

# SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living



Real change always comes through peaceful struggle in non-political fields.

# ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

*Spirit of Islam* is a monthly magazine which is now in its Eighth year of publication. The aim of this journal is to present Islam in the contemporary idiom, while at the same time the contents are of universal appeal and of interest to a wider circle of spiritual seekers. It is our desire to help Muslims rediscover Islam, focusing on its message of peace and spirituality as derived from the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet, and in general we strive towards religious understanding for bringing about greater harmony.

Another purpose of this magazine is to assist its readers to deal with life's challenges, deriving positivity even from negative occurrences, gaining in spirituality and developing themselves intellectually so that they may contribute constructively to society.

The magazine's regular readers will appreciate that the entire thrust of its articles is directed to the individual—a collection of intellectually prepared individuals being the sole foundation on which a peaceful and harmonious society can be built.

As the subtitle indicates, *Spirit of Islam* is working towards enlightening people on the subject of global peace and regularly addresses relevant contemporary issues. The articles on peace based on the teachings of the Prophet of Islam offer us an ideology of peace—principles which lay down how peace may be established between conflicting groups, controversies resolved and conflicts defused. We believe that violence begins in the mind and so an effective ideology of peace needs to be presented to counter its influence.

We hope and pray that God helps us in this noble endeavour and grants us His special blessings!



# SPIRIT OF ISLAM

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Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living

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# A MESSAGE FOR THE NEW YEAR

Dear Readers,

Greetings of Peace!

This January 2020 issue of *Spirit of Islam (SOI)* marks the magazine's entry into 8<sup>th</sup> year of its publication. We are thankful to Almighty God for according us the opportunity to contribute positively in the greater service of humanity to establish peace and spirituality in the world.

The scientific age has thrown up unheard of challenges in the face of religion. Religion, as had been presented hitherto, lost its appeal to the educated masses as it promulgated rituals bereft of any meaning to modern man. With its focus on dos and don'ts, and belief in unverifiable creeds, religion lost its ground. The insistence of people occupying the pedestals of religion to follow the dictates of religion unquestioningly proved to be no help. Science and religion were considered to be at irreconcilable variance.

However, Islam being the religion of nature, there is no contradiction between Islam and science. Quran believed to be the preserved book of God is free from human interpolation. The personality of the Prophet of Islam, his life and teachings are historically established. *SOI* firmly believes that the age of science and technology has only strengthened the religion of Islam.

*SOI* presents Islam from the original sources, which are Quran and the model of the Prophet. *SOI* makes use of rational and contemporary idiom to bring home the message of peace and spirituality. Its arguments for the existence of God, the Hereafter, Hell and Paradise are based on well-established principles of science. Its rational, logical and scientific approach to religion is like a fresh and embalming air to the doubtful and questioning souls. It impresses upon conscious discovery and acceptance of verified truth.

*SOI* also tries to dispel the wrong notions that have unfortunately got associated with Islam. Islam, based on Quran and the prophetic model, is a religion of universal love and brotherhood as opposed to prevalent misconception of Islam being a religion of violence. *SOI* emphasizes that Muslims should be judged in the light of true Islamic principles. It is an academic fallacy to judge Islam in the light of the conduct of Muslims.

Spirit-based rather than form-based religion is the priority of *SOI*. It encourages one to live life with highest standards of morality.

We take this occasion to express our gratitude to our readers for their love and support. Do share with us your views regarding this publication. We wish you a peaceful and spiritual New Year with the following supplication from the Quran:

'Our Lord, do not let our hearts deviate after You have guided us. Bestow upon us Your mercy. Surely You are a Munificent Giver. Our Lord, You will surely gather all humankind on the Day of whose coming there is no doubt. God never fails to fulfill His promise.' (3: 8-9) □

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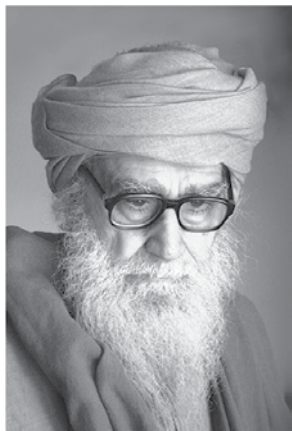
**WE LOOK FORWARD  
TO YOUR FEEDBACK**

*Dear Readers,*

*Spirit of Islam team believes in the involvement of readers to enhance the quality of the magazine. Your precious views, suggestions, and recommendations in this regard are earnestly solicited and will be readily acknowledged. Kindly mail us your views at:*

*[thecentreforpeace@gmail.com](mailto:thecentreforpeace@gmail.com)*

## FROM MAULANA'S DESK



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

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## TAKING SETBACKS AS CHALLENGES

**M**USLIMS profess to be beset by myriad of problems, the foremost among them has been their inability to be realistic in their approach. This issue demanded an immediate remedy. The remedy is still eluding Muslims.

When it comes to the state of Muslims in India, it has been my firm opinion that India is thriving with opportunities for Muslims to progress. There is no dearth of possibilities for Muslims to live as an honourable, prosperous and advanced community. Yet, their state of mind has unnecessarily created all manner of problems for them. It is nothing more or less than their own lack of realism. If Muslims could just become realistic in their approach, nothing could stand in the way of their betterment.

Whatever the grimness of the events, this verse of the Quran offers great hope: "You may hate a thing although it is good for you." (2: 216) This verse unambiguously states that even in the seemingly very disturbing situation, a great fortune lies hidden.

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

What is this great fortune? It is the necessity it creates for adopting a very realistic approach. The greatest secret of success in the world is the ability to think and act realistically. Human nature itself inclines man to realism. The so-called Muslim leaders, however, have misled Muslims by their emotionalism and superficiality. Now, the outcome of their almost two centuries of struggles has made their incompetence as clear as daylight. Nevertheless, now Muslims have started to realize that they need to free themselves from the unhealthy influence of their misguided leaders. They must chart a course of action in accordance with nature, the Quran, and the example set by the Prophet.

The Prophet of Islam was the most realistic person in history. That is why his success was the greatest ever achieved by anyone. The present situation has brought Muslims to a point where they will of themselves become realistic. And this new turn to their lives is certainly the greatest guarantee of success and progress.

The whole system of the earth and the heavens is based on reality. Man too can succeed in this world simply by conceding to this reality. It would be a matter of great contentment if Muslims could now discover this secret, which is the sure ladder to success.

'Many a small group, by God's command has prevailed against a large group. God is indeed with the steadfast.' (2: 249)

This verse of the Quran shows that if a minority group is facing challenges at the hands of a powerful majority, there is nothing in this for them to feel depressed or frustrated about. This should be looked upon as one of the God-given opportunities for the weaker group. This challenge provides impetus to the minority to re-plan, work even harder and achieve its goals.

***The greatest secret of success in the world is the ability to think and act realistically.***

How can such a reversal of the present order take place? The secret, according to this verse, lies in patience. Those who are faced with challenges require more alertness and need to make more efforts just to survive. The patience and endurance which they learn in

the process are what enable such a group to dominate and conquer their fears and come out with flying colours.

Patience for a human being or a human group is just like the heat applied to water. When water is heated up to hundred degrees centigrade, it starts boiling. The molecules change state and they scatter outward



in the form of vapour. In this way, heat converts water into gas. Water taking the form of gas becomes so powerful that it can move mighty machines.

In a similar way, when a group is continually faced with adverse circumstances, when its very identity is challenged, it reaches the point of explosion. Its latent capabilities are so aroused that it rises from the state of "water" and turns into "vapour".

History shows that whenever a group has faced persecution, its potential has been awakened. It has emerged in the form of an unconquerable force. Arnold Toynbee, a historian, has termed this process as Challenge-Response Mechanism. It is patience coupled with wise strategy that converts this ordinary group into an extraordinary group. □

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# FROM THE EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

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## RELIGION AND HUMANITY

**G**OD tells us in the Quran: "We have indeed honoured the Children of Adam, and provided for them means of transportation on land and sea, and given them wholesome food and exalted them high above the greater part of Our creation." (17: 70)

***Anyone, even if belonging to a religion you follow or of any other religious tradition, whether he belongs to one community or another; whether he belongs to friendly group or an opponent group, in all cases is worthy of respect.***

This shows that man by his very creation deserves regard and respect. This respect is man's natural birth right, regardless of which community he belongs to.

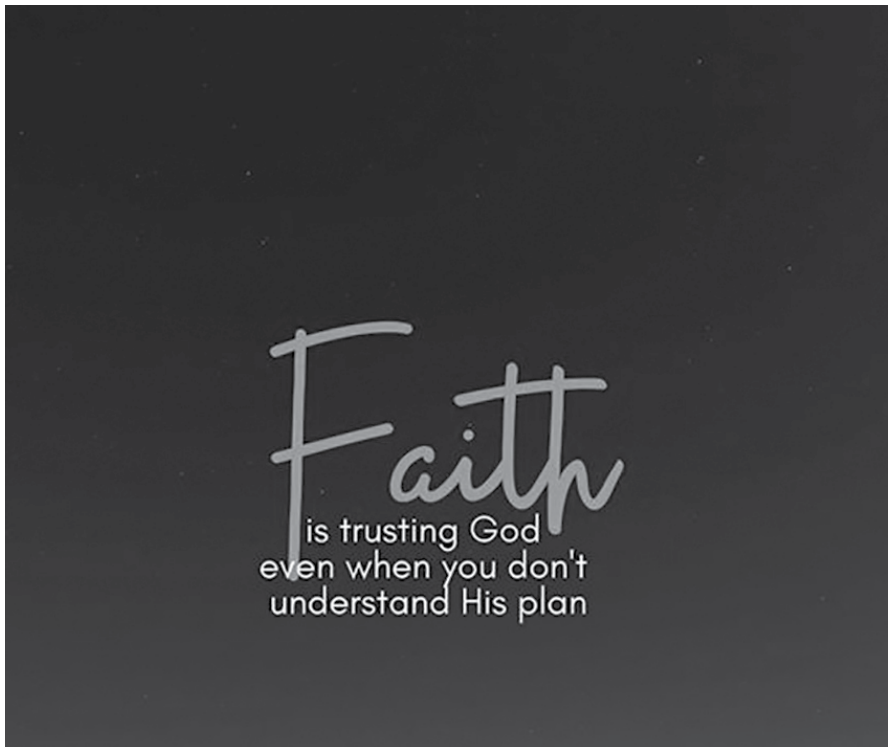
According to a *Hadith*: "That person is not one of us who is not merciful to our younger ones and respectful to our elders." According to another *Hadith*, the Prophet Muhammad said, "One who believes in God and the Last Day must honour his neighbours; one who believes in God and the Last Day must honour his guests."

There are a number of such commands to the believers in the Quran and the corpus of *Hadith* which lay great stress on showing due respect to humankind. For this is an important area in which we are actually being tested about our faith in God. Our love and devotion for God finds expression in this world in the form of our relations with other human beings. One who is a true lover of God has an inner urge to love all of God's creation.

Respect for humankind is one of the basic teachings of Islam. Anyone, even if belonging to a religion you follow or of any other religious tradition, whether he belongs to one community or another; whether he belongs to friendly group or an opponent group, in all cases is worthy of respect. According to the teachings of Islam, human beings are to be respected, despite their differences. Even where antagonism is displayed, we have to adopt the way of avoidance of conflict and continue to show respectful behaviour. In the eyes of Islam, all human beings are equal and deserve our respect. □

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# THE UNIVERSE DECLARES

## *Arguments for the Existence of God*

**T**HE Christian Mission of Kerala published a booklet titled *Nature and Science Speak about God*. In this 28-page book, scientific discoveries about the universe are mentioned to bring home the point that the existence of God is a fact that cannot be denied in any way.

The greatest evidence of God before us is His creation. Nature itself and our study of nature, both proclaim that there is one God who, in the infinity of His wisdom, has created and continues to sustain the universe.

Scorpions, fleas, and many other similar creatures of land and water combat and control their enemies by making use of their stings. At the tip of their sting is a very small aperture through which they inject a type of poison into their enemy's body. If this aperture was at the very end of the sting, it would be closed when the sting was inserted into the body. Moreover, the sting would not efficiently pierce the skin of the target. That is the reason the aperture is always a bit slanted like the

***Whatever object you see will manifest an intelligent design. The universe is not a random pile of garbage, but rather it exhibits a tremendous purpose and discipline. Could this happen without a conscious plan?***

hole in the doctor's syringe. This is to cite just one example of intelligent design. Whatever object you see in nature manifests such design. The universe is not a random pile of garbage, but rather it exhibits a tremendous purpose and discipline. Could this come about without a conscious plan?

Termites build for themselves houses that are thousand times bigger than their size. If we try to build our homes in the same proportions, we will need to erect a mile-high wall. Termites can live in the woods and carve their homes inside. Studying their lives reveals many wonderful occurrences. To take just one example: Termites eat wood. After stone, wood is the most indigestible of all known materials, but it does not pose a problem for termites. They have specific jaws for the purpose, which not only serve as a saw but also function as grinder. However, no matter how much the wood is ground, it will still remain wood, and will only induce indigestion rather than satisfy the need for food in the stomach. What is it, then, that helps termites? There

are many microorganisms in the intestines of the termite to facilitate this function. These microorganisms make certain alterations to the swallowed wood so that they can be digested and provide nourishment to the body. Who brings about this amazing arrangement?

Consider the structure of eggs. Each egg has seven different characteristics, all of which are so important that even if one of them is missing, the egg would not survive as an egg. The outer-shell made of limestone, the pores inside the shell that provide passage to the air, the thin membrane that surrounds the insides of the egg, the yolk and egg white forming the food of the hatching chicks inside the shell, the germ of the baby, the ligament that keeps the germ fixed in the right direction. Remove any one of these, and the egg will never become a nourishing place for the chicks. Is this aggregation of seven different things simply a coincidence?

***There are numerous things in the universe that would require an entire library just to name them, whereas in proportion, current human knowledge of the cosmos is minimal compared to the vastness of the universe. What we have yet to see, is much more than what we have seen.***

“Coincidence” cannot explain the presence of these seven different things, which are found to be in precise and in perfect condition. What is even more baffling is why are only these things accumulated in the egg by “coincidence”. Why not a leaf of a plant, some form of wood, a piece of stone, and thousands of such things that could have been contained inside, enter the shell? If any of such things were inside the shell, they would have destroyed the egg. The most perplexing thing is that when the chick is ready to get out of the egg, a small hard horn appears on its beak with which this ‘lump of flesh’ is able to break through the walls of its shell. After fulfilling its purpose, the horn falls off automatically a few days after the chick is born. How did such precision come about in the egg?

Ponder upon your own existence. How wonderful the human body is! Look at the brain. A telephone exchange that connects all the men, women and children of the planet at every moment; that continuously exchanges messages with them. If you can conjure up such a telephone exchange, you have only estimated a tiny bit of the incredibly complex system of the brain.

There are about a hundred billion nerve cells inside your brain. There are very fine wires coming out of each nerve cell and they are spread

all over the body. They are called nerve fibres and function to conduct information in the form of electrical impulses to other cells, muscles and glands in the body. A system of information transmission on these thin fibres runs at a speed of about hundred kilometres per hour.

Look at the heart, a small organ about the size of the fist. It weighs no more than 200 grams, but this little pump of the human body runs continuously day and night. It pumps 100,000 times a day and sends about six litres of blood to the entire body every minute. The heart has been endowed with extraordinary capability for achieving this amazing performance.

There are numerous things in the universe that would require an entire library just to list them. On the other hand, current human knowledge of the cosmos is miniscule compared to the vastness of the universe. What we have yet to see, is much more than what we have seen.

***The term 'law of nature' simply expresses that things always come into existence under a certain principle and will always come into being in the same way. This does not indicate why something is happening?***

Did this brilliant workmanship, this complete planning, and this perfect intelligence happen by chance? Of course, sometimes an incident does happen by chance. For example, a gust of wind sometimes blows up a pollen of a red rose and puts it on a white rose, resulting in a yellow flower. But this kind of coincidence can produce only partial and subtle changes. It can only account for this particular colour of the rose, not for the entire existence of the rose. Coincidence does not always explain why a particular type of system continues to be consistent. It does not explain why there is regularity and organization in our world. The process of "coincidence" will not keep repeating itself. It is not possible for

coincidence to bring into existence today what transpired yesterday. Then why do all things always appear in the same form with total uniformity? Why are natural systems and laws so methodical, mathematical and regulated?

If some pieces of metal are tossed into the air, what are the probabilities that they would fall to the ground in the form of moulded typeface letter and upon falling, form some meaningful text on a page? If this cannot happen simply by chance, then why is it assumed that such a large world with such amazing features has come into being by chance?

What academic argument could be put forth to prove a theory that could not be proven in a laboratory?

Another justification that materialist thinkers rely on is the term 'the law of nature'. "Why do chicks come out of the hen's egg in 21 days, whereas from the egg of the ostrich, the babies take 45 days to hatch?" There are a number of questions of this nature which are answered by the materialist simply as: "It is a law of nature." This does appear to be a justification, but in fact this answer only describes one incident. By using the words 'law of nature', we only acknowledge the order and function of the universe. These words do not explain why this discipline and performance is established in the first place. The term 'law of nature' simply expresses that things always come into existence under a certain principle and will always come into being in the same way. This does not indicate why something is happening? It does not state the cause of the incident, but only presents the picture of the event.

*Science has furnished us with many new insights. But whatever it offers is only a detail of a few events. Science has no answer for why they are happening.*

If you ask a doctor why the blood is red, he will reply that the blood contains very small red particles (equivalent to one thousandths of an inch) called red blood cells.

"True, but why are these particles red?"

"These particles contain a special substance called haemoglobin, which turns red when it absorbs oxygen in the lungs."

"Okay, but where do the red blood cells carrying haemoglobin come from?"

"They are prepared in your spleen."

"That's wonderful, doctor, but tell me how is it that blood, red blood cells, spleen and thousands of other things are organized in such a coherent way and act so unitedly that I can breathe, run, speak, and live."

"Ah! That is the law of nature."

"What is it that you call law of nature?"

"When I say 'nature', I mean the interplay of blind physical and chemical forces."

“But doctor, what causes these blind forces in nature to always act in a direction that leads them to a definite end? How do they organize their activities in such a way that a bird can fly, a fish can swim and a human being comes into existence with his unique abilities?”

“Don’t ask me, my friend. A doctor can only tell what is happening. He does not have the answer for the question: Why something is happening?”

***The law of nature is a phenomenon of the universe. It is not a justification of the universe. It seeks justification for its own existence.***

This conversation aptly illustrates the reality of current science. Indeed, science has furnished us with many new insights. But whatever it offers is only a detail of a few events. Science has no answer for why they are happening. How do the delicate organs of a fly work? Of course, science has told us a lot in this regard, but who is the one who thought that bees needed these delicate organs, and provided them with such fine skilfulness?

To explain the order of the universe and its appropriateness, and to show why various kinds of blind forces act towards a particular end—what we need is something other than the presence of these powers. The description of a bed is not enough if we just throw a few words such as mattress, pillows and bedstead. A castle is the name given to a structure of millions of bricks and other things installed in their proper and ordered place. For any small organ of the human body to come into being, it is necessary that millions of atoms come together in a unique and special setting. Blind forces cannot always express this kind of purpose, they cannot create meaning and harmony within events.

Science does not tell us how or why the laws of nature came into being, how or why they continue to exist or why they cause the earth and the heavens to function with such unflinching precision that, simply by observing them, it was possible to establish immutable scientific laws. The fact is that the law of nature is a phenomenon of the universe. It is not a justification of the universe. It seeks justification for its own existence. As Cecil Boyce Hamann says,

*Nature does not explain, she is herself in need of an explanation.*

In other words, the existence of meaningfulness in something is clear evidence that there is a mind behind it. The germ of life (sperm cells) that is nourished in a male’s body is very similar to the other cells in the body, but it has a unique and remarkable feature very different from



other cells. By attaching itself with a special egg cell of a female, it has the ability to bring into existence a completely new human being. How is it possible that two cells, each of which are raised in two completely different bodies, are capable of acting so amazingly together? Can this event be explained without acknowledging the involvement of a creative mind?

Acknowledging the existence of a creative mind in the universe is not accepting a baseless tradition. In fact, many of the inevitable conclusions from the discoveries of science lead us to this belief. Numerous scientific facts compel us to accept the existence of a driving force behind the universe. Just like the sound from the radio compels us to recognize the presence of radio waves, even though we do not see them. When sugar is added to the glass of water, it will dissolve in such a way that it will not be visible to the eyes. But by tasting it with your tongue, you can detect the presence of sugar in water. Similarly, God is not visible to the eyes, but when we study the world of our surroundings, our instinct and intuition cry out that there is God here, without whom the universe could not exist.

*The greatest evidence of God before us is His creation. Nature itself and our study of nature, both proclaim that there is one God who, in the infinity of His wisdom, has created and continues to sustain the universe.*

The fact is that the stupendous increase of human knowledge has not distanced man from God, but has brought man closer to Him. To doubt God's existence is merely to declare our ignorance. How definitive then are Pasteur's words:

*A smattering of science turns people away from God.  
Much of it brings them back to Him. □*

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# RESTORATION OF RELIGION

## *Much-needed Task*

**I**N 1509, Michelangelo (1475-1564), painter, sculptor, architect, and poet, was commissioned by Pope Julian to design and paint the frescoes for the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. The project was completed in 1512. In the 450 years that have elapsed since then, the original colours used by Michelangelo have become considerably subdued and, therefore, distorted. One reason for this was a coating of animal glue which was spread over the surface of the fresco in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to keep the plaster from flaking. This glue then collected centuries of soot from the torches used to illuminate the chapel before the advent of electricity.

Under Pope John Paul II, the Vatican ordered restoration of the frescoes. At the beginning of 1986, the first results of the cleaning work were displayed to the public. Renovation revealed some startling things about Michelangelo's original work. The master was previously believed to have used subdued, twilight colours, but it now appears that the colours he used were so vibrant, it was decided that softer lighting would be needed when the cleaning would finish in 1988. Art historians had to revise their whole concept of the Florentine school which Michelangelo represented, for the Florentines have been considered masters of design, but not of colour.

***True faith, as painted  
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American journalist, George Armstrong writes in *The Guardian Weekly* (February 16, 1986) that the axiom of Tintoretto (1518-1594) 'draw like Michelangelo, paint like Titian'—'has been thrown off balance by the Sistine's restored colours.' The renovation, Armstrong says, "has revealed Michelangelo in a new light." Further restorations culminating in 1999 had a profound effect on art lovers and historians, as colours and details that had not been seen for centuries were revealed. It has been claimed that as a result "Every book on Michelangelo will have to be rewritten".

In very much the same way, the nature of true religion has become distorted over the centuries. Originally, religion is revealed by God and taught in its pure form by the prophets. Then, when it falls into the hands of ordinary men, they corrupt its true message, making it

conform to their own desires. Whereas religion had originally been based on belief in the Hereafter, it later became an instrument for the acquisition of worldly wealth and power. True faith, as painted by the prophets, springs from the heart, but religion in its corrupted form becomes a mere enactment of rites and ceremonies, devoid of any true spirit. Religion in its pristine form breeds humility in its followers, fostering human unity; but when religion becomes distorted, it becomes a source of pride, with one group using it to assert their superiority over another.

When this happens, it means that grime and dust have collected on the face of true religion. Its true colours have become distorted and it is in need of restoration to its original form. When the renovation is completed, it will be revealed that religion is something quite different from what men have made it out to be. Theologians will be exposed as misleading in their interpretations, just as the public has been misguided in its opinions. □

*Religion in its pristine form breeds humility in its followers, fostering human unity; but when religion becomes distorted, it becomes a source of pride, with one group using it to assert their superiority over another.*



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# SIGNS OF GOD SCATTERED IN THE UNIVERSE

## *Wonders of Nature*

**S**AMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834) was a well-known English literary critic, theologian, philosopher and poet. One of his poems is titled '*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*'. In this poem, Coleridge describes a sailor who, on account of some sin, gets stuck in the sea. He has no fresh water to drink. His ship is surrounded on all sides by sea water, but because the water is salty, he cannot drink it. In anguish he cries out,

*'Water, water everywhere. Nor any drop to drink.'*

The condition of this fictitious sailor is potentially the same of every human being in this world. Man cannot live without water. But a huge proportion of the world's water is exceedingly salty—being contained in the seas and oceans—and hence is not potable.

*Reflect on any of the countless amazing phenomena in nature and you will be wonder struck at God's miracles.*

Now, consider how nature has provided a solution to this issue. Heated by the sun, seawater evaporates. The vapour rises up in the atmosphere, leaving behind the salt that the water had contained. It is only the sweet component of the water that evaporates. This water, which is desalinated through this natural process, falls on the earth in the form of water—sweet water that human beings can drink and which they cannot live without.

If we reflect on just this one amazing phenomenon of desalination—an astounding sign of God—we can be wonder struck at God's miracles, which are scattered all across the universe! □

**Faith doesn't  
make life easy.  
It makes life**

*possible*

# GOD—THE VOICE OF HUMAN NATURE

## *Helplessness of Man*

**I**N January 1975, French actress, Gina Lollobrigida, came to India. At a press conference, a newspaper reporter asked her a question about whether she believed in God. She replied, "I believe in God, I believe in God, more when I am on an aeroplane." (*The Times of India*, January 3, 1975)

When one travels on an aeroplane, one is at the mercy of external forces, and if there is even a minor change in these forces, it could lead to certain death. One faces the same helplessness while travelling on a ship. The Quran says:

Have you not seen how the ships sail on the sea by God's grace so that He may show you some of His signs? Surely therein are signs for every steadfast, thankful person. When the waves engulf them like shadows [of death], they call to God, sincere [at that moment] in their faith in Him alone: but as soon as He has brought them safe ashore, only some of them take the right course. And none denies Our signs save the perfidious and ungrateful person. (31: 31-32)

Russia witnessed a Communist takeover in 1917—the so-called 'Russian Revolution'. The communist regime stayed in power for several decades, till it collapsed in 1991. In this long period, the communists tried every means to wipe out religion and make people atheists. They claimed that religion was a mere appendix of capitalism and that after the overthrow of capitalism, religion would naturally wither away in Russia. But this did not happen, and today religion is alive and thriving in Russia. In fact, there is a major revival of religion among many youths there.

An interesting incident is related about the Soviet communist dictator Stalin (1879-1964). Stalin denied God, but his own life proved that in times of immense difficulty and in a state of utter helplessness, man remembers only God.

***No matter how rebellious a man may be, no matter how much he may deny God, in times of extreme difficulty and in complete helplessness he cries out to God. This is evidence that God is the voice of human nature.***

In 1942, during the Second World War, the British leader Winston Churchill (1874-1965) travelled to Moscow to talk with Russian leaders for opening a second front against Hitler. Churchill placed before Stalin the Allies' military plan—it was given the secret name of 'Torch'. Because Stalin was himself against Hitler's growing influence, he took a deep interest in this plan. Churchill relates that when the plan was being explained to Stalin, the latter remarked, "May God prosper this undertaking!" (*Winston S. Churchill, The Second World War (Abridgement), London, 1965*)

Svetlana Alliluyeva (1926-2011) was the daughter of the atheist Soviet dictator Stalin. She later went on to adopt Christianity. Explaining her search for truth, in her book *Only One Year*, she talks about her dissatisfaction, her search for something to comfort her heart and how she found what she was searching for in the following words of the Bible:

The Lord is my light and my salvation—  
whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the stronghold of my life—  
of whom shall I be afraid?

When the wicked advance against me  
to devour me,  
it is my enemies and my foes  
who will stumble and fall.  
Though an army besiege me,  
my heart will not fear;  
though war breakout against me,  
even then I will be confident. (PSALM 27: 1-3)

Professor Carl Troll was President of the International Geographical Union from 1960 to 1964. He remarked, "The fruit of my life as a scientist and geographer is to have become more and more deeply grateful to our Creator."

No matter how rebellious a man may be, no matter how much he may deny God, in times of extreme difficulty and in complete helplessness he cries out to God. This is evidence that God is the voice of human nature. □



# Re-engineering Minds Towards Peace

## The Way to Peace

CPS maintains that the only practical way to achieve peace is to establish it for its own sake. Establishing peace should not be linked to justice or other conditions. Peaceful environment establishes normalcy, which opens all doors to opportunities. Peaceful availing of these opportunities leads to development, progress, constructive initiatives, and finally justice. Thus, the formula for peace and development is:

**Ignore the problems,  
and avail the opportunities.**

## Peace Foundation Activities

1. CPS Peace Workshops to address and disseminate the ideology of peace.
2. Spirituality Classes to inculcate spiritual living as opposed to pure materialist approach to life.
3. Special sessions to counter the ideology of religious fundamentalism by presenting argument-based ideology of peace.
4. Conflict resolution and peace-building through non-confrontational approach workshops.
5. A series of courses on the above-mentioned topics for the academically-oriented.
6. CPS team members address various functions to speak on these topics on invitation.
7. Distribution of literature to bring home the importance of peace.

## The Need

In today's pluralistic societies beset by conflicts, confrontation, extremism, civil and global wars, it is the foremost need of the hour to offer practical solutions for peaceful coexistence. Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Peace Foundation, established under the aegis of CPS International, aims to fulfill this need by offering solutions for countering extremism, peace-making, peace-building and re-engineering minds towards a culture of peace.

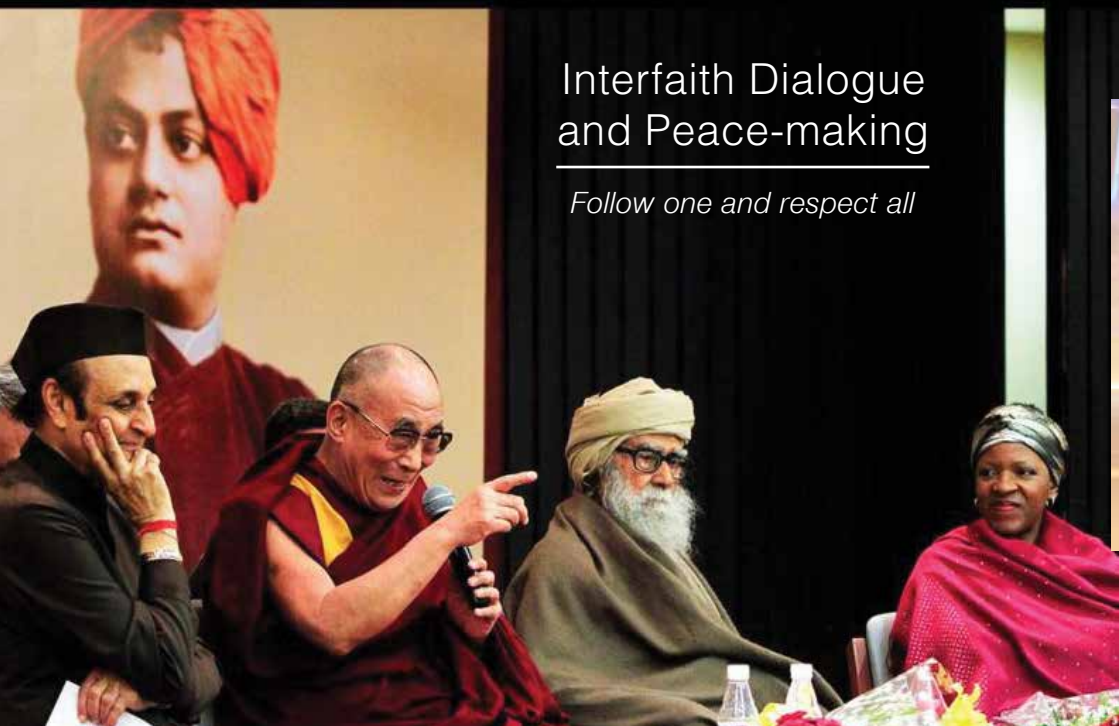


CPS Outreach at the New Delhi Peace Centre



## Interfaith Dialogue and Peace-making

*Follow one and respect all*



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan in dialogue with leaders of communities.

**M**aulana Wahiduddin Khan Peace Foundation believes that peace in pluralistic societies can be maintained through interpersonal, interfaith, intercommunity and international dialogue. Such dialogue aims at learning from each other and arriving at mutual solutions to usher in a culture of peace. The foundation explains that 'differences' are a natural part of all aspects of life, including religion. Using the

formula: 'Follow one and respect all' the Ambassadors of Peace (AoPs) at the foundation and the Peace centres globally undertake interfaith efforts to promote harmony, mutual learning and peace-making.

The Maulana and the foundation members are regular invitees to interfaith, peace and spiritual gatherings in which they spread the message of peace.



## Awards and Recognition



In 2015, under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan the Maulana was awarded the Sayyidina Imam Al Hassan Ibn Ali Peace Award by the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies at Abu Dhabi in the presence of 350 Islamic Scholars and faith leaders.

**M**aulana Wahiduddin Khan has been nationally and internationally recognized for his contribution to world peace, having received, among others, the Demiurgus Peace International Award by the Nuclear Disarmament Forum AG; and the title of 'Ambassador of Peace' by the International Federation for World Peace, Korea. The Maulana was awarded the Sayyidina Imam Al Hassan Ibn Ali Peace Award by the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies at Abu Dhabi under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan. He has also received the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA).

On national front, the Maulana has been awarded the Padma Bhushan,

the Rajiv Gandhi National Sadbhavana Award, the National Integration Award, the Communal Harmony Award, the Diwaliben Mohan Lal Mehta Award, the National Amity Award, the Dilli Gaurav Award, the FIE Foundation Award, the Urdu Academy Award, the Aruna Asaf Ali Sadbhavana Award and the National Citizen's Award presented by Mother Teresa.

He is considered as one of the most influential scholars according to the book, *The 500 Most Influential Muslims of 2019*, published by Georgetown University, Washington DC. Called "Islam's Spiritual Ambassador to the World", his approach, the book points out, is "popular among Indians, both Muslim and people of other faiths."

# CPS Global Network



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

## EUROPE

Albania  
Andorra  
Austria  
Belarus  
Belgium  
Bosnia  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Cyprus  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Estonia  
Faroe Islands  
Finland  
France  
Georgia  
Germany  
Gibraltar  
Greece  
Guernsey  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Ireland  
Isle of Man  
Italy  
Jersey  
Kosovo  
Latvia  
Liechtenstein  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Macedonia  
Malta  
Moldova  
Monaco  
Montenegro  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Poland  
Portugal  
Romania  
San Marino  
Serbia  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
Ukraine  
United Kingdom

## MIDDLE EAST

Bahrain  
Iran  
Iraq  
Jordan  
Kuwait  
Lebanon  
Oman  
Palestine  
Qatar  
Saudi Arabia  
Syria  
Turkey  
U.A.E.  
Yemen

## ASIA

Afghanistan  
Armenia  
Azerbaijan  
Bangladesh  
Bhutan  
British Indian Ocean  
Brunei  
Cambodia  
China  
Christmas  
Cocos  
East Timor  
Hong Kong  
India  
Indonesia  
Japan  
Kazakhstan  
Kyrgyzstan  
Laos  
Macau  
Malaysia  
Maldives  
Mongolia  
Myanmar  
Nepal  
North Korea  
Pakistan  
Philippines  
Russia  
Singapore  
South Korea  
Sri Lanka  
Taiwan  
Tajikistan  
Thailand  
Turkmenistan  
Uzbekistan  
Vietnam

## AFRICA

Algeria  
Angola  
Benin  
Botswana  
Burkina Faso  
Burundi  
Cameroon  
Cape Verde  
Central African Republic  
Chad  
Comoros  
Congo  
Djibouti  
Egypt  
Equatorial Guinea  
Eritrea  
Ethiopia  
Gabon  
Gambia  
Ghana  
Guinea  
Guinea-Bissau  
Ivory Coast  
Kenya  
Lesotho  
Liberia  
Libya  
Madagascar  
Malawi  
Mali  
Mauritania  
Mauritius  
Mayotte  
Morocco  
Mozambique  
Namibia  
Niger  
Nigeria  
Reunion  
Rwanda  
Saint Helena  
Sao Tome and Principe  
Senegal  
Seychelles  
Sierra Leone  
Somalia  
South Africa  
Sudan  
Switzerland  
Tanzania  
Togo  
Tunisia  
Uganda  
Western Sahara  
Zambia  
Zimbabwe

## OCEANIA

Australia  
Fiji  
Nauru  
New Caledonia  
New Zealand  
Niue  
Northern Mariana  
Palau  
Palmyra Atoll  
Papua New Guinea  
Pitcairn Islands  
Samoa  
Solomon Islands  
Tokelau  
Tonga  
Tuvalu  
Vanuatu  
Wake Island  
Wallis and Futuna

## ANTARTICA

Bouvet Island  
French Southern Territories  
Heard Island  
McDonald Islands  
South Georgia  
South Sandwich Island

## Ambassadors of Peace Training



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan training Ambassadors of Peace.

The Ambassadors of Peace Training is conducted at the New Delhi Centre. It prepares Ambassadors of Peace as peace activists to organize the activities of the New Delhi Centre, Peace Centre, partner institutes and organizations as well as setting up new Peace Centres globally. The Programme trains Ambassadors of Peace in:

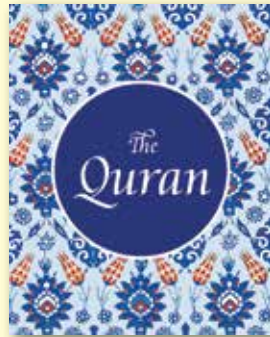
- The ideology of life
- The ideology of peace
- The principles of peace
- Peace activism
- Interfaith dialogue for mutual learning and peace-making
- Culture of peace
- Countering extremism
- Islamic ideology of peace
- Conducting the activities of the Peace Centres
- Setting up new Peace Centres

# Training through the Foundation's Literature

The Maulana maintains that this is a 'literature-based' movement. He has produced more than 200 books and thousands of articles, videos, audios and online material explaining the ideology of peace based on the creation plan of God. This material has been useful in transforming the mindsets of thousands of people, and has transformed them into Ambassadors of Peace. This group of people under the guidance of the Maulana are now training new Ambassadors of Peace through the Foundation material and the weekly training sessions with Maulana Wahiduddin Khan.



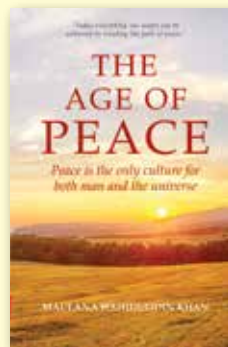
Monthly Spirit of Islam Magazine



Translation of the Quran



Online material of the Foundation



Peace material of the Foundation

The Ambassadors of Peace are trained through the material of the Foundation and the Weekly Sessions with Maulana Wahiduddin Khan.



# Join Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Peace Foundation Project

Laying the foundation for global peace is a gigantic task. Presently the Ambassadors of Peace are volunteering for the cause. To make peace a reality requires the support of many more peace activists. We invite you to join *Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Peace Foundation Project* by supporting:

**Project 1. Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Peace Centre, New Delhi:** Head Office of this noble movement. You can donate and volunteer for the Centre.

**Project 2. CPS Multimedia:** : Support the development and publishing of print content like books, course material, e-books, audios and videos, apps, websites and social networking to spread the message of peace.

**Project 3. CPS Programme:** Donate and/or participate in the CPS Programme.

**Project 4. CPS Academic Programme–Education:** Conduct and/or donate for the courses in your institute or area.

**Project 5. CPS Academic Programme–Research:** Facilitate and sponsor academic researches and partnering with the Centre.

**Project 6. Ambassadors of Peace Training:** Support the training of the Ambassadors of Peace and help them set up Peace Centres globally.

**Project 7. CPS Global Network:** Donate for the Centre's development and infrastructure and/or sponsoring peace material for free distribution.

The vision of the foundation is to introduce the message of peace into each and every home in the world to usher in an era of global peace and unity.  
To partner with us contact:



MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN  
P E A C E F O U N D A T I O N  
RE-ENGINEERING MINDS TOWARDS PEACE

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# GUIDING THE MISGUIDED

## *A Formidable Task*

The Quran describes the plight of humanity on the Day of Judgement:

'On the Day when their faces are turned over in the Fire, they shall say: 'Oh, would that we had obeyed God, and obeyed the Messenger!' They shall say, 'Our Lord, we paid heed to our leaders and our elders, but they led us away from the right path. Our Lord, give them double punishment and curse them with a mighty curse.' (33: 66-68)

**T**HESE verses of the Quran make the distinction between those who, having read the Book of God and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, accepted their guidance and consistently followed their precepts, and those whose course of action was always determined by demagogues and contemporary religious guides. The former are deserving of God's mercy, but the latter are not, as they have gone completely astray. Try as they may to justify their actions by bending the terms of the Quran and *Hadith*, they will incur only the wrath of God, for He cannot be deceived by fine words. If they have allowed themselves to be misguided, they have only themselves to blame for this, and can never know the blessings of their Creator's mercy.

Today, it is unfortunate that the majority of the Muslims fall into the category of the misguided. In multitudes, they are following in the footsteps of slogan-mongering leaders and are moving further away from the path of God and His Prophet. They are deaf to the injunctions from the Quran which would prove to them the error of their ways, and are frequently to be heard asserting that they have no intention of changing those ways no matter how impressive these Quran-based and *Hadith*-based arguments happen to be. □

***If Muslims have allowed themselves to be misguided, they have only themselves to blame for this.***



## FROM THE SPIRITUAL TREE

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



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## MAKE GOD YOUR SUPREME CONCERN

**M**OST people talk frequently of *marifah* (God-realization) without having attained it. The reason is that they wish to attain the realization of God but they are not willing to pay the price. In this world nothing can be achieved without paying the price. What man ought to do is that when he is not ready to pay the price for something, he should not talk about it. For talking about something for which he is not willing to pay the price will mean that he is only mouthing words about God-realization without understanding its significance.

There is a saying in Arabic: "Knowledge gives you a part of it only when you give yourself to it completely." The price of God-realization is that a person should give his all to it, that he should make it his sole concern, that while going to bed he should think of God-realization, while getting out of bed he should think of God-realization. He should engross himself in it to the point of starting to dream about it. The price of God-realization is total surrender. One who does not totally surrender to God, will find that the doors of God-realization are permanently closed to him.



How does one achieve this *marifah*? The journey begins with the acceptance that there is a God and finishes with one discovering the true Creator. The individual must first of all become a seeker and later become a finder. It is this order of the journey of *marifah* which applies to a common man as well as to a prophet. The following Arabic saying brings out the above understanding with clarity, “[Acknowledging that] I do not know, is half of knowledge”. First, an individual has to discover his own ignorance, and then a spirit of enquiry is born within. The greater the acknowledgement of his own ignorance, the greater is his spiritual and intellectual learning. It is a natural rule to which there is no exception.

*Marifah* or the discovery and realization of God is not something to be inherited, that a father may give to a son and the grandson may receive from his forebears. It is of a personal nature. Whenever anyone attains to God-realization, it will happen only as a result of personal effort. Without personal effort, no one can ever achieve *marifah*. Whatever one receives without personal struggle will be just a kind of traditional belief rather than a living *marifah*.

*Marifah* relates to the entire personality of the human being. It is initially achieved at an intellectual level. Subsequently through a natural process, it pervades his whole personality. The attainment of God-realization for anyone colours his whole personality in its hue. No aspect of his life will remain unaffected by its influence.

***Marifah or the discovery and realization of God is not something to be inherited, that a father may give to a son and the grandson may receive from his forebears. It is of a personal nature.***

The journey of *marifah* is indeed one of discovery. This discovery continues during the whole of one’s life. One who thinks that he has achieved perfect *marifah* would in effect, never have discovered it at all. □



# MANAGING CONTROVERSY

## *Peaceful Living*

**T**HE Quran says, "Let them not dispute with you in the matter".  
(22: 67) This verse would mean, 'Do not give others a chance to dispute with you.' That is, 'You should not enter into disputes.'

The verse actually indicates, 'You should manage the dispute in the very beginning before it degenerates into a full-fledged controversy.' We need to solve controversial issues only by way of peaceful management.

In AD 628, the Prophet and his Companions left Madinah and travelled to Makkah to offer pilgrimage to the *Kabah*. When they arrived at Hudaibiya, some miles away from Makkah, the group was stopped by their Makkan opponents. The leader of the opponents refused to let the Prophet enter Makkah. A battle seemed inevitable. On the contrary, the Prophet engaged in negotiations with the opposite side for about 15 days.

***Whenever there is a controversial issue, do not allow it to become a large-scale conflict, rather defuse it and finish it off in its initial stages.***

Finally, a peace pact was concluded that laid down that the Prophet would return to Madinah without performing pilgrimage. The Prophet and his Companions accepted this condition and returned to Madinah.

The treaty of Hudaibiya has been referred to in the Quran as a 'clear victory' (48: 1). This means in God's eyes, an issue should not be allowed to escalate into a dispute and controversy, rather it should be resolved beforehand through wise management and non-controversial approach.

Muslims all over the world, including Indian Muslims, should follow this principle. Whenever there is a controversial issue, do not allow it to become a large-scale conflict, rather defuse it and finish it off in its initial stages. □



# FAITH AND HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

## *True Faith Explained*

ISLAM can be summed up very briefly: Fear of God (*taqwa*) and benevolence towards others. *Taqwa* means piety, which is, leading a life of caution and restraint in this world. The object of all the teachings of Islam is to produce the spirit of piety in every action.

Those imbued with *taqwa* always keep in view the will and pleasure of God in every task they perform. Their lives are based on truthfulness and honesty. No worldly loss diverts them from the path of truth. The Quran describes those whose lives are marked by *taqwa* in these words:

'Virtue means believing in God, the Last Day, the angels, the Book and the prophets; the virtuous are those who, despite their love for it, give away their wealth to their relatives and to orphans and the very poor, and to travellers and those who ask [for charity], and to set slaves free, and who attend to their prayers and pay the alms, and who keep their pledges when they make them, and show patience in hardship and adversity, and in times of distress. Such are the true believers; and such are the God-fearing.' (2: 177)

Those who possess *taqwa* firmly believe that God sees everything. This inspires in them a strong desire to perform good deeds and a hatred for all things evil. Such thinking induces righteous conduct and *taqwa* thus becomes the foundation of all good deeds.

Once an individual becomes a God-fearing person, his life changes completely. He becomes careful to avoid that which will lead him to Hell, and is desirous of anything which will make him deserving of Paradise. He loves and fears God above all.

Fear of God and consciousness of the eternal destiny of humankind make one extremely cautious in dealing with fellow men. It is then clear that mistreating others would mean exposing oneself to the fire of Hell. Arrogance is never an option, for in human interaction every man is supported by the power of God and His angels. Neither is injustice an option, for he knows that eventually he will have to answer

***Faith in God Almighty transforms the believer completely. It shakes his human soul. His entire being is engulfed in the fear of God. This fear is manifested in all his dealings with others.***

to God for his actions. One does not see others as mere people; for one realizes that Almighty God is also standing by their side.

Faith in God Almighty transforms the believer completely. It shakes his soul. His entire being is engulfed in the fear of God. This fear is manifested in all his dealings with others. He does not humiliate the weak, for he sees that God is standing by the side of His servants. He does not bow before the strong, because he sees that all are helpless before God.

A man of faith has been likened to a tree in the Quran (14: 24). As we all know, man receives shade, fruits and flowers from the tree. All such qualities are found in God's worshippers in the true sense of the word. They give comfort to everyone. They have a soothing effect upon all.

There is a *Hadith* to this effect. The Prophet of Islam said: 'The believer is like a gentle plant. When the winds blow, it does not become rigid, but rather sways to and fro with each gust, and when the winds are not blowing it stands still once again.' This is exactly the case of the true believer. He does not display arrogance. His way is that of adjustment and not of clash and confrontation. He follows the principle of persuasion and avoids the way of violence.

***A True believer believes that every commitment made between two persons is actually made under the watchful eyes of God, and that he will be accountable for its fulfilment in the court of God.***

A true believer is one who is always conscious of the presence of God. He feels that each time he gives his word to another, it is a divine promise. Therefore he is extremely circumspect about giving his word. He believes that every commitment is actually made under the watchful eyes of God, and that he will be accountable for its fulfilment in the court of God. This compels him to be

highly responsible as regards his promises. Whenever he gives his word to anyone, he makes a point of keeping it.

Many other virtues come in the wake of the fulfilment of promises. One of these is mutual trust. In a society where mutual trust exists, there is an atmosphere of confidence, as there is no fear of promises being broken. It is therefore faith that makes man the possessor of this highest of human virtues.

Another impact of faith upon the behaviour of the believer is that he becomes a truth-loving person. He always speaks the truth. In all matters he says only what is in accordance with reality.

Truth is the highest virtue of a believer's character. A man of faith is a man of principle. He finds it impossible to deny the truth. He thus becomes totally free of falsehood or double-standards. His whole existence is moulded by truth.

An important aspect of true God-worship is that the worshipper, instead of living within the confines of the self, begins to live in the world of reality. The truly pious person begins to look upon people with love and compassion. He does not expect anything from anyone. That is why, even if others do not behave well with him, he behaves well with them and he continues to be tolerant towards them.

Then the Quran and the *Hadith* lay great stress on compassion. The Prophet of Islam said:

"O people, be compassionate to others,  
so that you may be granted compassion by God."

In this way Islam makes compassion a matter of self-interest for every man, as his own future depends on his compassionate behaviour to his fellow men. Thus, the Islamic faith motivates the faithful to be compassionate in their dealings with one another. Those who want to receive God's grace will have to show compassion to others.

Faith makes the believer a responsible person towards both God and man. His duty towards God means believing in Him, worshipping Him and carrying out all His commandments. Duty towards man means giving him such treatment as is in accordance with Islamic teachings. A true believer therefore gives proper respect to others, never humiliates them while giving them help, does not harm them, fulfils trusts, never breaks his word, never usurps the wealth and property of others and deals justly with others in all circumstances.

In short, when an individual adopts Islam, first of all it is his thinking, which comes under its sway, then his desires, his feelings, his interests, his relations, his likes and his dislikes—all are coloured by his obedience to God's will. When man comes under God's command, in his daily life his behaviour with others and his dealings, all are moulded by the demands of Islam.

***Faith prepares a person to lead a worthy life in society by adopting an attitude of modesty, sympathy and goodwill in all his dealings.***

Faith prepares him to lead a worthy life in society by adopting an attitude of modesty, sympathy and goodwill in all his dealings. In short, faith perfects man's relationship with God as well as with other human beings.

### **Development of a Sense of Responsibility and Accountability**

Accountability is one of the basic teachings of Islam. A perfect divine arrangement preserves a complete record of every person's words and deeds. On the Day of Judgement, every single human being will be faced with an entire and accurate record of his deeds on earth. The Quran says about this fact: 'Each word he utters shall be noted down by a vigilant guardian.' (50: 18)

A careful study of the present world shows that there is an unerring system of 'recording' in existence here on earth. The thinking of man is being impressed on the nerve cells of his brain. Every utterance of man is permanently preserved in the air in the shape of sound waves. Man's actions are preserved in the external world by means of heat waves in such a way that they can be reproduced at any point in time. All these are known facts today. It is these known facts that make the Quran's claim totally credible, that man's intentions, his utterances and his actions, are all in the knowledge of his Creator. Every single thought or act of a human being is being entered in the registers of the angels.

***Man will be held accountable on the Day of Judgement for anything he does on earth. On the Day of Resurrection, an exhaustive record of an individual's good and bad deeds in this world will come before him.***

Man will be held accountable on the Day of Judgement for anything he does on earth. On the Day of Resurrection, an exhaustive record of an individual's good and bad deeds in this world will come before him. On seeing this record, he will exclaim: 'What can this book mean? It omits nothing small or great; everything is noted down.' (18: 19)

Whatsoever a man does is put on record by God's arrangement. Man's intentions, his sayings and his deeds are all imprinted on the screen of the universe. Today this arrangement or system is not visible to us, but on the Day of Judgement the curtain hiding it will be raised. At that moment man will instantly be terrified to see that whatever he had been doing in this world, under the misconception that nobody knew about it, is so clearly recorded here that neither the smallest nor the greatest thing has been left out.

On the Day of Judgement, the treatment meted out to a man by God will be based on thoroughly established facts. For this reason, on that Day, when he receives his reward or punishment for his deeds, he will know, beyond a shadow of doubt, that he is getting what he really deserves—nothing more and nothing less.

The Prophet enjoined the believers: ‘Reckon yourselves before being reckoned with.’ According to another teaching, on the Day of Judgement no one can move until he has been asked about five things: how he spent his life; how he spent his youth; how he earned his wealth; and how he spent his wealth. and did he practice on his acquired knowledge. (Tirmidhi)

Accountability is a basic and fundamental concept in Islam. It governs man’s life on earth and determines his fate in the Hereafter. That is because, according to the Islamic viewpoint, man is not born into this world only to make money and die after living here for a hundred years or so. The truth is that human life is eternal and we live in this world only for a small fraction of our real lives. The actual and eternal life is to be lived in the next world. The present mundane world has been created merely for human trial. The consequences of our deeds will be reaped in the life of the next, eternal world. It is to gather this harvest that we strive.

This way of understanding life makes it an extremely serious business. It produces a strong incentive in man to take even the smallest matters of life very seriously. An individual therefore should be alert at every moment of his life. He should lead his life in this world in a manner that, rather invite God’s wrath and the ensuing punishment, would bring down His blessings upon him in the world to come.

### **Social Behaviour of the God-conscious Person**

A pious person is one who is totally God-conscious. Such a person leads life in this world with the feeling that all his works and deeds are observed by the eyes of God. He is then accountable for all actions to God, for nothing lies hidden from the All-Knowing God.

This type of conviction and feeling makes a man a responsible member of society. His behaviour is totally different. He is always aware of the fact, that all his dealings are related directly to God. So, he is always

*A believer is always aware of the fact that all his dealings are related directly to God. So, he is always conscious of the presence of God between him and the other person.*

conscious of the presence of God between him and the other person. The other person may be rich or poor, weak or strong, but he will always treat him with justice, for he is conscious of the fact that God will take him to task for any shortcoming on his part. This consciousness will make him fully alert to the fact that he must take every step in this world with great forethought of its consequences.

According to Islamic belief, everything in this world is designed as a test for human beings. Even social dealings are meant to serve the purpose of divine trial. Any dealings, pleasant or unpleasant, favourable or unfavourable, are always a test paper for the participants. This situation has been created because God wants to test individuals on their behaviour towards others.

In Islam, relations in social life are based on total justice. According to Islamic teachings, man must—in all possible situations in life—adhere to justice, be the outcome favourable or unfavourable, beneficial or detrimental. Whatever the issue, he has to observe the principles of justice. This is the true basis of social ethics as far as Islam is concerned.

This belief is extremely important. It gives man the necessary courage to do good deeds. He then rises above the mere expectation of reward from his fellow human beings as the upshot of his dealings with them. He has the conviction that God is constantly watching him and that He will reward him for his virtuous deeds, whether or not society itself sets any value on his deeds. The just man leads a principled life without expecting any return from others.

Virtue does not consist in whether you face towards the East or the West; virtue means believing in God, the Last Day, the angels, the Book and the prophets; the virtuous are those who, despite their love for it, give away their wealth to their relatives and to orphans and the very poor, and to travellers and those who ask (for charity), and to set slaves free, and who attend to their prayers and pay the alms, and who keep their pledges when they make them, and show patience in hardship and adversity, and in times of distress. Such are the true believers; and such are the God-fearing. (QURAN 2: 177)

Man needs to be clothed, but not just externally. He needs inner raiment too: that of piety, fear of God, acceptance of truth, setting the same standard for oneself as for others, regarding oneself as God's servant, remaining modest and humble, concentrating on the thoughts of the Hereafter instead of being astray in the world. When an individual adopts all these values, it is like a splendid accoutrement of his inner existence, and when he adopts an attitude opposite to this, he divests his inner existence of its entire moral apparel. □



# THE FLAWLESS UNIVERSE

## *Argument from Design*

**T**HIS universe is, in the complete sense of the term, a flawless one. The Quran (67: 3-4) refers to this aspect of the universe in these words:

*He created seven heavens one above the other in layers. You will not find any flaw in the creation of the Gracious One. Then look once again: can you see any flaw? Then look again and again. Your gaze will come back to you confused and exhausted.*

Here, the Quran speaks of the universe as flawless. At the time when these verses of the Quran were being revealed man did not know that the universe was flawless. Man gazed at the moon and the stars, the sea and the mountains and was filled with a sense of awe and this led him to nature worship. The Creator's intention was that man should realize the flawlessness of the universe and in this way discover the greatness and power of the Creator. But for thousands of years, this aspect of the universe remained undiscovered.

***Accepting the universe as an intelligent universe means also that this universe is the creation of an intelligent Creator.***

The discoveries in the field of science over the last four hundred years or so inform man, for the first time that an unparalleled meaningfulness is to be found in the universe, that the universe is a well-planned universe, that it is a well-managed universe, that it is a well-disciplined universe. And now, scientists, generally speaking, believe that the universe is also an intelligent universe. This issue is a subject of considerable study and discussion, with a huge amount of literature having been published on the subject.

In Newton's time, the universe was considered to be a mechanical one. But further research showed this to be wrong. Research in various fields of science seem to indicate the universe is an intelligent universe. Accepting the universe as an intelligent universe means also that this universe is the creation of an intelligent Creator. There can be no other explanation or interpretation of this fact. Much has now been written on the issue of intelligent design, one of the most well-known books about it being Fred Hoyle's *The Intelligent Universe: A New View of Creation and Evolution* (1983). □

# APPEARANCE AND REALITY

## *Looking Beyond the Veil*

**A** PPEARANCE veils reality. In this world, man is put to the test of recognizing appearance for what it is, and of penetrating it in order to reach the reality hidden beyond it. If he is to be successful, he must refrain from becoming obsessed with appearances. He must rise above the level of the seen, and pass beyond to that of the unseen. There, on this higher plane, the hidden realities of life will stand out clearly before his eyes.

How does one free oneself from obsession with appearances? It means, primarily, looking at things in an entirely different way. For example, it means recognizing that something which is ostensibly a purchasable item is actually a gift from God. It means having a grasp of the fact that the merchandises of the marketplace have come not just from the hands of the craftsman or the assembly line of a factory, but from the treasure house of the universe. Faith in the unseen means the realization that the things which we seem to receive from the hands of men, come in actuality, from the hands of God. It is only those who are at one with their Maker, who can attain this degree of finely-tuned perception.

***Faith in the unseen means the realization that the things which we seem to receive from the hands of men come, in actuality, from the hands of God.***

In this world, we have the option of living like the blind, or of living with our eyes wide open. The test we are set in the present world forces us to make this choice. One who remains blind to the realities of this world of trial will—due to his blindness—be stranded in the world to come. On the other hand, one who lives with his eyes open to the divine truth will be blessed with heavenly vision in the life beyond the grave. There, all the blessings of the world—and even more—will be given to him for all eternity.

The 'blind' man, sitting at the dining table, will look upon the milk, fruit, vegetables as items which have been bought from vendors, and then brought to him and prepared for him so that his palate and hunger may be satisfied. Content with this thought, or not even thinking about his food at all, he eats his fill, and then is off on his way to some other activity, without having acknowledged, even for a second, that the eatables he consumed were actually gifts from God. He simply cannot see that these are some of nature's greatest masterpieces. He does not

give a single thought to the long and infinitely complex development of the entire universe which made it possible for such things to come into existence.

The man who has his eyes open to the truth thinks in quite a different way, when the same set of eatables is set before him. He is intensely aware at all times that these are the products of nature's 'factory.' He reflects upon how cows and buffaloes eat grass and then convert it into milk. He thinks of how the tree takes in water and nutrients from the soil and then converts them into flowers and fruit. When he ponders upon how such 'factories' could come into existence, the system of the entire universe begins to unfold itself before him. He considers how it was only after this limitless universe had evolved for millions and millions of years that the system of the present world could be established. The present world, vast and varied as it may seem, accord with it in every detail. This is so that the tree can yield fruit and the cow can give milk.

*In the Hereafter ,  
that which we receive  
shall be in direct  
proportion to what  
we have discerned  
behind the veil of  
appearances. Those  
who have never torn  
that veil aside can  
expect to receive  
nothing.*

When he thinks of all these, he experiences a strange kind of thrill, and a sense of wonder and awe. Now, when he drinks milk, or puts a piece of fruit into his mouth, he feels that it is a unique blessing from God.

It is obvious that eating, as a normal human activity, is not the same for the 'blind' as it is for the 'seeing'. Neither can the consequences be the same for both, as is suggested by the analogy the Quran gives us of the man who eats stones and the man who eats fruits. Just as the effects of eating can never be the same for these two men, so can the consequences never be similar for one who eats 'blindly' and one who eats 'with his eyes open'. In the Hereafter, that which we receive shall be in direct proportion to what we have discerned behind the veil of appearances. Those who have never torn that veil aside can expect to receive nothing. □



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# A PERPETUAL ENTERPRISE

*Growing in Faith*

**F**AITH is the discovery of God who is a limitless reality. In space and time, He is never-ending, discovering Him is likewise an enduring, ongoing event. The discovery of God is the bedrock of true religion. A well-known scientist once reflected that if a day came and went without his having discovered anything new in nature, he considered that day as wasted, for, as he said, "Observing nature is my religion." If this is the feeling of one who is absorbed in God's creation, how can one who is absorbed in the Creator Himself feel any different? Just as the scientist discovers something new in the world of creation every day, so a believer should always be making fresh discoveries about his Creator—discoveries which would strengthen him in his faith.

If one's thoughts are constantly centred on God, one will repeatedly come upon new and greater aspects of His glory. Different facets of His attributes will appear time and time again, bathed in eternal, divine light. Just as God's attributes are infinite, so is the believer's search for knowledge of God unending.

***If one's thoughts are constantly centred on God, one will repeatedly come upon new and greater aspects of His glory. Just as God's attributes are infinite, so is the believer's search for knowledge of God unending.***

This quest for knowledge comes to fruition in many forms. Sometimes it takes the form of divine states never before experienced. Sometimes it expresses itself in words of praise for the Almighty never before conceived of. Sometimes some aspect of God's wisdom—hitherto unrevealed—becomes as clear as crystal. Sometimes one simply feels unusually close to God. And sometimes one suddenly feels capable of plumbing to the depths of profound and awesome truths.

If the discovery of God is a never-ending event, the converse is also true. Faith that does not grow is no faith at all. It is an expression rather of religious neglect—neglect of Almighty God, our Creator and Sustainer. □



# PROCESSION OF DEATH

## *Entry to a New World*

**W**HEN a person dies, he is laid in a coffin which is then carried aloft towards the grave. This journey or funeral procession is unlike any journey that the man has undertaken. This journey marks the end of man's existence on earth. He is now introduced into a world totally unknown and where rules of the game are quite different from those of the earth.

When man is born into this world, he immediately has recourse to mother's compassion and father's protection. He grows up among friends and relatives. Then he reaches adulthood and forges ahead on his chosen path through life.

His journey of life continues until finally death knocks on the door. Those relatives who had supported him through life now carry him to his final resting place. They lay him under a mound of earth where he is all alone with his Lord.

So far, he had been confronted with humans like himself; now he is face to face with God, infinitely greater than himself. Up till then, he had been in a world where he had power of his own, but now he finds himself absolutely powerless. Man, the most helpless of creatures, will come before God the All-Powerful—a meeting so awesome that it is almost beyond imagining.

People are dying here on earth. Not a day goes by without our seeing or hearing of the death of someone or the other. Yet we fail to realize the implications of death. This is because in our minds we lack a living picture of Heaven and Hell. We are preoccupied with other, totally unrelated, matters. We are too busy making homes for ourselves in this world to plan for our eternal abode. We are too concerned with worldly profit-making to care whether we have done enough to earn everlasting life. We are too preoccupied with improving our position in society to consolidate our relation with God.

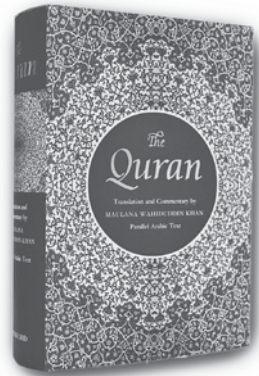
We think of every human being in worldly terms. So, when a person dies, the loss we feel is mundane in nature in the sense that we think of him as one who gave so much to the world and now, he has been taken away from it. We see man in relation to this ephemeral world, but fail to see him in relation to the next eternal world. How then can we realize the implications of death? How can we see that, as one is laid to "rest", one is, in fact, being led to one's meeting with the Lord and one's eternal fate? □

# 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 AD 610 and 632. It is a book that brings glad tidings to humankind, along with divine admonition, and stresses the importance of man's discovery of the Truth on a spiritual and intellectual level.*

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



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## **THE INEVITABLE HOUR**

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

***The Inevitable Hour! What is the Inevitable Hour? And what will make you realize what the Inevitable Hour is? The tribes of Thamud and 'Ad denied that disaster would strike them: the Thamud were destroyed by a terrible storm of thunder and lightning; and the 'Ad were destroyed by a furious wind which God let loose against them for seven nights and eight days unremittingly, so that you could have seen its people lying prostrate as though they were the hollow trunks of palm-trees which had fallen down. Do you see any vestige left of them now?***

***Pharaoh and those before him and the inhabitants of the overthrown cities persistently committed grave sins. They defied their Lord's messenger, so He seized them with an ever-tightening grip. But We bore you away in the Ark, when the waters rose high, so that We might make it a reminder for you and so that attentive ears might retain it.***

(69: 1-12)

Some deny the Hereafter openly, while there are others who may not explicitly deny the Hereafter, but who in their heart of hearts attach importance solely to worldly affairs. That is why there is no difference between the way of life of these people and that of those who make open denials. In essence, these two groups are the same. In the eyes of God, both of them are rejecters of the Hereafter—one group rejecting it by word of mouth and the other doing so in practice.

***When a single blast is blown on the trumpet, and the earth and the mountains are lifted up and then crushed with a single blow, on***

**that Day the Great Event will come to pass. And the sky will be rent asunder, for on that Day it will be so frail. The angels will appear by its sides and, on that Day, eight [angels] will bear your Lord's throne above them. On that Day you will be brought to judgement and none of your secrets will remain hidden.** (69: 13-18)

In accordance with the law of God, all such people are going to face destruction. In the days of the prophets, this destruction was made manifest in the present world, as for their successors it will become a reality in the Hereafter.

The present world has been made with a view to putting human beings to the test. When the period of testing is over, this world will be demolished and a new world fashioned to meet new requirements will be made. The majesty of God at present reveals itself indirectly, but at that time the Majesty of God will be directly manifested. □



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# ASK MAULANA

*Your Questions Answered*

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

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

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***What is the meaning of prayer? Why should I pray to God?***

Prayer is the compensation for a person's helplessness. An individual, again and again, experiences helplessness and prayer is his response to such occasions. He calls out to a Being that is above and beyond him.

The Second World War was fought between the Axis Powers and the Allied Powers. During the war, there was a time when it was not sure who would win. The victor side became clear after the atom bomb was dropped. In the famous Yalta Conference, heads of three countries, Russia, Great Britain and the US had gathered to find a strategy to contain the Axis Powers. Joseph Stalin was representing Soviet Russia. He was given to read the draft of the strategy and after reading it, he exclaimed suddenly: 'May God prosper this undertaking!'

At the point where man feels helpless, his nature is bound to call out to the One who is beyond human beings. It is undoubtedly the experience of every person to call out to the Supreme Being when he feels utterly helpless.

In the sea, when a ship is on voyage and a storm strikes, there is nothing that a person sees except huge waves of water ready to engulf the ship any moment. It is in such times of helplessness that one spontaneously calls out to God. I had read about a Russian pilot. In spite of being an atheist, he was heard saying, 'Peter save us!' when his plane got stuck in a thunderstorm.



### ***What should be the right prayer that we should make to God?***

In this world, every person is born to lead a different life, each with its own set of opportunities and challenges. Hence, one cannot follow a 'one-prayer-fits-all' policy in life.

A believer may pray to his Creator regarding anything, without any constraints. However, the manner in which the prayer is answered shall be governed by divine will. At times, prayer is answered instantly and at other times, there passes a long time before one's request is fulfilled. A verse in the Quran gives us the prayer of the virtuous in these words:

Our Lord, grant us good in this world as well as good in the world to come, and protect us from the torment of the Fire. (2: 201)

The essence of a true prayer is patience. A believer must submit to the divine will and entrust his matters to his Creator. He should pray to God for guidance and sustenance. Prayer is not mere repetition or usage of specific words, rather it is the expression of the believer's deep sentiment, entreating divine succour. The Quran mentions several expressions of prayers through which divine guidance is sought.

### ***Can one ask God for death?***

No, this is completely forbidden according to Islamic teachings. This had been alluded to in the following *Hadith*: One of the Prophet's Companion reported that the Prophet said, 'None of you should long for death, for if he is a good man, he may increase his good deeds and if he is an evil doer, he may stop the evil deeds and repent.' (*Sahih al-Bukhari*)

Hence the longer you live, the more opportunities you get to do good deeds, or repent if you have committed any bad ones. Keeping this wisdom in mind, one should always pray for well-being and happiness and not anything negative. According to the creation plan of God, the hour of death for every individual has been appointed by God Himself. We should accept our natural time of death, as God knows what is best for us. □

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