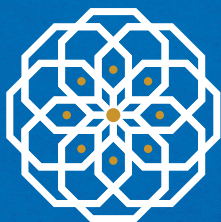


The Art of Clear Thinking

Right Thinking is
Positive Thinking



MAULANA
WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

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Right Thinking is Positive Thinking

MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

Translated by
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FOREWORD

The study of the Quran tells us that the actual target of the Book is to change the thinking of an individual. The Quran gives many principles to inculcate right thinking in a person. Thinking is man's greatest action. Right thinking is, in fact, a form of worship. After his death, someone asked the widow of Abu Darda, a Companion of the Prophet, what his greatest action had been. She replied, "Thinking and drawing lessons." (*Kitab al-Zuhd wa al-Raqa'iq* by Ibn al-Mubarak: 286) Likewise, after the death of another Companion of the Prophet, Abu Dharr, someone asked his widow what his special worship had been, and she replied, "The whole day, he would keep thinking." (*Hilyat al-Awliya*, Vol. 1, p. 164)

Thinking occurs at the level of the mind. It is the mind that is the biggest aspect of human existence. Thinking makes a person capable of effectively planning his actions, which is key to his success. Thinking is the means for one's intellectual development. Thinking lifts a person to a higher level of humanity.

The Quran says: "Be mindful of God; He teaches you" (2:282). In this verse, ilm means understanding. The

meaning of this is that God-consciousness (*taqwa*) in a person will engender in him a proper understanding of the religion (*At-Tafseer al-Qurtubi*, Vol. 3, p. 406). From this, we learn that it is possible for a person to possess knowledge or information about religion and yet not possess a proper understanding of religion. This is because the source of true understanding of religion is God-consciousness, not mere knowledge. There is a supplication in a hadith report as follows: “O God, I seek refuge with You from the knowledge that is of no benefit.” (*Sunan an-Nasa’i*, Hadith No. 5470)

If a person possesses knowledge (in the sense of information) but does not possess the insight of *maarifah*, he will not understand the difference between one thing and another. What he speaks will be based simply on the information that he possesses. But in actual fact, it will be based on ignorance, and nothing else. For *maarifah*, knowledge is necessary, but a person of *maarifah* is able to go beyond external knowledge to see inner realities. He is able to properly analyse information. He can read between the lines. He can see events in their proper perspective. These are some of the attributes of a person of *maarifah*. Only for a person of *maarifah* can his knowledge become beneficial. Without *maarifah*, knowledge will only lead to ignorance.

Right thinking is an art. Those who have learned the art can construct a successful life in this world.

It is through right thinking that one understands the difference between one thing and another; one discovers solutions to difficulties; one discerns hidden realities. Through right thinking, one learns how to convert minus points into plus points. Another name for right thinking is positive thinking.

Positive thinking gives us the direction to use our intellectual capacity, while negative thinking acts as a check upon the development of that intellectual capacity. Those who have a tendency towards negative thinking, think and plan only under the influence of external situations, which may or may not be particularly good. By keeping a positive mind, one can rise above the psychology of reaction or retaliation, plan objectively, and arrive at rational conclusions.

The truth of the matter is that it is our level of thinking that determines our success or failure. Success is the result of right thinking. Think right, do right, and succeed, both in this world and the Hereafter. This book will help readers to learn the art of thinking on positive lines.

Wahiduddin Khan

July 2002

New Delhi, India.

THE ART OF CLEAR THINKING

Thinking enables people to effectively plan their actions, which is key to achieving success. By learning the art of critical thinking, individuals gain the ability to transform challenges into opportunities (minus into plus).

Thinking, one could say, is man's greatest action. Right thinking is actually a form of worship. After his death, someone asked the wife of Abu Darda, a Companion of the Prophet, what his greatest deed had been. She replied, "Thinking and drawing lessons." (*Kitab al-Zuhd wa al-Raqa'iq* by Ibn al-Mubarak, Hadith No. 286) Likewise, after the death of another Companion of the Prophet, Abu Dharr, someone asked his widow what his special worship had been, and she replied, "The whole day, he would keep thinking." (*Hilyat al-Awliya*, Vol. 1, p. 164)

The action of thinking happens at the level of the mind. And it is the mind that is the biggest part of human existence. Thinking is the means for one's intellectual development. It is through thinking that all great discoveries have been made. Thinking lifts a person from the animalistic level to the higher stage of humanity. It is through thinking that one understands

the difference between one thing and another; one discovers solutions to difficulties; one discerns hidden realities. Through thinking, one learns how to convert minus points into plus points. Thinking makes one capable of effectively planning one's actions, which is key to success.

The ability to think is a quality that all human beings possess by birth itself. But only that person possesses right thinking who makes himself properly prepared for it at the conscious level. For right thinking, it is necessary for a person to have the courage to think by rising above his personal likes and dislikes. He should see things realistically just as they are, not as he would like to see them. He should be free from biased thinking. No matter what the prevailing conditions might be, he should be ready to accept the results of proper thinking, be they in his favour or against him. This is the beginning of right and clear thinking.

KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT REALISATION

Knowledge is necessary for attaining *maarifah*. Knowledge plays a pivotal role in attaining God-Realisation. Such an individual possesses the ability to transcend superficial knowledge and gain insight into the inner spiritual realities.

The Quran says: “Be mindful of God; He teaches you” (2:282). In this verse, *ilm* means understanding. The meaning of this is that God-consciousness (*taqwa*) in a person will engender in him a proper understanding of the religion (*At-Tafseer al-Qurtubi*, Vol. 3, p. 406). From this, we learn that it is possible for a person to possess knowledge or information about religion and yet not possess a proper understanding of religion. This is because the source of true understanding of religion is God-consciousness, not mere knowledge. There is a supplication in a hadith report as follows: “O God, I seek refuge with You from the knowledge that is of no benefit.” (*Sunan an-Nasa’i*, Hadith No. 5470)

To understand this point, consider an example. In present times, some emotionally driven Muslims have unleashed violence at different places wrongly in the

name of *jihad*, for which they have had to face one-sided devastation. And now, in line with a defeatist mentality, some of them are even resorting to suicide bombing. They strap bombs around their bodies and enter the areas of their supposed enemies and, exploding the bombs, knowingly kill themselves and others too. This is clearly a case of suicide, and suicide has been declared to be *haraam* (forbidden) in Islam. However, some Muslim scholars, giving this the name of *istishhaad* (desire for martyrdom), have declared it *ja'iz* (permissible). In this regard, they seek to back their claim by drawing on some incidents in the age of the Prophet's Companions. For instance, these people cite an incident from the time of the Caliphate of the first Caliph, Abu Bakr Siddiq (d. 634 C.E.), and wrongly claim that it is proof in support of their ideology. This incident is about a Companion of the Prophet named Al-Bara ibn Malik (d. 20 A.H.), which took place during the battle against Musaylimah, the false claimant to Prophethood (d.632 C.E.).

In the period of the Caliphate of Abu Bakr Siddiq, a battle took place between the Muslims, led by Hazrat Khalid, and Musaylimah and his supporters from among the people of Yamama. In the last stage of this battle, a group of rebels entered a walled garden and shut its sturdy door from the inside. At that time, Al-Bara ibn Malik was among the Companions of the

Prophet who were engaged in fighting the rebels. He was famous for his bravery. He told some of the Companions of the Prophet to make him sit on a shield and to lift up the shield with the help of spears and get him to the top of the wall of the garden. Once he got to the top of the wall, he leaped over and entered into the garden. The rebels who were inside attacked him, but he fought them. Managing to get to the door of the garden, he opened it. As soon as the door was opened, a group of the Prophet's Companions entered. Fighting the rebels, they overpowered them. Now, this step of Al-Bara's was an act of great risk. It contained a threat to his life. But the rebels could not succeed in killing him and he was able to come out alive. In fact, after this incident, he lived for another eight years and died a natural death, in the year 20 A.H. (*Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, Vol. 2, p. 218; *Al-Bidaya wa'l-Nihaya*, Vol. 9, p. 469-70; *Al-A'lam* by al-Zirikli, Vol. 2, p. 47)

There is a big difference between the act of Al-Bara and modern-day Muslim suicide bombers. Putting himself in danger, Al-Bara took a step that had two possible outcomes—either he would come out alive, or he would be killed. In contrast to this, the step that suicide bombers take has only one possible outcome—their own death. They strap bombs to their bodies and explode them. The outcome of this action

is dependent on their own death. This is a clear issue of knowingly and deliberately committing suicide. There is, thus, a clear difference in the nature of the two actions.

But on account of not knowing this difference, some people wrongly assume both actions to be identical in nature, and so an action that was clearly an act of suicide was wrongly accorded by them the status of 'martyrdom.'

This is an example of knowledge without realisation or *maarifah*. If a person possesses knowledge (in the sense of information) but does not possess the insight of *maarifah*, he will not understand the difference between one thing and another. What he speaks will be based simply on the information that he possesses. But in actual fact, it will be based on ignorance, and nothing else.

For *maarifah*, knowledge is necessary, but a person of *maarifah* is able to go beyond external knowledge to see inner realities. He is able to properly analyse information. He can read between the lines. He can see events in their proper perspective. These are some of the attributes of a person of *maarifah*. Only for a person of *maarifah* can his knowledge become beneficial. Without *maarifah*, knowledge is an enormous depravity.

DIFFERENCE OF PERSPECTIVE

When confronted with a challenge one should think and search for practical solutions. Through the implementation of practical measures, one can overcome potential losses, and turn them into gains.

In the year 625 C.E., at the time of the Prophet Muhammad, a battle occurred which is called the Battle of Uhud. In this battle, initially, the Muslims scored a victory. But later, their victory turned into defeat. The Quran commented on this issue in this way:

And God made good His promise to you when by His leave you were about to destroy your foes, but then your courage failed you and you disagreed among yourselves [concerning the Prophet's direction] and disobeyed it, after He had brought you within sight of what you wished for, some of you desired the goods of this world and some of you desired the Hereafter, then in order that He might put you to the test, He prevented you from defeating your foes. But now He has pardoned you: God is most gracious to the believers. (3:152)

In this battle, the Muslims were defeated. Many of

them were seriously wounded. Moreover, the battle had occurred entirely because of the excesses of their opponents. It was a completely one-sided attack on the part of the latter. For this battle, the fault lay with them, not with the Muslims. But despite this, why was it that here, the Quran, instead of criticising the opposing party, only indicated the weaknesses of the Muslims? Why was this style adopted?

The reason for this was the difference in the way of thinking. In cases like this, one method is to engage in logical analysis. And so, one can analyse, what in the light of logical analysis, is right and what is wrong, and who the oppressor is and who the oppressed is. This method appears, on the face of it, to be a just one. But in actual fact, it is of no use. In such cases, what is of actual importance is not expressing what is logically just, but, rather, searching for practical measures for solving a problem. Making up for the loss caused in such cases can only happen through taking practical measures, and not through logical analysis.

The Quran has adopted this very same practical method in commenting on the Battle of Uhud. In the court of the Hereafter, oppressors will certainly be told about their oppression and will receive punishment for it. But in this present world, in such cases what needs to be done is to find out a practical solution so that, through it, one's defeat can be transformed into a victory.

DICHOTOMOUS THINKING

Engaging in dichotomous thinking, or thinking in black and white, often leads to adverse consequences. The ability to explore alternative options can serve as a safeguard against severe losses.

There is a certain way of thinking that can be called 'Dichotomous Thinking.' Dichotomous thinking is thinking in terms of rigid compartments of black and white. This way of thinking often becomes the cause of much harm and damage. A person who thinks in this way sees things in rigidly dualistic terms. It is as if there are only two options before him—black, or white. He is unaware that there is actually a third option available as well. On account of his unawareness of this third option, he is not able to avail of it even though it may be that his success actually lies hidden in it.

Consider the following case: Members of a certain community take out a procession. Raising slogans, the procession enters a locality that is inhabited by members of another community. Thinking the slogans to be directed against them, the people of this locality get agitated. As a result, there is a clash between the members of the two communities, which ends in enormous loss of life and property.

Reflect carefully on this example. Because of their particular way of thinking, the inhabitants of the locality through which the procession passed, see the matter in such a way that only two options seem plausible to them: either to tolerate the objectionable slogans or else to try to stop the processionists from raising the slogans. They think that tolerating the slogans would be tantamount to cowardice and accepting dishonour while trying to stop the processionists from raising the slogans seems to them an act of bravery. And so, they decide to take action to try to stop the sloganeering in order to attain their desired objective. But the result, in actual practice, of their not being willing to tolerate the sloganeering turns out to be that they have to tolerate bloody rioting instead, in which they suffer immense loss.

The cause for this devastating outcome is dichotomous thinking. Had the inhabitants of the locality been aware that there exists also a third option that is possible for them to avail of, they might have saved themselves from having to face the terrible loss caused by the rioting. This third option for them would be to simply ignore the sloganeering. Had the inhabitants of the locality availed of this third option and simply ignored the sloganeering, within five minutes or so they would have found that the procession had moved ahead in its path and that the provocative slogans had vanished into thin air as if they had never existed.

SIGN OF WISDOM

A wise person not only knows his actions but also anticipates the possible consequences of those actions. This is aptly described in the axiom: 'The wise man is he who knows the relative value of things.'

A British writer, William Ralph Inge (1860-1954), rightly remarked, 'The wise man is he who knows the relative value of things.'

One form of knowing the 'relative value of things' is that a person knows the possible results of his actions. If unawareness of the possible results of one's actions is evidence of foolishness, awareness of the possible results of one's actions is wisdom.

Once, it so happened that a person's friend cheated him of a large sum of money. This person had now a burning desire for revenge, so much so that he wanted to kill his former friend.

This man happened to meet me. I said to him that before taking revenge, he should think of the consequences of such an action: Revenge would be taken for revenge. If he killed his former friend, then the man's sons might kill him. In this way, a chain of enmity and revenge would begin between the two

families. I said to the man that one mistake of his had given an opportunity to his former friend to cheat him. The right thing now for him to do was to accept this mistake and to reform himself for the future.

To take revenge is to turn one's 'first mistake,' as it were, into a chain of continuous destruction. On the other hand, to not take revenge is to nip one's mistake in the bud. A foolish person knows only his actions, while a wise man knows not only his actions but also their possible consequences.

SECOND CHANCE

When one loses his 'first chance', a 'second chance' remains within his reach. Through thoughtful consideration, one can seize new opportunities and achieve success.

A certain man was a manager in a company. He had a dispute with the company's owner. The dispute kept mounting. It caused the manager grave mental stress and tension, so much so that he began contemplating suicide. Instead of trying to end the problem, he decided to end his own life, in the hope of thereby saving himself from the problem.

This man happened to meet me. I asked him why he wanted to commit suicide. The doors of life were open to him, so, what was the need to choose the door of death? I said that he had ostensibly lost only his 'first chance.' A 'second chance' was still available for him. I then suggested that he shift to some other city. On the basis of his abilities, he could get good opportunities elsewhere. After advising him thus, I penned these words in his diary: 'Sometimes, a gardener plucks a plant in his garden from its place only so that he can plant it in some other, better place.'

The man accepted my advice, and, resigning from the company where he worked, went off to another city. There, he became engaged in business, and, compared to before, he was now in a far better position economically than before.

In every person's life, a time comes when he experiences some sort of loss. People who consider a loss to be just a loss can, through new efforts, make themselves successful once again. On the other hand, people who consider loss to be permanent failure lose their courage and give up. They lack the will and determination to engage in any new action. Which of these two courses of action a person will adopt depends on his thinking. It is his way of thinking that makes a person fail or leads one towards success.

DIFFICULT BECOMES EASY

Critical thinking plays an important part in all aspects of life. Erroneous thinking can complicate a simple task, whereas sound thinking can simplify complex endeavours. This principle holds true across national and global affairs.

Along with more than 10,000 of his Companions, the Prophet Muhammad was proceeding from Makkah to Taif. On the way, they came to a mountainous path that did not seem wide enough for them to move on. The Prophet asked the people how the path was. Based only on the external appearance of the path, they said that it was a narrow path. It seemed as if this caravan of more than 10,000 people would not be able to move on the path. The Prophet said it is the easy path. (*Sirat Ibn Hisham*, Vol. 2, p. 482) He explained that the road would definitely be narrow for them because they wanted to pass through the path all together, at the same time. He suggested that they stand one behind another in a vertical line. The people did as he suggested and were then able to move along the path easily. The path that had appeared narrow to them as a group now became wide when they took the form of a line.

This incident illustrates the difference that one's way of thinking can make. In this world, everything depends on thinking. Wrong thinking makes an easy thing difficult, while right thinking makes a difficult thing easy. This issue of difference in thinking applies to all matters, big or small. It applies to domestic affairs as well as to national and international affairs.

HARM CAUSED BY WRONG THINKING

“Leaders within the Muslim community should disengage from separatist endeavors characterised by impassioned rhetoric and emotional politics in order to safeguard the community from the adverse consequences of misguided ideologies.”

In 1930, the annual session of the All-India Muslim League was held in the town of Allahabad. It was presided over by Allama Iqbal. In his Presidential address, he made the claim that in undivided India, Muslims would not be able to keep their identity protected and that, therefore, when India becomes independent, in the Muslim-majority areas of the country Muslims should have a separate homeland. This suggestion later became popular among many Muslims under the name of ‘Pakistan,’ and in 1947, a country separate from India came into being with that name. This concept of a separate Muslim territory was accepted by many other Muslim thinkers too. And, based on this same sort of thinking, several movements came into being in different parts of the world. The agenda of these movements can be described in one word: ‘Pakistanisation.’

Following such anachronistic thinking, in those countries that had territories on their frontiers with Muslim-majority, such movement, as can be called 'Pakistanisation', emerged with full zeal. In all such places, Muslim leaders emerged who, through their emotionally driven movements and fiery rhetoric, fomented emotional politics among Muslims based on separatism. The cases of Myanmar, the Philippines, Ethiopia, parts of China, and the former Yugoslavia can be cited in this regard.

These regional Muslim leaders were enthusiastically driven to the point of madness in their imaginary ideology of 'Pakistanisation.' And so, they did not keep their divisive political movements limited to peaceful methods of action. Rather, they led them on to bloody armed struggles. These violent movements of 'Pakistanisation' met with complete failure. They resulted in further exacerbation of the problems of the Muslims themselves.

Why did this destructive policy of 'Pakistanisation' become popular in so many parts of the Muslim world? The reason was the anachronistic thinking of the Muslim leaders of the times. They could not understand and appreciate the new changes that had come about in modern times. The whole world had become one and was entering the age of globalization, but at this very time, Muslim leaders, because of

their lack of awareness of the age, were spearheading contrarian movements in the form of 'Pakistanisation.' These movements were synonymous with banging their heads against the massive boulder of the age, as it were. That is why these movements met with such negative outcomes as was fated for them from day one.

The changes that accompanied the modern age greatly increased the importance of mutual interaction between people from different religious backgrounds and communities. But Muslim leaders, with extreme foolishness, were spearheading their movements in complete opposition to this. Historical experience has conclusively proven that challenge and competition are indispensable means of progress. But these Muslim leaders, fired with misplaced zeal, were busy trying to construct a fanciful world for Muslims where they would supposedly face no challenges, nor any competition. From the immense opportunities for progress that modern developments had made available, it had clearly come to be seen that only through large-scale joint efforts among people from different religious and other backgrounds could big achievements be possible. But these Muslim leaders had come to imagine that it was their political task to construct imaginary political islands, as it were, for Muslims, where they would be devoid of the impact

of inter-community interaction and cooperation. Modern communications have rendered the concept of geographical separation of peoples completely unnecessary. But these Muslim leaders, unaware of these changes, ridiculously wasted their time and resources on their useless movements. The modern age opened up a great opportunity in the form of freedom and also of democracy, which was based on the principle of power-sharing among members of the public, rather than the rule of a single individual. But these Muslim leaders neither understood the possibilities that these had made available nor succeeded in using them.

Modern changes had opened up another possibility, which can be called 'The Age of Institutions'. In contrast to the Age of Monarchy, governance had now narrowed down within the restricted political boundaries of administration. Other than this, many new fields (for instance, in the areas of education, economy, and the mass media) had come into being in which individuals and groups could, by establishing institutions, obtain greater distinction than through exercising political power. However, these Muslim leaders were not aware of these modern possibilities. That being the case, how could they avail of them?

LESSER EVIL

A wise person is able to distinguish between the lesser evil and the greater evil, and is willing to endure the lesser evil so that he can be saved from a bigger evil.

There is a saying of the second Muslim Caliph, Umar Farooq: ‘Intelligence is not who knows good from evil, but intelligence is one who knows the lesser of two evils’ (*Al-‘Iqd al-Farid*, Vol. 2, p. 109 -10). From this saying, one learns that if a person possesses theoretical knowledge of things that are good and things that are bad or evil, he may be a scholar, but he cannot be said to be a wise person. In order to be a wise person, one must possess an additional quality, and that is knowledge of which among two evils is a lesser evil and less destructive.

To understand this issue, consider a hypothetical situation. Suppose a group of people are raising objectionable slogans outside your house. In this case, one evil is this sloganeering of theirs. Another possible, evil is that if you try to stop them or enter into an argument with them, they might get more aggressive and might even resort to violence and cause loss of life and property. Now, a wise person

is one who, thinking with a cool mind, understands which of these two evils is the bigger one and which is the smaller one. Following this, he agrees to tolerate the smaller evil so that he does not have to face the bigger evil.

In their affairs, ordinary people know only two things—the aspect of good and the aspect of evil. But the wise person is he who can also distinguish between the two types of evil, and then agree to tolerate the lesser evil so that he can be saved from a bigger evil.

THE STRENGTH OF FORBEARANCE

The right method to put out a fire is to use water. Likewise, one should try to respond to anger through patience, self-restraint, tolerance, or forbearance. Forbearance is not just an ethical quality; it is a powerful plan of action.

Two men lived in the same city. It so happened that their relations became strained. One day, they happened to meet on a street. On seeing Mr. B, Mr. F burst out. He heaped all the harsh words that he had in his vocabulary on him. But Mr. B silently listened to him. When after going on for a long time Mr. F fell silent, Mr. B, without reacting at all, politely said to him, 'I think you are tired. Come, let us go to a restaurant and have some tea.' After this, the two men went to a nearby tea stall. Sipping his tea, Mr. F's anger subsided. Finally, he requested Mr. B for forgiveness and promised that he would never again behave with him as he had just done.

Whenever a person says something provocative, what generally happens is that the person he directs his words at becomes enraged. He tries to reply to him through counter-aggression or anger. But this method

is synonymous with trying to douse the flames of a fire with the fire itself. The right method to put out a fire is to use water. Likewise, one should try to respond to anger through self-restraint, tolerance, or forbearance. Forbearance is not just an ethical quality. More than that, it is a powerful plan of action. If a person gets angry in response to a provocation, he loses his biggest ability—i.e., intellect (*aql*). In such a situation, he is not capable of using his intellect to understand the matter in depth and to defend himself in a more efficacious manner. An enraged person can only display a negative reaction. In contrast, a person who, despite being shown anger by someone else, does not get angry, can respond positively to the situation at hand. Needless to say, this is a much more effective response.

PEACE OF MIND

Everything depends on one's way of thinking. We can achieve peace of mind by changing our way of thinking. Then sorrow can be transformed into happiness, and helplessness into courage.

Perhaps the biggest problem in present times is that today, maybe not a single person enjoys peace of mind. Almost every person, rich or poor, has become prey to mental tension. I once learned of a computer engineer who all of a sudden received a sum of 750 million dollars from America for an invention. But this huge amount of money led to enormous mental stress for him, so much so that in a period of just a year, he lost his sleep and began consuming sleeping pills. The condition of a vast section of people, both 'big' and 'small,' in the world today is something like this.

Generally, two sorts of solutions are offered for this problem of mental stress and tension. The first is the recommendation that one should try to earn as much money as possible so that one can obtain as many items of convenience, comfort, and luxury as possible. However, experience clearly shows the inadequacy

of this approach. Many people accumulated a huge amount of material wealth during their lifetime but, despite this, remained devoid of satisfaction and tranquility till they finally departed from this world in that same state.

The fact is that by nature, man is a perfectionist, while the present world is, in every sense, imperfect. This situation creates a contradiction between man and the present world. It is as a result of this contradiction that despite obtaining all sorts of worldly 'goods' a person does not enjoy contentment. Everything in the world appears to him as lower than the yardstick that he has established. This is why even after obtaining all sorts of material 'goods' he is not content. Even when he is surrounded by material luxuries, he remains sunk in a sort of unconscious discontentment. This fact proves that to search for peace of mind in material 'goods' and worldly luxuries is useless and that it will never succeed.

A second suggestion that is often offered for the problem of mental stress and tension, is a sort of 'meditation' that seeks to stop a person's process of thinking so that he is not capable of feeling stress consciously. However, this approach is synonymous with mental anesthesia. It seeks to benumb or blunt a person's capacity for thinking and make him insensitive. Even if this sort of peace of mind

is attained, it is definitely not something desirable because a process that suppresses the thinking faculty of a person is like putting him into a coma.

This method is against the system according to which human nature works. The greatest thing that Nature has given man is his mind. According to Nature's plan, the presence of problems is not something bad for the mind. In fact, it is a blessing in disguise. For man's intellectual development, Nature has established a method of shock treatment. This being the case, to put an end to the process of shock treatment is to shut the doors of a person's intellectual development. In this way, this method is against the system of Nature. And, needless to say, something that is against the system of Nature is something that is worthy of being rejected.

The fact of the matter is that the solution to the problem of mental tension is not to put an end to mental tension, but, rather, to manage it. This means engaging in intellectual planning such as renders mental tension so ineffective that while a person may continue to face it, it does not disturb his peace of mind.

To understand this issue, consider an example. A young, 30-year-old, man was the manager of a multinational company. There, he earned a sizeable salary, plus perks. But because the company where he

worked followed the hire-and-fire principle, he was constantly afflicted with mental tension. The fear of losing his job always troubled him, as a result of which he had no peace. One day, I said to him that I would give him a formula. If he abided by it, his peace of mind would not get disturbed. The formula was expressed in these words: ‘A person can take away your job. But no one has the power to take away your destiny.’

The man abided by this formula. After some days, we met again. He said that he had obtained peace of mind, that he now slept contentedly, and that he spent his daytime also with contentment.

Every person can defuse mental tension by managing it in a similar way. Despite facing challenges, they can lead a life characterised by peace of mind. The fact is that the human mind is a treasure trove of a vast number of abilities. There is just one cause for all mental tension—and that is, not being able to use one’s mental abilities in full. Likewise, the solution to all mental tension too is just one, and that is, to use one’s mental abilities suitably.

Consider the following example: There was once a trader in a big city. It so happened that he invested a huge sum of money and developed a certain product. When the product was ready, all of a sudden, the demand for it in the market disappeared. The man

was compelled to store the items in a warehouse. The incident had such an impact on him that he fell ill. His blood pressure shot up. He lost his sleep at night. He became a victim of spasms and convulsions.

When I met the man, I explained to him that he was viewing the issue only in terms of the present. I suggested that he change this thinking of his and start thinking of the issue in terms of the future instead. He should place the issue in the wait-and-watch box, as it were. The man took my suggestion. Later, after two years or so, I received a letter in which he joyfully wrote that all the goods that he had produced had been sold off, and at a profit.

The fact of the matter is that everything depends on one's way of thinking. Our minds become of a certain sort and begin to work in a certain way depending on the way we think. This being the case, if we change our way of thinking, sorrow can be transformed into happiness, despondency into trust, and helplessness into courage.

PROTECTION OF PURPOSE

Through unilateral avoidance of conflict and not allowing irrelevant matters to become obstacles in one's path, one can continue to strive towards one's positive goals.

The Quran says: 'We have appointed for every community ways of worship to observe. Let them not dispute with you on this matter. Call them to the path of your Lord—for surely, you are rightly guided' (22:67).

'Let them not dispute with you' in the above verse means that one should not give them any reason for disputing. The price for putting up with a dispute with an opponent will be that the purpose of inviting them to God will be affected. The benefit of avoiding a dispute is that the issue of inviting them to God will remain central to one's relationship with them. It is to the benefit of the one who invites others to God that this issue alone remains at the top of their dialogue. Through unilateral avoidance of conflict, they must try to ensure this.

Consider the following example of Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (d. 1944), founder of the *Tablighi Jamaat* movement. In the initial days of the movement,

he went to an area called Mewat (a region in northern India, where the movement began). He saw a villager standing at the edge of his field. The Maulana asked him to recite the *kalima* (the Islamic creed). This man was not familiar with this sort of thing. He got angry and pushed the Maulana, who fell to the ground. After this, the Maulana silently got up and then, without any complaint, said to him that he would recite the *kalima* and that the man could repeat it.

This example very clearly illustrates how to appropriately respond to such challenging situations. Had Maulana Ilyas complained about the wrong action of the villager, the central point of their relationship—which was related to inviting the man to God—would have shifted. The Maulana unilaterally ignored the man's action so that religion alone remained the basis of their relationship and no irrelevant matter became an obstacle in it.

In matters like this, there can be two ways of thinking. One is to give importance to the excesses committed by the other party and complain and agitate against them. The other is to ignore the excesses of the other party, exercise patience, and avoid conflict. The first approach leads to the central focus of the relationship with the other party to change completely, while with the second approach, the central focus continues to remain unchanged.

EQUALISING MATTERS

As a result of balanced and positive thinking, one can save oneself from devastating results, and continue one's journey to progress without any interruption.

In the Second World War, America and Japan were enemies. They caused immense damage to each other. But their inimical relations were soon to come to an end. It happened in this way: In 1945, America dropped two atom bombs on Japan, which destroyed two Japanese cities, Nagasaki and Hiroshima. This event greatly incensed the Japanese. They began talking about taking revenge against America.

Now, this was a very delicate situation. Had Japan decided to tread the path of revenge, it would have only led to further devastation. But at this time, Japan's leaders and intellectuals adopted an approach that turned the minds of the Japanese people from a negative direction to a positive direction. They said that if in 1945, America had devastated two Japanese cities, then Japan had, before this—in 1941—destroyed America's Naval Base at Pearl Harbour. So, in this way, matters had now been equalised between

the two. Hence, the Japanese must now forget the issue and put themselves instead to the task of constructing Japan anew. The result of this balanced and positive thinking was that in some years' time, Japan became a much stronger country than before.

Whenever a dispute arises between two parties, generally, each party takes a very one-sided stance. It recounts only the excesses of the other party. As a result, its thinking becomes imbalanced. It forgets its share of excesses and only remembers those of the other party. This way of thinking always proves to be destructive, for both individuals and for entire communities and nations.

This imbalanced way of thinking is called *tatfeef* in the Quran (83:1-3). That is giving short measure to others. In a dispute, an imbalanced way of thinking always leads to devastating results. In contrast, a balanced way of thinking always takes one towards progress. Such people who give short measure will remain in a state of deprivation in the Hereafter.

IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT

A shift in context changes the entire meaning of an issue. In order to understand an issue properly, it is necessary to have a proper understanding of its context.

In order to understand an issue properly, it is necessary to have a proper understanding of its context. The importance of context is such that if the context changes, the entire meaning of an issue can also change. To understand this issue, consider the following example. Commenting on my book *Tazkeer ul-Quran*, a certain person wrote about me, saying, 'Leaving aside the issue of differences with Maulana Wahiduddin's ideology, which level of defeatism and cowardice a historian of the future will place on Maulana's view that only if the Muslims of India live as no-problem people [without rights] will they obtain peace in the country, otherwise not, he alone knows.' (*Ulema-e Deoband ki Tafsiri Khidmat*, p. 49).

In this critical remark, the author does not quote anything from my writings. Instead, he has written some words on his own and they have been declared

as my viewpoint. This method is completely non-intellectual and non-academic. In the above passage, what is claimed to be my viewpoint is not my viewpoint at all. My point is that in this country, the position of Muslims is that of *dayees*, those who communicate the message of God to others while the position of non-Muslims is that of *madu*, to whom the message has to be communicated. In other words, the relationship between Muslims and others is not a relationship between communal rivals, rather it is a relationship between those who invite people to God (*dayee*) and those people who are to be invited to God (*madu*).

If the relationship between two social groups is that of rivals and adversaries, then their relations will be established accordingly. In such a situation, one group might justifiably launch an agitation, for the law of the land permits them to peacefully launch such protests against the governments or other groups. An example of this might be a movement of workers against capitalists for demanding certain rights.

What is right and what is wrong in this matter can be determined by the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. Therefore, when we look at this matter in the light of Islamic teachings in this regard, we find that the status of Muslims is that of *dayees* and those of non-Muslims is that of *madu*. This relationship between *dayee* and *madu* is a very delicate one. This means that the status of the

dayee group is that of givers and that of *madu* is that of takers. It is the demand of this relationship between *dayee* and *madu* that Muslims have to sedulously refrain from indulging in the politics of protest and demand. Such activities will harm the process of normalization of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. This delicate relationship requires that the members of the *dayee* group must solve their own problems through their own positive efforts.

From this clarification, one can gauge that what I had said about inviting people to God has been taken out of context by the writer, and referring to it, he sought to link it to another, unrelated context. In this way, the actual objective of my argument has been made to appear to be completely different.

PROBLEM OF MEMORY

By right thinking one should refrain oneself from the imprudence of magnifying relatively minor issue into a major problem for oneself.

A certain person was continuously disturbed on account of some bitter memories of the past. Because of this, his health deteriorated. One day, I recited a couplet to him that was written by an Urdu poet, Akhtar Ansari (1909-1988):

Yaad-e maazi azaab hai ya Rabb

Chheen le mujh se hafiza mera

Remembrance of the past is a curse, O Lord!

Snatch away from me my memory.

On listening to this couplet, the man remarked that it was beautiful. In response to his comment, I said I disagree with it. Explaining my opinion, I said that memory is a great blessing. It is because of our memory that we know things and recognize them. If the supplication made in the above couplet was actually accepted and a person's memory was wiped out, he would only externally appear to be a human being but in actual fact would become lower than even

a goat and sheep. I added that I knew many people who had lost their memory because of illness in old age. Their condition was such that they could neither speak anything nor recognise anyone. They lived in this way in a state of helplessness for a few years and then died.

The right way of thinking in the above matter is that instead of wiping out their memory, one should try to transform one's bitter memories into happy memories. For instance, suppose a person owes some money to somebody and is unable to repay his loan, and because he constantly remembers this, he is in deep sadness. The right method for this person is to distinguish the loan from the sorrow of being presently unable to pay it. Of course, he should make efforts to repay the loan, but he should not be obsessed with it to the point that he becomes overwhelmed by sorrow about it. He should recognise that the problem of mental tension would be more severe than the problem of his debt. If the problem of debt is just a problem, mental tension is a sort of mental suicide.

By right thinking, one should save oneself from the foolishness of converting a relatively small problem into a big problem for oneself.

CONTENTMENT AND PROGRESS

One should willingly accept the limited in this world
and desire the unlimited in the Hereafter.

Often, one hears that a certain company has gone bankrupt. Often, the reason for this is what can be called 'seeking to leap beyond one's reach'. Generally, it happens that a company's assets are only a few million dollars, but it makes a plan for a project for which several billion dollars are needed. For this purpose, it takes credit based on interest from a bank. The loan needs to be returned in installments with interest. Now, if the company's earnings continue as estimated, it will be able to pay the installments. But if for any reason, the company's income declines considerably, it will no longer be able to pay the installments. The breaking of this balance is what is called 'bankruptcy.' This is such a problem that, actually speaking, every materialistically-minded person is afflicted by it, in some form or the other.

Now, why does this problem arise? There is a very deep cause for this. Most human beings seek more and more. To stop at a certain point with regard to something that they desire is against their thinking. It

is this that creates the above problem. In a materialistic way of thinking, there is really no solution for this malady. A person who habitually thinks in terms of material 'success' can never save himself from it. For him, to stop at a certain limit as far as material acquisition is concerned is against his thinking, and that is why, in his case, recommending this solution will not work.

In this matter, the practicable or workable solution is just one—and that is Hereafter-oriented thinking. In line with Hereafter-oriented thinking, the solution to the above problem is that a person should be content with obtaining that quantum of things that are sufficient to satisfy his needs in this world, and for the Hereafter, he can desire according to his wishes. That is to say, he should be content in getting according to his needs in this world and should turn the direction of his desire for more towards the Hereafter.

In brief, the formula for this is to willingly accept the limited in this world and to desire the unlimited in the Hereafter.

UNILATERAL ADJUSTMENT

In situations involving a conflict between two individuals or groups, the party that is willing to engage in unilateral compromise invariably attains a favorable outcome.

When a dispute arises between two individuals or groups, each party tries to make the other party accept its position or claim and to extract what it regards as its rights from the other party. This method is completely against Nature, however. It only results in a temporary problem turning into an unending one. Not only does the problem not end, but, moreover, new problems arise that make the original problem even more intractable.

There is only one solution to a dispute—and that is unilateral adjustment. The first party to agree to unilateral adjustment is always successful. In contrast, the party that does not agree to this must always pay the price of its stance—and that is, to have to accept with disgrace that very same resolution that it could have agreed upon at the very outset with honour but refused to do so.

In the Quran this principle is explained in these words: 'Reconciliation is best' (4:128). In the Quran, these words appear in the context of a marital dispute, but it is a general principle and applies to all aspects of life, be they small or big, personal or collective.

The opposite of reconciliation is war. The psyche of war is that each party wants to obtain what they regard as their right by defeating the other party. In contrast to this, the method of reconciliation is based on the principle of give-and-take. In this method, in case of a dispute, each party tries to ensure that no clash occurs and that the dispute is resolved through peaceful discussion and on the basis of bilateral agreement.

In the case of war, the focus of each party is on what is present. They want to capture what appears to be present in front of them. Those who are obsessed with the war mentality consider the capturing of what is presently available as a victory and the loss of it as defeat. In contrast, a person committed to working for reconciliation focuses on the future, rather than the present. His insight tells him that there exists much more than what presently appears before him, which, although not presently visible, can be obtained through wise action. This foresightedness is the secret of great achievements.

EASE IN DIFFICULTY

The Quran teaches 'high thinking.' Its purpose is to nurture in a person a way of thinking that is not centred on problems but rather on rising above problems to find solutions.

In the Quran, a universal principle of Nature is expressed in these words: 'So, surely with every hardship there is ease; surely, with every hardship there is ease' (94:5-6).

Here, we are provided with a teaching that can be called 'high thinking'—that is, thinking by rising above problems. Its purpose is to nurture in a person a way of thinking that is not centred on problems but rather rises above problems to find solutions. A person who possesses this sort of high thinking will very quickly discover that where only difficulties seemed to exist, opportunities were also present through which not only could the problems be solved but also one's failures could be turned into successes.

One can cite several such examples from the past as well as the present day. One example is from the 13th century, when warlike Mongol tribes from Central Asia came out of their mountainous homeland and

spread across large parts of Asia, destroying the Abbasid Caliphate and extending their sway over many Muslim towns, from Samarkand to Aleppo. This event was described by the famous Muslim scholar Ibn al-Athir al-Jazari (d. 1233 C.E.) in these words: ‘If someone were to say that from the time God Almighty created Adam until now, the world has not witnessed anything like it, they would be speaking the truth.’ (*Al-Kamil fit-Tarikh* by Ibn al-Athir, vol. 10, 333)

Now, this appeared, on the face of it, to be a big problem, but in this challenge, an aspect of ease emerged. And that was, that the Mongols themselves entered the habitations of Muslims. This led to interaction, in different forms, between the two. Through this, the Mongols learned about Islam, and within a few decades, most of them had entered its fold. Thus, in this war with the Mongols, on the face of it, the Muslims had lost, but at the very same time, Islam attained great success. This historical fact was expressed by a Western historian in these words, ‘The religion of the Muslims had conquered where their arms had failed.’ (Phillip K Hitti: *History of the Arabs*, part III, p. 488)

MISTAKE OF GENERALISATION

A form of faulty thinking is taking one particular example and projecting it as a general phenomenon and, on that basis, presenting a generalised opinion about a subject as a whole.

One form of faulty thinking is what can be called ‘Making a generalisation.’ It is to take one particular example and project it as a general phenomenon and, on that basis, to present a generalised opinion about a subject as a whole. Making generalisations is so common that only a few people can be said to be free from it.

Consider the following case. In the Bible (Mathew 10:34), Jesus is quoted as having said, ‘Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.’

Now, this saying attributed to Jesus has the status of an exception in the entire corpus of utterances attributed to him in the Bible. Most of the other utterances attributed to him in the Bible are based on teachings such as love and ethics. This being the case, to take the above words and claim that Jesus’ mission was to pick up the sword, is to project what

is an exception as a general rule. This would be a completely wrong generalisation, which would be academically unacceptable.

This same sort of wrong generalisation has been made with regard to the Quran. Taking some verses about war in the Quran, some people claim that the Quran is a book of war and violence. Now, this is actually a very erroneous generalisation. The fact of the matter is that more than 99% of the verses of the Quran are those that are related to such positive themes as peace and humanity. Less than 1% of the verses of the Quran provide instructions for defence in case of open aggression by an opponent. In this context, asserting that a few verses represent the overall teachings of the Quran is entirely inaccurate and lacks scientific validity.

This evil of making generalisations is very widespread in our society. Many people's mentality is such that if there is someone they adore, they select some of his virtues and project them in a grossly exaggerated manner, using these few virtues to present a supposedly complete picture of the person. On the other hand, they ignore the virtues of someone they dislike, and, instead, search for and extract some of his faults. They express these faults in a very exaggerated fashion in order to create a misleading general impression about the person as a whole.

Both these forms of generalisations are completely wrong. This method of forming an opinion about someone or something is not intellectually sound and is also unethical and unjust. In a society where many people engage in such generalisations, people will have wrong impressions of each other, impressions that have no basis in reality. I have experienced this sort of wrong generalisation in the course of the mission of inviting people to God. Some people, focusing on just one aspect of my writings, sought, on the basis of this, to create a misleading general impression about me and my views. Such a method, while not being academic, is also dishonest.

PRACTICAL METHOD

Individuals ought to engage in intellectual awakening. When facing some challenging situations, one should be willing to adjust to a situation on pragmatic grounds as a matter of principle, not by compulsion.

Once, I happened to meet a madrasa student whose head was shaven. During our conversation, he related that the madrasa administrator had had all the students' heads shaved off. The reason that the administrator cited was that he did not like long hair. I asked him if the students whose heads had been shaved off had protested against this action. He replied that they had not. Apparently, the students felt bad about the administrator's action, but they remained silent because the madrasa would have expelled them if they protested.

Seen from the point of view of principles, strictly speaking, the administrator's having the boys' heads shaved off was for the students a provocative act. However, the students did not gauge this act in terms of the yardstick of principles or ideology. Instead, they agreed to accept on pragmatic grounds an action that on theoretical grounds or in terms of principles was unacceptable.

If one reflects on the matter, one will discover that most people behave in just the same way in their personal life.

When they are faced with some challenging situations related to their personal life, they agree to accept and adjust to a situation on pragmatic grounds even though they may not fully agree with it on theoretical grounds or in terms of their principles. But these very same people often do not display the same sort of wise pragmatism when a challenging issue arises that relates to the community they identify themselves with. Instead of responding to the matter pragmatically and adjusting accordingly, they view it in ideological terms and react emotionally, which only worsens the situation. In their personal affairs, these people are pragmatic and agree to make suitable adjustments in order to protect their interests, but when it is an issue of the community they identify with, they often become impractical and refuse to make the same sort of pragmatic adjustment. The reason for this difference in behaviour is lack of intellectual awakening.

The biggest weakness of present-day Muslims is lack of intellectual awakening. No movement has emerged among them that could engage in promoting their intellectual nurturing in the light of the principles of the art of right thinking. The outcome of this is that present-day Muslims are deprived of intellectual development. Many people are simply living at the animalistic level, knowing nothing about intellectual growth and the process of positive thinking.

RESULT-ORIENTED ACTION

One's actions must always be result-oriented. When a particular course of action is expected to yield a desired result, it should be pursued. Otherwise, one should refrain from undertaking such a course of action.

The Prophet Moses appointed his brother Aaron to be responsible for the Children of Israel and went to Mount Sinai for some days. It so happened that, thereafter, the Children of Israel began worshipping a calf made of gold. Aaron tried to stop them, but seeing their insistence, he later kept silent. When Moses returned, he destroyed that golden calf, threw it away, and punished the culprits.

Here, it is interesting to ponder why there was this difference in action between Moses and Aaron. What was the reason that Aaron tolerated in practice an issue of what was open shirk (association of something with God), while Moses acted very differently, by destroying it?

The reason is that Aaron realised that had he taken practical action, one group would support him and the other group would remain with the worshippers

of the calf in the form of an idol. In this way, the community, getting divided into two groups, would fall prey to internecine conflict. But this apprehension did not exist in the case of the action that Moses took. Moses enjoyed a dominant position in the community. On account of this, it was possible to enforce the decision he wanted on the community.

From this incident one can learn that action must always be result-oriented. If by engaging in a certain action a desired outcome will result, one should do so. But if there is an apprehension that by taking a certain step the situation will worsen and an additional evil will arise, one should desist from engaging in such action.

MENTAL TENSION, BRAINSTORMING

To live with peace of mind and be tension-free, one must focus on managing mental tension, rather than attempting to entirely suppress it.

The modern industrial age has led to new sorts of complications for human life. These things were always present in a preliminary form prior to this, but human beings are now experiencing them in a full-blown form. Among these is the problem of what is called ‘mental tension’.

The reason for lack of peace of mind is mostly what is called ‘mental tension’ or ‘mental stress’. Now, it is a fact that in the present world, it is not possible for any person to avoid tension or stress completely. This being the case, the question arises as to what should be done in this matter.

I believe that tension or stress is not evil in itself. Rather, if seen from the right perspective, it can be a boon for human beings. Mental tension produces a form of ‘brainstorming’ in a person’s mind that activates one’s thinking process. If a person did not experience mental tension, he would not experience

‘brainstorming.’ Moreover, without this sort of ‘brainstorming’ inside a person’s mind, a person cannot grow intellectually.

To seek to stop mental tension directly or to try to suppress it is not a healthy solution to the issue. This sort of ‘solution’ is actually a sort of intellectual anesthesia. And this sort of anesthesia, seeks to stop the process of a person’s intellectual growth, is synonymous with taking a person to the animalistic level. One can say that the right solution is to seek to appropriately manage mental tension, rather than seeking to suppress it.

PEACE FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

The correct approach to peace is to associate it with opportunities for constructive engagement, rather than linking it with the pursuit of justice.

Some scholars define peace as ‘the absence of war.’ But people who have unleashed war in different places in the name of rights and justice do not accept this definition. They argue that there is nothing as peace for the sake of peace, or peace for its own sake. According to these people, the peace that is acceptable is peace with justice, not peace without justice.

But this is an example of unrealistic thinking. The fact is that peace needs to be established first. Once peace is established, conducive conditions then emerge that make it possible for people to avail of the available opportunities. A situation of war is an obstacle to availing of opportunities. Establishing peace for its own sake enables people to remove obstacles in this path. By availing opportunities in a climate of peace, people can eventually obtain the rights or justice that they seek.

If a person’s thinking is such that he sets conditions for establishing peace with his opponent, that is, only

if, along with peace, he also gets what he regards as justice, he will never attain peace, nor will he secure justice. Such peace is simply not possible in this world for anyone. This sort of thinking is not in line with the law of Nature, and so it can never produce a positive outcome. The right way of thinking in this matter is that peace must be linked with opportunities for engaging in positive actions, and not with obtaining justice.

THINKING BEHIND THE TIMES

The solution of a contemporary issue can never happen on the basis of past precedence. The solution to a present problem always happens in the present context. This is an irrevocable historical law.

In March 2002, a new concept emerged among Arab countries in the context of a possible solution to the issue of Palestine. And that was, that if Israel withdrew to its 1967 borders, the Arab countries would recognize it. Talking to a Jewish person, an educated Arab presented this proposal before him. The Jewish person replied, smiling, 'Dear neighbour, you are too late.'

Now, the above proposal of the Arabs seems nice, but it is certainly not practicable. It is actually thinking behind the times, which is something that is not workable in practice.

It is a bitter reality that for the Arabs, with regard to the issue of Palestine what was possible in 1917 had become impossible in 1948. In the same way, what was possible for them in 1948 no longer remained possible in 1967. Likewise, what was possible for them in 1967 did not remain possible for them in

2002. These facts, no matter how bitter they may seem, are a historical reality, and to change history is simply not possible for anyone—neither for the Arabs nor for anyone else.

In 2002, what was possible for the Arabs as regards the issue of Palestine was just one thing—and that was, that they should accept whatever they had gotten in the form of Gaza and the West Bank and construct their future on this territory. However, unfortunately, as a result of the impractical leadership of their emotion-driven leaders, they have made even this territory that they have acquired doubtful for themselves. The Arabs should know that they cannot obtain anything through violent movements like Hamas and the Intifada. Through negative actions, positive outcomes cannot be produced. Movements like Hamas and uprisings like the Intifada are, in actual fact, simply an expression of emotional reaction. And in this world of realities, emotional upheavals cannot produce any meaningful outcomes.

The fact of the matter is that the solution to an issue that prevails in the present can never happen on the basis of the past. The solution to a present problem always happens on the basis of the present. This is an irrevocable historical law. No exception to this law is possible for anyone.

THE SECRET OF REFORM

All forms of evil are related to thinking. The transformation of human consciousness or thinking is the secret of reform. Without this, no reform is at all possible.

Many people mistakenly think that the root of all problems are those individuals who happen to control the levers of power in their times, and that, therefore, if they are removed from power, all evils will come to an end. This sort of thinking has repeatedly been shown through experience to be completely wrong.

Consider the following case: Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist group, believed that the government of King Farooq (d.1965) was the root of all evils facing Egypt and that if somehow this government could be toppled, everything in the country would be set aright. In line with this thinking, they joined with some Egyptian army officers, overthrew King Farooq, and forced him out of the country. But after this, all that occurred was that the conditions in the country became even worse than before.

Similar was the case with another Islamist group, the Jamaat-e Islami of Pakistan, which repeated the same blunder, with greater intensity. In the era of President Ayub Khan, they assumed that the root of all the problems of Pakistan was the military government of President Ayub. They unleashed a tumultuous movement against this government, so much so that the government fell. But despite this, there was no improvement in Pakistan's conditions. Later, too, Pakistan's Jamaat-e Islami once again made the same mistake. It assumed that the government of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was the root of all evil. And with the help of other so-called 'pro-Islamic' elements, they launched movements directed to overthrow Mr. Bhutto, so much so that with the help of General Zia ul-Haq, in 1979, they succeeded in getting Mr. Bhutto hanged. However, the conditions of Pakistan continued to worsen.

This experience with regard to the fallacious 'root of all evils' theory has been frequently repeated in present times. And every time, this theory has completely failed.

The fact is that all forms of evil are related to thinking. The secret of reform is the transformation of human consciousness or thinking. Without this, no reform is at all possible.

LACK OF RIGHT THINKING

Wrong thinking prompts a person to react to a provocative situation in the same manner, while right thinking teaches a person to defuse a provocative situation and render any provocation ineffective.

Once, a riot broke out in a certain town between members of two communities. In this riot, members of one community faced large-scale loss. Their economy was laid to ruins. I happened to meet a man from this town who belonged to this community. I asked him why the riot had taken place. He said that a procession of members from the other community had entered the locality inhabited by members of his community and there they began raising slogans against this community. On this, residents of the locality got agitated. Some youths among them, he said, then ‘took one step’ as one of them explained. I asked him what that step was. He explained that they had thrown some hand bombs on the procession. This enraged the people in the procession so much that they began to indulge in violence. I asked the man what the slogan was, reacting to which those youths had taken that step. He explained that the

sloganeers had called for the locality to be emptied of its inhabitants.

During our conversation, the man claimed that it was necessary to give a reply to this sort of provocative plot. I replied to him saying that he should rather call it an imaginary plot that could never turn into a reality. I asked the man if, after the sloganeering and the rioting, his locality had been emptied of its inhabitants. Enthusiastically, he replied, ‘Certainly not!’, adding that the people of his community still remained there. On this, I remarked that this meant that the slogan raised by the people in the procession had dissolved in the air, as it were, and was not able to be converted into reality.

Listening to the man, I said that the processionists’ slogan was so weak that even after engaging in bloody rioting, it could not empty the locality of the inhabitants of his community. That being the case, I asked, what was the need for those members of his community to get so agitated over such a weak slogan? The simple reply to the slogan would have been to respond in line with the ancient saying, ‘Dogs keep barking, and an elephant continues to walk on.’

The response of the agitated inhabitants of the locality in the example above is one of a lack of right thinking. Right thinking can fully save a person from bloody

rioting. But in the above case, wrong thinking resulted in the people of a locality experiencing the two-sided devastation of humiliation and loss. Wrong thinking instigates a person to react to a provocative situation in the very same manner, while right thinking teaches a person how to defuse a provocative situation and render any provocation ineffective.

SECONDARY POSITION

In life, accepting a secondary position is essential for any progress. Unity or advancement prevails only in a society characterised by such thinking.

A lesson is imparted every day in the congregational prayers that are held in mosques. This lesson is that when, out of 10,000 worshippers, 9999 worshippers, praying behind a single person (the *imam*), accept a seemingly secondary position, it becomes possible for the congregational prayers to be offered.

The same formula is desirable in the life outside the mosque too. In a society where this thinking is absent, there can be no unity or progress. In life, accepting a secondary position is essential for any progress.

For the life of a community, this way of thinking is indispensable. However, it cannot come about on its own. It requires conscious nurturing and training. Generating conscious awareness or awakening is the main task, not indulging in zealous protests and agitations.

MEDIA CULTURE

It is imperative to foster conscious awareness among individuals, enabling them to engage in right thinking and critical analysis, so that they may arrive at correct opinions on their own.

In the contemporary age, ‘media culture’ is arguably the primary factor responsible for the corruption of people’s mindset.

A central feature of the modern media, be it print, electronic, or digital, is the method of one-sided reporting. Because most people obtain news from the media, on account of one-sided reporting in the media, they develop faulty opinions. They form their opinions on the basis of one-sided reporting.

One-sided reporting involves selecting bad news and ignoring good news. The media has the status of an industry. On account of this, it regards highlighting the bad news of any country or society as profitable while good news is not considered worthy of being reported. This behaviour of the media has made human thinking negative all across the world.

Consider an interesting and insightful example in this regard. I often listen to the broadcasts of BBC

London. One day, I was listening to a programme on BBC London's Hindi service. At the end of the programme, some letters were read out. One such letter was from a person based in Mauritius. In his letter, he complained that they broadcasted news from Hindi-speaking areas and that even though there were many Hindi-speaking people in Mauritius, they never gave any news of that country. The BBC announcer laughed, and replying to the sender of the letter, said, 'Media is the name of reporting bad news. In your country, there is only good news, and for the media, good news is no news.'

It is against the system of Nature that there be only evil in the world and nothing else. The fact of the matter is that, in line with the system of Nature, in this world, if there is 1% evil, then, at the very same time, directly or indirectly, 99% good also exists. But the media never gives information to people about the fact that the evils that it reports are just 1% of the entire society and not the whole of it.

Prior to 1947, almost all the newspapers in the subcontinent would highlight only negative aspects of the British. The positive aspects of the British administration rarely found a place in their columns. And so, many people began to hate the British. Likewise, before 1947, newspapers that were influenced by the

Muslim League used to ignore the positive aspects of the Hindus and published only negative things about them. The result of this was that many Muslims of the Indian subcontinent developed mistrust of Hindus. Similarly, these days, large sections of the Muslim media in many parts of the world do not refer to the positive aspects of America. As a result of this, many Muslims have developed an intense dislike for America and have even begun to imagine that America is the Enemy No. 1 of Muslims.

The status of the media is that of an industry. On account of the media's own business expediencies, it is not possible for it to stop its method of one-sided reporting and follow a method of two-sided reporting. The practical solution in this regard is not complaining against the media, but, rather, reforming one's own thinking. We need to promote conscious awareness among people. We need to nurture among them the ability to engage in right thinking and reflection so that they do not get affected by the faulty reporting of the media. By becoming capable of analysing things, themselves, they should be able to arrive at a proper opinion about them. An instance of the use of this method of analysis would be that if someone hears a Muslim leader claiming that America is the Enemy No. 1 of Islam or if someone reads such a claim in a

Muslim newspaper, they should ask that if this claim were indeed true, how is it that more than six million Muslims are comfortably living in America (including even relatives of the Muslim leaders or writers who make such a wrong claim about America)? How is it, they must ask, that thousands of Islamic institutions have been established in America and are able to run freely? How is it that in America, grand religious gatherings take place the likes of which do not happen even in Muslim-majority countries?

If one engages in this sort of analysis of the claims of such Muslim media and Muslim leaders, the actual facts of the matter will come to light. In other words, we must not depend on the 1% news provided by the media, but, rather, along with it, should form a picture by also including the remaining 99% news. If one does this, one will save oneself from forming wrong and highly skewed opinions.

CONTRARIAN THINKING

When individuals engage in balanced thinking, they will realise the importance of willingly accepting minor setbacks to avoid losses should they refuse to do so.

Sometimes, an individual or a social group engages in violence in order to obtain what it regards as its rights. In terms of results, this approach is actually completely counter-productive, because history shows that through violence, one loses, whereas through peace, one gains.

Throughout much of human history, numerous dictators, such as Hitler and Stalin, have engaged in violence on a huge scale, seeking thereby to obtain their supposed objectives. But without any exception whatsoever, the end result of the violence that was engineered by all of these people was just one—and that is, devastation.

The same is the case with Muslims. In present times, in different places, Muslims have taken to violence in the name of obtaining justice or securing rights, but the result of this has always been counter-productive.

In the wake of this violence, their conditions only became worse.

One example of this is Palestine. In line with the Balfour Declaration, in 1947, Jews were given a third of the territory of Palestine while Arabs were given two-thirds, which included the whole of the city of Jerusalem. However, the Arabs did not accept this division and announced that they would push the Jews into the sea. This struggle of the Arabs was, from its very beginning, carried out by using violence, and it remains so even today. Despite, enormous sacrifices of loss and property, all that the Arabs obtained from this approach was humiliation and deprivation.

According to a hadith, the Prophet frequently emphasized that “God grants to gentleness what he does not grant to harshness.” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 2593) From this, we can learn that if for some reason hostility arises between oneself and another person, one’s planned response to this should be on the basis of peace, not violence.

When a person adopts the method of violence, in many cases it is because he is overwhelmed with emotions. He sets off on the path of violence fired with negative emotions such as hate and vengeance. But instead, if he can keep his negative emotions under control, and, make an objective analysis of the matter in a realistic

manner, if he plans the course of his actions wisely, he will never adopt the method of violence. Under all conditions, he will engage in action while remaining non-violent, even if in adopting the method of peace he might have to face some deprivation initially. It often happens that in adopting the peaceful method, a person feels that they have to tolerate some loss. But if they think in a balanced manner, they will realise that they ought to willingly agree to tolerate a small loss so that they will not be compelled to face a bigger loss if they refuse to do so.

RISING ABOVE THE SITUATION

Keeping the future in mind, one focuses on the opportunities that are still available, rather than dwelling on past setbacks. This is one of the secrets of progress.

If a dispute arises between two individuals or between two communities, often, people are not able to think by rising above the temporary problem that is at hand. Things like the immediate loss and the question of honour so overpower their minds that it does not remain possible for them to separate themselves from the dispute and think dispassionately, and thereby make a more appropriate decision based on farsightedness.

The result of this narrow thinking and shortsightedness is that many individuals as well as communities remain engrossed in some problem or the other. A major portion of their time and energy is continuously wasted on non-beneficial things in the name of solving problems, although the intelligent thing to do would be to use their resources for the work of positive construction and progress.

When a problem arises, the wise thing to do is to ignore

immediate considerations and make a bold decision in terms of the future. After a problem has arisen, one's entire attention should be given to ending it. Agreeing to tolerate immediate loss, one should act prudently. In case of a dispute arising, one should make ending the dispute one's objective. In making efforts to end the dispute, one should keep the future in mind, and not just the past or the present. One's focus should be on the opportunities that are still available, and not on the losses of the past. This is one of the secrets of progress.

CRITIQUE IS NOT SOMETHING BAD

Critique can actually be a very lofty form of engagement. It is necessary for a person's intellectual development. To declare critique as taboo will lead to intellectual stagnation.

Many people think that critique is something bad. But the truth is that, while being non-critical might help in garnering popularity for oneself, it is, however, not beneficial as far as the task of any sort of meaningful reform is concerned.

Critique can actually be a very lofty sort of action. It is necessary for a person's intellectual development. To declare critique as taboo will lead to intellectual stagnation. It will cause the thinking process to cease. And in a human society where the thinking process ceases, its members may still appear to be humans but in terms of their intellect and understanding, they will be at the animalistic level. They will be deprived of intellectual progress, which is the greatest asset in this world for any person.

A BETTER GIFT FOR A CHILD

The biggest gift that parents can give their children is not to leave them a mass of wealth but to provide them with conditions that motivate them to engage in constructive pursuits.

Some people who have not obtained much material affluence worry about what they should do so that their children do not face the same sort of economic hardship as they do. The right formula for such people in this regard is contentment for themselves and progress for their children. In other words, they should be content with the economic standards that they have achieved and lead their life accordingly, while they should leave it to their children to engage in the world and through hard work, obtain greater success and progress. Parents should be content with being only the initial step for their children. They should leave it to their children to climb the remaining steps and reach the top floor.

The biggest gift that parents can give their children is not to leave behind a huge mass of wealth for them but to provide them with conditions that encourage them to engage in positive activities and enthusiasm for hard work. Material wealth that is obtained without hard work is not good. This sort of easy money gives more harm than benefit to those who obtain it.

SECRET OF UNITY

Differences are a part of nature. The practicable formula is to remain united despite differences, rather than attempting to eliminate them.

How is it possible to establish unity in a social group? A suggestion that is often offered in this regard is to remove the differences that exist among members of the group so that unity can be established. The thinking behind this suggestion is that when there are no longer any differences among members of a group, unity will automatically come about. According to this way of thinking, if differences exist among people, there is no unity, and where there is unity, no differences exist. But this thinking is actually completely baseless. Through this sort of formula, unity can never be established in the world.

Difference is actually a natural thing. It is a compulsory part of the nature of every human being. This being the case, doing away with differences is simply not possible. In this matter, the proper and practicable formula is to remain united despite differences. This is what unity is, and not trying to become united by doing away with all differences. This is because, in

this present world, it is just not possible that people's differences can be bulldozed in such a way that they are completely wiped out.

In this present world, the true formula of reform can only be one that is in line with human nature. A formula that is not in line with human nature is not practicable or workable. And something that is not practicable or workable is also not beneficial.

OPPORTUNITY WITH PROBLEM

In this world, every difficulty (problem) is accompanied by ease (opportunity). The system of the present world is based on the principle of hope, where after each night, a fresh morning dawns.

The system of the present world is based on the principle of hope. Here, after every night, a new morning arrives. Here, every difficulty is accompanied by ease. Here, along with every problem, the door of opportunities remains open. To put it briefly, every problem is accompanied by a solution. This is an eternal principle of this world that can never change.

Even if there appears to be no solution in sight, one should know that the formula that one is using in seeking to solve the problem is not in accordance with the circumstances. In such a situation, one should use a new formula. So, for instance, on realising that the method of war cannot solve a problem, one should at once abandon it and use the formula of peace.

SUCCESSFUL MARITAL LIFE

According to the laws of nature, in the present world, no one can find anything on an ideal yardstick. For a successful life, we need to be realistic. Success does not come to one with an unrealistic mindset.

Providing guidance for good relations between spouses, the Quran says:

Live with them in accordance with what is fair and kind; if you dislike them, it may be that you dislike something which God might make a source of abundant good. (4:19)

This teaching applies to both husbands and wives. From it, one learns that good marital relations do not depend on whether the husband gets a wife who is totally to his liking or that the wife gets a husband who is what she would like ideally. The fact of the matter is that, in accordance with Nature's laws, for this to happen is just not possible. The secret of a successful marital life lies in adjusting to a spouse who in some respects may not be in accordance with one's liking. One must search for likable aspects in them amidst aspects that one may not like.

A song by the famous singer Mohammad Rafi (d. 1980) became so popular that it went on to become the heartbeat of many a mother and father. When Mr. Rafi sang the song himself, he began crying, being overwhelmed with emotion.

In this song, a father, bidding farewell to his daughter after marriage recites some verses, some lines of which are as follows:

Babul ki duaen leti ja,

Ja tujh ko sukhi sansaar mile.

Maike ki kabhi na yaad aye,

Sasural mein itna pyar mile.

Take your father's blessings and go,

May you obtain a world of joy.

May you get so much love in your in-laws' home,

That you never remember your parents' home.

But this message is against the law of Nature. In this present world, no girl or boy can obtain joy and love in this way. This being the case, to present the above sort of joy and love as the yardstick for a successful life for spouses is doing injustice to them because it engenders in them an unrealistic mindset. And in this world, it is simply not possible to lead a successful life on the basis of an unrealistic mindset.

IDEAL *VERSUS* PRACTICAL

The principle of accepting what is practically possible, while setting aside the ideal, constitutes a natural law that operates both at the individual level in personal life as well as collective life.

Often, the reason people face loss is because they do not differentiate between what is ideal and what is practicable. They look at a thing from the point of view of what they regard as the ideal, and when it does not measure up fully to their ideal, they reject it. This is sheer foolishness. In this present world, it very rarely happens that a person obtains something in the form that they consider ideal. In most situations, one must agree to accept what is practically possible. This is not a matter of lack of courage. It is actually a law of Nature, and in this world, in order to succeed, one must accept and abide by the laws of Nature, not clash against them. This principle of accepting what is practically possible operates at the level of an individual's personal life as well as collective life.

Consider an example to understand this point better. One of the new ideologies with immense consequences that emerged in modern times and gained widespread

acceptance is what is called ‘secularism’. When this political ideology emerged, numerous Muslim leaders who projected themselves as pro-Islam rejected it. They claimed that secularism was opposed to Islam, rather they went to the extent of saying that it was an ideological rebellion against religion. On the basis of this thinking of theirs, they translated secularism to mean irreligiousness or anti-religiousness, although such a translation was definitely not correct.

Presently, in almost all Muslim countries, people who have received Western-style education are in power. Now, these people were supporters of a secular system of government. On account of this, so-called pro-Islam elements unleashed an ideological as well as physical war against them. As a result, in every Muslim country, Muslims got divided into two rival camps—the secular camp, and the ‘Islamist’ camp—and began fighting each other. In this completely useless war, Muslims had to face enormous losses, the likes of which they had perhaps never experienced before in the entire annals of Muslim history.

The fact of the matter is that secularism is not some religious belief. Secularism does not mean irreligiousness or anti-religiousness. Rather, secularism is the adoption of a neutral policy with regard to religion. It is a practical policy. Its purpose is

to avoid religious disputes and to conduct the political and economic affairs of a country on a collective basis. This secularism was actually extremely beneficial for religion and its followers. It gave people the possibility, in both Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority countries equally, to engage in positive religious activities. It provided them the opportunity to organise places of worship and centres for religious instruction, to set up educational institutions, to invite people to God, and so on. All such fields were completely open for the followers of Islam to engage in positive works. Availing of this opportunity, they could have engaged in positively serving God.

But modern-day Muslim leaders, gauging secularism on the basis of an ideal that they had in their minds, remained inimical to it. Had they instead gauged secularism on the basis of practical reality, they might have considered it as a blessing from God and availed of it as a great opportunity.

Branding secularism as an 'irreligious', 'anti-religious', and 'devilish' system and waging war against it proved to be completely unrealistic. This was against the very system of Nature itself. It was a totally impractical programme of trying to live life on the basis of an ideal in a world that runs on the basis of practical realities. That is why it naturally had to fail. And

now the very people who ranted and raved against secularism are leading a comfortable life throughout the world under the same secular systems that they had earlier branded as un-Islamic. In other words, the very same secularism that they refused to accept in principle they have now accepted in practice, in a very hypocritical way. This is a clear case of double standards.

LAST WORD

As human beings, we have the capacity to think at a purely intellectual level. We can conceptualise and discriminate between right and wrong, good and bad. The greatness of humanity lies in our ability to think and plan a course of action. As such, it is necessary for everyone to fully awaken their intellectual senses and cultivate their mental faculties for the right way of thinking. Once we start thinking right, our actions will consequently be right.

In every person's life, a time comes when he experiences some sort of loss. People who consider a loss to be just a loss can, through new efforts, make themselves successful once again. On the other hand, people who consider loss to be permanent failure lose their courage and give up. They lack the will and determination to engage in any new action. Which of these two courses of action a person will adopt depends on his thinking. His way of thinking makes a person fail or leads one towards success. Right thinking leads us to progress and development. Wrong thinking leads us in the opposite direction. Our level of thinking determines success or failure.

Success is the result of right thinking. Think right, do right, and succeed.

We need to learn the art of right thinking. A foolish person knows only his actions, while a wise man knows not only his actions but also their possible consequences. The British writer, William Ralph Inge (1860-1954), rightly remarked, 'The wise man is he who knows the relative value of things.'

Everything depends on one's way of thinking. Our minds become of a certain sort and begin to work in a certain way depending on the way we think. This being the case, if we change our way of thinking, sorrow can be transformed into happiness, despondency into trust, and helplessness into courage. The secret of reform is the transformation of human consciousness, by learning the art of thinking. Without this, no reform is at all possible.

In this world, everything depends on thinking. Wrong thinking makes an easy thing difficult, while right thinking makes a difficult thing easy. This issue of difference in thinking applies to all matters, big or small. It applies to domestic affairs as well as to national and international affairs.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Aql: *Aql* means the intellect or the thinking process, which is the most prominent aspect of human existence. If one keeps one's intellect alive, one can manage all the affairs of one's life.

Hadith: *Hadith* is also referred to as Tradition; the word *hadith* means communication or narration. In the Islamic context, it has come to denote the record of what the Prophet said, did, or tacitly approved. According to some scholars, the word *hadith* also covers reports about the sayings and deeds of the Companions of the Prophet. The Quran provides the basic teachings of Islam, while their detailed applications can be found in the *hadith*.

Dawah: *Dawah* means calling people to God to explain His creation plan, so one may become an inhabitant of paradise in the hereafter.

Dayee: A *dayee* is an individual who invites people to God and shares God's creation plan for man with them in such a way that it successfully addresses people's minds at every age.

Ilm: *Ilm* means understanding. Possessing knowledge or information about religion is not enough. One must have a proper understanding of religion. This is the essence of *ilm*.

Imam: The *Imam* or the leader of a group of Muslims in ritual prayer (*Salah*). Praying behind an *imam* teaches us a lesson that extends to other areas of life as well. It encourages us to wholeheartedly accept a secondary position by acknowledging the leader of the respective field ensuring that society may progress without any hindrance. Developing such thinking requires conscious nurturing and training.

Jihad: *Jihad* means exerting oneself to the utmost to achieve one's goal. *Jihad* is essentially a peaceful ideological struggle, striving one's utmost in submission to God's will and communicating God's message to others.

Haram and Ja'iz: *Haram* refers to things that are forbidden in Islam. *Ja'iz* refers to those things that are permissible in Islam.

Istishhad: Seeking Martyrdom. Suicide bombing is unlawful in Islam, but the Muslim leaders have given it a good name—*istishhad* (seeking martyrdom)—and thus, for their part, legitimized something that is forbidden in Islam.

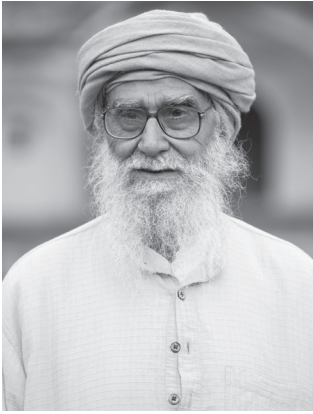
Kalima (Kalimatu ash-Shahadah): The word of testimony. This is the Islamic creed. The recitation of the *Kalima* of monotheism is to accept the oneness of God and accept Prophet Muhammad as God's Messenger.

Maarifah: *Maarifah* means the realization or understanding of reality through contemplation and reflection. *Maarifah* denotes insight to go beyond external knowledge to see inner realities. If a person possesses knowledge (in the sense of information) but does not possess the insight of *Maarifah*, he will not understand the difference between one thing and another.

Madu: A *madu* is one who is invited towards God and the truth. Other communities have the status of *madu* for the Muslims, to whom Muslims are duty-bound to communicate the message of God.

Taqwa: *Taqwa* means God-consciousness, leading a life of caution and restraint in this world. To properly understand religion, one must inculcate God-consciousness in oneself.

Tatfeef: According to the Quran (83:1-6), *Tatfeef* refers to an unfair way of thinking. Every human being wants to have his dues paid in full. It is only fair that he should also give others their full dues. This is a balanced way of thinking which will lead to progress. A balanced way of thinking or right thinking is man's most significant action. Through right thinking, one understands the difference between one thing and another; one discovers solutions to difficulties; one discerns hidden realities; one learns how to convert minus points into plus points. It is our level of thinking that determines our success or failure. Success is the result of right thinking. Think right, do right, and succeed, both in this world and the Hereafter.



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925-2021) was an Islamic scholar, spiritual guide, and ambassador of peace. His English translation of the Quran and its Commentary are widely appreciated for their simplicity, clarity, and ease of understanding. He has authored over 200 books; and two magazines, *Spirit of Islam* and *Al-Risala*; and recorded thousands of

video and audio lectures. Demonstrating the relevance of Islam in the modern idiom, this material delves into Islam's spiritual wisdom, the Prophet's non-violent approach, its relationship with modernity, and other contemporary issues.

For his seminal contributions to world peace, Maulana received numerous national and international awards including the 'Demiurges Peace International Award' by the Nuclear Disarmament Forum AG under the patronage of the former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev (2002). The Government of India honoured him with the 'Padma Vibhushan Award' (2021), and the 'Padma Bhushan Award' (2000) for his contributions to spirituality. He was also the recipient of the 'Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavna Award' (2010), the 'Communal Harmony Award' (2000), and the 'National Citizen's Award' by Mother Teresa (1996), to name a few. In 2001, Maulana founded the *Centre for Peace and Spirituality International* which is actively carrying his legacy forward by distributing copies of the Quran and peacefully conveying the spiritual message of Islam at a global level.

www.mwkhana.com
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Right thinking is man's greatest action. Everything in this world depends on how you think. Wrong thinking complicates the easy, while right thinking simplifies the difficult. Thinking occurs at the level of the mind and serves as a means for one's intellectual development. Thinking is the key to intellectual growth, elevating us from animalistic instincts to higher humanity. It enables us to differentiate, find solutions, and uncover hidden realities. Thus, it is crucial to prioritise improving one's thinking. This book guides readers toward right thinking.

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