



# REVIVING IJTIHAD

Unlocking the Door to  
Islamic Renewal

Maulana  
Wahiduddin Khan



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WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

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## TAQLID AND IJTIHAD

The human mind can be categorized into two types: an imitative (taqlidi) mind and an independent reasoning (ijtihadi) mind. The distinction between these two can be described as follows: an imitative mind is a closed mind, while an independent reasoning mind is an open mind. The mental journey of an imitative person comes to a halt at a certain point, whereas the mental journey of an independent reasoning person continues to progress, ceasing only with death. This distinction can be better understood through an example.

Shakespeare was a great writer of the English language, who passed away in 1616. On the other hand, George Bernard Shaw, an English writer of a later period, was born in 1856—there was a gap of about three hundred years between their periods of activity. In the history of English literature, Bernard Shaw holds a lesser position as compared to Shakespeare. Referring to this, Bernard Shaw famously remarked:

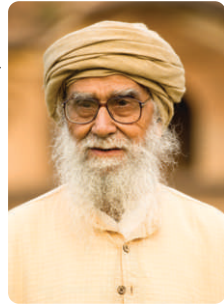
“I am smaller in stature than Shakespeare, but I stand upon his shoulders.”

This statement reflects an independent reasoning approach. Such a way of thinking fosters broad-mindedness and courage. In a society where this attitude prevails, the journey of intellectual evolution continues unhindered. Each generation adds to the intellectual heritage of its predecessors and further develops it to pass on to future generations.

## REVIVING IJTIHAD

Ijtihad (independent reasoning) is essential for intellectual and societal advancement. In Islamic Shariah, it is the scholarly effort to interpret and apply Islamic teachings to new situations using the principles of the Quran and Sunnah. By addressing societal changes, ijtihad ensures Islam's relevance and preserves the dynamic nature of Islamic law. In contrast, abandoning ijtihad, known as taqlid (imitation), leads to intellectual stagnation, depriving societies of progress and development.

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. The Government of India honoured him with the 'Padma Vibhushan Award' (2021), and the 'Padma Bhushan Award' (2000) for his contributions to spirituality. 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.

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