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# SPIRIT OF ISLAM

SCIENCE AND  
THEOLOGY

A RELIGION  
MISUNDERSTOOD

PATIENCE,  
NOT REACTION

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# SPIRIT OF ISLAM

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Towards Spiritual Living

# SPIRIT OF ISLAM

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VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3, MARCH 2013

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Detail from 'Poppy Field in a Hollow near Giverny', 1885

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# WELCOME

*Dear Readers,*

*Greetings and best wishes of Peace.*

*They say that joys shared are joys multiplied. So it is with the eternal joys of learning and intellectual pursuit. For years, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan has expressed in writing his profound discoveries relating to God's creation plan, life, peace and practical wisdom. Today, God Almighty has made it possible through this magazine to share these ideas with the entire world.*

*Intellectual discoveries are truly the greatest joy that man can have. The seeker treads this path with a continuous enthusiasm, without boredom or mental stagnation. Material joys on the other hand, are fleeting, and lead one only along the path of deception until the end of life's journey, when the realization occurs that there is no happiness down this way.*

*In this issue, we bring to you again the most fundamental ideas of mankind's purpose in life—The creation plan of God—which is the basic message in the scriptures; one that all of the Prophets brought to mankind, here beautifully explained in the modern context. Wisdom from the examples of the Prophets is explained in a manner that can be applied in our lives leading towards God realisation, peace and progress.*

*We believe that science does not contradict religion, but rather corroborates many eternal truths. Scientific discoveries have, in fact, enlarged the canvas of God realisation about which we continue to bring you articles.*

*All types of ideologies thrive equally in this world and at times can be confusing. Finding the clear truth free of all prejudices is a true blessing. However, this requires a de-conditioning of our minds, to open them up to reason. The Truth, once discovered, will give us the conviction that moulds our behaviour and gives meaning to our lives.*

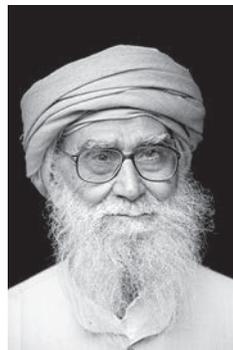
*Happy reading!*

*Feedback is welcome and appreciated, and can be sent by email to [feedback@thespiritofislam.org](mailto:feedback@thespiritofislam.org) or by post to our Bangalore office.*

**Aijaz Ahmed**  
Associate Editor

## FROM THE CHIEF EDITOR'S DESK

*Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, born in 1925, in Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh, is an Islamic spiritual scholar who is well-versed in both classical Islamic learning and modern disciplines. The mission of his life has been the establishment of worldwide peace. He has received the Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian honour in India, and the Demiurgus Peace International Award. He has been called 'Islam's spiritual ambassador to the world' and is recognised as one of its most influential Muslims'. His books have been translated into sixteen languages and are part of university curricula in six countries. He is the founder of the Centre for Peace and Spirituality based in New Delhi.*



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### LIVING WITH A POSITIVE MIND

**P**RAYER is only another name for spirituality: spirituality and peace are two sides of a single coin. Spirituality is the inner content of peace and peace is the external expression of spirituality. Where there is peace, there is spirituality, and where there is spirituality there is peace. Both are interconnected.

*In June 2011, while on a visit to the USA, I was invited to a Christian Church in Philadelphia, to deliver a lecture on 'Islam and Peace'. The gist of my lecture was that according to Islam, peace is the summum bonum; without peace, there can be no progress, neither in the secular nor in the religious field.*

*At the end of my lecture, a Christian scholar observed: "Jesus Christ once said: 'Love your enemy.' This, no doubt, is the highest ethical value." Then he asked whether I could mention any Islamic teaching of this kind from the Islamic scriptures.*

*To the pleasant surprise of that gentleman, I said, "Yes." And then I referred to Chapter 41 of the Quran, in which it is laid down what one should do when facing the problem of enmity. The Quran tells us that in such a situation, we have to give a positive rather than a negative response.*

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

According to the Quranic verse:

*"Good deeds and evil deeds are not equal.*

*Do good deeds in return for bad deeds; then you will see that the one who was once your enemy has become your dearest friend."*(41: 34).

*Going by this Quranic verse, an enemy is not an eternal enemy. And in keeping with the law of nature, your enemy is your potential friend. So, try to turn this potential into actuality. According to Quranic teaching, the concept of 'we and they' is wrong. The right concept is that which is based on a 'we-we' relationship. Friendship is a natural phenomenon, while enmity is unnatural. Enmity is always the outcome of misunderstandings. By unilaterally adhering to a high standard of ethics, you can remove the misunderstanding and then you will find that there is no enmity at all.*

*The other aspect of prayer is positivity. Positive thinking is the basis of all kinds of high virtues. Moreover, it requires a positive mind to build a healthy and creative personality. Without positive thinking, intellectual development is impossible.*

*But there is the point in question of there being different kinds of unpleasant experiences in our practical lives. And these can occur at any time, often involving scenes of a provocative nature. All such happenings are bound to start a negative train of thinking in every man and woman. In such a situation, how can we maintain positivity? Man has no option but to live in a negative atmosphere, but he is nevertheless required to build a positive personality. What is the solution?*

*The solution is to learn the art of conversion. You have to convert negativity into positivity. You have to try to live with a positive mind even in negative situations. This seems to be a very difficult task. But this is not so. God Almighty has given us a mind and the mind has an unlimited capacity. One philosopher has rightly said: 'I am large enough to contain all these contradictions.' So, use your mind, try to manage the differences. If a cow can convert the grass that it eats into milk, why cannot man, with a mind a billion times more developed than that of a cow, convert negativity into positivity? It must be conceded that it is quite possible for a man to convert negativity into positivity, i.e. to live with a positive mind in a negative situation.*

*This is the gist of prayer. This is the essence of spirituality; this is the secret of a peaceful life, both individual and social.*

**Maulana Wahiduddin Khan**  
editor@thespiritofislam.org

## ALL PRAISE IS DUE TO GOD

**O**NE of the important teachings of Islam is that on receiving anything, we should be grateful to God in acknowledgment of His bounty, and utter these words; 'All praise and thankfulness is due to God, the Lord of the Worlds.' Praise of God, in its true spirit, is the essence of the Quran. After having accepted Islam, a believer's inner most feelings find expression in these words of praise.

Man's existence is a blessing of God. Man's extremely complex and balanced body is a blessing of God. The entire world created so favourably for man is a blessing of God.

When this reality dawns on man and he realises God's immeasurable blessings upon him, his soul is filled with a feeling of gratefulness to God. His heart and mind are overawed by His greatness. At that moment words of acknowledgment of God — 'Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds' spontaneously comes to his lips.

God the Almighty is too great for man to give Him anything. The only thing man can offer in His presence is acknowledgment. The moment of man's greatest worship of God is when his soul is pervaded by God's glory and greatness; when he recognizes God's divinity as compared to man's servitude; when, in full awareness of his own helplessness, he comes to acknowledge God's bounties in the true sense of the word.

When man discovers God with all His attributes, his soul lies prostrate before Him. His whole being turns towards God. The feelings inspired in him by God's bounties surge within him like the waves of the ocean. When all these feelings find verbal form, they are called praise and gratefulness to God.

God is the greatest being of the universe. Yet, in a universe visible to all, God's supreme glory remains invisible. Realisation of God is to discover this hidden greatness. This realization finds expression in words such as 'Praise be to God—Lord of the Worlds.'

الحمد لله رب العالمين

# A 15-BILLION YEAR PLAN

**A**CCORDING to scientific accounts, about 15 billion years ago, at the behest of the Creator, a big cosmic ball came into existence in space. This contained all the particles from which the various parts of our universe have been formed. Again, at the command of God, there was an explosion in this great cosmic ball which scientists refer to as the 'Big Bang'. After this explosion, all its particles were scattered throughout the vastness of space.

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**An invisible recording system has been established on a universal scale by God, by means of which the words and deeds of every man and woman are continually being recorded.**

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Later, adhering to the Creator's plan, they began to assemble themselves in different forms. With the coming together of these particles, innumerable stars, galaxies, dark matter, and our solar system were formed. In this way, the entire universe gradually came into existence.

The Creator then chose the planet Earth for the implementation of one of His special plans. This process spanned aeons, as the planet earth cooled down. By God's command, water was produced and with heavy rainfall, seas and rivers came into existence. About three-quarters of the planet Earth was covered with water. Subsequently, again according to the Creator's plan, vegetation appeared on the planet and the land became covered with lush green forests. Then the world of animals came into existence and the earth was filled with all kinds of living creatures: innumerable kinds of small organisms, fishes, birds, four-legged animals, etc. made their appearance. The next stage was the creation of man and his settlement on the planet Earth. And so, the first man Adam and his wife Eve were created. Human beings continued to multiply until human settlements came into existence in all parts of the world.

Later another part of God's plan unfolded. This was the coming of the prophets to the Earth. All these prophets were human beings. God sent them especially to carry out the task of explaining to human beings His creation plan in a language they could understand.

A whole series of prophets, starting with the first man Adam, continued to come to this world over a long period of time, each in a different generation — for instance, Prophets Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and the Prophet Muhammad, who was the final prophet.

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**God sent the prophets to carry out the task of explaining to human beings His creation plan in a language which they could understand.**

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Through the Prophets, God explained to human beings in one generation after another that the present world had been made as a selection ground: the actual and eternal place for man's settlement was Paradise. Paradise was eternal as well as ideal in every respect; but entry into Paradise would only be on a selective basis.

An invisible recording system has been established on a universal scale by God, by means of which the words and deeds of every man and woman are continually being recorded. This record will be placed before them on the Day of Judgement. Then, in accordance with this record of people's deeds, only those individuals who qualify for it will be selected for the perfect world of Paradise. The Creator wanted to grant this special award to those selected individuals, so that they might eternally remain in this ideal world of Paradise, in an atmosphere of all kinds of pleasure and happiness experiencing complete fulfilment. This will be a unique blessing of God which will be bestowed upon only a few fortunate human beings. The rest of the people will be thrown into hell, the dustbin of the universe, there to suffer eternally the torment of deprivation, frustration and despair.

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**The Creator produced the Universe by a long complex process, so that man might develop his thinking capacity and reach a high stage of intellectual development and God-realisation.**

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The Creator did not want to create this world by a miracle, but rather through cause and effect. The Prophet Moses was God's messenger. He threw a wooden staff on the ground and by God's command it turned into a live serpent. Had God so desired, He could have created the entire universe all of a sudden — miraculously — like Moses' staff

turning into a serpent. But in doing so, creativity could not have been developed in man. No science, no civilization would have come into existence. That is why the Creator produced the universe by a long complex process, so that man might develop his thinking capacity and reach a high stage of intellectual development.

This was a very lengthy plan, which is why 15 billion years passed since its inception. The present global warming is a warning signal from the Creator that the first stage of creation has come to an end, i.e. the stage of the selection of meritorious individuals. Now the Creator of the universe will uncover the veil of the invisible and appear before us, and with complete justice, will decide the eternal future of all human beings. Now the final hour has come for man to wake up and prepare himself to find a place in the eternal heaven of the next world.



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You may also send a letter to our office in Bangalore.

**New subscriptions /renewal instructions on page 47.**

# THE SPIRITUAL VERSUS THE MATERIAL

**M**ANY years ago, an international technological exhibition was held in Delhi in which a large number of countries had participated. The American pavilion was the centre of people's attention, drawing the crowds away from other pavilions because it had a flying car on display.

The visitors had gathered on the field to watch the flying car demonstration. The driver first drove the car on the ground like any other car, then lifted off hovering about four feet above the ground, circled the field several times, then brought it down on to the ground again. There was much applause all around at the wondrous spectacle.

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**A spiritual person possesses inner contentment,  
and is far above all material gain and loss.**

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It was explained to the crowd that such cars drew air from above and released it at high pressure below the car, thus building an air pad between the car and the ground over which it could glide like a boat sailing on water.

Amongst the visitors was a young Sadhu. Clad in saffron clothes, his long, tangled hair falling into curls and knots, he kept gazing at the car with rapt attention for a long time. Seeing his state of absorption, a news reporter approached him asking what his impressions were of this flying car. The Sadhu replied quite seriously, "After watching this flying-car, I am faced with a new problem, that is, whether or not I should forsake the spiritual life for the material, and thus fulfil my ambitions by way of material achievements. This exhibition has caused me to have second thoughts about which of the worlds, spiritual or material, it is better to be attached to."

Such events as this seem to show a contradiction between scientific and spiritual development. It would appear that the one can be gained only at the cost of the other. But it entirely depends on what we interpret spirituality as. If being spiritual means forsaking the world altogether and taking to jungles and mountains, renouncing all contact whatsoever with the world; the scientific and spiritual appear to contradict each other.

However, if we regard the spiritual life as one in which we can purify ourselves - body and soul of base motives, we find no clash between the two, In this way being spiritual, means only to rectify our relationship with other human beings, and this is far from meaning the renunciation of all contact with the material world.

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**Inner peace is something which a spiritual person holds dearer than anything else, for he needs look no further than his own inner resources for satisfaction in life.**

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The spiritual is by no means the opposite of the scientific; it is actually the opposite of the material. Because a spiritual person is not materially minded, it does not mean that he cannot think scientifically. One who is spiritually inclined resorts constantly to his inner mental life; something which no one can take away from him. Such a man possesses inner contentment, and is far above all material gain and loss. Inner peace is something which he holds dearer than anything else, for he needs look no further than his own inner resources for satisfaction in life.



# DARWIN AND DARWINISM

**C**HARLES Robert Darwin is famous for having given the concept of evolution to the world. He wrote two books on this subject: *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*.

*The Origin of Species* is merely, an attempt to interpret the origin of species. Therefore, a more appropriate name for it would have been 'The Interpretation of the Origin of Species.' After the publication of Darwin's book, the Christian church bitterly opposed his interpretation, as people had come to regard Darwinism as the negation of the existence of God. But that is not true. Darwin's book, *The Origin of Species*, mentions God's name more than once. He concludes his book with these words:

*There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one: and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning, endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved.*

During the final days, Darwin suffered from ailments which could not be diagnosed. It is believed that he was totally dissatisfied with the contradictory explanations given in his book. He suffered from heart attack twice and died in 1882.



## ***The Devil Finds Work for Idle Hands***

*When one has no work to occupy oneself physically or mentally, one falls a prey to morbid brooding and one's own unending frustration which finds an outlet in negativity.*

# A RELIGION MISUNDERSTOOD

**T**HERE are many misconceptions about Islam that result in the general public having a negative perception of Islam. It is common for Muslims to be asked whether they are moderate Muslims. They are also asked what the difference is between a moderate and an extremist Muslim. Some people ask why Muslims are engaged in *Jihad* and whether *Talaq* is allowed in Islam.

Since this implies a negative understanding of Islam, it is important to highlight the positive contributions of Islam as well. The confusion generally arises when people fail to differentiate between Islam and Muslims (or the alleged followers of Islam). It must be stressed that Muslims must be judged in the light of Islamic teachings and not vice versa.

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**People fail to differentiate between Islam and Muslims.  
Muslims must be judged in the light of Islamic teachings  
and not vice versa.**

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Let us understand this by considering a similar case: India, like other secular societies, has a legal and political constitution. The people of India have accepted that constitution and claim to adhere to it. This, however, does not mean that they do adhere to it, in the proper sense. Witness the many examples of corruption and lawlessness in our country. This being so, if one wants to know what, in essence, the Constitution of India is; one has to look not at the actions of the citizens of India, but at the Constitution of India itself. One should differentiate between the Indian Constitution and the misinterpretations and the abuse of the constitution by the citizens of India. The case of Islam is on an exact parallel with this example.

Islam is actually a religion of peace and humanism. Not only Islam, but also all other religions are religions of peace. The Sufis, in contrast to the theological interpreters, have given the best interpretation of Islam. They have a Persian saying: *Sulh-e-Kul*, which means 'Peace with all'. This truly expresses the spirit of Islam.

What are the sources of Islam? Here, let us consider in brief the history

of Islam. The Prophet of Islam was born in Makkah in 570 A.D. and received the first revelation in 610 A.D. when he was forty. It was with these revelations that Islam began. He started his mission in Makkah and continued with it for a period of thirteen years and then he migrated to Medina.

Throughout these thirteen years, he was engaged only in peaceful activity. He would always say: 'O people! O mankind! God is one. You have to worship this God and this God alone.' Islam began with the mission of peace. Its special concern was the oneness of God. Then the Prophet migrated to Medina in 622 A.D., where he continued his mission till his death in 632 A.D. In Medina too, he was engaged in a peaceful mission. He was successful in establishing the first Islamic society in Medina.

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**Do good deeds in return for bad deeds and you will find that your enemy has become your dearest friend.'**

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What was the guiding principle of this Islamic society? He issued a declaration that is called in Islamic history *Sahifa-E-Madina*, which means Medina Declaration. There is a verse in the Quran to this effect, "For you your religion and for me mine." This means that the formula for social peace, social harmony and inter-faith dialogue is based on peaceful coexistence. Mutual respect is a sine qua non for Islam. Indeed, this democratic tradition is the basis of Islam.

The following episode illustrates this point:

One day a funeral procession wound its way along a street in Medina. The Prophet, who was seated there at the time of its passing, stood up in deference to the deceased person. One of his companions said, 'O Prophet, but he was a Jew!' meaning thereby that it was the dead body of a non-Muslim. The Prophet replied: '*Alaisat nafsan*': 'Was he not a human being?' This humanitarian outlook was typical of the Prophet's vision of life. He was able to see everyone as a human being. In this case, he discovered a commonality between himself and that Jewish person. He felt that just as he was a human being, so also was the Jew a human being. Just as God had created him, so also had God created the Jew. People may have their differences in belief, religion, culture, etc., but a common bond has to be discovered between them, which shows them all to be human beings.

According to a study of the Quran, two distinct entities emerge: the Creator and the created. God is the Creator and all of us are His creation. All of us are human beings. There is no third position. On the one hand, there is God, and on the other hand, there is God's creation. This is a matter of fact. God is one and mankind also is one. Thus we have the Unity of God—monotheism—and the Unity of mankind. This is the fundamental teaching of Islam.

Now let us take the much-misunderstood concept of *Jihad*. To clarify this, let us recall the verse in the Quran: "God calls us to the home of peace." Our target is peace. All our struggles are directed towards peace. We have to proceed towards peace. So that is the true criterion by which to judge whether our activities are Islamic or un-Islamic. If our activities lead in the direction of peace, then they are Islamic; otherwise they are un-Islamic. There is a very relevant Hadith (the sayings of the Prophet of Islam) to this effect: God grants to non-violence what he does not grant to violence.

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### **The fundamental teaching of Islam is the unity of God—monotheism—and the unity of mankind.**

---

*Jihad* literally means 'struggle', i.e. peaceful struggle for a noble cause. No 'war' is involved in *jihad*. The equivalent Arabic word for war is '*qital*.' *Jihad* has nothing to do with war or violence. *Jihad* is a peaceful struggle. In Islam, war is permitted only in exceptional situations. In Islam, peace is the rule; and war is a rare exception and can only be defensive. If there is no attack, then there is no war. Quranic teachings are very clear in this regard. It must be emphasized that the common perception of *jihad* as *fasad*—spreading evil—has nothing to do with Islam.

According to Islamic teachings, guerrilla warfare is unlawful. Even proxy war is unlawful in Islam. To understand this better, let us recall a very important teaching in the Hadith to the effect that the waging of war is the prerogative of an established state. No group, no individual, has the right to go to war. There is a verse in the Quran, which says that there is no such thing as secret war in Islam. Proxy war is a secret war. Proxy war is therefore also unlawful in Islam. So proxy war, guerrilla war, aggressive war and undeclared war are all unlawful in Islam. The only lawful war is that which is waged in defence, in response to an attack. The Quran and the Hadith define war with the utmost clarity.

The formula given in the Quran for social reform and social betterment is simply that everyone is accountable to God. Accountability, indeed, is the bedrock of Islam: it is the ideal solution to the problem of anarchy in society and the misuse of freedom. Freedom has to be accepted as being necessary for development. If there is no freedom, there can be no development. Without freedom, there is no progress. But, we cannot afford unlimited freedom.

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**The formula given in the Quran for social reform  
and social betterment is simply that  
everyone is accountable to God.**

---

There is a very interesting story in American history. When America became free, an American citizen ran out into the street and, in jubilation, started swinging his arms as he walked along. Quite by accident, he hit a passer-by on the nose. The man who was hit, an elderly person, asked him why he had hit him. He replied that now he was free to exercise his freedom.' The elderly person retorted, 'Your freedom ends where my nose begins!' The Christian as well as the Islamic formula goes thus: We may exercise our freedom, but we are not free to hit other people on the nose. There is a beautiful saying in the Hadith:

'A Muslim is one from whose hands and tongue people are safe'

This is a common spiritual maxim in Hinduism, Christianity and Islam.

In this age of imperialist wars, one has forgotten the philosophical basis of Christianity: 'Love your enemy'. When one says, 'Love your enemy', one means 'love all including your enemy.'

Similarly, the Quran states:

'Do good deeds in return for bad deeds and you will find  
that your enemy has become your dearest friend.'

This means that every enemy is potentially a friend. While differences between religions arise out of theological interpretations, there seems to be no difference if we try to understand the spiritual basis of religions.

Consider Hinduism's great truth: All human beings are one family. The same truth is expressed in the Hadith. Mankind is the family of

God. Therefore, as far as ethical values are concerned, there are no differences at all between religions. In daily life, we need to understand that all human beings are God's family. There is a very relevant Hadith recorded by Bukhari, which clarifies that when the Prophet had to choose between two paths, he always opted for the easier, peaceful course of action, rather than the harder course of action. One is free to choose between the two paths of peace and violence.

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### **The best plan is to ignore the problems and avail of the opportunities**

---

One has to differentiate between Islam and the followers of Islam. When one is questioned on the nature of Islam and when the popular media makes a difference between a 'moderate Muslim' and a 'radical Muslim', one needs to tear down such false barriers and say that Islam does not talk of a 'moderate' or 'radical' Muslim, but a 'true' Muslim in the sense of adhering to the truth that has been continuously preached by the Sufis.

Let us conclude with the beautiful teaching of the Quran which says that with every hardship there is ease. This teaching can be formulated in a single sentence: Where there are problems, there are opportunities. The best plan is to ignore the problems and avail of the opportunities, for there is hope in every situation.

Islam at all events is an optimistic religion. There is no room for pessimism in Islam.



### ***Availing of Today***

*Everyone has lost out on his yesterday. The successful man is one who does not lose out on his today.*

## DUTY-CONSCIOUSNESS, NOT RIGHTS-CONSCIOUSNESS

**T**HROUGHOUT the world, man has always been fighting for his rights. Much of the strife is a result of man's belief that he is being denied his rights and his quest for regaining them. Countless hours and days are wasted and property lost or destroyed in strikes and agitations against the government or the management in demand of their rights. The general trend has everybody demanding for their rights, for their share, for fairness in everything in life.

There is a Hadith of the Prophet that says:

A believer should be duty conscious  
and as far as his rights are concerned  
he should ask of them from God.

(Sahih-Al-Bukhari 4: 800)

It is a believer's duty to give to others what is due from him and as far as his rights are concerned he should ask for them only from God. Instead of being Rights-Conscious, he should be Duty-Conscious.

---

**It is a believer's duty to give to others what is due from him and as far as his rights are concerned he should ask for them only from God.**

---

One person's duty is another's right. So, if we all follow the principle of being duty conscious, automatically our rights will be taken care of.

Nevertheless, complete justice and total fairness is not possible in this imperfect world. God has promised that only in the Hereafter, where He will give to every person every atom's worth of what is due to him. Thus, we must continue to do our duty faithfully seeking God's pleasure and should demand our rights in this world only from God.

Islam wants us to build a Duty-conscious, rather than a Rights-conscious society.



# HOW THE QURAN WAS COMPILED

**T**HE Quran, according to Muslim belief, is a book of revelations from God. Today, it exists in the form of a book, but all the 114 chapters of the Quran were not revealed at one time. They were sent bit by bit, according to circumstances, over a period of 23 years.

The Quran is pivotal to all Muslim activities. Muslims recite the Quran daily, and read from it in their prayers five times a day. Over and above this, they read it out to others for conveying its message. In this way, the Quran has remained at the centre of Muslims' activities since its revelation.

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**It was quite exceptional that the Quran should have been both memorized and preserved in writing.**

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In ancient times information used to be preserved in human memory. The oral tradition in those days functioned as libraries do today. This system made it possible for the revelations of the Quran to be preserved in the memory of a large number of devotees. And to this day despite the printing industry, the institution of memorizing the Quran is still alive all over the Muslim world.

But the message of the Quran was not transmitted purely by oral tradition, even during the lifetime of the Prophet. Among his companions were a select group of about half a dozen *katib-e-wahy* — transcribers of the revelations. A few of these scribes were always present and whenever any part of the Quran was revealed, the Prophet would recite it to them. Thereupon, at the exact moment of revelation, they would not only commit it to memory, but would write it down on any available material, such as paper, bones, leather or skin. In former times, when the accepted way of disseminating the subject matter of a book was to memorise it and then recite it, it was quite exceptional that the Quran should have been both memorized and preserved in writing.

The second exceptional point concerns the arrangement of the verses and chapters of the Quran. When the Quran was revealed in parts, at different times according to the demand of circumstances, how did it come to be arranged in its present form? We find the answer in books

of Hadith (sayings and deeds of Prophet Muhammad). It has been proved from authentic traditions that the angel Gabriel, who conveyed the revelations of God to the Prophet, himself arranged these verses. Each year during the month of Ramzan, the angel Gabriel would come to the Prophet and recite before him all the Quranic verses revealed up till that time. And after listening to Gabriel, the Prophet would repeat the verses in the order in which he had heard them. This dual process has been termed *al-Irza*, 'mutual presentation' in the books of Hadith.

In the last year of the Prophet's life, when the revelations were complete, Gabriel came to the Prophet and recited the entire Quran in the existing order twice, and the Prophet also recited to Gabriel the entire Quran twice. This final presentation is called *al-Arz al-Akhirah* in the Hadith. (Fathul Bari, p. 659-663).

And in this way the Quran came to be in the form we are familiar with today, preserved originally in the memories of tens of thousands of the Prophet's companions during his lifetime, which continued through the generations to this day.

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**Any copy of the Quran found in any part of the world at any time will be exactly the same as that handed down to the Muslims by the Prophet in his last days.**

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When the Prophet died in 632 AD, at the age of 63, the Quran existed in two forms: in the memory of these companions, who had learned it by rote in what is now its present order; and, in writing — on pieces of paper and other materials, preserved by the companions. What must be noted here is that the order existed in memory, not in writing, though all the parts existed at that time in written form.

After the death of the Prophet, Abu Bakr Siddiq was appointed the first Caliph, and it was during his caliphate that the compilation of the Quran was carried out. Zaid ibn Thabit, the Prophet's foremost scribe and an authority on the Quran, was entrusted with this task. His work was more of collection than of compilation — the scattered bits and pieces of the Quran put together, not that they could be bound in one volume, but that they could be used to crosscheck countless memories in oral tradition. Once this correspondence between the oral and written forms had been established beyond any reasonable doubt,

Zaid proceeded to put the verses of the Quran down on paper in their correct order. The volume he produced was then handed over to the Caliph, and this remained in the custody of the Prophet's wife, Hafsa.

The third Caliph, Osman, arranged for several copies of this text to be sent to all the states and placed in central mosques where the people could prepare further copies. In this way the message of the Quran spread further and further, both through oral tradition and handwritten copies, until the age of the press dawned. Many printing presses were established in the Muslim world, where the beautiful calligraphy of the scriptures was reproduced after its content had been certified by memorisers of the Quran. Once again with the help of memorised versions and written texts, correct, authentic copies were prepared; and with the publication of these copies on a large scale, the Quran spread all over the world.

Any copy of the Quran found in any part of the world at any time will be exactly the same as that handed down to the Muslims by the Prophet in his last days, arranged in the form still extant today.

*This article was originally published in The Pioneer, Dec 7, 1997.*



### ***On Achieving Goals***

*A purposeful man always looks ahead to the future  
—straightforward and not towards right or left.*

*He always thinks of long-lasting consequences  
rather than momentary considerations.*

*He looks at things not from the point of view  
of personal desires and whims,  
but from the point of view  
of reality.*

# PEACE IS THE NAME OF GOD

In every religion including Islam, God is described as a Being Who is the source of peace. In the Quran we find a number of names for God which are descriptive of the divine attributes. One of these is *As Salam* (THE QURAN 59: 23), meaning Peace.

This name for God which specifically denotes peace occurs only once in the Quran. But there are many other names which indirectly connote peace. For instance, the words *Rahim* (Most Merciful) and *Rahman* (Most compassionate) occur more than two hundred times in the Quran.

As represented in the Quran, God is All Peace. He is peace in His very being and He desires that His servants live peacefully in this world. They should have peace in their hearts and extend that feeling to everyone. That is why one of the teachings of Islam is that when the Muslims meet one another, they should greet each other by saying "*Assalamu-Alaikum*," May peace be upon you.

Besides the Quran, the books of Hadith contain many sayings which tell us of the importance of peace in Islam. For instance, the Prophet of Islam said, 'Peace is from Islam'. On another occasion, the Prophet of Islam observed, 'God is peace'. We also learn from traditions that the wording of the conclusion of the Prophet's prayer included the eulogy: 'O God, You are Peace and Peace is from You.'

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**The greatest success of the human being in this world  
lies in his intellectual development, in his spiritual  
advancement, in the production of the divine soul  
– the ultimate goal of man.**

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A tradition in Sahih al Bukhari is related by a companion, Ammar ibn Yasir "There are three actions, the performance of which is equal to possessing the whole faith. These are doing justice, doing one's utmost for the peace and well-being of the world, and spending on others in spite of a lack of means."

This part of the Hadith, exhorting one to do utmost to bring about peace in the world, is extremely important. This shows the real Islamic spirit

— a kind of special awareness that Islam wants to inculcate in human beings, which would predispose everyone to live in peace himself, to be anxious for the peace of all the people living in this world, and to do the very best to bring peace to the world.

The truth is that the maintenance of peace is the most important of God's laws. It is on the basis of this law that the entire universe is able to function. If its various elements did not follow this law, the whole universe — its systems thrown into disarray — would simply collapse.

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**God desires that His servants  
live peacefully in this world.**

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The greatest success of the human being in this world lies in his intellectual development, in his spiritual advancement, in the production of the divine soul — the ultimate goal of man. And the struggle towards this goal can be carried on only in an atmosphere pervaded by universal peace. Without peaceful conditions, it is impossible to achieve any worthwhile goal.

The many communities living in different parts of the world are dissimilar in a variety of ways. But in one characteristic way they are alike: they all want to set out on the journey of progress. But this can be undertaken only in peaceful circumstances. It is vital, therefore, to give the topmost priority in the establishment of peace at the international level.



***God is All Peace***

*As represented in the Quran, God is All Peace.  
He is peace in His very being and He desires that  
His servants live peacefully in this world.*

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SUCCESS

**W**ORLD champions in sport often possess equal physical strength and capabilities and receive training of an almost equal standard. Then why does one win and another lose? This question was a topic of research in the United States of America for some time. The group of scientists working on this project submitted their report which was widely circulated in the media.

For their study, the scientists chose top ranked international wrestlers and made comparisons of their physical strength and psychological reserves. They found out that there is one marked difference between the winners and the losers in world competitions. This difference was not physical but played the most crucial role in winning or losing a competition. The experts found that the winners were more conscientious and in control of themselves than the losers. Successful wrestlers were differentiated from unsuccessful wrestlers by being more confident, believing they were close to their maximum potential, and attention focusing ability. Their report was summed up thus:

“Losers tended to be more depressed and confused before competing, while the winners were positive and relaxed.” This applies equally to the broader field of life. In life when two individuals or two groups confront one another, their victory or defeat does not depend so much on material resources as on intellectual and psychological reserves.

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

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**Gould, D., Weiss, M., & Weinberg, R.** (1981) *Psychological characteristics of successful and non-successful Big Ten wrestlers.*



# SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY

**P**ROFESSOR Paul Davies, a well-known English physicist and author, is the Director of BEYOND, a research centre of the Arizona State University. He has several books to his credit, notably *'The Goldilocks Enigma'*. He states in one of his articles, 'Flaw in Creationists' Arguments' (*Guardian* Newspapers, 2007):

"Scientists are slowly waking up to an inconvenient truth—that the universe is based on very firm laws. Scientists have been investigating physical laws for 40 years. This research is pointing towards a conscious being behind the universe. If even one of these underlying laws were changed, the result would be lethal. The universe is so organized that even a minor change in its present structure would be sufficient to completely disturb the whole universe."

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## **The concept of the universe presented by religion and modern science appeals to an agency outside the universe to explain its law-like order.**

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For example, the entire universe is made up of atoms, atoms which are a combination of neutrons, protons and electrons. A neutron is a little heavier than a proton. This proportion is extremely important. If it were the other way round, that protons were heavier than neutrons, then according to known laws, the atom could not exist. And when there are no protons, there can be no atomic nuclei and no atoms. No atoms, no chemistry, no life.

This example shows that science today is facing unanswerable questions. For instance, what is the origin of the present laws of physics? Why do they take their present form? How is it that they are so well-established, etc.? Traditionally, scientists supposed that these laws were an integral part of the universe, that they were imprinted on the universe at its birth and fixed thereafter. Inquiry into the origin of nature and of its laws was not regarded as a proper part of science. But now these questions are vexing the scientists.

The Cambridge cosmologist, Martin Rees, President of The Royal Society,

suggests that the laws of physics are not absolute and universal, but are more akin to local by-laws varying from place to place on a mega-cosmic scale. He calls this the 'multiverse' system. According to these researches, our universe is a universe which possesses bio-friendly laws. That is why we find ourselves in a universe, which, in meeting all of our exact requirements, is apparently customized for habitation. Had this not been so, our existence would have been impossible. What is the origin of these absolute and universal laws, which are controlling the universe in a highly organized manner?

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### **If a universe can exist without a Creator, the existence of a Creator is also possible without a Creator.**

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The root cause of all the difficulty, according to modern thinkers, is that the concept of the universe presented by religion and modern science appeals to an agency outside the universe to explain its law-like order. However, accepting a designer who exists before the existence of the Universe is not an explanation of this problem. For this explanation of the Universe immediately begs the question: if the designer designed the universe, who designed the designer?

"If there is an ultimate meaning to existence, as I believe is the case, the answer is to be found within nature, and not beyond it. The universe might indeed be a fix, but if so, it has fixed itself." (Paul Davies)

#### **The Explanation**

In the matter of theology the modern mind is in grave confusion. As we find from this article written by Paul Davies, the atheist philosophers and physicists have frequently asked, "If God has created the Universe according to religious belief, who has created God?" But this question is totally illogical. It is sheer negation of logic. Furthermore, this objection is based on a clear contradiction. Those who believe in a universe without a Creator are not ready to believe in a Creator without a Creator. Therefore, if a universe can exist without a Creator, the existence of a Creator is also possible without a Creator.

#### **The Rational Stand**

The issue of the existence of God must only be dealt with in a purely rational manner. No other stand except a rational stand can be adopted or is practicable.

It is an established fact that there is order in the Universe in an absolutely perfect sense. This order is apparent to everyone's observation. To support this, the writer has given a scientific example of the atom's structure; so far, order in the universe is considered as an established fact by both the theists and the atheists.

As regards the rational stand, the other important point is that the concept of order or organization cannot exist without the concept of an organiser. Wherever there is organisation, there certainly exists an organiser. The conception of organisation without an organiser is rationally impossible. The presence of organisation creates a compulsive logic, that is to say, that they are no longer left with any excuse for refusing to acknowledge the presence of an organiser. If someone fails to find an explanation for the existence of an organiser, it does not provide any logical pretext to deny the existence of the organiser.

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**The concept of order or organization cannot exist  
without the concept of an organiser.**

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What has been said by the writer with reference to atomic structure holds true also for this world. Each part of this world, whether big or small, is so immutable and proportionate that even the minutest change in its structure could disturb the entire system of nature.

For instance, the gravity in the earth is exactly in accordance with our needs. If the force of gravity were to be doubled, or halved, either way the survival of human civilization on the planet earth would become impossible. As we know, we have two immediate neighbours in space — the sun and the moon. If the sun were replaced by the moon and the moon by the sun, let alone human life on earth, the entire earth would burn to ashes.

On our earth everything travels downwards, but the tree is an exception to this rule. Its roots go downwards into the earth and its trunks go upwards. If the tree did not have this two-sided feature, our earth would become bereft of lush green trees. There would be little chance of human survival on Planet earth without them producing copious quantities of oxygen.

## **Intelligent Universe**

There are innumerable things in the universe and everything is in the form of a compound. Formerly, the atom was regarded as an indivisible unit and not a compound. But when the atom was split in the age of Einstein, it was discovered that it was also a compound and not a single unit.

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**If someone fails to find an explanation for the existence of an organiser, it does not provide any logical pretext to deny the existence of the organiser.**

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Everything has been scientifically studied in the modern age. This study shows that all the things consisting of certain compounds have many options about the form they take. But science tells us that nature inevitably opts for the one form—out of the many possible forms that they could take—which is exactly in accordance with the overall scheme of the universe. This is why, in this world, everything is in its perfect and ultimate form.

This principle prevailing in the universe may be termed an intelligent selection. There are billions and trillions of things in the Universe. But everything, without exception, is an example of this intelligent selection. This principle is so common that a British Nobel prize-winning physicist, Dr. Fred Hoyle, chose the title 'The Intelligent Universe' for the 250-page book he wrote on this subject (London, 1983).

This phenomenon of the universe provides conclusive proof of God's existence. Intelligent creation is clearly a proof of an Intelligent Creator. Logically, it is unthinkable that, here, intelligent action should exist without an intelligent Creator. Both are interdependent.

Believing in intelligent creation without believing in an intelligent Creator is like believing in a complex machine without believing in its engineer.

Dr. Fred Hoyle explains in his book, that in the initial stages of scientific discovery, the violent reaction of the Christian church against the scientists still lingers in human memory. People fear that if proof of the existence of an intelligent Creator behind the universe is declared, there will be a resurgence of the religious extremism of former times.

But this is a baseless fear. After the scientific acknowledgement of the Intelligent Creator, history will witness the return of a true divine religion.

## **Two Options**

We have two explanations for the extraordinary order and proportion existing in the universe. One is that the universe is its own designer. Yet all the research conducted on the universe refutes this, because the order discovered by science in the universe is clearly based on an entirely intelligent design; on the other hand, science also tells us that there is everything in the universe except what is called 'intelligence'. We are then asked to believe that the universe discovered by science is totally designed, but that at the same time, it is totally non-intelligent. In such a state of affairs if we believe that the universe is the designer of its own design, it is like believing that a stone statue is a self-created being and has moulded itself into a meaningful design. Given this situation we are left with only one option to explain the universe. And that is to accept some agency outside the universe as being responsible for its underlying design. We have no other choice besides this one.

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## **Denying God's existence because of His being invisible is an anachronistic argument in the age of modern science.**

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In reality, the choice does not lie between the universe without God and the universe with God; but rather between the universe with God and no universe at all. That is to say, if we deny God, we shall have to deny the existence of the universe as well. Since we cannot refute the existence of the universe, we are compelled to accept the existence of God.

## **The Only Option**

One of the principles of rationality is that in such circumstances as leave us practically a solitary option; we are faced with a compulsive situation. That is, we are compelled to accept that option. Going against that is possible only when there is more than one choice. But when there is no other choice available, it becomes incumbent upon us to accept that single course of action. In this context, this single option means to accept the existence of God as a fact, for no other choice is available except for the acceptance of the existence of God.

## **Logical Argument**

Logic is the greatest system of thought man possesses: it enables him to understand concepts at the rational level. Through logic, ideas are made rationally understandable. There are two major kinds of logic — optional logic and compulsive logic. Both of these methods of logic are equally dependable methods. When either of these logical methods is applied to prove any point, the result will be accepted as established.

### **Optional Logic**

Optional logic is that which allows the possibility of accepting either of two propositions. By applying certain methods, we can make a reasoned choice. For instance, take sunlight. When we look at sunlight with the naked eye, it appears to be of a single colour. But on seeing sunlight through a prism, this same light is divided into seven colours. This leaves us with two options regarding the colour of sunlight. Now, thanks to advances in science, it becomes possible for us to see which option carries more logical weight. That is why the seven-colour option has come to be accepted as a reality. It has been upheld by a superior logic.

### **Compulsive logic**

The case of compulsive logic differs in that only one option presents itself. One is compelled to accept that option and no other, for no other option is available. As regards compulsive logic, man has to accept it, there being no other alternative.

One obvious example of compulsive logic is that of acknowledging the identity of one's mother. Everyone believes one particular woman to be his mother. Despite not having seen himself being born, he is compelled to accept this as a fact, and clings to it as a matter of conviction. His belief results from compulsive logic. He maintains this belief because, in this matter, his position is that he has no other option but to accept one particular woman as his mother.

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## **Intelligent creation is clearly proof of an Intelligent Creator.**

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Belief in the existence of God pertains to this same kind of compulsive logic. On the question of God's existence, the actual point is that we have no option in this matter. We are compelled to believe in the existence of God. For if we did not believe in the existence of God, we

should have to negate the existence of the universe as well as our own existence. Since we can negate neither the existence of the universe nor our own existence, we cannot logically deny the existence of God.

### **Man's existence is the proof of God's existence**

In the vastness of the universe, it is man alone who denies the existence of God, in spite of the fact that man's own existence is the greatest proof of God's existence. If a being like man exists, then a being like God, too, certainly exists. All the qualities which we envisage existing in God in a perfect form, exist in man in an imperfect form. If an imperfect being exists, a perfect being can certainly exist. Believing in one and denying the other is such a contradiction in logic that no one endowed with any reason can afford it.

Rene Descartes, the famous French philosopher (1596–1650), was also faced with the question: 'If man exists, what is the rational proof of his existence?' After long reflection, he gave this answer:

'I think, therefore I exist.'

The answer he gave is entirely sound in terms of logic. But this logic, which proves the existence of man, proves something far greater, and that is, rational proof of the existence of God. In the light of this logical principle, we would be right in saying:

'Thinking exists, therefore God exists.'

Those who deny God, deny Him because He appears to them as abstract and therefore incomprehensible. They find it difficult to believe in something which has no material existence. But human beings are thinking creatures. And everyone believes in the existence of thinking on the basis of his own experience, even though thinking is totally an abstract activity, with no material existence.

Now, if man believes in the existence of one kind of abstract concept, then there is no reason why he should not accept the existence of another kind of abstract concept — that of God's existence. Everyone will agree with the soundness of this logic. If the existence of thinking — which is an integral part of everyone's experience — is denied, then, certainly, man shall have to deny his own existence. And no one can deny his own existence. That is why it is not logically possible for anyone to deny the existence of God.

God being invisible is not a sufficient reason for denying His existence.

The truth is that denying God's existence because of His being invisible is an anachronistic argument in the age of modern science. In the age of Einstein (d. 1955), when the atom was smashed and scientific knowledge embraced the sub-atomic world, it was brought to light, that in this realm, everything was invisible.

Everything which had previously been perceived to be palpably solid was shown to be made up of components which were invisible. This being so, taking the stand that God's existence may be denied on the grounds of invisibility has come to be regarded as unscientific.

The following two books provide details on this subject:

1. *The Unseen World* by Sir Arthur Eddington.
2. *Human Knowledge* by Bertrand Russell

Therefore, we can say that:

The option that we have is not between a 'universe with God' or a 'universe without God'. The only option we have is between a 'universe with God' or 'no universe at all'.

*...To be continued*



### **No short-cuts**

*There is no doubting the fact  
that failure in life usually results  
from the quest for immediate success.*

*The word 'short-cut' may be applicable  
to the world of roads and footpaths,  
but there are no short-cuts  
in the struggles of life.*

*This fact frequently evinces itself  
in untoward ways.*

# COMPREHENSIVE PRINCIPLE

**T**HE simplest principle of the religion of humanity is to treat others just as one would like to be treated by them. The Prophet once observed:

‘No one can be a believer until and unless he begins to like for his brother what he likes for himself.’ (Fathul Bari, 1/73).

With minor differences these words of the Prophet have been recorded in all the books of Hadith. For instance, according to the tradition narrated by Muslim (the compiler of the second most authentic book of Hadith) the wording is as follows:

‘By the Being in Whose Hand is my soul; no one can be a believer as long as he does not like for his neighbour (or brother) what he likes for himself.’

All individuals, be they literate or illiterate, rich or poor, from any part of the world, are certain at all times of their own likes and dislikes. Now what is required is that they simply follow the principle that whatever behaviour they want from others, they should themselves accord to others. Conversely, whatever behaviour towards themselves they abhor in others should likewise be eschewed by them.

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**One who does not differentiate between his own people and others is a man of principle.**

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This is such a comprehensive principle that it is useful in relations between men and women, individuals and nations, in the homeland as well as in foreign lands. If people were to adhere to this principle, their family life as well as their social life would improve. National life as well as international life would run more smoothly. It is like a master key to human ethics, one single key which suffices to open all locked doors.

One who does not differentiate between his own people and others is a man of principle. His is a contradiction-free personality. And this trait, when properly developed, will turn him into a perfect person.



# ISLAM AND POLITICS

**T**HE Prophet of Islam has said: "Perform your prayer as you see me performing it." The same he said about Hajj. He said: "Learn the method of Hajj from my practice." It means that there is an example in the Prophetic life for prayer and Hajj. So, Muslims must emulate this Prophetic example forever. But it is significant that the Prophet of Islam never gave any advice about politics. Although he was the head of the Medina state, he never said that make your political system by seeing my political practices.

This difference between *ibadah* (worship) and politics is very important. It means that as far as the *ibadah* is concerned there is a set example. And people are required to be guided by this example forever. But with regards to the political system, there is no such set pattern of politics in Islam.

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## **The political system in Islam is based on the social condition of the time.**

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From this difference we can draw a very important principle, which is in contrast to the form of *ibadah*. The political system is based on the social condition of a given time. In every society, depending on the real social situation, the Islamic politic has to be adopted accordingly.

From this difference it is very clear that Islamic *ibadah* has a set pattern forever but Islamic politics has no such eternal norms. Islamic politics can be termed as a kind of situational politics that is based on social realities.

This is the practical concept of politics. The Prophet of Islam has said: "As you will be so will be your rulers." It means that Islamic politics is subject to people than to some fixed norms. In other words the Islamic government is a people's government rather than any kind of theocratic government.

By seeing the Prophet's life, one can say that there are three forms of an Islamic government: the first form can be said to be a secular government. The second form as a mixed government. And the third form can be called an Islamic government. Examples of all these three forms of political systems can be found in the life of the Prophet.

The Prophet's Mecca'n period was the example of the first type of government. At that time Muslims were a tiny minority in Makkah and the majority of the citizens were non-Muslims. The Prophet accepted their rule which was established under their tribal parliament known as *Dar al-Nadwa*. The Prophet was even offered the position of the ruler of Makkah, but he refused because the society of Makkah was not prepared to accept a Muslim rule.

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**Follow your own religion in personal life and accept the status quo, in social or political life.**

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So, in this first period the Prophet accepted what may be called a secular government. In 622 A.D, the Prophet migrated from Makkah to Medina and settled there for ten years. This period is divided into two phases. In the first phase, Muslims and non-Muslims in Medina were almost equal in number so it was a mixed society. He accepted a mixed type of politics.

At that time there were two centres of power. One was the Prophet himself, the second was a Jewish leader, Kab bin Ashraf. So, it was a bi-polar state. The Prophet accepted it as it is without trying to bring a change in the political status quo of Medina. Then, in the second phase of the Medina period the whole city had accepted Islam. Medina became completely a Muslim society. At that time the Prophet of Islam implemented Islamic Shariah in Medina.

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**The Islamic political system is a peoples government rather than any kind of theocratic government.**

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Due to this nature of politics in Islam, there is no political structure in the Islamic system. For example in the early period there were six heads of the Islamic political system — the Prophet himself, Abu Bakr, Omar bin Khatab, Uthman bin Affan, Ali bin Abi Talib, and Umar bin Abdul Aziz. All six were heads of the state in the early period of Islamic history, but every one of them was appointed political head in a different manner. The most fundamental component of a political system is the appointment of the head of state and without a common method of their appointment there could have been no single political structure of Islam.

This kind of political concept is a great contribution of Islam towards mankind. Political history shows that people always have some fixed political ideas and they want to establish and implement these ideas. Such an ideology is bound to create conflict leading to violence.

Islam gives a very practical formula in this regard. The formula is based on two points:

One, is to follow your own religion in personal life and the second is to accept the status quo, in social or political life.

In other words, it is to establish a democratic government based on free and fair election. It is this formula that can save people from all kinds of political confrontation and wars. Only such a political ideology can ensure the establishment of peace in every situation.



### ***Art of Scrutiny***

*To be successful in this world, it is very important  
for us to know the art of scrutinizing things.  
Things usually are not what they seem.*

*When we scrutinize things, we get to the heart of the matter  
and only then can we see things as they actually are.*

*The Art of Scrutiny starts from doubting what is being said.  
Once a doubt comes into our mind, we have to apply our  
common sense and ask questions. Sometimes it happens  
that direct questions do not get you answers.*

*In such a situation, we have to ask indirect questions.  
Only by applying the art of scrutiny do we get to the  
heart of the matter and understand things  
for what they actually are.*

# WORKING IN UNISON

*U.S. shipbuilders take sixteen months to complete a 50-thousand ton tanker. The Spaniards take even longer to produce a ship of similar tonnage —24 months. But Japanese shipbuilders do the job in just eight months.*

**W**HAT is the secret of this Japanese miracle? A survey conducted by western experts shows that the deciding factors is teamwork. Japanese workers and management function together in complete unison. At no stage during the work processes is this bond disrupted. The result is the production of high quality goods within an amazingly short time.

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**The willingness of large numbers of people  
to work together with good grace is a prerequisite  
for success in any venture.**

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Group harmony is something, which is part of the whole fabric of Japanese culture and work methods. Whether in the home or in the factory, in large institutions or small, the will to be co-operative manifests itself as the truly distinctive feature of the Japanese character. William Ouchi, an expert in Japanology writes: "Every activity in Japan is group activity and not a springboard to individual glory and personal advertisement."

It is to this speciality that Japan's greatest secret of national progress can be traced. The willingness of large numbers of people to work together with good grace is a prerequisite for success in any venture. The only flaw in this system of joint effort is that the personality of the individual has little opportunity to flourish. But it is only a nation which is made up of individuals who are prepared to make this personal sacrifice which can ever aspire to success. Where individuals keep pulling in opposite directions, so substantial progress can even be made at the national level.

When work is co-operative in spirit, well co-ordinated in organization and an atmosphere of harmony prevails, the sky is the limit in quality and quantity of production. It is unity then which is the true key to organisational success.

# PATIENCE INSTEAD OF REACTION

*Contrary to common belief, Islam does not teach its adherents to react against issues such as that of Salman Rushdie and the cartoon issue. Islam teaches patience in the fullest sense of the word.*

**O**N the publication of the *The Satanic Verses*, by Salman Rushdie in 1988, Muslim reaction was to have him killed forthwith; he had committed an unpardonable offense against Islam and the Prophet. All over the world, Muslims demanded his head. They were not prepared to settle for anything less than that. In a similar incident, when the Denmark cartoon was published, Muslims reacted in much the same manner.

In the modern age, all campaigns are spread like wildfire. Reactions such as these give the impression that Muslims are vengeful and violent people. Consequently, in certain Western countries notice boards are put saying, "Beware of Muslims". This shows the extreme fear engendered by the Muslim fundamentalist threat worldwide.

In all fairness one can ask, 'Is this Islam?'

Never! God has been represented in Islam as an All-Merciful, and the Prophet has been proclaimed the Prophet of Mercy. It is ironical that in the name of such a magnanimous religion, a certain section of the fundamentalists could not appreciate such sentiments; far less, promote them. Islam can never incite people to committing murder in the name of religion, simply because someone has written a book or publishes a cartoon which ruffles their emotions.

In the days of the Prophet, a large number of Rushdie's and cartoon publishers existed, but none of them were beheaded or protested against for having insulted Islam and its Prophet. On the contrary, in the times of the Prophet, the principle of countering words with words was followed. That is why those who spoke out against Islam—no matter to what lengths they went—were not penalised in any way. All that happened was that the Prophet appointed a poet called Hassan to give a befitting answer in verse to the offenders, poetry being the main mode of public expression and sentiments. This is the example we should follow for the resolution of all such problems in true Islamic spirit and earlier traditions.

The Prophet's name was Muhammad, meaning the praised one or the praiseworthy. But when the Quraysh of Makkah became his most dire opponents, they themselves coined a name for the Prophet, 'Muzammam,' on the pattern of 'Muhammad,' Muzammam meaning condemned. They used to heap abuses on him calling him by this epithet of Muzammam. But the Prophet was never enraged at this distorted version of his name. All he said in return was: "Aren't you surprised that God has turned away the abuses of the Quraysh from me. They abuse a person by the name of Muzammam. Whereas I am Muhammad." (Ibn Hisham, 1/379). This shows that Islam does not teach one to be easily provoked, even in cases of extreme provocation.

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### **The only way to deal with the irksome side of daily living is to exercise patience.**

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On another occasion the Prophet of Islam was in the Masjid al-Nabwi in Medina, the second most sacred mosque in Islam, when a bedouin, that is, a desert Arab, entered the mosque and urinated inside it. It was obviously a very provocative matter. But the Prophet was not at all provoked. After the nomad had urinated, the Prophet simply asked his companions to bring a bucket of water and wash the place clean. (Fathul Bari, 1/386).

The present world is designed in such a way that here one has repeatedly to face unpleasant experiences, inside as well as outside the home. Now if people were to fall to wrangling on all such occasions, they would fail to advance along the path of human progress. That is why Islam has placed great emphasis on patience, so that by avoiding all unpleasantness, man may continue his onward journey towards the higher goal of God-realisation.

The Quran repeatedly stresses the need for patience.

"Endure with fortitude whatever befalls you." THE QURAN 31: 17

"Have patience. God is with those that are patient." THE QURAN 8: 46

"Perdition shall be the lot of man except for those who believe and do good works and exhort one another to justice and to fortitude." THE QURAN 103: 2-3

Similarly, the traditions have laid great emphasis on the importance of patience. The Prophet once said, 'Listen and obey and be patient.' On another occasion he observed: 'God has commanded man to be patient and forgiving.' A companion of the Prophet said: 'The Prophet and his companions always remained patient in the face of persecution at the hands of enemies.' It is true that patience provides the basic quality for Islamic activism. In this world no one can adhere to the path of Islamic virtue without remaining patient.

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### **Patience is the exercise of restraint in trying situations.**

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Patience is the exercise of restraint in trying situations. It is a virtue, which enables the individual to proceed towards worthy goals, undeflected by adverse circumstances or repeated provocations. If he allows himself to become upset by opposition, taunts or other kinds of unpleasantness, he will never reach his goals. He will simply become enmeshed in irrelevancies.

The only way to deal with the irksome side of daily living is to exercise patience. Patience will ensure that whenever one has some bitter experience, he will opt for the way of tolerance rather than that of reaction to provocation. It will enable one to absorb shocks and to continue, undeterred, on one's onward journey.

Patience, as well as being a practical solution to the problems faced in the outside world, is also a means of positive character building. One who fails to exercise patience, gives free rein to negative thoughts and feelings and thereby develops a personality which is likewise negative. While one who remains patient is so morally bolstered by his own positive thoughts and feelings that he develops a positive personality.

Patience or *Sabr* is no retreat. *Sabr* only amounts to taking the initiative along the path of wisdom and reason as opposed to the path of the emotions. *Sabr* gives one the strength to restrain one's emotions in delicate situations and rather to use one's brains to find a course of action along result-oriented lines.



# THE WORD OF GOD

**T**HE Quran is the book of God. It has been preserved in its entirety since its revelation to the Prophet of Islam between 610 and 632 A.D. It is a book that brings glad tidings to mankind, along with divine admonition, and stresses the importance of man's discovery of the Truth on a spiritual and intellectual level.

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

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***Believers, let not some men among you ridicule others: it may be that the latter are better than the former: nor should some women laugh at others: it may be that the latter are better than the former: do not defame or be sarcastic to each other, or call each other by [offensive] nicknames. How bad it is to earn an evil reputation after accepting the faith! Those who do not repent are evil-doers.*** 49: 11

From birth, there is hidden in every man an instinct to be 'great'. That is why, if a man finds some weakness in another man, he makes a point of highlighting it, so that in this way he may prove himself to be great and the other small. He ridicules the other person, finds fault with him and calls him by insulting nicknames, in order to satisfy his instinct for self-aggrandisement.

But the criterion of goodness or badness is not that which an individual himself decides upon. One is really good who is good in the eyes of God and one is bad if he is adjudged bad in the eyes of God. If a man really develops these feelings in himself, he will lose the desire to be known as 'great'. Ridiculing others, finding fault with others, giving nicknames to others will all become meaningless to him, because he will come to know that a man's true status and position are actually going to be determined by God. He will then ponder over the fact that if he considers anyone as small in this world and if later, in the real world of the Hereafter, he (the latter) is treated as worthy of respect, his way of thinking will prove to be absolutely meaningless.

***Believers, avoid much suspicion. Indeed some suspicion is a sin. And do not spy on one another and do not backbite. Would any of you like***

***to eat his dead brother's flesh? No, you would hate it. Fear God, God is ever forgiving and most merciful.*** 49: 12

If a man harbours suspicion against another, everything about the latter appears wrong to him, for his mind starts drifting in negative and wrong directions. He starts searching for his shortcomings rather than his good points. It becomes his favourite ploy to describe his weaknesses and then to denigrate him.

The root of many social evils is unfounded suspicion. It is therefore necessary for man to be alert to this. He should not allow such suspicion to enter his mind.

If you are suspicious of someone, you can always meet him and talk frankly to him. But, it would be highly unethical to speak ill of a person, if he was not there to defend himself. An individual may occasionally make such mistakes. But, if he is God-fearing, he will not persist in doing so. His fear of God will warn him about his mistake and consequently he will give up his wrong approach and seek God's pardon.

***Mankind! We have created you from a male and female, and made you into peoples and tribes, so that you might come to know each other. The noblest of you in God's sight is the one who fears God most. God is all knowing and all-aware.*** 49: 13

Human beings differ from each other in many ways, notably in terms of race and place of origin—some are black, some are white, some are from the rain forests, some are from the tundra. But all these differences are for the purpose of identification—not for the making of distinctions. Indeed, many evils have stemmed from these differences being used to discriminate between one person and another, between one community and another, between one nation and another. Humanity has been eternally torn asunder by such prejudice.

Human beings, in view of their origin, are all one. Among them, if at all there is any basis for distinction, it is as to who is fearful of God and who is not. Even this is known only to God and not to any human being.

***The Arabs of the desert say, 'We have believed.' Say to them, 'You have not believed yet; say rather, "We have submitted," for faith has not yet entered into your hearts. But if you will obey God and His***

***Messenger, He will not detract anything from your good deeds. God is most forgiving and ever merciful.*** 49: 14

***The believers are only those who have faith in God and His Messenger and then doubt not, but strive, hard with their wealth and their persons for the cause of God. Such are the truthful ones.*** 49 : 15

There were many small tribes around the Medina township. After the immigration of the Prophet to Medina, these people embraced Islam. But their embracing of Islam was not the result of any deep mental revolution. In the eyes of God, the person who genuinely adopts the faith of Islam is one who discovers Islam as a reality and enshrines it in the depths of his heart. Those who accept the Faith of God in this manner acquire eternal conviction. Their steadfastness is such they are ready to make any sacrifice.

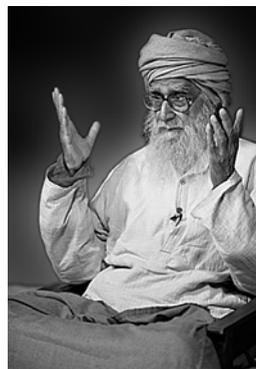
One may perform some righteous deed then think it necessary to announce the fact, but such announcement actually has a nullifying effect. A truly righteous deed is one which is done purely for the sake of God. As God Himself knows everything, where is the necessity to advertise it?



# ASK MAULANA

*Controversy marred author Salman Rushdie's appearance at the Jaipur Literature Festivals, 2012 and 2013. His visits and even a video conference with Rushdie had to be ultimately cancelled. India Ink spoke with Muslim leaders about the situation, their feelings about the book 'The Satanic Verses' and whether politics played a part in this controversy.*

*Maulana Wahiduddin Khan is the founder of the Center for Peace and Spirituality, New Delhi. He has received the Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian honor in India, and the Demiurgus Peace International Award. Malavika Vyawahare of India Ink, spoke to him at his home in New Delhi and the following conversation was published in The New York Times, 27 January 2012.*



## ***What is your reaction to the protests against Salman Rushdie's participation in the Jaipur Literature Festival?***

These protests were by a tiny minority, who are not representative of the Muslim community.

The protesters were completely wrong in doing what they did. Salman Rushdie has every right to come to this country. I heard his interview after the video conference was cancelled and agree with him when he said that all other freedoms rest on the freedom of expression. If you abolish the freedom of expression, all other freedoms will cease to exist.

According to Islam, you have to counter a book with a book; statement with statement. Countering a statement with violence is not right. It is un-Islamic. Protest and argument are two different kinds of reactions. The Prophet himself faced many negative things, abuses, but he never protested. The prophet's life is a model for Muslims, thus violent protest in this manner is against the spirit of Islam.

## ***What is it about Mr. Rushdie's work that has offended you personally, and is offensive to the Muslim community?***

I have read the 'Satanic Verses'. The book is not based on historical facts. This author has quoted an event that did not happen and is

totally fabricated. He has misconstrued the events that are described in Chapter 53, Verse 19 of the Quran. He has relied on those words as being part of the Quran which are in fact, not; they are misreported by some non-believers.

Also, he has referred to the existence of harems and the Prophet having many wives as the existence of brothels. In Islam it is accepted practice to have more than one wife, he could have referred to the fact as polygamy or even harems, but to call them brothels is wrong and offensive. It has a negative connotation which the other words do not have.

***Do you think that it was right of Muslims to take issue with Mr. Rushdie's appearance, even by video conference?***

Islamic law does not recognize violent protest; the word itself does not exist. In terms of democracy, the protesters may have been right; but not in terms of Islam. I do think Salman Rushdie abused his right to expression in the book, but Islam recognizes the right to disseminate your ideas; if one expresses one's ideas in a completely peaceful manner.

Islam does not require that the author should take into consideration the sentiments of his audience, but Salman Rushdie has misquoted history, which he has no right to do. Muslims needed to protest peacefully, counter argument with argument.

***How the government handled the issue? Do you think the Muslim community has been given a fair hearing in all this?***

I do not blame the government of India. Those who say that there is discrimination against how Muslim protests are dealt with and how protests by other communities are dealt with are wrong. There is no discrimination against Muslims.



Please send your questions to  
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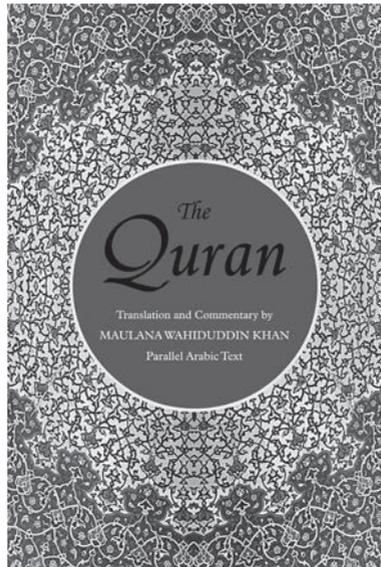
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