positive aspect of emotionalism is sensitiveness and compassion, but the negative aspect is that it can make a woman stubborn. Therefore, both men and women should know that they should exercise self-control.

Understanding about the differences and de-conditioning

Man and women are two different personalities. They are both conditioned to their different ways of upbringing and lifestyle. They are a product of their environment. As a result, they start regarding their way of thinking as right. When one starts to think in this manner, it is the result of conditioning. This will be a problem. The only solution to this problem is to decondition one another. This is possible only through intellectual discussion with each other. However, the prerequisite for this is the willingness to admit one's mistakes and be ready to change.

Mutual Trust

When any task is assigned to two people, mutual trust between the two is required for the successful completion of the task. Mutual trust between husband and wife is essential to successfully build a home. No good home is ever built without the existence of mutual trust between husband and wife.

The above-listed guiding points are the foundation of a successful married life. □



THE TEST PAPER

Embracing Opportunities Amidst Adversity

IN the vast garden of life, a man finds himself before a flourishing rose tree, captivated by the allure of its beautiful flower. Eager to pluck this delicate blossom, he extends his hand hastily, but in his haste, he might inadvertently injure himself. Subsequently, if he proceeds to lament the thorns of the rose or engages in conflict with the gardener, his efforts are in vain. This predicament is not of the gardener's making; rather, it is an immutable law of nature. The man's mistake lies in his impatience, for no one can triumph by opposing the natural order. This scenario is not unique to the rose plant; it is emblematic of the entire world.

Just as a rose bush bears both fragrant flowers and sharp thorns, the world presents both opportunities and challenges. Those who become ensnared by life's challenges are akin to the unwary individual who becomes entangled in the thorns of the rose bush. Conversely, those who discern and seize opportunities amidst adversity are akin to the astute scientist who navigates past the thorns to delicately pluck the flower.

This coexistence of adversity and opportunity in the world is not a mere coincidence; it is an integral part of the divine plan. God fashioned the world as a testing ground for humanity. Therefore, the world is meticulously designed to encompass both thorns and flowers, problems, and prospects. This intricate balance is a profound test for human beings, and it is incumbent upon them to rise above negative emotions and nurture positive attitudes.

God's intention is to observe how individuals exhibit positivity even in the face of adversity, and how they sustain their enthusiasm in the midst of challenging circumstances. It is the Creator's desire to witness the resilience of human spirit, the power of unwavering faith, and the ability to maintain a positive outlook, even when the world presents its thorns.

Life's challenges and opportunities are intricately woven into the fabric of existence, as part of a divine plan. Navigating this world requires not only the wisdom to recognize opportunities amidst adversity but also the strength to maintain a positive attitude and unwavering enthusiasm. □

REBUILDING THE SELF

The Role of Conscience

WITHIN the Quran, a profound psychological truth is encapsulated in the verse: "But man has been unmindful of his soul." (75: 14) This verse signifies that humans possess a profound self-awareness, irrespective of the multitude of excuses they may offer. It alludes to a psychological reality termed the conscience, an inner faculty for distinguishing right from wrong. This psychological reality acts as an inner compass for every individual.

While humans share outward similarities with other animals, what truly distinguishes them is the presence of conscience. According to divine design, humans have been endowed with complete autonomy to think, speak, and act as they choose. However, humans are born with an innate awareness that they must differentiate between good and evil. The conscience serves as their moral guide, emphasizing the importance of striving to become self-made individuals who assume responsibility for their growth.

Humans represent a unique fusion of contradictions within the Creator's grand scheme. This gift from the Creator is intended to enable humans to embark on a journey of self-discovery. It is expected that humans acknowledge their errors and commit to perpetual self-improvement.

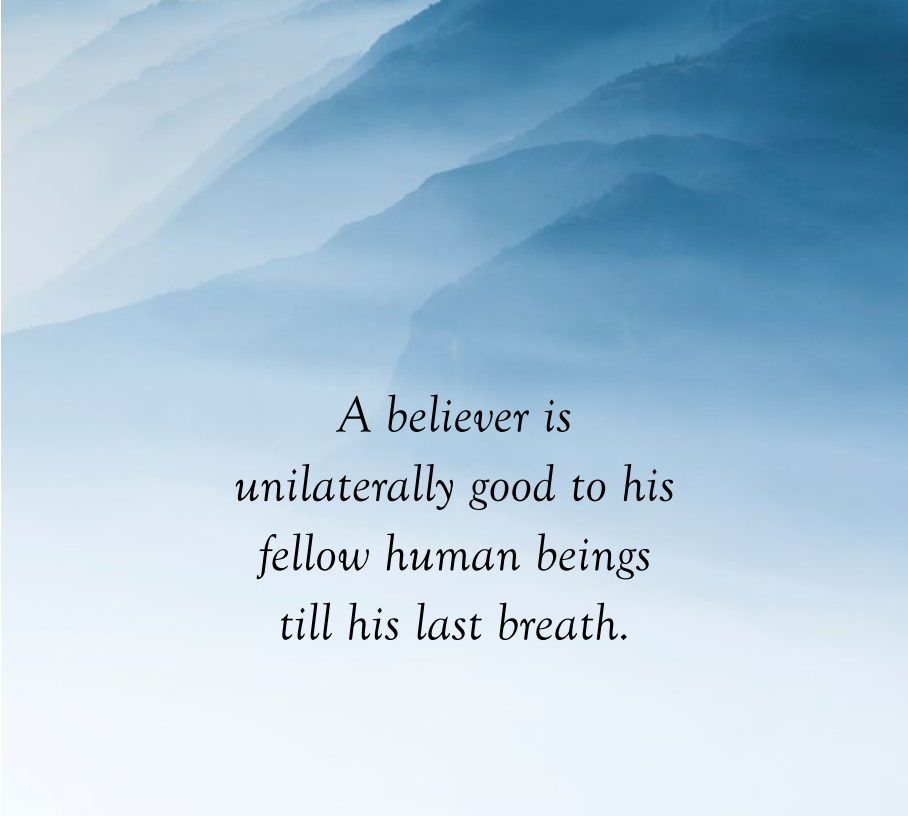
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God's guidance in His Scripture and the signs in the universe unquestionably aid humans. It is incumbent upon humans to utilize these resources to merit Paradise through their actions. For humans, God has designated Paradise as their destiny. Paradise stands as humanity's habitat, where all desires are fulfilled, leading to complete fulfillment in every sense. This Paradise, undoubtedly, is the Creator's most magnificent gift to humankind.

The Creator's exceptional benevolence towards humans lies in declaring that they merit Paradise through righteous actions. Although the Creator remains the ultimate Giver, it is a distinct favour that humans can, through their actions, make

themselves deserving of Paradise. They must strive to reside there eternally, liberated from fear and sorrow.

In this context, a significant *Hadith* (a saying of the Prophet Muhammad) holds profound meaning: "By Him in Whose Hand my soul is! If you do not commit sins, God would replace you with a people who would commit sins and seek forgiveness from Him; and He will certainly forgive them." (*Sahih Muslim*) This *Hadith* underscores the intricate interplay between sin and forgiveness. It emphasizes the psychological journey that unfolds between committing a sin and seeking forgiveness. When a person sins, it is an act stemming from the ego, yet simultaneously, a sense of remorse begins to germinate within their conscience. This sets the stage for an internal struggle between the ego and the conscience, eventually giving rise to a new persona within the individual. Such a transformation would not be possible without a sense of remorse. □



*A believer is
unilaterally good to his
fellow human beings
till his last breath.*

THE saying “born with a silver spoon” suggests that privileged birth can lead to contentment, thereby killing motivation. Conversely, those born poor often develop discontent, thereby sparking motivation. It can be said that such a person is born with an incentive spoon. Super-achievers are self-made, not products of inheritance. Parenting should focus on building self-confidence, as favouring can hinder it. It is not external favour that makes one a super-achiever, but one’s own struggle.

Many from humble backgrounds have become super-achievers through hard work. One shining example of this principle is Dr Nidhi Maganlal Patel. She is a practising dentist in Bengaluru. She pursued graduation and post-graduation in dental surgery and passed all her exams with flying colours. She ranked first in Gujarat University (MDS 2017).

Her life has been full of challenges. In her own words:

“I studied BDS and MDS from one of the most prestigious colleges of India, also known to be Asia’s largest hospital, Government Dental College Ahmedabad. I wasn’t born with a silver spoon. My parents come from farmers’ background. They tirelessly worked towards providing the family and raising children with high morals. They taught me to give back to society however much I can. This training made me want to be a doctor.

Books were my companions from childhood. For me, each page was a bridge to the world that I craved.

Books were my companions from childhood. For me, each page was a bridge to the world that I craved.

Acing exams and scoring 1st rank was not enough. I volunteered at underprivileged clinics and honed my skills till they glittered.

6th rank amongst entire state was a consequence not an aim for me. Success is not a crown, but the ability to give back, one smile at a time. My story would whisper: Dreams like teeth, require constant care, but with enough grit, they shine.

Sure, awards line my office walls, and patients review and recommend to others. But I would rather be lost in crafting smiles. I listen not just to the medical/dental history, but the unspoken fears and anxiety etched in a patient's face.

I believe in curing patients with empathy. I have huge gratitude towards patients whom I treated while I was in college still studying and learning because they made me what I am today.

My learning: ***Don't believe in quick fix. Believe in making your goal come true brick by brick.*** □



*Patience, fortitude and
tenacity are the virtues which
will see us through to success.*

THE ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE

Finding Solutions

IN today's world, conflicts have become all too common, leading to a surge in acts of violence and bloodshed. This alarming trend has profound implications for societies across the globe.

The *Hadith* narrations, or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad provide valuable insights into this issue. One *Hadith* from *Sahih Muslim* states, "The last Hour will not come unless there is much bloodshed," and clarifies that this "bloodshed" refers to violence. This prophetic statement suggests that violence will escalate to an unprecedented level in the future.

Moreover, another *Hadith* from *Sahih Muslim* prophesies a time when murderers will no longer understand their motivations, and victims will be clueless about why they have been targeted. This implies a state of chaos where violence becomes so rampant that it defies logical explanation.

According to another *Hadith*, the Prophet Muhammad issues a stern warning about the consequences of Muslims fighting each other with deadly weapons. He states that both the aggressor and the victim will face punishment in the afterlife. (*Sunan Nasai*). This *Hadith* underscores the gravity of violence within a community and its dire spiritual consequences.

Now, let's delve into the root cause of these fanatical acts of violence. When love for their own group or organization escalates into an intense enmity towards others, a dangerous mindset takes hold and they engage in perpetual conspiracies against them.

This self-made belief system fosters intense hatred and a propensity for violence against others. The idea that they must protect their own at all costs often leads to radicalization, making individuals more susceptible to carrying out acts of violence. About such acts Prophet has said: Whoever hurts a believer, God will hurt him and whomever God decides to hurt he will not find anyone to protect him from God. (*Sunan Abi Dawood*)

The escalation of violence is a pressing concern that transcends geographical boundaries. To combat this dangerous trend, it is essential to promote understanding and acceptance of differences and staying united in spite of them. Every peace loving citizen should join hands to work for this. □

LEADERSHIP AND SOCIAL HARMONY

Shun Hate and Embrace Positivity

WITHIN the depths of every individual lies a hidden devil, a reservoir of hatred that lurks within us all. This hate bomb remains dormant under ordinary circumstances, but when triggered, it can explode with overwhelming intensity. This aspect of human nature knows no gender boundaries, as all of humanity is susceptible to this powerful force.

In a society comprising 10,000 individuals, each person becomes akin to a moving combustible, susceptible to ignition at the slightest provocation. Nevertheless, personal interests compel people to restrain their violent tendencies and adopt pacifistic approaches, making leadership a formidable challenge.

A true leader must refrain from merely relying on slogans of complaint and protest, because such negative rhetoric can inflame people, fostering a volatile society akin to a gathering of combustible materials awaiting ignition. Instead, a leader must embrace a message of love and compassion, spearheading movements for positive change. Conversely, those who propagate hatred and grievances should refrain from initiating mass movements and reflect on their actions in private.

Collective movements can be categorized as either positive or negative. A positive movement stems from personal responsibility and duty, resulting in righteous endeavours that yield positive outcomes. In contrast, negative movements focus on demanding rights and protesting, often leading to invalid and potentially harmful actions. The choices made by leaders significantly impact the outcome of movements, with righteous endeavours contributing to goodness and unrighteous ones inevitably leading to evil consequences. Understanding the potential explosion of hatred within us and choosing the right approach is paramount in shaping a harmonious and progressive society.

Beyond comprehending the darker facets of human nature, embracing the power of positive thinking plays a pivotal role in shaping a

The influence of positive thinking extends to every aspect of a person's life, shaping their personality and defining their future. Embracing positivity fosters a pure and constructive character, resonating with the essence of nature.

fulfilling and purposeful life. Positive thinking is a mindset free from negative emotions, where opinions are formed based on facts rather than complaints or protests. It embodies a realistic outlook on life, transcending pride and prejudice.

The influence of positive thinking extends to every aspect of a person's life, shaping their personality and defining their future. Embracing positivity fosters a pure and constructive character, resonating with the essence of nature. By adopting a positive mindset, individuals are more likely to tread a path leading to a fulfilling life, while negativity hampers progress and potential.

Cultivating a positive mindset demands conscious effort and mindfulness, holding oneself accountable, and continuously striving for improvement. The essence of positive thinking transcends self-centred goals, empowering individuals to focus on meaningful pursuits and avoid wasting time on fruitless endeavours.

Understanding the interplay between hatred within and the power of positive thinking equips individuals to navigate life's challenges and contribute to a more harmonious and progressive society. By embracing positivity and cultivating self-awareness, we can forge a brighter future, transcending the darker aspects of human nature. □



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.



PEACE IN THE PROMISED LAND

*This article appeared in the November 15, 2023, edition of **The Speaking Tree, Times of India**.*

PALESTINE is the holy site of three major Abrahamic religions. For the Jews, Palestine is the 'Promised Land' as mentioned in the Bible. Christians regard this land as holy because Jesus Christ was born here and fulfilled his mission in this land. Muslims consider this place sacred because the Prophet of Islam came here on a journey called *Mi'raj*, ascension to heaven, and after migrating to Madinah, he made Bait-ul-Maqdis in Jerusalem, his *Qibla*, prayer direction, for over a year.

The 'promised land' in the Bible is the 'assigned land' in the Quran. The Quran commands Moses to lead his people in diaspora, living in Egypt, to this Promised Land. 'O my people, enter the holy land which God has assigned to you.' (5: 21)

As per the Balfour Declaration, the Jews in Diaspora were permitted to return to Palestine under a limited quota system. The Arab leaders should have accepted this as a legitimate decision, but they showed a strong reaction to it. History shows that the conflict has caused large-scale destruction and displacement of Palestinians since 1948 and has taken thousands of lives.

In the wake of the Balfour Declaration, an opportunity presented itself to the Palestinians to work for progress and development in cooperation with the Jews, who came mainly from Western countries

and were highly educated. They could become their best partners in such constructive collaboration. However, the Arab leaders failed to understand this positive aspect of the matter.

The system of nature is based on the principle that peaceful methods are far more effective and result-oriented in achieving any goal. Violent methods can produce no positive results.

The Quran says, 'Reconciliation is the best.' (4: 128) When we speak to the Arab leaders about the importance of peace and reconciliation, they answer, "Yes, we want peace but peace with justice." However, according to the law of nature, this kind of peace can never be achieved. Peace does not automatically produce justice. As Maulana Wahiduddin Khan used to say, "Peace only opens the door to opportunities, and the desired justice is achieved only by availing of those opportunities."

At the time of Hudaibiya Treaty, the Prophet had achieved peace only by delinking it from justice. The Prophet had made this peace to create opportunities for constructive activities. And, with the establishment of peace, excellent opportunities for action did open up, which the Prophet made use of in full measure. Thus, the Prophet ensured justice in just a few years and set Islam on a much more solid footing.

This Hudaibiya peace treaty, which was made by unilaterally accepting all the conditions of the opponents was, unexpectedly, termed a clear victory in the Quran. (48: 1)

Both the Arabs and the Jews need to understand that they cannot keep fighting forever. The practical solution for Arabs is to abandon all kinds of violence and accept Israel as a legitimate state. In return, Israel must make territorial adjustments that Arabs find acceptable. Thus, they can establish peace in the Holy Land by accepting the give-and-take formula, mutually benefiting both parties.

Peace in Palestine is crucial for global peace. There is a relevant saying of the Prophet: God grants to nonviolence what he does not grant to violence (*Sahih Muslim*). The system of nature is based on the principle that peaceful methods are far more effective and result-oriented in achieving any goal. Violent methods can produce no positive results. □



THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

Limitless and Always Growing

THE essence of faith is the realization or discovery of God (*Marifah*). When a man consciously seeks out and finds God, and thereby has access to divine realities, that is what constitutes faith.

This discovery is no simple matter. God is the Creator and Owner of all things. He will reward or punish people according to their deeds; none is free from His grip. The discovery of such a God shakes to the core the whole life of man. His thinking is revolutionized, for God becomes the centre of all His emotions.

With God as the principal focus of his attention, man becomes God's servant in the fullest sense of the word. He becomes a man whose living and dying is all for God.

Such a faith ultimately results in all of man's behaviour and his dealings taking the hue of God. When the believer speaks, he is conscious of the fact that God is listening to him. When he walks, he does so with modesty so that his gait may not be displeasing to God. When he deals with people, he is always worried lest he deal unjustly and be punished by God in the next life.

The impact of this degree of faith makes the entire life of man Hereafter-oriented. In all matters his eyes are focused on the Hereafter. Instead of immediate gain he makes gain in the next life his goal. Whenever there are two aspects of any matter, one pertaining to this world and the other to the next world, he always prefers the latter.

Faith, another name for the recognition of the Supreme God, becomes for the believer a fountainhead of limitless confidence in his Creator. When this recognition takes root in an individual's heart and soul, his whole personality becomes regenerated. Knowing that in all circumstances he may depend on God, he becomes a new man.

Faith in God becomes for the believer a fountainhead of limitless confidence in his Creator. When this recognition takes root in an individual's heart, his whole personality becomes regenerated. Knowing that in all circumstances he may depend on God, he becomes a new man.

The Arabic word for belief is *iman*. It literally means 'to know', 'to believe', 'to put one's trust in something or someone'. *Iman* means putting one's trust in, or having complete faith in God, His Prophet and His message.

In this world all things fall into two separate categories: those that grow and those that do not. For example, a stone does not grow. It remains in the same state. On the contrary, a tree keeps on growing. The Quran likens the faith and the faithful to the tree (14: 24). That is, unlike the stone, their faith does not remain static, but goes on increasing, never coming to a standstill.

At various places in the Quran, it is said that faith is something which continues to grow:

'The true believers are those (.....) whose faith grow stronger as they listen to His revelation'. (8: 2)

'As for those who follow the right path, God will increase their guidance....'. (47: 17)

'As they (the believers) listen, their humility increases.' (17: 109)

'God will increase the guidance to those that have followed the right path.' (19: 76)

Say: Lord, increase my knowledge. (20: 114)

Those who have had the wealth of true faith bestowed on them will find their faith increasing in the manner mentioned in the Quran. On the contrary, those who have not been lifted up to the heights of true faith will find that their 'faith' is something static and does not grow.

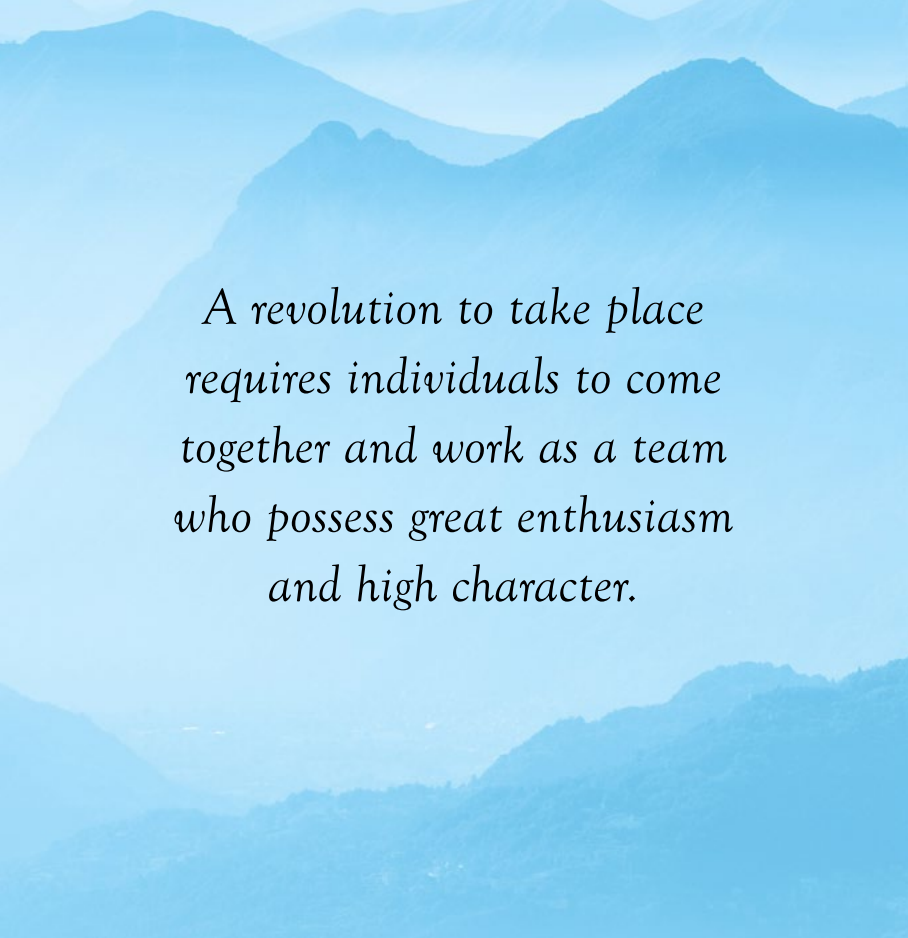
One of the Companions of the Prophet Ibn Rawaha said to another Companion: "Lets come together to increase faith in God for a while".

These words enraged his Companion and he asked, "Aren't we believers already?" Ibn Rawaha replied, "Yes, that is true. We are believers. But when we remember God, our faith increases."

To the one Companion, faith meant the recitation of the monotheistic creed. There is no god but the One God, after which he felt that his faith was complete. But so far as Abdullah ibn Rawaha was concerned, he had discovered God the limitless, God with all His forms of perfection. For the former, the recitation of the creed (*kalimah*) was all that mattered, but, to the latter, *kalimah* recitation was only the beginning. The concept of God that came to his mind was a treasure house of limitless perfection. This being so, he felt that his remembrance of God should also be endless. He lived in God Consciousness. In other words,

he lives in the remembrance of God continuously. He would never have the feeling that he had come to the outermost limit. The third Caliph, Uthman said, "If your hearts are purified, you will never feel that you have had your fill of the remembrance of God."

Whether a man feels satisfied or dissatisfied depends on his capacity for satisfaction. A small container is soon filled up with just a small quantity of water. But no amount of water will fill up the ocean bed. An ocean requires an unlimited quantity of water, if it is to be filled right up. The same applies to a man. If, like a small container, his desire for God is limited in extent, it will soon be filled. But, if, like the ocean, his desire for God is limitless, it will never come to an end. □



*A revolution to take place
requires individuals to come
together and work as a team
who possess great enthusiasm
and high character.*

ONENESS OF GOD IN ISLAM

The Essence of Islamic Faith

THE declaration that 'there is no god but God' is the essence of Islam. It means that God has no partner. He exists by Himself. This is expressed by the Arabic word *Tawheed*, 'oneness' and 'unity', which in the Islamic context means 'the oneness of God'. Nothing can rival God as a source of power or love. He is not an abstract concept. He is always near us; He cares for us, and we owe our existence to Him alone.

Islam establishes a close and direct relationship between the Creator and His creation, in which no mediating power plays any role. God's absolute unity is reflected in the unity of His creation, in which each individual part is in harmonious conjunction with all of the others. There is nothing remotely like Him. The Quran thus enjoins us:

Islam establishes a close and direct relationship between the Creator and His creation, in which no mediating power plays any role.

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.' (112: 1-4)

God alone is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, including human beings. He is the sole possessor of powers. He is Omniscient and Omnipotent. That is, although invisible to the naked eye, He knows everything, He sees everything, He has full control over everything.

Monotheism (*Tawheed* in Arabic) is the doctrine that all power lies in the hands of one God alone; that He alone deserves to be worshipped. It is God alone who fulfills our needs. It is God alone who is behind the functioning of the entire universe.

Here are further verses from the Quran which very clearly state the concept of God:

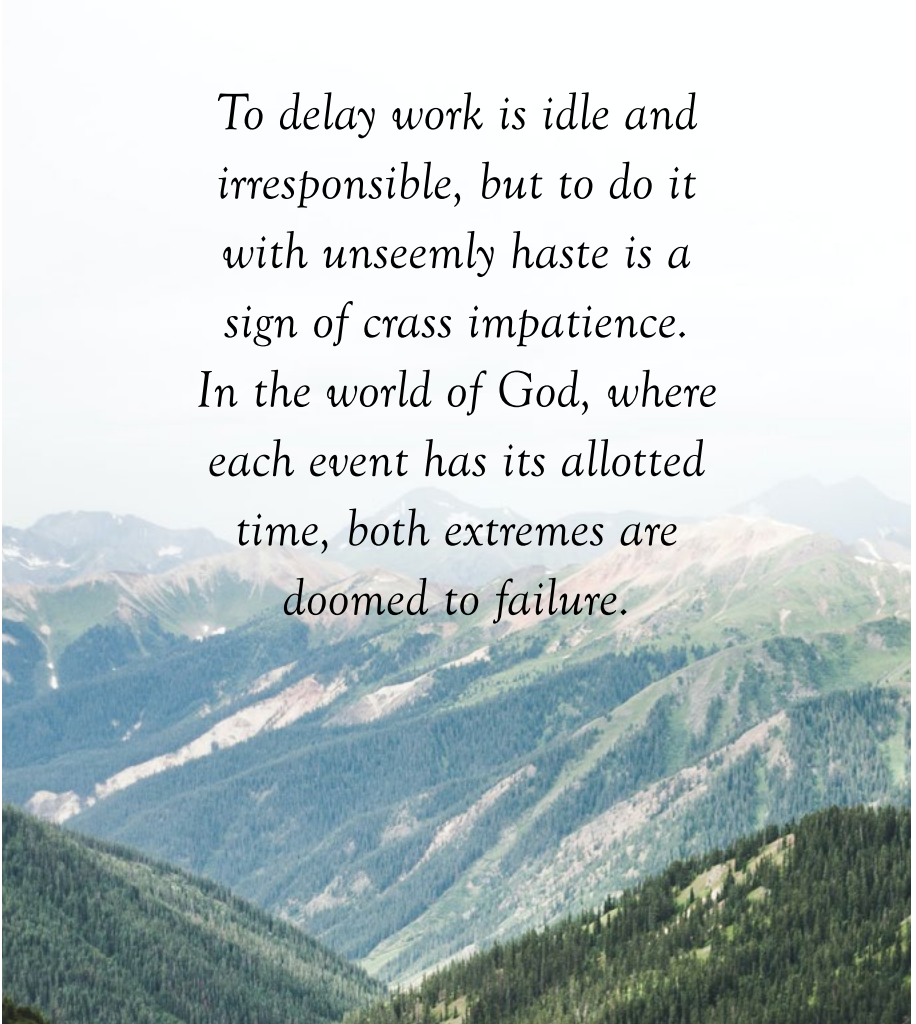
"Truly your God is but one: Lord of the heavens and of the earth." (37: 4)

"This is God your Lord; there is no God but He, the Creator of all things; therefore, worship Him alone". (6: 102)

"Your God is one God; there is no God but He, the Compassionate, the Merciful". (2: 163)

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) □

To delay work is idle and irresponsible, but to do it with unseemly haste is a sign of crass impatience. In the world of God, where each event has its allotted time, both extremes are doomed to failure.



CHILDREN'S CORNER

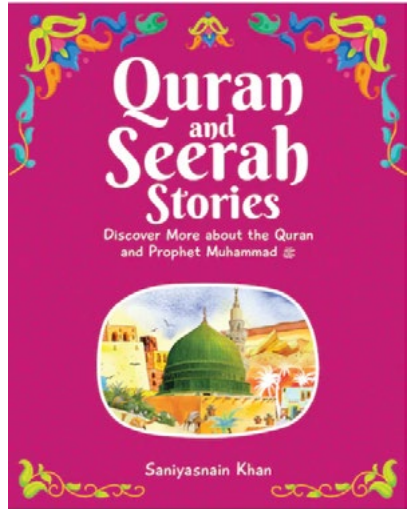
Name of the Book: Quran and Seerah Stories

Name of the Author: Dr Saniyasnain Khan

Pages: 240

ISBN: 9788178984247

These are some of the best-loved tales from the Quran and from the life of the Prophet Muhammad. Especially chosen for the very young, they provide a foundation on which to build a growing knowledge of the Scriptures. This is storytelling at its best, with the meaning and message expressed in the simplest of words. Colourful, child-friendly illustrations complement the text and bring the stories vividly to life. We reproduce here a selection for you.



THE GARDEN OF SABA

Long long ago, before the birth of the Prophet Isa (Jesus), there lived in the ancient lands of Yemen the very rich and powerful people of Saba, or Sheba. The largest city of the region was Marib. For about 1000 years the area became more and more wealthy and reached its peak, as the people of Saba expanded their trade through land and sea routes.

Marib was an ancient city, about 50 miles from the present city of Sana. It was on the old frankincense route between Arabia and Syria. Through Syria it connected with the great and flourishing kingdoms of the great Roman Empire around the Mediterranean. At the other end along the Yemen coast, the road connected by sea transport with India, Malaysia and China.

The people of Saba were very hard-working. They constructed a huge dam. This dam was called the Marib dam or sad al-Marib. It took years to construct it. The dam was about two miles long and 120 ft high. The people of Saba with their great skills made it into the best example of engineering of their times.

This dam brought great wealth to the area.

They made roads and canals. The canals were bordered by gardens on both sides.

The trees and bushes of the lush green gardens and orchards were laden with fruits. The gardens and fields, well-watered by streams, produced a variety of fruits, spices and frankincense.

All worldly progress is achieved thanks to the help which Allah has given us. Without His blessings, we cannot achieve any success. So whenever we are successful, we should say "Thank You" to Allah for His help and remain humble and down-to-earth.

But the people of Saba, instead of being thankful to Allah, chose to become arrogant. They thought that all the progress and riches that they enjoyed were due to the clever planning of their forefathers, who so ably built the great dam of Marib. They forgot to thank Allah. They became proud and haughty.

Allah does not like arrogant people who do not thank Him. So during the seventh century A.D., when the pent-up waters of the eastern side of the Yemen highlands were collected in a high lake held back by the Dam of Marib, the wall of the dam began to crack.

A mighty flood came and the dam burst, and it has never been repaired since. This was a great crisis which brought on the slow downfall of the country.

The flourishing gardens of Saba were left to turn into a waste land. The luscious fruit trees became wild, and gave place to wild plants with bitter fruit. The feathery leaved tamarisk, which is only good for twigs and wattle-work, replaced the sweet-smelling plants and flowers. Wild and stunted kinds of thorny bushes, like the wild Lote tree, which were good for neither fruit nor shade, grew in place of the pomegranates, the date palms, and the grape vines.

This punishment of the people of Saba was an example to all mankind. It reminds us that we should always be thankful to Allah for His blessings and never become arrogant and proud over our success. All success comes only with the Help of Allah. □



CPS NEWSLETTER

CPS International Women's group conducts regular discussions between its members on the topics of spirituality and peace. These discussions are streamed online. Here are the YouTube links of two discussions:

What is Good Life?

<https://youtu.be/23fglJeDm0E?si=RO-DTqWu6-35HLal>

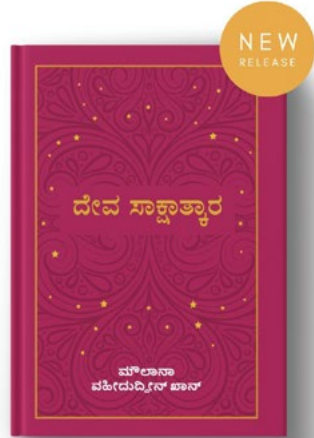
Complaint Culture is Satan's Culture

<https://youtu.be/XHsewtLle6A?si=xC-zL2-lm3SWLMbk>

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's Urdu book **Allah-u-Akbar** is now available in Kannada.

THE BOOK '**ALLAHU AKBAR**' IS
NOW AVAILABLE IN KANNADA

DOWNLOAD AT CPSSGLOBAL.ORG



Download link:

<https://www.cpsglobal.org/books/allah-o-akbar-kannada>

A book by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan titled **Culture of Peace** translated and published in Tamil.

Download link: <https://www.cpsglobal.org/books/culture-peace-tamil>

TOWARDS COMMUNAL HARMONY AND PEACE

Mr Sajid from CPS Nagpur team gifted peace and spirituality books by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan to the library of St John High School, Nagpur. The set of books were warmly received.

CPS members from Bengaluru, Ms Fathima Sarah and Mr Abrar Mudsser were invited by the Jesuit Priests of Ashirvad to attend a session on giving inputs for introducing a study of different religions at school and pre-university level. The purpose behind this exercise was to give an understanding of all religions for helping the youth to be able to live in harmony and peace with fellow beings.



Ms Fathima Sarah highlighted Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's work towards global peace and presenting Islam as it is from the original sources, as a religion of peace and a religion of nature.

Peace Promotion in Muslim Societies

The CPS team Nagpur reports that Quran translations and books on spirituality by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan in various languages were gifted to the guests who attended a marriage function.



CPS team members participated in Jamshedpur Book Fair on November 25, 2023.



CPS team members from Jammu and Kashmir gift peace literature by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan to the tourists on regular basis.

Joining hands with other Peace Organizations

Upon invitation Ms. Fathima Sarah attended the zoom session conducted by the HWPL.



HWPL International Religious Peace Academy (IRPA)

HWPL International Religious Peace Academy (IRPA), conducts online lectures which are delivered by prominent religious leaders from Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism, based on their respective religious scriptures.

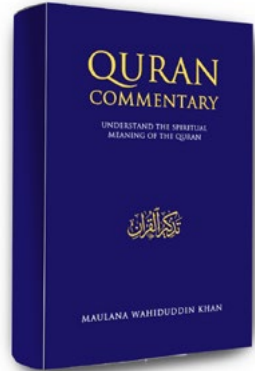
<https://www.hwpl.kr/language/en/hwpl-international-religious-peace-academy-irpa/>

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



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

By [the winds] that pluck out vehemently and those that blow gently, and by [the clouds] that swim serenely and by those that outstrip them suddenly, and by those who regulate events. On the Day when a violent convulsion will convulse [the world], to be followed by further [convulsions], hearts will be throbbing, while eyes will be downcast. They say, 'What? shall we be brought back to life, even after we have turned into decayed bones?' and they say, 'That indeed would be a losing return.' But all it will take is a single blast, and behold! They will all come out in the open. (79: 1-14)

Every year we experience periods of calm weather followed by gales bringing clouds and rainstorms. Soon it is clearly visible that where the land was desolate, a new world has sprung up. This event of nature indicates the possibility of the Hereafter. This shows in symbolic fashion that the emergence of the Hereafter from the present world is just as possible as the emergence of lush green foliage from dry barren land.

Have you heard the story of Moses? His Lord called out to him by the sacred valley of Tuwa: [saying], 'Go to Pharaoh, he has exceeded all bounds, and say, "Will you reform yourself? Do you want me to guide you to your Lord, so that you should fear Him?"' Moses showed him the great sign, but he denied it and refused [the faith]. Then he quickly turned his back. And he summoned all his people, and proclaimed, 'I am your supreme Lord,' but God seized him and meted out to him the chastisement of both the next world and the present: surely there is in this a lesson for the God-fearing. (79: 15-26)

The life of Pharaoh and other deniers of the truth like him provides proof of the fact that one who denies realities is ultimately punished for it. These historical examples are enough to teach man a lesson. But an instructive event is such only to one who has a prudent mentality, and who examines an action from the viewpoint of its result and not just in relation to its beginning.

[O Men!] Are you more difficult to create than the heaven which He has built, by raising its vault high and fashioning it flawlessly, and making its night dark and bringing forth its morning light, and the earth which He spread out, after that bringing forth from it its water and its pasture land, and making the mountains firm: [all this] as a means of sustenance for you and your animals? (79: 27-33)

The magnificent phenomenon before us in the shape of the universe is so great that all other things are small in comparison to it. So, in the world when the occurrence of a big event is possible, why should the occurrence of a small event not be possible? There are already many factors in existence on a large scale which explain the Quran's declaration that man shall one day have to face resurrection.

When the great overwhelming event arrives, on the Day that man remembers what he strove for and Hell is there for all to see, anyone who has acted arrogantly and prefers the life of this world, will find himself in Hell; but one who fears to stand before his Lord and restrained himself from base desires, shall dwell in Paradise. They will ask you [Prophet] about the Hour, saying, 'When it will come to pass?', what have you to do with the mentioning of it? Your Lord alone knows when it will come; you are but a warner for those who fear it. On the Day when they see it, they will feel as if they had tarried in this world for only one evening or one morning. (79: 34-46)

Man is between two domains. One is the present world, which is before him, and the second is the world of the Hereafter, which is hidden from view. The real test of man is that he should prefer the Hereafter to the present world. But this can be done only by one who has the courage to exercise control over the base desires of the self and not behave arrogantly. □



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.

How to live a meaningful life?

If life is to be invested with meaning, it is essential that a goal be set. One should be absolutely certain of the worthwhile nature of this target. In pursuit of it, one must have the total support of one's conscience. It should permeate one's entire being, coursing through one's body just as blood runs through one's veins. It is by exercising his powers of concentration while setting his heart on a particular target that a human being becomes different from the animals. When one focuses upon an overarching purpose, one's life undergoes a drastic change. One becomes a completely different person. So total in one's absorption in one's quest in life that one has no time for petty side issues. One pursues one's goal with unswerving dedication, not stopping to rest until it is reached.

How to achieve our goals?

By channelling one's entire energy into the goal one wants to achieve. Few people actually do this. They tend rather to diversify their efforts. Their failure to concentrate on a single goal renders all their efforts incomplete and ineffective. Every worthwhile task demands all the strength that an individual can muster. The only way to be successful in one's work is to give all one has got.

What are the qualities of a person who lives a purposeful life?

A person who has a purpose in life, will overlook all other considerations in order to concentrate on achieving his purpose. Everything he does will be directed towards that end. Mundane topics, temporary benefits and easy living will have no attraction for one so inspired. Losses and

hardship will be endured if this serves to bring one closer to one's objective.

What is the role of time management for a person with goals to achieve?

When a person has a specific and worthwhile goal before him, he sets a great value upon his time, but when bereft of a goal, time hangs heavily upon his hands. It is then that ceremonial gatherings and vain pursuits become welcome occupations. He carves out no real life for himself but depends upon others for occupations and distraction. In this way, he drifts along like a ship without a rudder, to the end of his useless life. On the surface, he has led a full and busy life, but, on closer inspection, he discovers, too late, that his achievements are nil, and that he has frittered away his precious existence in empty meaningless diversions.

Sometimes ill health will become an obstacle to achieving our goals. How to look at this aspect of life?

There are many examples of people who achieved their goals in spite of their poor health or any other adverse condition for that matter. When one feels sufficiently inspired to perform a task one undertakes it at all costs, even on one's deathbed, and even when one's external circumstances are totally adverse. It is one's will and one's motivation to work which are of prime importance. Health and strength are secondary.

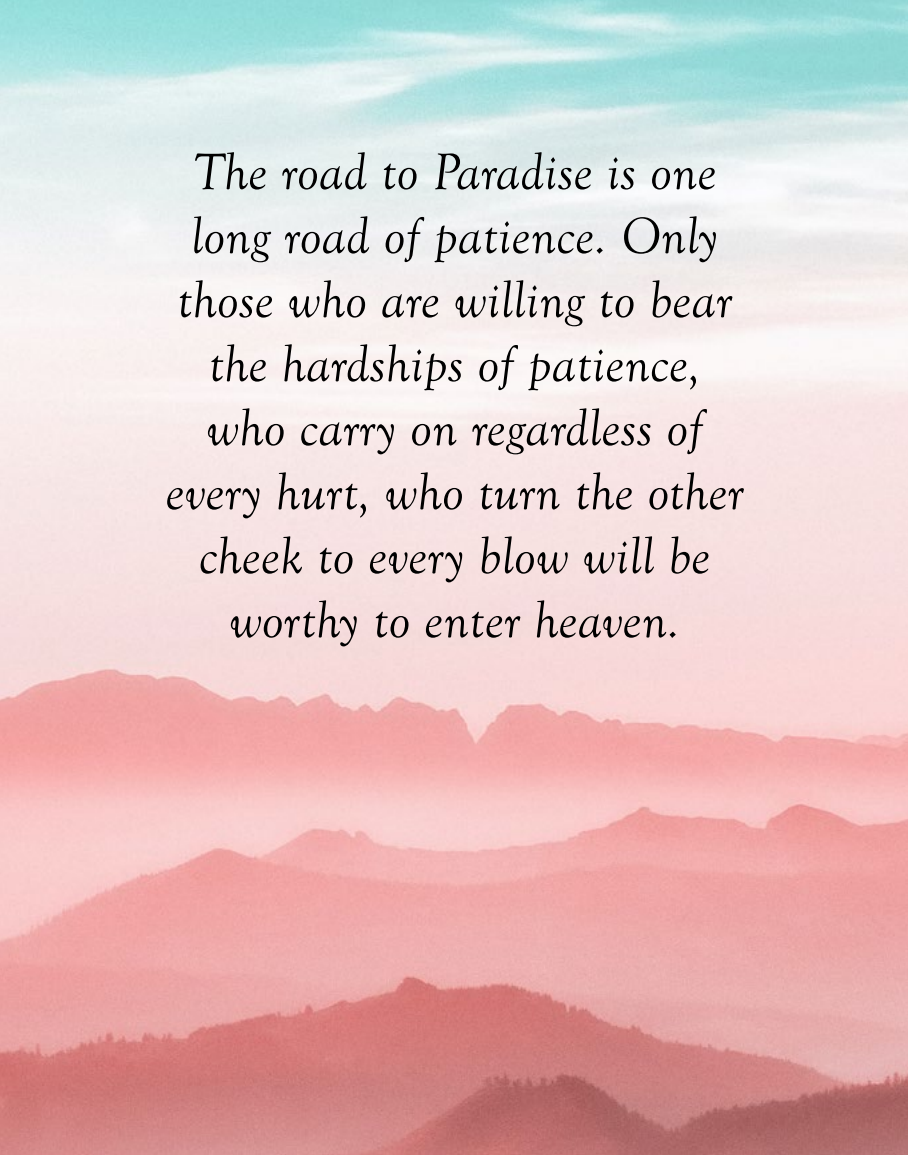
What if we face obstacles in availing the opportunities and miss them?

Every person has been allotted a fixed time and certain opportunities. This fixed time and these opportunities are not taken away from him until the Almighty wills it to be so. If after the night the Almighty makes you see things anew in the morning, you should understand that there are more days left for you to do your work. It means that, according to the plan of Almighty, you have still to do something which is as yet unaccomplished.

What if we meet with roadblocks in our journey towards our goal?

It is human nature to want to proceed towards the goal by broad straight routes, moving fast and reaching one's goal in the most direct possible way. But so often such roads are blocked, and achieving success begins to seem a very difficult matter. But for every major road which is blocked, there are always several minor roads which are open. It is just a question of having to go about things in a roundabout way. It is all about adjustment and patiently waiting. When you fail to find a

place for yourself in the front row, you can always make do with one in the rear until a place ahead finally falls vacant for you. For every closed door, there is always another which is open—but only to those who have the eyes to see it and the courage to march through it. □



*The road to Paradise is one
long road of patience. Only
those who are willing to bear
the hardships of patience,
who carry on regardless of
every hurt, who turn the other
cheek to every blow will be
worthy to enter heaven.*

WE ASKED CHATGPT TO OFFER
SOME INFORMATION ABOUT CPS
INTERNATIONAL, NEW DELHI.
THIS IS THE RESPONSE.

The Center for Peace and Spirituality (CPS) is a renowned organization dedicated to promoting peace, harmony, and spiritual enlightenment.

Founded by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, CPS aims to foster understanding and cooperation among people of diverse backgrounds and faiths. The center's activities include interfaith dialogues, seminars, and conferences that encourage mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. CPS also emphasizes the importance of personal and spiritual growth, offering guidance and resources for individuals seeking a deeper connection with themselves and the world around them. Through its inclusive and compassionate approach, CPS serves as a beacon of peace, inspiring positive change and unity in society.

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another which is open—but only to those
who have the eyes to see it and the
courage to march through it.

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