

# SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Towards Global Peace & Spiritual Living



Understand the creation plan of God and all of God's blessings will return to you.

# 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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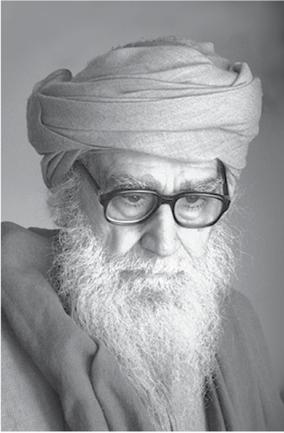
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## FROM MAULANA'S DESK



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## A MESSAGE OF HOPE

**T**HESE DAYS, after waking up, I hear people talking of despairing things. News broadcasts are filled with gloomy updates of the coronavirus pandemic. Then I observe the sun rising. This natural and everyday occurrence of the sun rising gives me a most hopeful lesson. The world is moving from darkness towards light, while the people of the world were speaking as if the world was going toward darkness. This is against nature. The world of nature is so designed that here, one state gives way to another. There is a system in place in this world which brings light after darkness. Human beings are no exception to this principle.

The present crisis humankind is facing reminds me of an incident. A woman from Delhi went to Germany with her husband and stayed there for some time. There she met a German lady, and they became friends. Once, the girl from Delhi said to her German friend that she believed in Paradise. The German lady replied: "Why do we need Paradise? We can have everything from our marketplaces." This is a common feeling amongst most people today.

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

This culture prevalent in the world today is the fundamental reason for humans having gone against nature. God settled man on Earth so that he remembers God and lives as per the creation plan\*. The Creator has created man as a seeker of Paradise, but man forgets Paradise and becomes a seeker of the world.

After finding ourselves in this predicament, we need to return to our original nature. We need to return to our Creator. The Creator gives us glad tidings of hope in the Quran: "Your Lord has not forsaken you, nor is He displeased with you." (93: 3). In an extended sense, this verse addresses all human beings. God is saying: 'O man, don't think that your Creator has forsaken you! In fact, this situation of yours is a reminder for you. You need to understand the system of nature, understand your Creator. This is a time of rediscovery. You need to rediscover that the Creator has made this world in such a way that every situation will make way for another brighter situation'. This is the message the universe is giving out every day. Every morning is a testimony to this law of nature.

***The world is moving from darkness towards light, while the people of the world were speaking as if the world was going toward darkness. This is against nature. The world of nature is so designed that here one state gives way to another.***

God is Eternal, Living and All-encompassing. His angels are always ready to comply with His commands. Therefore, we have no reason to despair. What we really need is to turn to Him. We need to be convinced that the Creator is a Living Creator. He will surely turn to us in mercy. Through these words of the Quran,

God gives us consolation and hope: 'O people, I have not abandoned you. Every negative experience is a shock-treatment for you, and a reminder to turn in repentance towards Me. You need to change your lifestyle and your way of thinking. Understand the creation plan of God, and all of God's blessings will return to you, just as the sun rises again in the morning.'

The Merciful Creator is reminding us to rethink. There is no need to despair in the current situation. Every dawn is full of hope that the world in which the sun rises every day leaves no place to sink into despair and despondency. This is the message sent out every day by the Lord of the heavens and the earth.

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\* For more information on the Creation Plan of God, please use "Creation Plan" as keywords in the search option on the [home page](#).

Gloomy situations can be overcome only through faith in God. We can change our situation by way of rethinking, re-planning and rediscovering lost lessons. If yesterday was a dark day, why will the next day not be full of light? We need to have this conviction and pray to God.

In my native village, I used to go out in the morning towards the river. This was my daily habit—I used to witness the scene of sunrise every morning. Perhaps the Creator desired that I understand the truth that the world is moving from darkness towards light.

My advice to all of you is—do not fear the darkness of night, but focus your eyes on daylight. Remove the word ‘hopelessness’ from your dictionary. Do not think that the Lord has forgotten His people, His creation. Re-plan your life. Stop using negative, despairing words and think with hope; not with hopelessness, then God will certainly turn His attention to you. No mother is ever angry with her child. No father is ever angry with his child. The same is true of the Creator who has created us. He will never forget us. We only need to model our lives all over again. We need to develop positive thinking. We need to find out where we went wrong.

***Do not fear the darkness of night, but focus your eyes on daylight. Remove the word ‘hopelessness’ from your dictionary. Do not think that the Lord has forgotten His people, His creation.***

If our life has been derailed from the track, we must come back on track. We must make every mental effort to return to the straight path. We need to stop thinking in a despairing way and begin to think again with hope.

I have always experienced that when I made living with hope my goal, in strange ways, paths were opened up for me. It seemed that the sun which was hidden in shade had come back again in full view. We must forget that we faced darkness yesterday and focus on the light that the sunrise will bring the next day. □

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# FROM THE EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

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## FAKE NEWS

**S**PREADING fake news and rumours is a grave offence. Intentional or unintentional circulation of fake news adds to public frenzy and chaos, and causes a situation to go out of control. In these uncertain times, creating and spreading lies through social media has become an organized endeavour. To put a curb on this phenomenon, governmental as well as non-governmental agencies the world over are working to find ways of solving this grim issue. Recently, social media platforms, including Facebook, Google and Twitter, initiated talks to form an industry-wide alliance to tackle fake news on their platforms in India. (*Economic Times*, February 19, 2020)

The proposed alliance, Information Trust Alliance (ITA), will bring together social media platforms, digital publishers, content creators, fact-checkers, civil society actors and academics to spread awareness about fake news and harmful misinformation among netizens through collaborative efforts. The companies are also discussing a possible 'Code of Practice' to curb misinformation.

*Islam takes a harsh stand against the spread of lies, calumny and rumours.*

The alliance proposes to run public awareness campaigns in schools, colleges and universities, conduct workshops with content creators, and work with academia to find innovative solutions. The Centre's nodal agency for issuing releases to the public, the Press Information Bureau (PIB), has created a fact checking unit in order to tackle fake news on social

media. Social media platforms had been key factors in spreading misinformation and creating panic among citizens related to the coronavirus pandemic, according to media reports. But now these platforms have announced a crackdown on misinformation in the light of the pandemic.

Islam takes a harsh stand against the spread of lies, calumny and rumours. Fully aware of the scale of injury and damage a lie can inflict, the Prophet of Islam said, "The Impact of the tongue is harsher than the impact of the sword." (*Abu Dawood*)

According to Islam, every news that reaches you should be verified before it is passed on. The Quran says:

Believers, if an evil-doer brings you news, ascertain the correctness of the report fully, lest you unwittingly harm others, and then regret what you have done. (49: 6)

To be labelled as a liar, one need not tell lies intentionally. Islam labels one as liar if one passes on unverified news. The Prophet said:

"It is enough lying for a man to speak of everything that he hears." (*Muslim*)

Thus, spreading misinformation is not just a crime in the worldly sense but also a grave sin. God takes a very serious account of it. According to the Quran:

When you were spreading it with your tongues and saying with your mouths things of which you had no knowledge, you considered it to be a trivial matter, but, in God's sight, it was very serious. (24: 15)

Islamic injunctions in this regard ask us to verify news before we take action. If we are not in a position to verify news items, we can put the matter before experts. These experts can bring to the fore the facts of the matter and remove any misperception or misrepresentation.

Mental agony and physical injury caused by fake news or lies are of a very serious nature. Fake news and rumours can corrupt and damage our societies critically. To inculcate

***To be labelled as a liar, one need not tell lies intentionally. Islam labels one as liar if one passes on unverified news.***

***People should be extremely cautious about every word that they utter. They will be held accountable for not only the deeds they perform, but also for the words they speak.***

the spirit of speaking truth in society, Islam has set down specific guidelines. The Quran asks its readers to hold truth dearer than their kith and kin:

"Believers, be strict in upholding justice and bear witness for the sake of God, even though it be against yourselves, your parents, or your kindred. Be they rich or poor, God knows better about them both. Do not, then, follow your own desires, lest you swerve from justice. If you conceal the truth or evade it, then remember that God is well aware of all that you do." (4: 135)

Unintentional spreading of lies and rumours is attributed to the hasty and impulsive nature of human beings. To dissuade people from being overhasty and imprudent, the Prophet said:

"Patient deliberation is from God and haste is from the Satan."  
(Tirmidhi)

People should be extremely cautious about every word that they utter. They will be held accountable for not only the deeds they perform, but also for the words they speak. God has an impeccable system of recording our words. "Each word a person utters shall be noted down by a vigilant guardian." (50: 18). The Quran also says: "Believers, fear God, and say the right word." (33: 70) □

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# SPRING-CLEAN YOUR MIND

## *Prepare Yourself*

**A** MILKMAN, deeply influenced by Gautam Buddha, insisted that Buddha visit him and share his nuggets of wisdom. In lieu of this, the milkman offered to present milk to Buddha. He agreed. In the evening, when Buddha set out to visit the milkman, he took with him a container in which he intentionally put some mud. The milkman took the container but just as he was about to pour milk into it, the milkman realized that the container had some impurities. The milkman cleansed the container and removed all impurities. He then poured the milk into it and gave it to Buddha. Upon getting the container, Buddha got up to leave. Surprised, the milkman asked Buddha why was he leaving before imparting any wisdom. Buddha replied that he just had. Unable to comprehend it, the milkman urged Buddha to explain the learning to him. Buddha told the milkman that our mind is similar to the container, and the thoughts that preoccupy us are like the impurities in the container. In order to attain wisdom, we must purify our mind and make it free of all impure thoughts. Buddha asked the milkman to cleanse himself of his thoughts for only then would he be able to imbibe any further learning.

This illustration depicts the case of every individual. We cannot add more water to a glass full of water; it will only spill. The glass must be empty in order to imbibe wisdom. It is only a prepared mind that meets the right kind of situations that further harness one's potential. Living with a narcissistic mindset is injurious to one's development. Such a way of life leaves no room for receptivity as one thinks about none but one's own self.

Trying to deride the discovery of a scientist, a man said to him that all discoveries were nothing but chance occurrences. Calmly the scientist replied that the man was right, but such chances took place only with scientists. This was a befitting answer.

It is only a prepared mind that is able to achieve the goal assigned. There is nothing mysterious about this. It is quite understandable that only a mind that has engrossed itself in trying to unravel a phenomenon that

*In order to be receptive to truth, one must make efforts to develop a prepared mind. Man, by virtue of his societal existence, becomes a conditioned entity. It is this conditioning that is a major obstacle in his way.*

can eventually decipher it. However, a price must be paid to attain such a state where one can be referred to as a prepared mind. One must be sincere in one's efforts, objective and unbiased in one's approach and ready to admit a mistake and reassess the approach towards the target.

*In order to attain wisdom, we must purify our mind and make it free of all impure thoughts.*

In order to be receptive to truth, one must make efforts to develop a prepared mind. Man, by virtue of his societal existence, becomes a conditioned entity. It is this conditioning that is a major obstacle in his way. To be able to overcome this hurdle, man must be ready to revisit his existing ideas. He must be willing to rise above all kinds of biases and prejudices and become receptive to truth that may come to him from anywhere. □



# INTELLECTUAL FOG

## *Clear Your Vision*

**P**ARTS of northern India get very cold in winter, resulting in thick fog. Trains get held up in the fog or move very slowly. To solve this problem, the Indian Railways have developed a 'fog-safe device' and plan to equip more than 2,000 trains with the device. These portable GPS driven anti-fog or fog-safe devices will track in real time the location of the next signal on the train's route. This will let the driver know exactly how many metres away he is from the signal. This device now enables trains to be driven at high speeds even in dense fog and ensures they reach their destination safely.

While this anti-fog device relates to material fog, there is also something that can be called 'intellectual fog' that hampers intellectual development. In ancient times, the means of acquiring knowledge were limited. With the prevalence of print and electronic media it has now become very simple to acquire knowledge. People express themselves through writing and speech, and with new forms of communications and media, the volume and exchange of such expression has increased enormously. The Internet has made it very easy to access information on any subject.

*Eliminating the irrelevant from the relevant is critical for success. This ensures that our thinking remains untouched by the intellectual fog that is present all around us.*

But there is a problem with this information overload. Despite access to a wealth of material on any subject, many people are unable to decipher a clear understanding of the issues. The information overload has only resulted in a jungle of confusion for them, and it is easy to get trapped in this 'intellectual fog'. One's thoughts and actions will then get determined by the 'thick fog' that surrounds them.

How do you keep yourself safe from this fog? How do you maintain right thinking in the midst of such intellectual darkness?

The 'fog-safe device' that trains use illustrates a solution to this problem. We need to have our own 'intellectual fog-safe device'. This device is an internally prepared mind trained in the art of differentiation.

For this device to work one should develop the capacity to put aside all unrelated matters and only extract information relevant to the subject. This technique can be called the principle of elimination. Eliminating the irrelevant from the relevant is critical for success. This ensures that our thinking remains untouched by the intellectual fog that is present all around us. In line with the laws of nature, this external fog will never end. All we can do is to develop the skills to stay safe from its negative effects and proceed on our intellectual journey, just as the train moves ahead and reaches its destination in spite of the fog. □

A decorative rectangular frame with ornate scrollwork at the top and bottom. The top scrollwork is large and intricate, while the bottom scrollwork is smaller and simpler. The frame is outlined in black and contains text and a small icon.

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A small decorative icon of an open book or flower, rendered in a light gray color, positioned centrally below the text within the frame.

# IN PURSUIT OF TRUTH

## *A Meaningful Life*

**I**N *The Story of an African Farm*, Olive Schreiner (1855-1920), a noted South African novelist, recounts the story of a hunter who goes in search of the beautiful White Bird of Truth. All he had seen of it was its reflection in a lake once while he was out shooting. He tried to catch the bird in the snares of credulity and the cage of imagination, but he realized that the bird of truth could be obtained only through truth. He left the Valley of Superstitions and started climbing up the Mountain of Truth. He continued climbing till he reached a high precipice. He started cutting rocks and making steps in the stone. He continued doing this for years, till, old and wizened, he managed to reach the summit. But, on arriving there, he found another range, higher than the previous one. Here, overwhelmed by old age and weariness, he laid himself down to die, but as he lay dying, a white feather fell close to him from above.

Now he felt sure that the bird he sought existed on the next range. Even though he could not reach the bird of truth, he died with the solace that those who followed him would not have to cut the first steps. His last words were: "Where I lie down, worn out, other men will stand young and fresh. By the steps that I have cut they will climb. They will never know the name of the man who made them...But they will mount on my work. They will climb and by my stair. They will find truth and through me." This story illustrates our quest for truth.

***The quest for truth is embedded in the human psyche. Life will be rendered meaningless unless it is anchored in some sort of truth.***

The pursuit of truth is the oldest adventure of humankind. It is innate in human nature. Mahatma Gandhi, a great champion of truth and nonviolence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, put it quite aptly, "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and nonviolence are as old as the hills." The quest for truth is embedded in the human psyche. Life will be rendered meaningless unless it is anchored in some sort of truth.

We are encouraged to pray in the following words: *O God! Show us the truth as truth, and inspire us to follow it. Show us falsehood as falsehood, and inspire us to abstain from it.* □

# FATE OF THE TRUTH-TELLER

## *Identity at Risk*

**N**APOLEON HILL, an American self-help author, mentions an interesting true story in his best-selling book *The Law of Success*. A Greenland Eskimo was taken on one of the American North Polar expeditions. Later, as a reward for faithful service, he was brought to New York for a short visit. He was filled with amazement and wonder at the miracles of sight and sound that he saw there. When he returned to his native village, he told stories of buildings that rose to the very face of the sky; of tram cars, which he described as houses that moved along a track; of artificial lights and all the other dazzling concomitants of the metropolis.

*In this world, a veil of falsehood clouds the truth. Man has not seen the world in which truth will come into its own. The prophets were made to see that world before its coming so that they could warn man of its advent.*

His people looked at him coldly and walked away, and forthwith throughout the village he was dubbed Sagdluk, meaning the Liar. In shame, he carried this name to his grave. Long before his death his original name was entirely forgotten. The simple minds of the Eskimos were unable to visualize the startling pictures drawn by Sagdluk, so they simply rejected the truth.

Just as the Eskimo was made to see a hitherto unknown world, so God gave the prophets a glimpse of the world that lies beyond death. They came to their peoples and conveyed to them the truths that God had embedded in their consciousness. But since these truths

belonged to an unseen world, which man was unable to visualize, people dubbed them madmen and liars (QURAN 11: 27). This was the fate of all the prophets of God. (QURAN 36: 30)

Indeed, every truth-teller in the history of man has had to tread the same rocky path. In this world, a veil of falsehood clouds the truth. Man has not seen the world in which truth will come into its own. The prophets were made to see that world before its coming so that they could warn man of its advent. But they met with disbelief from people who had seen nothing beyond the world which meets the eye. □



# SEEKER OF TRUTH

## *What is the Purpose of Truth?*

**T**RUTH gives us conviction. Only with conviction can we undertake any purposeful action. Our behaviour is governed by our conviction. Man is a born seeker—a veritable truth-seeking being. Every human being regards himself as incomplete until he has found that supreme principle by which he can explain his existence in this world and discover the purpose and meaning of his life.

A seeker aims at a rational explanation of the world and endeavours to discover a definite principle by which he may successfully plan his present life. A seeker of truth is looking for the answer to the question: 'What is that knowledge by which I may believe? Or, what may be the valid basis of my belief?' When he finds truth, he makes it his supreme concern.

### **Oneness of Truth**

If truth is more than one, it cannot give us any conviction. If we all believe in one God, then it is not possible that the guidance He sent to people at different times was inherently different. The truth or the true message has to be universal, identical and one.

Who is a True Seeker of Truth?

- A true seeker is sincere in his search and contemplates on the related questions. He rises above worldly considerations before drawing conclusions.
- A true seeker desires to seek out the hidden realities behind external appearances. He rises above emotional bias in his discovery of truth.
- He discards all assumptions and preceding notions seeking the truth with an open mind.
- A true seeker will use the right criterion in determining the truth.
- A true seeker will speak in a language understandable and rational or analytical. A true seeker shows humility in the face of truth. Truth is always presented by man and not directly by God.
- A true seeker looks not at the person who presents the truth but at the truth itself.
- A true seeker will surrender to the truth on discovering it. Truth is his supreme concern.
- A true seeker is potentially spiritual.

Everyone is a seeker. True. But few are finders. Why? Because, where seeking is instinctive, finding is the outcome of one's own conscious effort. □

# TRUTH—AN ANALYSIS

## *Relative or Absolute*

**I**T IS GENERALLY believed that truth is not something absolute. People have different perceptions or criteria for truth. That which is truth for one, may not be truth for another. In other words, truth is something relative not real, known in other words as 'personal truth'. A philosopher has described it in the following words:

There are no full stops in Truth, but only commas.

Some people think in this way, but this is a notion that stands rejected prima facie. This supposition does not have any logic or rational ground to stand on. In this world, whatever man believes in, he does so in an absolute sense. This is human nature. If man is not able to decipher a thing in its absolute sense, he continues his research until he has discovered it.

For example, in ancient times, man knew very little about the sun and the solar system. His search continued for thousands of years till he came to discover the overall system of the planets. As long as man had not reached this discovery, he continued his investigation.

***Denying truth to be absolute is akin to mental suicide. Those who hold this belief are not serious in their utterance. Refusing to accept the truth in its absolute form is similar to refusing to accept one's mother in the absolute form.***

The same is the case with other fields of knowledge. For thousands of years man has engaged himself in research and investigation in various disciplines of knowledge. This quest is ongoing till date and will continue till man comprehends the actual reality. This is because to man everything has an absolute form; from the stars to an atom, there is no exception to this rule.

It appears that the human mind takes everything in an absolute form. This is the conviction on the basis of which the process of search and research continued for thousands of years. If man were to believe that things did not occur in their absolute form, scientific activities would come to a complete halt. Scientific discoveries would come to a standstill.

The same principle applies to personal matters. Man considers himself to be absolute. If he doesn't think this way, he cannot stay alive for

even a single day. Man takes his mother, his wife, and his children in an absolute sense—the very survival of the family system is based upon this. In its absence, the entire system of human life would be shattered. Similarly, man considers his belongings like his house, his business and his bank balance, to be absolute. If he did not think like this, his economic life would never take shape.

In such a situation, it would be an exception to consider that truth is not absolute. It would mean that in an absolute world truth has a non-absolute existence. But, there is no logical basis for accepting this concept. It is incomprehensible to believe that in this vast universe, where everything else is in its absolute sense, truth, as an exception to this rule, is not in its absolute form. This would be a contradiction in logical terms and would never be acceptable to thinking people.

This is not a simple matter. Upon reflection, we find that man has a dual existence—body, and mind. Except for truth, everything caters to fulfilling the physical needs of man. Truth is the only thing that man requires for fulfilling his spiritual needs. Now, it is inconceivable that all objects of fulfilment of our physical needs are in their absolute form while truth, that fulfils our spiritual needs, is not absolute. To accept this division we would have to admit that there is a big contradiction in this world, that the objects of our material needs are available here in an absolute form while the objects of our spiritual needs are, by way of an exception, not available here in an absolute form.

***In this world, whatever man believes upon, he does it in an absolute sense. This is human nature. If man is not able to decipher a thing in its absolute sense, then he continues his research until he has discovered it.***

Truth is the biggest requirement of man. Without it, man is totally incomplete. The truth is that the denial of truth as absolute is akin to mental suicide. Those who hold this belief are not serious in their utterance. Refusing to accept the truth in its absolute form is similar to refusing to accept one's mother in the absolute form.

Another possibility is that nothing is true, that truth is something different altogether, or that truth has no existence. This kind of thought is without doubt an intellectual luxury that no serious man can afford to indulge in.

On a serious note, a person can, however, say that he has not found the truth, or that he is just a seeker. But no serious man can say that

truth is not absolute. A seeker of truth is looking for the answer to the question: "What is that knowledge by which I may believe?" When he finds truth, he makes it supreme.

In the universe that man lives in, everything is known to be absolute, and if something has not yet been discovered in its absolute sense, then man is continuously struggling hard to discover its absolute position. The same is the case with man's identity. Man, by his very nature, is an absolute-loving person. He wants to live in conviction. Truth gives him this conviction. Only with conviction can he take any action. His behaviour is governed by his conviction. If he knows a woman to be his mother, he wants to have an absolute belief in the fact that she is his mother. Similarly, when he owns a property, his ownership should be in the absolute sense. If this does not happen, man will be in an uncertain state of mind about everything. And it is a fact that man cannot live in uncertainty.

These facts make it clear that the concept of absoluteness is exactly in accordance with human nature. On the other hand, regarding everything as non-absolute is against the very nature of human beings. As far as truth is concerned, if it is not absolute, it cannot give us any conviction. To say that truth is not absolute is like saying that one does not believe in anything to be true. With such a belief, a person can only become a skeptic. And to be a skeptic is not a practical position for any human being. □



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# AN OVERVIEW OF MODERN ATHEISM

## *An Unsatisfactory Explanation of Nature*

**I**DEOLOGICALLY, human history can be divided into two major phases—the pre-scientific age, and the scientific age. In the former period, religion was the trendsetter for man. But after the emergence of modern science, this situation underwent a complete change. Now it is science—without itself being either for or against religion—which has acquired the position of trendsetter. Despite the non-partisan role of science, due to certain reasons, the atheistic ideology has come to dominate all intellectual disciplines. How did this happen? The following is a brief review of the situation.

Man, who has inhabited planet Earth for thousands of years, continues to see many things happening on a daily basis—for instance, the rising of the sun, the falling of the rain, the blowing of the winds, etc. Traditionally, man believed that God was instrumental in all these happenings. This belief had become for man an established axiom. Both theist and idolater believed this to be the reality, in one form or another.

After the emergence of modern science, however, it was learnt that apparently there existed a material cause behind all happenings. For instance, once while Sir Isaac Newton (d. 1727), the founder of modern science, was in his garden, he witnessed an apple drop from a tree. Newton began pondering about why the apple had fallen straight to the ground rather than going sideways or upward. After giving this matter deep thought, he succeeded in deducing from this the Law of Gravity. It was because of gravity that things fell downwards.

Thus, scientific study made great progress. Finally, scientists discovered that all the events happening in this world invariably have a cause. They formulated the principle of causation. This thinking, that all happenings are the result of some cause, continued to grow, until it finally dominated all scientific and academic human activities. Prior to this, happenings had been explained with reference to God. Now

***In the twenty-first century, further research has been carried out which demonstrates that this period of the world's demise has come very close. Now it is believed that soon all those resources will be exhausted with the help of which the supposed material paradise was being constructed.***

references to God were replaced with references to cause. This thinking was epitomized in these words: If events are due to natural causes, they are not due to supernatural causes. (*Religion without Revelation*, New York, 1958)

This scientific discovery initially had a purely physical connotation, and although natural phenomena were now explained with reference to

*The scientific discovery of 'cause and effect' initially had a purely physical connotation, and although natural phenomena were now explained with reference to cause instead of God, this did not amount to a denial of God. It was the atheist thinkers who equated this to the denial of God.*

cause instead of God, this did not amount to a denial of God. It was the atheist thinkers, rather than the scientists who, by appropriating this concept of causation, equated this with the denial of God. From this point onwards, modern atheism began to hold sway.

By laying much emphasis on the scientific discovery of cause and effect, modern atheists sought to convince people that there was no longer any need to make any reference to God for an explanation of events. For, *if events were due to natural causes, they were not due to supernatural causes.*

We shall soon see how there is an irrefutable gap in the logic of this argument. This gap notwithstanding, this theory gained extraordinary popularity among modern scholars. Consciously or unconsciously, they

began to regard the concept of cause and effect as a substitute for God. This way of thinking dominated all scientific disciplines. Here are a few examples to illustrate this point.

## **Materialism**

Materialism is a philosophy as well as a culture. Looked at practically, materialism is the notion that there is now no need to wait for the next world where God will bless us with Paradise, a world where all desires can be fulfilled, because the 'cause' by which Paradise can be built right here on this Earth has finally been understood. And this 'cause' is modern technology. That is why 'Paradise' on Earth began to be 'constructed' by means of modern technology and modern industry. A whole civilization was brought into being in the name of materialism. Today's man, totally oblivious of God, rushed towards the acquisition of this 'Paradise on Earth' in the concrete forms of modern civilization.

Houses were built and cities developed with the help of modern technology, and a modern lifestyle could be seen everywhere. This material Paradise in the wake of modern civilization has yet to be completed. But the latest research has proved that it is impossible to build Paradise on Earth. Moreover, further studies in the physical sciences have shown that the law of entropy applies to our world. That means in submission to this law, the world is irrevocably moving towards its end. A day will come when it will become extinct.

In the twenty-first century, further research has been carried out which demonstrates that this period of the world's demise has come very close. Now it is believed that soon, all those resources will be destroyed or exhausted with the help of which the supposed material 'Paradise' is being constructed. In other words, soon, those 'causes' will no longer be there on the basis of which the plans for a material Paradise were conceived.

### **Darwinism, or Organic Evolution**

For thousands of years, man believed that all living species, including man, were created by God—that it was the Lord of the world who brought into existence all the living species by directly creating them. But Charles Darwin (d. 1802) supposedly managed to find a 'cause' here as well. According to him, this 'cause'—'natural selection'—was responsible for bringing into existence all living species. That is, in the biological process resulting from various physical causes, many living species continued to evolve one from another. That is to say, all living species, including man, were brought into existence by a material cause rather than a non-material God.

This 'cause' discovered by Darwin has never been scientifically proven. It is only a supposition or a theory. Even biologists have given it the status of a working hypothesis, rather than an established fact. Darwin himself had doubts about this theory in the last stage of his life. That is why he died in a state of frustration.

In spite of this flaw, Darwin's theory gained general acceptance in modern academic circles. Even today this unsubstantiated theory is taught in universities all over the world.

### **Marxism**

Another such example is provided by Marxism. Karl Marx (d. 1883) tried to apply this principle to the field of society and the economy. He constructed the theory that the cause of the revolutionary changes

in human society is an automatic process of material action and reaction—or class conflict.

Karl Marx called this ‘historical determinism’ or ‘dialectical materialism’. He argued that, as a result of ineluctable factors inherent in society, two classes are produced. For historical reasons, there is a clash between the two classes, which leads to the obliteration of one class, and thus one class is replaced by another. In this way, owing to these internal causes, human society continues to make progress.

This ‘cause’ discovered by Karl Marx and his colleagues proved to be a mere supposition, however. Marx’s predictions were disproved and attempts to translate them into reality in the long run proved abortive. It is common knowledge that a revolution was brought about by the use of force in the Soviet Union in 1917, under the banner of Marx’s communist ideology. But after attempts to put this ideology into practice on a large scale, it had to be finally discarded.

*The truth is that the principle of causation was based originally on supposition. It was not an academic argument. But people, in their haste, were willing to give credence to a ‘concept’ which was a mere supposition rather than a reality.*

### **Modern Consumerism**

Modern consumerism is another example of this nature. Man has a limitless desire to accumulate goods of all kinds which will bring him comfort and luxury. Industrial progress appeared to make this feasible. It was as if

modern industry was the cause which could result in all kinds of instant gratification.

People all over the world then rushed to shopping centres to buy goods, only to find that this ‘cause’ again proved to be a supposition. They did not take into consideration the fact that the production of these goods was never going to bring them Paradise, as the production of consumer goods came at the cost of making the present world uninhabitable for man. For instance, cars and aeroplanes made travelling very easy, but their functioning resulted—to an unmanageable extent—in the carbon emissions known as green-house gases. Scientists the world over have failed to find a solution to this problem. Air conditioning and the refrigeration of perishable goods have also contributed to tearing a large hole in the life-giving ozone layer of the upper atmosphere. This has proved to be an insolvable challenge to all life forms. This shows

that industries have to be pollution-free so that consumer goods may be produced in a non-injurious way. But it has proved well-nigh impossible for man to rid industry of its pollutant factors.

The truth is that the principle of causation was based originally on supposition. It was not an academic argument. But people, in their haste, were willing to give credence to a 'concept' which was a mere supposition rather than a reality. And indeed, its popularity was due less to its academic weight than to its sentimental value.

In this argument put forward by modern atheists there was clearly a great logical flaw. It did not take into account the fact that according to science, the proximate or immediate 'cause' of any event is not the final word. Even after that, the question remains to be answered: How did that cause come into existence? The truth is that this 'cause' does not explain anything. The 'cause' itself is in need of an explanation.

(For further details, see the book, '*God Arises*', by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan at [www.cpsglobal.org/books/god-arises](http://www.cpsglobal.org/books/god-arises)) □



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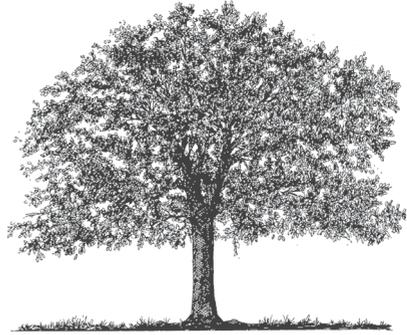
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# FROM THE SPIRITUAL TREE

*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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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE TRUTH

**G**OD manifests Himself on earth through truth. Disbelief in the truth is disbelief in God. There is no greater crime than to refuse to accept the truth after it has been made plain. Truth emanates from God. Whoever rejects it is, in fact, rejecting God.

***Rejecting truth on the grounds of prejudice, pride or expediency, is to reject God Himself. It is a failure to recognize God in the truth. It is equivalent to placing yourself above God and giving precedence to your own petty requirements.***

There is nothing strange about the truth. It is inherent to human nature, yet people fail to accept it. This is because they are psychologically inhibited from doing so. Acceptance of the truth might disrupt their materialistic life-pattern. They might have to lower their worldly status. If the truth is presented by some insignificant person against whom they are prejudiced, they are reluctant to acknowledge it. Psychological barriers such as these dominate their minds, preventing straight thinking. They reject matters which a little honest thought would surely have led them to accept as the truth.

Since man is being tested in this world, God does not make Himself manifest in visible form; He appears in the form of truth. Man must recognize God as enshrined in truth and bow down before it. When truth appears on earth, it is as if God has appeared in all His majesty. Rejecting truth on the grounds of prejudice, pride or expediency, is to reject God Himself. It is a failure to recognize God in the truth. It is equivalent to placing yourself above God and giving precedence to your own petty requirements. God will have scant regard for such people on the Day of Judgement, and whomsoever God scorns will find no refuge on earth or in the heavens. They will wander helplessly, forever abject and forlorn. □



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# ATHEISM REFUTED

## *A Causeless Cause*

**A**THEISM is an outcome of being against theism. It does not result from a discovery of the non-existence of God. Earlier, atheism was based on claims of scientific validation. However, it has now lost its foundations and adherence to it has become anachronistic in nature. Those who claim scientific backing for atheism now have to face observations of other scientific authorities which run contrary to their claim.

Einstein, when asked whether he was an atheist replied, "You may call me an agnostic, but I do not share the crusading spirit of the professional atheist whose fervour is mostly due to painful act of liberation from the fetters of religious indoctrination received in youth". (*Letter to Guy H Raner Jr*)

***One of the most amazing qualities of the universe is that there is no interpretation or explanation of it, other than that which allows for God's existence, despite the fact that the best brains in every age have attempted to unravel its mysteries.***

This means scientists are not in a position to say that there is a God, or that there is no God. They can just take a sceptical stand on the existence of God. This is because the accepted base for belief in something in the intellectual world is scientific. Since there is no clear scientific discovery on the non-existence of God, this is still subject to interpretation.

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a strong wave of what was popularly called 'scientific atheism'. The argument often offered to negate the existence of God was His being invisible. But new scientific investigations, carried out at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, started turning the tide against the credibility of this position. It became apparent and accepted that there are

many aspects of nature that are invisible and yet they exist. One of the books written on this new world discovered by science is *Science and the Unseen World* by Sir Arthur Eddington.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sir James Jeans declared that the universe which had been discovered by modern science was not compatible with the mechanical interpretation that had gained ground since past several decades. The age of quantum mechanics has established that nothing is fully observable. Contrary to previous

belief, it was not the atom that was the last fundamental particle that constituted matter; rather there were unobservable subatomic particles that served as the building blocks of atoms. In a book published in 1988, entitled *A Brief History of Time*, Stephen W. Hawking (one of the foremost physicists of recent times, 1942-2018) explains the Big Bang Theory, according to which the universe is constantly expanding.

After working out the relevant mathematical equations, Hawking reached the conclusion that the expansion of the universe is taking place according to a well-calculated scheme. The initial rate of expansion must have been fixed with great accuracy so that it would always be less than the critical rate, i.e., the rate at which the universe would begin to collapse again. This view cannot be explained unless it is accepted that the rate of expansion of the universe has been determined with the utmost precision.

Hawking writes:

It would be very difficult to explain why the universe should have begun in just this way, except as the act of God who intended to create beings like us.

One of the most amazing qualities of the universe is that there is no interpretation or explanation of it other than that which allows for God's existence, despite the fact that the best brains in every age have attempted to unravel its mysteries.

It has been claimed that the universe has always been in existence in its present form. It has also been claimed that it came into being on its own and that it goes on its own. Cause and effect have been said to have created everything, and attempts have also been made to prove the law of organic evolution to be the creator of the universe; which however can be only a process of nature, but never its creator. But the more a man learns about the universe, the more absurd do these theories appear to him and the stranger does it seem that something, or some being other than God Almighty should be the Lord and Master of the universe. The universe, by its very existence, testifies to the fact that God is its Creator. Whatever arguments or opinions have been expressed to counter this fact have proved erroneous by the knowledge acquired to date through human research. □

***The accepted base for belief in something in the intellectual world is scientific. Since there is no clear scientific discovery on the non-existence of God, this is still subject to interpretation.***

# APPEARANCE AND REALITY

## *Looking Beyond the Veil*

**A** PPEARANCE veils reality. In this world, man is put to the test of recognizing appearances for what they are, and of penetrating them in order to reach the reality hidden beyond them. 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 the level 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

*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 apart can expect to receive nothing.*

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.

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 cattle 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, accords with the systematic organization of the universe in every detail. It is only because this is so that the tree can yield fruit and the cow can give milk.

*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.*

When he thinks of all this, 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. 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 apart can expect to receive nothing. □



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# FAITH AND REASON

## *An Objective Study*

**I**N ITS ISSUE No. 134 (1992), the journal, *Faith and Reason*, from Manchester College, Oxford (England), published an article titled, 'The Relationship between Faith and Reason', by Dr Paul Badham. Paul Badham is professor emeritus of Theology and Religious Studies at St. David's College, Lampeter, in the University of Wales. His paper in this issue had been presented at a Conference of the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Science in Moscow in November 1991.

Professor Badham's paper can indeed be called thought-provoking and, as such, is worth reading, but he has made certain points with which I do not agree. He states that philosophical certainty should not be confused with religious certitude. He writes: 'As a philosopher of religion I feel compelled to acknowledge that faith could never be placed on the same level of certainty as scientific knowledge'.

In contrast, I feel that faith and belief can indeed be placed on the same level of certainty as scientific theory. In the twenty-first century, there is no real difference between the two.

### **Religion and Science—At Same Level of Certainty**

As Bertrand Russell puts it, knowledge is of two kinds—knowledge of things and knowledge of truths. This dichotomy exists in religion as well as in science. For instance, to the scientist who regards biological evolution as a scientific fact, there are two aspects to be considered. One is related to the organic part of species, and the other relates to the law of evolution which is inherently and covertly operative in the continuing process of change among the species.

When an evolutionist studies the outward physical appearance of species, he may be said to be studying 'things'. On the other hand, when he studies the law of evolution, he deals with that aspect of the subject, which is termed as the study, or knowledge of 'truths.'

Every evolutionist knows that there is a basic difference between the two aspects. As far as the study of things or the phenomena of evolution is concerned, direct evidence is available. For instance, because the study of fossils found in various layers of the earth's crust is possible at the level of observation, working hypotheses may be based thereon.

On the contrary, as far as facts about the law of evolution are concerned, due to the impossibility of objective observation, direct argument is not possible. For instance, the concept of sudden mutations in organs is entirely based on assumptions, rather than on direct observation. In the case of mutations, external changes are observable, but the cause, that is, the law of nature, is totally unobservable. That is why all evolutionists make use of indirect argument, which in logic is known as inferential argument.

The concept of mutation forms the basis of the theory of evolution. However, there are two aspects to the matter. One comes under observation, but the second part is totally unobservable. It is only by making use of the principle of inference that this second part of evolution may be included in the theory of evolution.

It is a commonplace that all the offspring of men or animals are not uniform. Differences of one kind or another are to be found among them. In modern times, this biological phenomenon has been scientifically studied. These studies have revealed that spontaneous changes are suddenly produced in the foetus in the mother's womb. It is these changes that are responsible for the differences between children of the same parents.

These differences between offspring are observable. But the philosophy of evolution subsequently formed on the basis of this observation is totally unobservable and is based only on inferential argument. That is to say, that the 'things' of evolution are observable, while the 'truths' inferred from observation are unobservable.

Now, what the evolutionist does—as an example—is put a goat at one end and a giraffe at the other. Then, taking some middle specimens of fossils, he forms a theory that the neck of one of the offspring of the earlier generation of the goat was somewhat taller. Then, when this particular offspring with the taller neck gave birth, this tallness for generations spanning millions of years ultimately converted the initial goat with a taller neck into a species like the giraffe in its advanced stage. Charles Darwin writes of this change in his book *The Origin of Species*: "It seems to me almost certain that an ordinary hoofed quadrupled might be converted into a giraffe".

***The same  
inferential logic  
employed to prove  
newly discovered  
concepts of science  
is applicable to  
religious faiths to  
prove their veracity.***

In this case, the existence of differences between the various offspring of a goat is itself a known fact. But the accumulation of this difference, generation after generation, over millions of years resulting in a new species known as 'giraffe' is wholly unobservable and unrepeatable. This conclusion has been inferred from observation; the whole process of mutation developing into a new species has never come under direct observation.

Exactly the same is true of the subject of religion. One aspect of the study of religion is the study of its history, its personalities, its injunctions, its rites and its rituals. The above division (knowledge of things and knowledge of truths) amounts to a study of the 'things' of religion. In respect of religion, objective information is likewise available. As such, the study of religion too can be done on the basis of direct observations exactly as is done in the study of biological evolution.

***Faith and belief can be placed on the same level of certainty as scientific theory. In the twenty-first century there is no real difference between the two.***

The second aspect of the study of religion is what is termed, in general, beliefs pertaining to the unseen world. These are the beliefs that are beyond our known sensory world. That is, the existence of God and the angels, revelation, Hell and Heaven, etc. In this other aspect of religion, direct observations do not exist. The study of religion must, therefore, be done in the light of that logical principle called inference on the basis of observation, that is, the same logical principle which the evolutionists employ in the second aspect of their theory.

Looked at in the light of this principle, both religion and science are at par. Both have two equally different parts. One part is based on such scientific certainty as permits direct argument. The other part is based on scientific inference, to prove which only the principle of indirect argument may be used. Keeping this logical division before us, we can find no actual difference between the two.

The unnecessary apology for religious uncertainty made by Professor Badham is occasioned by his inability to consider this difference and his confusing one area of study with another. Making the error of false analogy, he is comparing the first part of science to the second part of religion and looking at the second part of religion in the light of the first part of science. This meaningless comparison is responsible for the ill-considered conclusions he has arrived at in his article.

Had the Professor compared the first part of science to the first part of religion and the second part of science to the second part of religion, his inferiority complex (as a man of religion) would have ceased to exist. He would have felt that, purely as a matter of principle, wrong parallels had been drawn. The argument used in the first part of science is equally applicable to the first part of religion. Similarly, the argument applied to the second part of science is equally applicable to the second part of religion.

This is a truth which has been acknowledged even by a staunch and leading atheist like Bertrand Russell. At the beginning of his book *Why I am not a Christian*, he has set forth what he considers a valid argument. He points out that in his view, all the great religions of the world Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Communism—were all untrue and harmful and that it is not possible to prove their validity from the logical point of view. Those who have opted for one religion or the other have done so, according to Russell, under the influence of their traditions and environment, rather than on the strength of argument.

However, Bertrand Russell has admitted this fact—that a belief based on rational argument is valid—when he says, “There is one of these arguments which is not purely illogical. I mean the argument from design. This argument, however, was destroyed by Darwin.”

He intends here to say that the existence of God is proved by the argument that in this world where there is design there should be a designer. He admits that this method of argument in its nature is the same as that used to prove scientific concepts. However, even after this admission, he rejects this argument by saying that it has been destroyed by Darwinism.

This is, however, a wholly baseless point, as Darwin’s theory is related to the Creator’s process of creation rather than to the existence of the Creator. To put it briefly, Darwinism states that the various species found in the world were not separate creations but had changed from one species into separate species over a prolonged period of evolution by a process of natural selection.

It is obvious that this theory is not related to the existence or non-existence of God. It deals with the process of creation instead of the Creator. That is to say, if it was hitherto believed that God created each species separately, now, after accepting the theory of evolution, it has to be believed that God originally created an initial species

which was invested with the capability of multiplying into numerous species. And, then, He set in motion a natural process in the universe favourable to such multiplication. In this way, over a long period of time, this primary species fulfilled its potential by changing into innumerable species. To put it another way, the theory of evolution is not a study of the existence of God but, simply, of how God displayed in the universe His power of creation. That is why Darwin himself has concluded his famous book *The Origin of Species* with these words:

There is grandeur in this view of life, that 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.

It is true that the new facts regarding the universe discovered in the twentieth century have revolutionized the world of logic. The difference between religious argument and scientific argument which had been erroneously conceived has been eliminated. In respect of argument, the case of science too has reached exactly the same point as religion.

### **Both Direct and Inferential Argument are Valid**

Newton (1642-1727) made a special study of the solar system, discovering laws governing the revolution of planets around the sun. His study was, however, confined to astronomical bodies, which can be called the macroworld. It is possible in the macroworld to weigh and measure things. As a result of the immediate impact of these discoveries, many began to think along the lines that reality was observable and that the proper and valid argument was one based on observation. It was under the influence of this concept that the philosophy generally known as logical positivism came into being.

However, the discoveries made in the first quarter of the twentieth century shook the very foundation of the preliminary theories. These later discoveries revealed that beyond this world of appearance, a whole world was hidden, a world which does not come under observation. It is only indirectly possible to understand this hidden world and present arguments in its favour. That is, by observing the effects of something, we arrive at an understanding of its existence.

This discovery altered the whole picture. When the access of human knowledge was limited to the macrocosmic world, man was a prey to

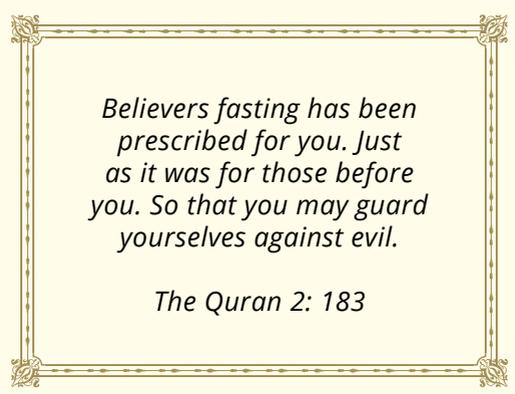
the misapprehension—that reality is only that which is observable. But when human knowledge penetrated the microworld, the academic situation underwent a paradigm shift.

Now it was revealed that the field of direct argument was extremely limited. New facts which came to the knowledge of man were so abstruse that indirect or inferential argument alone was applicable. For instance, in 1895, the German scientist Wilhelm Konrad Roentgen found during an experiment that on a glass before him some effects were observable despite the fact that there was no known link between his experiment and the glass. He concluded that there was an invisible radiation, which was travelling at the speed of 186,000 miles per second. Due to the unknown nature of this radiation, Roentgen named it X-ray.

The twentieth century brought forth the discoveries of a number of things like X-rays which do not come under direct human observation. However, due to their effects having come to the knowledge of man, it was not possible to deny their existence. As a result of modern research, not only were different departments of science revolutionized but the science of logic too witnessed fundamental changes.

Now inferential reasoning was also accepted as a valid method of reasoning, for, without discoveries like X-rays, the scientific structure of the atom, the existence of dark matter, etc., could not be explained.

After the extension of this method of reasoning in modern times, argument on religious faith has become as valid as reasoning on scientific concepts. Exactly the same inferential logic, which was employed to prove the newly discovered concepts of science, was applicable to religious faiths to prove their veracity. Differences in the criterion of logic have now vanished. □



*Believers fasting has been  
prescribed for you. Just  
as it was for those before  
you. So that you may guard  
yourselves against evil.*

*The Quran 2: 183*

# RATIONALITY OF FAITH

## *An Academic Approach to Religion*

**I**T IS THROUGH reason that man justifies his faith. Rational justification strengthens his convictions. Rational argument is thus an intellectual need of every believer. Without this, he would not be able to stand firmly by his faith. It is reason which transforms blind faith into a matter of intellectual choice.

History shows that man has employed four kinds of argument to find rational grounds for his faith. Each of these reflects different stages in his intellectual development.

### **Natural Argument**

The first kind of argument is one based on nature, i.e. simple facts or common experiences. This has been the most commonly used since ancient times. Some examples of this kind are found in the Quran, one of which relates to the Prophet Abraham. It is stated as follows in the Quran:

Have you not heard of him (*Nimrod*) who argued with Abraham about his Lord, because God had bestowed the kingdom upon him? Abraham said: 'My Lord is the one who gives life and brings death.' He answered, 'I [too] give life and bring death!' Abraham said, 'God brings up the sun from the east, so bring it up yourself from the west.' Then the disbeliever was confounded. God does not guide the wrongdoers. (2: 258)

We find another example of the argument based on natural reasoning in the Quran:

In this way We showed Abraham Our kingdom of the heavens and the earth, so that he might have certainty of faith. When night descended on him, he saw a star. He said: 'This is my Lord!' Then when it set, he said: 'I do not love things that set.' When he saw the moon rise and spread its light, he said: 'This is my Lord.' But when it set, he said: 'If my Lord does not guide me, I will be one of the misguided people.' Then when he saw the sun shining, he said: 'This is my Lord. This is the greatest of all!' Then when it set, he said: 'My people, I disown all that you worship besides with God.' (6: 75-78)

Argument of this kind may appear to be simple, but they are invested with deeper meaning. For this reason, they have been relied upon as much in the past as today.

### **Philosophical Argument**

The second kind of argument is that first propounded by Greek philosophers. Based on pure logic, it was so popular in the medieval ages that Jews, Christians and Muslims all incorporated it into their theological system. Commonly known as the First Cause, it may be summed up as follows:

The world man observes with his senses must have been brought into being by God as the First Cause. Philosophers have argued that the observable order of causation is not self-explanatory. It can only be accounted for by the existence of a First Cause. This First Cause, however, must not be considered simply as the first in a series of successive causes, but rather as the First Cause in the sense of being the cause for the whole series of observable causes.

The Prime Mover or First Cause theory, although obviously very sound, has constantly been under attack from secular circles, and critics have raised a variety of objections. To begin with, they say that it is only guesswork, and not an undeniable fact. Some critics also object that the actions or free will of subatomic particles are uncaused; so, why not also the world as a whole? Moreover, even if all things in the world are caused, this may not be true of the world itself, because no one knows whether the whole is sufficiently like its parts to warrant such a generalization.

*The truth is that, without a belief in God, the universe remains as unexplainable as the entire mechanism of light is, without a belief in electromagnetic waves.*

### **Spiritual Argument**

Yet another argument is that which is based on spiritual experience. Some people who engage in spiritual exercises and have spiritual experiences say that when they reach the deeper levels of the human consciousness, they find an unlimited world which cannot be described in limited language. They insist that this limitless, unexplainable phenomenon is nothing but God Almighty Himself.

Critics say that even if this spiritual state is as real as is claimed by those who enter it, it is still a subjective experience; that it conveys nothing to those who have not experienced the same spiritual state.

All the above arguments are in one way or another inferential in nature and not of the direct kind. In view of this fact, critics hold that all faiths, including Islam, have no scientific basis. They contend that Islamic theology is not based on primary rationalism, but on secondary rationalism.

However, these contentions appeared to be valid only till the end of the nineteenth century. The previous century closed the chapter on all such debates. Now, according to modern developments in science, one can safely say that religious tenets can be proved on the same logical plane as the concepts of science. There is now no difference between the two in terms of scientific reasoning. Let us, then, see what modern scientific reasoning is all about.

### **Scientific Argument**

Religion, or faith, relates to issues such as the existence of God, something intangible and unobservable, unlike non-religious things like the sun, which has a tangible and observable existence. Therefore, it came to be held that only non-religious matters might be established by direct argument, while it is only indirect or inferential argument which can be used to prove religious propositions.

It was believed, therefore, that rational argument was possible only in non-religious matters, and as far as religious matters were concerned, rational argument was not applicable at all. That is to say, it was only in non-religious areas that primary rationalism was possible, while in religion, only secondary rationalism could be applied.

*The existence of God,  
as a designer (cause)  
was presumed  
because His design  
(effect) could be seen  
to exist.*

In the past, arguments based on Aristotelean logic used to be applied to faith. By its very nature, it was an indirect argument. Modern critics, therefore, labelled such arguments as unworthy of consideration. That is why religion was not thought worthy of being paid any attention to by rational people. This state of affairs presented a challenge not only to other religions but to Islam as well.

About five hundred years ago, with the emergence of science, this state of affairs did not change. Scientists in the wake of the Renaissance, believed that matter, in fact, the entire material world, was something solid which could be observed. Newton had even formed a theory that light consisted of tiny corpuscles. As such, it was possible to apply

direct argument as an explanation of material things. It continued to be believed that the kind of argument which is applied to apparently tangible things could not be applied in the case of religion.

But by the early twentieth century, specifically after the First World War, this mental climate changed completely. The ancient Greek philosophers believed that matter, in the last analysis, was composed of atoms. And the atom, though very tiny, was a piece of solid matter. But with the breaking of the atom in the twentieth century, all the popular scientific concepts underwent a sea change. The theories about faith and reason seemed relevant only while science was confined to the macrocosmic level. Later, when science advanced to the microcosmic level, it underwent a revolution, and along with it, the method of argument also changed.

Till then, science had been based on the proposition that all the things it believed in, like the atom, could be directly explained. But when the atom, the smallest part of an element, was smashed, it was revealed that it was not a material entity, but just another name for unobservable waves of electrons.

This discovery demonstrated how a scientist could see only the effect of a thing and not the thing itself. For instance, the atom, after being split, produces energy which can be converted into electricity. This runs along a wire in the form of a current, yet this event is not observable even by a scientist. But when such an event produces an effect, for instance, it lights up a bulb or sets a motor in motion, this effect comes under a scientist's observation. Similarly, the waves from an X-ray machine are not observable by a scientist, but when they produce the image of a human body on a plate, then it becomes observable.

Now the question arose as to what stand a scientist must take. Should he believe only in a tangible effect, or the intangible thing as well which produced that effect? Since the scientist was bound to believe in the tangible effect, he had no choice but to believe in its intangible cause.

Here the scientist felt that direct argument could be applied to the tangible effect, but that it was not at all possible to apply direct argument to the intangible cause. The most important of all the changes brought about by this new development in the world of science was that it was

***Reason and faith are now standing on the same ground. No one can legitimately reject faith as something irrational, unless one is ready to reject the rationality of scientific theories as well.***

admitted in scientific circles that inferential argument was as valid as direct argument. That is, if a cause consistently gives rise to an effect, the existence of the intangible cause will be accepted as a proven fact, just as the existence of the tangible effect is accepted because it is observable. In modern times, all the concepts of science held to be established have been proven by this very logic.

After reaching this stage of rational argument, the difference between religious argument and scientific argument ceases to exist. The problem faced earlier was that religious realities, such as the existence of God, could be proved only by inference or indirect argument. For instance, the existence of God as the Designer (First Cause) was presumed because His design (effect) could be seen to exist. But now the same method of indirect argument has been generally held to be valid in the world of science. Bertrand Russel, famed for his atheistic views, also accepted the veracity of inferential argument. He wrote:

I commit myself to the view that there are valid processes of inference from events to other events....more particularly, from events from which I am aware without reference to events of which I have no such awareness. (*Human Knowledge*)

There are numerous meaningful things in the universe which are brought to the knowledge of human beings for which no explanation is possible. It has simply to be accepted that there is a meaningful cause, that is God. The truth is that without belief in God, the universe remains inexplicable just as the entire mechanism of light and motion is inexplicable without a belief in electromagnetic waves.

Thus, the option one has to take is not between the universe without God and the universe with God. Rather, the option actually is between the universe with God and no universe at all. Since we cannot, for obvious reasons, opt for the latter proposition, we are, in fact, left with no other option except the former, that is, the universe with God.

In view of the recent advancements in scientific reasoning, a true faith has proved to be as rational as any other scientific theory. Reason and faith are now standing on the same ground. In fact, no one can legitimately reject faith as something irrational unless one is ready to reject the rationality of scientific theories as well. For, all the modern scientific theories are accepted as proven on the basis of the same rational criterion by which a matter of faith would be equally proven true. After the river of knowledge has reached this advanced stage, there remains no logical difference between the two. □

# DENIAL OF TRUTH

## *Psychology at Work*

**T**HE HUMAN mind is a mirror of reality. Everyone knows the function of a mirror. It reproduces the image of anything that is placed in front of it. The image it produces corresponds exactly to the reflected object, leaving nothing out and adding nothing of its own. So it is with the human mind. When reality is placed before this mirror, it is reproduced exactly. The image of truth which is reflected in the human mind is exactly the same as that which stands before it. It recognizes the truth for what it is and accepts it as such.

This being the case, why is it that truth comes before many people and yet they fail to accept it? The answer to this question is that it is always personal attachments and commitments that prevent one from accepting truth. There can be no sound reason for denying the truth. Those that do so are motivated by their attachment to something else which prevents them from attaching themselves to truth.

If a third object is placed in between a mirror and the thing that is meant to be reflected, the image will be obscured. So it is with truth and the human mind. If something else comes in between the two, the image of truth that should be cast on to the mind becomes obscured. It is essential, therefore, that nothing should be allowed to come in between oneself and truth. There should be nothing to prevent one from accepting truth. This is a prerequisite for realizing the truth, yet it is one that people are usually unable to fulfil. All too often they let something else come in between themselves and the reality that has been placed before the mirror of their minds.

Sometimes, it is people to whom one is attached who come in the way of truth. Sometimes, it is self-interest, or some other commitment. In every day and age people have let some unconnected thing come in between themselves and truth, with the result that they remained bereft of what should have been lodged in their souls.

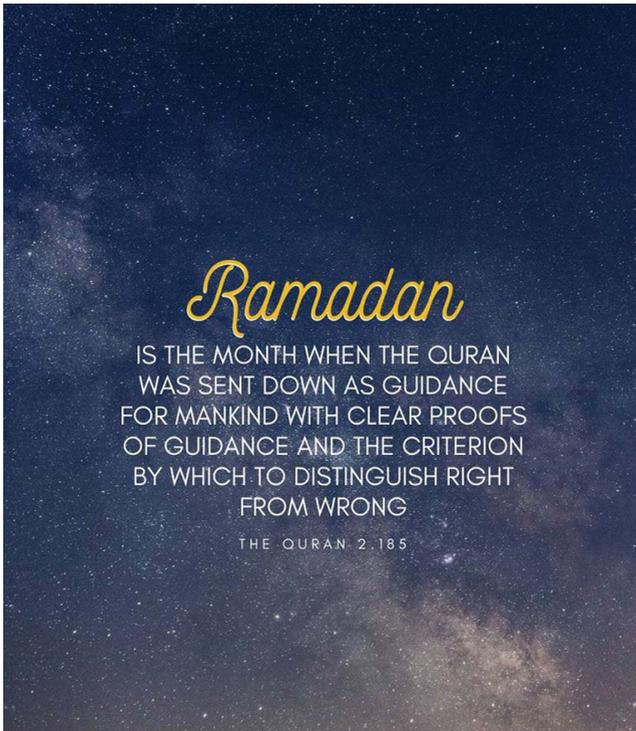
Some do not accept the truth for fear of losing their power and position. Some because the presenter of the truth appears to them

***Truth only accepts one who has accepted it without any reservation, who has given himself entirely up to it. Those who are attached to something else which they cannot break away from can never find truth, for they cannot give it the attention it demands.***

an insignificant person. They question—Is truth being promulgated by one who does not rank high among the mighty of this world?

Some others do not accept the truth as they do not want to become isolated from their people. Each case is a case of denial without valid grounds, only their blind commitment to something else which they do not want to break away from.

Truth will be attained by one who has accepted it without any reservation, who has given himself up entirely to it. Those who are attached to something else that they cannot break away from, can never find truth, for they cannot give it the attention it demands. Only those succeed in the search for truth who forsake everything else and give themselves up to it entirely when truth comes before them. □



# ACTIONS MATTER

## *Sincerity*

**A**T THE TIME of the Prophet of Islam, there were certain people in Madinah who talked of truth, yet did nothing for its sake and used beautiful words to cover up their misdeeds. Exposing them, the Quran says:

Those who exult in their misdeeds and love to be praised for what they have not done should not suppose that they are secure from punishment; they shall suffer a grievous punishment. (3: 188)

According to this divine principle set forth in the Quran, it is only real action that matters. Empty words have no value in the eyes of God. Those who utter such words are referred to in the Quran as hypocrites. One who talks of the truth, yet does nothing for the truth is guilty of falsity. He is trying to receive credit for something which he never did. He will be discredited before God.

Why do some people speak like this? They utter beautiful words or write charming essays to please others. These people may be applauded by their audiences, but this kind of speech or writing has no value before God. There are always people who can be fooled by false words, but God Almighty, who is all knowing, cannot be fooled in this way.

According to the Quran, mere lip service—for example, just saying sorry when a mistake is made, or saying thank you when receiving help—is not enough.

When a mistake is made, you have to repent in your heart, and when you are given much-needed assistance, you have to be grateful with all your heart and soul. Words are no alternative to deeds.

There is a great difference between social manners and real morality. Social manners are only at a superficial level; while real moral value is quite different, being based on great moral and ethical sensibility. □

***One who talks of the truth, yet does nothing for the truth is guilty of falsity. He is trying to receive credit for something which he never did. He will be discredited before God.***



# THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

## *Believing When it Matters*

**I**N THE PRESENT world, man believes in God on the basis of argument. In the Hereafter, he will believe in God on the basis of God's might and power, for God will be visible to all.

It is as if in the present world argument is the representative of God. On the other hand, in the Hereafter, God will appear before men in all His glory. There will then be no choice but to believe in Him.

The true believers are those who believe in God on the basis of argument, who bow to truth while there is no other incentive at work. On the other hand, the deniers are those who fail to believe in truth for the sake of truth, who believe in truth only when they have no choice. A truth bereft of power and glory fails to impress them. Such people, who accept as their object of worship visible might and power and not the invisible God are not true believers.

***God wants to test whether or not people truly believe in the sphere of the unseen, but people want to prove their belief in terms of what can be seen. A true believer is one who sees the world of eternity within the present world.***

God wants to test whether or not people truly believe in the sphere of the unseen, but people want to prove their belief in terms of what can be seen. Thus, the true believer is one who sees the world of eternity within the present world. He lives as if the realities of the next, unseen world were present before him. Unbelievers will also see the next world, but this will only be when all veils have been torn asunder by the shrill sound of the Trumpet announcing the resurrection of man. Then, all unseen realities will be visible to man. Man's vision will not profit him on that day. It will be a time of retribution, not a time to give evidence of one's faith in God.

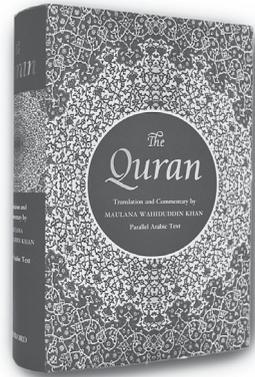
Here man can pretend to be great, but it will not be long before his real position is exposed. On that day, many who have honour in this world will be debased, and many who claim to be friends of justice and humanity will be exposed as enemies of the very causes they ostensibly espoused; many who are acclaimed amongst the brave will be condemned as cowards; many who denied bowing to the truth will be exposed as shams; many who thought that they had reserved Heaven for themselves will find themselves at the gates of Hell. The more fearless of God a man has become, the more fearful is the moment which awaits him! ❏

# 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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***We sent messengers before you [Prophet] to many communities and afflicted their people with suffering and hardship, so that they might humble themselves. When the affliction decreed by Us befell them, they did not humble themselves, but rather their hearts hardened, for Satan had made all their doings seem fair to them. When they had forgotten Our admonition, We granted them all that they desired; but just as they were rejoicing in what they were given, We seized them suddenly and they were plunged into despair. The wrongdoers were thus annihilated. All praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds. (6: 42-45)***

When a man is faced with the truth and he does not accept it, God does not seize him immediately, but gives him some jolts by way of monetary loss or physical trouble, so that he should review his way of life, and his thinking should be revolutionized. Life's events are not mere happenings but vibrant messages from God sent to wake a man up from his sleep of forgetfulness. But man learns nothing from these things. He consoles himself by saying that these are normal ups and downs and that such ups and downs do occur in life. In this way, Satan all too often diverts the mind of the individual from possible divine disfavour and pushes him into negligence of his religious duties by providing him with plausible justifications. When a man indulges in this type of behaviour again and again, his heart loses all sensitivity to what is true or false, right or wrong. His conscience eventually becomes totally blunted.

When a man ignores the warnings received from God, His approach towards him changes. Now, God's decision for him is that the doors to comfort and success should be opened for him; he should be granted prosperity in full measure; his honour and popularity should

increase. This is, in reality, a punishment, so that the evil hidden in him should come out clearly. Under these prosperous conditions the man feels satisfied with himself and becomes more and more insensitive and much bolder in ignoring the Truth. And, as a result, his meriting punishment is fully established. When this purpose is achieved, God's retribution suddenly overwhelms him. He is deprived of worldly life and presented before the court of the Hereafter, so that he may be awarded the punishment of Hell.

This world is God's world. Here the right to have one's greatness extolled belongs to only one Being. So, if a man ignores the divine truth, he is in fact disrespecting God. In a world overarched by the majesty of the Almighty, he wants to establish his own greatness. In this way he is indulging in unparalleled transgression. He is being insolent to God before whom no behaviour other than that of the utmost humility is proper.

***Say, 'If God should take away your hearing and your sight and seal your hearts, who is the deity who could restore it to you save God?' See how We explain the signs to them in diverse ways, yet they turn away. Ask them, 'Tell me, if the punishment of God came upon you suddenly or predictably, would any but the wrongdoers be destroyed?'***

(6: 46-47)

The granting of ears, eyes and heart to man indicates what his Creator wants from him. The Creator wants man to hear and see His signs and accept them using rational arguments. If a man does not utilize these God-given capabilities for the purpose they are meant, then he is running the risk that he may be declared incapable and his capabilities may be snatched from him. How helpless is one who is rendered blind, deaf and mentally disabled because such a person will remain of no social value. But there is a kind of helplessness greater than this: it is to have ears but be deaf to the Truth; it is to have eyes but be blind to the Truth; it is to have a heart in one's breast but be incapable of understanding the Truth. This deprivation is much more serious than the first kind, because it makes a man debased and worthless in respect of the Hereafter; there is no shortcoming more heinous than this.

If a man is warned of the result of the denial of truth, and has the bravado to respond insolently, it is because, being well placed in the world, he thinks that he need not fear the scourge of God. Indeed, he imagines he is exempt from divine retribution. And the more daring ones, such as he, challenge God's messenger and say, 'If you are truthful, bring down upon us God's wrath, and let us see.' They do not understand that if God vents His anger, it will be on them and not on anyone else. □

# 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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***Are reason and revelation contradictory to each other?***

Reason and revelation are not contradictory to each other. Revelation is a source of knowledge, while reason is a means of comprehension. When a person believes in what has been revealed, he does so by application of his God-given reason to reflect and determine with certainty the truthfulness and veracity of the knowledge he has gained through revelation. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to say that reason supplements the understanding of revelation and is not opposed or inconsistent to it.

All of the tasks a human being does are dependent on reason. No development or progress can happen without the application of intelligence. Without the mind, a person would be reduced to a statue, being unable to differentiate between right and wrong. Reason is in itself not a criterion which determines good and evil. Rather, it is the ability to understand and discern. By definition, reason is the intellectual ability by which conclusions are drawn from premises. Thus, reason is not an objective judge by itself.

Reason is an ability granted by God. It is not any person's own invention. The word *aql*, or reason, has been used in the Quran about fifty times. The Quran repeatedly enjoins the reader to discover the credibility of revelation by putting to use reason and rationale. For example, a verse in the Quran instructs: "We have sent down the Quran in Arabic, so that you may understand [by applying reason]." (12: 2). Similarly, in another verse a Prophet urges his people to reflect and determine the integrity of his claim to prophethood: 'If God had so wished, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have brought it to your knowledge.

Indeed, I have spent a whole lifetime among you before it came to me. How can you not use your reason?' (10: 16)

***What were the reasons behind people separating reason from revelation?***

In this matter, deviation happened when some people came to believe in an extreme version of reason, that is, they began to regard reason as a means of acquiring knowledge. Certain religious groups reacted to this conception of reason and began to consider reason-based discussions as inimical to religion. Due to this mindset, they wrongly started claiming that the spheres of reason and revelation were separate and that the domain of revelation begins where reason reaches its limits. The truth is that there is a difference between utilizing reason to understand realities and considering reason as the only source of knowledge.

A human being has been given various kinds of capabilities: hands to hold, legs to walk, eyes to see, ears to hear, and so on. Similarly, humans have been granted reason so that they may ponder over issues and comprehend through rational analysis. Along with this, humans have been given total freedom, which means that they can either make proper use of their reason or put it to improper use.

The real purpose of reason is for man to collect data or information and then, through examination and deliberation, arrive at useful knowledge. However, reason in itself is not an authority, which is why one can be either right or wrong in taking support of reason in one's pursuit of knowledge. Taking reason as the sole source of knowledge is a fallacy, yet it is a phenomenon observed everywhere, including within the sphere of religion.

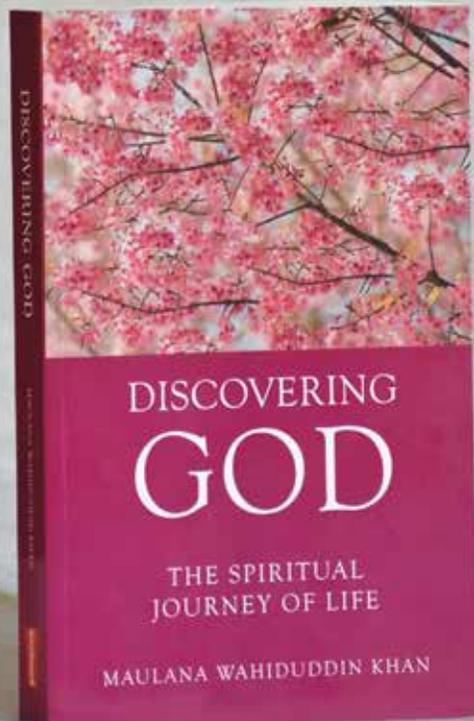
***What is the solution to the problems of humankind?***

The Islamic solution to the problems of man is the same as that which has been ordained for the rest of the universe. Like the universe, if man follows God's scheme of creation, he can live with the same peace, coherence and harmony which the cosmos already exhibits. That is why the Quran points out that the universe is faultless. (67: 3)

The path of truth is in compliance with God's scheme of creation, which is another name for the laws of nature. However, as man is free to act as he likes, he tends to misuse his freedom. He follows his desires and forsakes the true path. The result is corruption and disorder in the human world. The solution is for us to discover the Creator and His creation plan and to play our role accordingly. □

# DISCOVERING GOD

The author, through his study of science, religion, psychology and the experiences of his own life, enlightens about the path to discovery of God through one's journey of life. A discovery of this kind involves pondering on the word of God, converting one's material experiences into spiritual insights, constant introspection, and contemplating on the numerous phenomena of the universe. This kind of spiritual and intellectual endeavor of remembering God and recognizing His majesty and glory in everything around provides nourishment to the soul. Such a person develops strong affection for His Creator, Sustainer and Benefactor, a feeling which reflects in his character and behaviour. Discovery of the noble and merciful God makes a person rise above negative thinking; his heart becomes free of hatred, anger, and vengefulness. He develops the ability to engage in positive thinking even in unpleasant situations. The personality that undergoes this spiritual process is deserving of being settled in Paradise in the Hereafter.



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