

The background of the cover is a watercolor painting of a forest. It features tall, slender trees with light-colored trunks and dense green foliage. The colors are soft and blended, with shades of green, blue, and brown. The overall style is artistic and serene.

# BUILDING LIFE

*A Guidebook for Successful Living*

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

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MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

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Goodword Books

First published 2025

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This book is an English translation of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's Urdu book, *Tameer e Hayat* (first published 2000).

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## FOREWORD

One of the objectives of our institution has been to publish articles that guide people in the constructive development of their lives. Since its launch in 1976, the monthly *Al-Risalah* has consistently published articles that serve this purpose.

In this context, the first full-length book was published in 1987 under the title *Raz-e-Hayat* (English: The Secret of Success). The second book on this topic, *Kitab-e-Zindagi* (The Book of Life), was released in 1996. Additionally, the institution published several smaller works on the same theme during this period—for example, *Rahein Band Nahin* (Paths Are Not Closed, 50 pages) and *Rahnuma-e-Hayat* (Guide to Life, 50 pages), among others.

The present collection, *Tameer-e-Hayat*, is another book on this subject. Spanning 313 pages and divided into five chapters, it is our hope that—God willing—this book will serve as a source of guidance and support for everyone seeking to build a meaningful life.

Publishers





## CHAPTER ONE

# RIGHT THINKING

*For any person, the most important thing is the correct way of thinking. Right thinking guides a person towards progress and development, while wrong thinking denies him both.*

## RIGHT THINKING

Human beings have a unique ability for intellectual thought. Unlike animals, which act purely on instinct, humans can reason and plan their actions based on their thoughts. For an animal, there is no possibility of error in the way humans err, because it acts according to the instinct placed in it by God. However, humans can make both correct and incorrect decisions. Therefore, it is essential for every human being to develop their thinking skills fully so their thoughts are accurate. As a result, their actions will also be correct.

### **First Point: Life as an Art**

Life is an art. Only those who understand this art can live a successful life in this world. Those unaware of this art are doomed to fail. This art can be summed up in one word: positive thinking. That is, one must rise above a reaction-based mindset, think with an open and deconditioned mind, form opinions without emotional clouding, and plan one's life accordingly, based on reality.

Negative thinking contrasts with positive thinking. Positive thinking means bringing one's intellectual abilities into action. Negative thinking, on the other hand, is when a

person's intellectual capacity does not develop; instead, he thinks only under the influence of external circumstances and shapes his thoughts and opinions accordingly.

From this perspective, the whole affair of life ultimately comes down to whether one thinks rightly or wrongly. Right thinking leads to success, while wrong thinking results in failure. This concept applies to both individuals and nations.

If a person keeps an open mind, discovering the right way of thinking is not difficult. One's own nature guides them toward it. The signs scattered throughout the universe teach them this very lesson. The experiences of history reinforce it. Every field of knowledge points them toward right thinking. In such a situation, only those remain deprived of right thinking who have eyes yet do not see, who have ears yet do not hear, and who have an intellect yet refuse to understand.

### **Second Point: Humans as Thinking Beings**

It is said that a human being is a thinking being. This is true because all human actions rely on their thoughts. A person thinks first, then acts. If the thought is correct, the action will also be correct. If the thought is wrong, the action will be wrong from beginning to end. Correct thinking results in making a correct start, and a correct start leads to a correct outcome.

When an apple or any fruit falls from its branch, it always lands on the ground. This has been happening for thousands

of years, but people saw it as a normal event. They believed there was no need to question it since what was happening was natural.

Isaac Newton (1643-1727) was probably the first person to wonder why an apple falls from its branch. A unique thought occurred to him: Why does the apple fall downward instead of upward? This idea led Newton to discover that the Earth has a gravitational pull. That's why objects always fall downward and never rise upward.

Similarly, for thousands of years, humans believed the Earth was flat like a plain field. This idea seemed correct based on what they could see, so it was accepted as fact.

Once, a thoughtful man stood on the shore by the sea. The sea seemed to stretch to the horizon. Suddenly, he saw a mark appear on the far end of the sea. It was the mast of a ship. Slowly, the mast rose until the entire ship became visible on the surface of the water.

The man started to think about why this happened. If the Earth were flat, the ship would be visible all at once from a distance and up close, with the only difference being that it would look hazy from far away and clear up close. But as it actually happened, the ship appeared partially first, and then slowly the whole ship became visible. This made the man realize that the Earth has curvature, meaning it is not flat like a board but round like a ball. As the ship rose with the curvature of the Earth, it eventually became fully visible.

This highlights the importance of thinking in life. The truth is that all new discoveries are made through thinking. Planning is possible through thinking. Failures can be turned into successes through thinking. It is through thinking that a person can reflect on the past and present to create a better plan for the future.

### **Third Point: Ignore the Problem**

Conflicts have always been part of human society. However, they are not inevitable. It is up to each person to decide whether to engage in conflicts or avoid them. This principle applies to individuals, nations, and governments alike.

I know the story of a man who went into business and became quite successful. A relative of his, who started his business at the same time, failed in his venture and became envious of the successful trader. Someone informed the successful trader that his envious relative was speaking badly about him. The businessman chose not to respond. This informant repeated his news several times. Finally, he said, “I keep telling you that your relative is spreading bad things about you, but you never respond.” The trader calmly replied, “That is his problem, not mine.”

The trader listened to the remarks and chose to dismiss his envious relative’s words, preventing the situation from escalating. The matter ended there—with mere words. Had he reacted in anger, however, it would have sparked a conflict that could have consumed them both.

### **Fourth Point: Avoid Negative Reactions**

An incident occurred in pre-1947 India from which we can learn an important lesson. In a village, there were two landlords. One was religious and had a beard, while the other was clean-shaven. The clean-shaven landlord sent a gift of sweets to the bearded landlord, who returned it, saying he does not accept gifts from clean-shaven people. The clean-shaven landlord could not tolerate this and felt deeply insulted. A strong desire for revenge grew within him, leading to a long-lasting conflict. They engaged in destructive acts against each other, such as destroying crops, committing murders, filing lawsuits, and spreading rumours. This negative cycle continued for 25 years until both families were financially ruined and could no longer continue their feud.

Most conflicts in human society begin with words. People respond with anger to opposing views, and this reaction sets in motion a cycle of retaliation that ultimately leads to the painful outcomes we recognise as conflict. Negative actions are almost always born from negative thinking. The real solution is to maintain a positive mindset, even in difficult circumstances, and to respond constructively to negative behaviour.

A simple principle can prevent many problems: whenever you hear something unpleasant, do not react; pause and ask yourself whether it is merely a harsh word or an actual threat. If there is a genuine risk, take measured steps to deal with it. If not, simply ignore it.

### **Fifth Point: Overlook Imaginary Threats**

An interesting example in this context is that of the British when they entered Iraq in the 19th century and captured Baghdad in 1917. Following this, a British councillor was stationed there. When the British councillor first arrived in Baghdad, he noticed a loud noise outside his residence in the morning. He immediately called his local secretary and asked what the noise was. The secretary explained that it was the time for the Muslim morning prayer, and the call to prayer (Adhan) was being given in the mosques. The councillor then asked if this posed any threat to the British Empire. The secretary assured him that it did not. The councillor then said, "Let them do what they are doing."

This is a solid policy when dealing with disagreements. If someone presents a real threat to you, definitely confront them and try to stop them.

But if it's only a matter of words, even if your feelings are deeply hurt, ignore it. Hurt feelings don't cause real harm; they are just imaginary concerns, and acting on an imaginary issue isn't the sign of a wise person.

### **Sixth Point: Respond Positively**

In the present world, no one lives in isolation. Everyone has to coexist with many others, just like on the road where everyone drives among many vehicles. In such a situation, a policy of reaction is never beneficial. Success can be said to be assured for those who know how to respond positively to negative situations.

An interesting example of this is when Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) was tested by a Christian friend. The friend



invited Swami Ji to his home. In the meeting room, there was a table on which the friend had placed the holy books of every religion, one on top of the other. At the bottom was the Hindu religious book, the Gita, with the sacred texts of other religions placed above it. When Swami Ji arrived, the Christian friend pointed to the table and asked him to comment on the arrangement. The friend expected Swami Ji to be upset by seeing his religion's book at the bottom and the other religions' books placed above it, which appeared to honour the other religions more. However, Swami Ji did not get angry. He approached the situation calmly and responded positively to a negative setup. He smiled at the books and said, "The foundation is really good."

This incident further demonstrates that staying calm and balanced helps a person turn enemies into friends and transform an unfavourable situation into a favourable one.

From these few examples, it becomes clear how vital the thinking process is. The truth is that every success and failure in human life is determined by one's thoughts. A successful life corresponds with higher thinking. If you want to succeed in life, nurture right thinking within yourself. Right thinking leads to right actions, and correct actions lead to success.

### **Seventh Point: Avoid Dichotomous Thinking**

An example of faulty thinking is what can be called "dichotomous thinking," which involves only considering two options in a situation, even when a third, better choice exists.

For example, if someone insults you and damages your dignity, people usually can't tolerate it and become angry, confronting the other person. They see tolerating the insult as being cowardly, and confronting it as a brave act. Because bravery appears better than cowardice, they turn away from what they see as cowardice and choose what they believe is a brave response.

But this is an error in thinking. In reality, there is a third possible approach that they overlook. This means not wasting time getting provoked and fighting, but instead maintaining a positive course of action. This third approach is captured in the famous saying, "The dogs bark, but the caravan moves on."

This isn't just a moral statement but a crucial truth about life.

This world is full of different kinds of people, which often leads to unpleasant experiences. In such situations, if someone reacts angrily to every bad moment and gets provoked by every irritation, they won't accomplish anything meaningful. They will waste their time and energy fighting others. The right way is to focus their strength and abilities on positive growth and progress.

In this world, a person has very little time and limited resources. Because of this, no one can afford to keep chasing others to teach them lessons or seek revenge. The cost of this approach is the suspension of their own progress and growth.

### **Eighth Point: Principle of Adjustment**

Humans are naturally idealistic. They always seek the highest standards and aim to do their best in everything.

This kind of idealism may seem perfectly fine in theory but can lead to real problems in practice.

The reason is that no one lives alone in this world. Everyone has to live with others. Each person has their own interests, conveniences, and views on benefit and loss. This situation makes it impossible for everyone to pursue high standards. Therefore, the only practical solution is to learn to adapt with others.

The reality is that today, the choice isn't between good and evil but between the lesser evil and the greater evil. A sensible approach or correct thinking is, when facing a situation, to avoid the greater evil and settle for the lesser evil.

### **Ninth Point: The Art of Differentiation**

An important part of thinking is learning the art of differentiation, that is the difference between one thing and another. Many things in the world look similar but are actually different. Not understanding these differences can sometimes cause big losses.

For example, one person has a job, and another is a businessman. The salary the employee receives at the end of the month is entirely their income. If they spend the whole amount, it won't harm their job. However, if a businessman spends all the money that comes in each month on personal needs and does so every month, their business will fail, and they will go bankrupt. This is because only about ten percent of the money the businessman receives is their actual income, while the rest belongs to the market and must be returned to others. Therefore, it's important to understand the difference between having a job and

running a business; otherwise, you could face serious losses.

This principle applies to most areas of life. Whenever a situation occurs, one should avoid forming an unrealistic opinion based on superficial or partial similarities. Instead, they should understand the differences between two things and base their opinion on that. A person who doesn't understand this wisdom is like a driver who can't tell the difference between an empty road and a crowded one and drives the same way in both.

### **Tenth Point: The Art of Learning**

Another key principle here is to train the mind to learn lessons from surrounding events.

The habit of learning lessons not only promotes mental growth but also shields one from unnecessary harm. A young man opened a shop in the city. After some time, a theft happened. An elder asked the young man for details, and he explained that he had no experience and had installed a simple lock on the shop. The lock could be easily opened, so someone came at night, opened it, and stole goods quietly.

The elder said that there is no need to learn this through personal experience. Ample evidence from hundreds of people shows that a strong lock should be installed on the shop. Using a simple lock is like inviting thieves to steal.

Our world offers plenty of lessons and learnings. Everywhere, there is something from which a person can learn useful lessons and improve their life. The only requirement is to observe things with open eyes and reflect on them with an open mind.

## REALISM

The second Caliph, Hazrat Umar Farooq, said: “A wise person is not the one who knows good from evil, but the one who knows the better of the two evils.” (*Dham al-Hawa* by Ibn al-Jawzi, p. 8). In social life, conflicts often arise between individuals or groups. When such conflicts occur, the question always arises about how to resolve them. What guiding principle should be used to settle these disputes?

Often, people see these issues as a battle between good and evil or justice and injustice. They want to avoid evil and bring about good, protect themselves from injustice, and promote justice. However, such individuals often do not reach their goals, ending up with complaints and setbacks despite their efforts.

Why is this? The reason is that in social life, no one can decide things solely based on their own will. In such matters, every conflict has two sides. For any resolution to be reached, both parties must agree. If one party considers something to be good or just but the other party does not accept it, the result will be a confrontation. And confrontation always worsens the problem rather than solving it.

So, what does wisdom require in such situations? It calls for viewing the issue not as good versus evil or justice versus injustice, but as what is possible and what is not. Then, one should pursue what is practically achievable and let go of what is not.

A historical example of this principle is the Arab-Israeli conflict over Palestine in the mid-20th century, which

lasted fifty years. The Jews proposed a peace agreement between the two parties, but the Arabs were unwilling, insisting that peace could only be based on justice. Despite countless sacrifices, this approach failed, and by the end of the 20th century, the Arabs set aside their demand for justice and made a peace agreement with Israel solely for the sake of peace.

Theoretically, it makes sense that peace between two conflicting parties should be based on justice. Ideologically, this idea is very appealing, but practical experience shows that such perfection is rarely achievable. In such disputes, wisdom lies in not insisting on perfect justice but accepting pragmatic justice.

The core idea is that linking peace and justice is inherently flawed. In this world, peace is not achieved for the sake of justice. Peace relates to opportunities for work, not to justice. Peace is established not to achieve justice but to secure opportunities that can be used to attain justice.

For example, in 1948, most of Palestine was under Arab control. The wise policy at that time would have been to accept this situation and make peace with the Jews, as was done fifty years later. Doing so would have brought tremendous benefits. The Arabs could have established peace and started their efforts toward development and stability. Over the past fifty years, they have wasted enormous wealth and countless lives in the name of achieving justice. If peace had been established, all these resources could have been invested in building and stabilizing their society. This

positive approach would have allowed them to reach all their goals without conflict, which they unsuccessfully tried to do through war.

A clear example of this principle can be seen in the early Islamic period with the event known as the Treaty of Hdaybiyyah. After the Prophet of Islam (ﷺ) declared his prophethood, the Quraysh of Makkah became fiercely hostile toward him. They forced him to leave his homeland, Makkah, and continued to commit many other injustices against the Muslims.

If the Prophet had insisted on justice as a condition for peace, peace would never have been reached between the two parties. Instead, he disregarded the issue of justice and made a treaty with the opponents based on the principle of “peace for the sake of peace.” He used this peace as an opportunity for constructive work, using it to build and strengthen Islam. As a result, within just two years, he achieved everything he had seemingly lost at the time of the peace agreement, and even more.

This principle of wisdom applies not only to social conflicts but also to personal disputes and disagreements. In personal matters, the only way to succeed is to resolve issues based on what is possible and impossible, not on what is right or wrong.

When there is a disagreement between two men or two women in a household, the focus should not be on what’s just or unjust, but on what is practically achievable and what is not. Getting caught up in debates about right and wrong

will only continue the conflict. On the other hand, if you accept what is possible, you will gain two benefits at once: resolving the conflict quickly and creating opportunities for constructive action.

The same principle applies to all personal disputes. In the course of life, everyone faces situations of disagreement and conflict—sometimes over money and sometimes for other reasons. A person who debates right and wrong in such situations is undoubtedly unwise. Instead, a wise person recognizes the practical demands and, considering them, agrees to what is possible. This is the person who will succeed in this world.

Whenever conflicts occur in social life, people focus solely on what they believe is just or their right, then they fight with the other side to attain that right. These conflicts often last for years without a positive outcome. An alternative approach in such situations is to consider the time and energy spent fighting for an assumed right and instead use that energy for positive development.

Confrontation is always pursued in the name of securing rights. However, the tangible outcome of confrontation is often the loss of valuable opportunities. In this world, wisdom lies in adopting a practical approach in every situation. An individual can pursue ideals in their personal life, but when it comes to social matters, they must always be pragmatic.



## WHO IS WISE?

A British author, William Ralph Inge, once said:

“The wise man is he who knows the relative value of things.” To grasp the meaning of this statement, consider the following example.

A student has an exam to take and leaves home on time to reach school. On the way, an ignorant boy confronts him and insults him, making the student angry. If the student reacts out of anger and gets into a fight with the boy to take revenge, he might be delayed enough to miss the exam hall, which could cause him to lose an entire year.

Similarly, imagine someone has an important journey to make. They leave home to reach the train station and board the train to arrive at their destination on time. But along the way, they get into a quarrel with someone. If they continue to argue, they may be delayed and by the time they reach the station, they may find that their train has already left.

Consider these examples. The immediate problem for both individuals was the direct conflict they faced: being insulted or wronged by someone. This was the aspect of the situation that was directly visible at the time. However, there was also a hidden aspect that was not immediately apparent but could be understood by a discerning person. This hidden aspect was that if they engaged in the conflict and tried to punish the offenders, the result would be losing a much more significant benefit—failing to reach the exam hall or the railway station on time, and thus depriving themselves of a greater advantage for the sake of temporary emotional satisfaction.

In the statement mentioned above, this second and less visible aspect is referred to as the relative value of the matter. The first aspect—namely, the wrongdoing committed by the aggressor—is obvious to everyone. But the second aspect, or the relative value of the situation, can be perceived only by a person of deep insight, someone who makes decisions through thoughtful reasoning rather than momentary emotions.

The system of the current world is such that these two aspects often appear in many situations. An unwise person only sees the immediate situation and acts accordingly, making their own situation worse. A wise person is one who can see the other dimensions of a situation—who can rise above the immediate circumstances and perceive the deeper realities which, although not present at the moment of the event, eventually emerge and become decisive.

The modern world tests this kind of wisdom. Those who prove wise in this area will succeed. Conversely, those who do not demonstrate this wisdom are likely to face failure.

## THE WISDOM OF RESTRAINT

In a letter dated September 28, 1999, a person writes: “I read the September 28, 1999, issue of the Hindi newspaper ‘Hindustan.’ The editorial mentioned that recently in Surat (Gujarat), a procession for ‘Ganesh Visarjan’ took place. During this event, there was a clash between the police and

the procession. As a result of stone-pelting and firing, eight members of the procession were killed, and several dozen were injured. The procession was passing by a mosque in the Muslim neighbourhood of the city. It was expected that there would be a fight between Muslims and Hindus or Muslims and the police, but the opposite happened. The Muslims showed patience, and as a result, they reaped the benefits. None of the Muslims were harmed because the clash occurred between the administration and the Hindus. Reading this reminded me of what you have written in ‘Al-Risala’ or many other books.” (Suhail Ahmed, Hassan Banna Manzil, Jamiatul Falah, Bilariyaganj, Azamgarh).

This incident in Surat has been covered by all newspapers. There is an important lesson to learn from this event, a lesson that’s often emphasized in ‘Al-Risala.’ It is that the main cause of anti-Muslim riots is not the procession itself or its passage through a Muslim neighbourhood, but the unwise reaction of the residents when the procession goes through it. A thoughtful response safeguards you, but a reckless one brings trouble.

The core idea is that if Muslims in the area react negatively during the procession, the issue becomes Muslims versus the police. However, if Muslims choose to remain restrained, the issue shifts to the procession versus the police. This principle has been proven repeatedly through riots. The incident in Surat is a clear example of this wisdom.

During the early period, Muslims faced conspiracies and injustices from their opponents. At that time, they were

advised: “If you persevere and fear God, their designs will never harm you in the least.” (3:120). Consider how patience acts as a shield against the schemes of the enemies and protects the targeted group from harm.

The truth is that when an unpleasant situation occurs in social life, there are two ways to respond. One is that a person, seeing a provocative situation, becomes inflamed and retaliates under the pressure of impulsive emotions. The other is, despite the provocation from the other person, to stay calm, control one’s emotions, and carefully consider the whole situation before replying in a measured way.

In this context, the first type of reaction is called an impatient reaction, and the second type is called a patient reaction. In other words, an impatient reaction is an emotional response to the immediate situation, while a patient reaction is a considered response to the situation.

Patience is not inaction. It doesn’t mean that when faced with a difficult situation, one should sit idly feeling helpless. In reality, patience is the highest form of bravery. When someone acts impulsively out of impatience, it shows they have been overwhelmed by their emotions. On the other hand, when someone adopts a patient approach, it demonstrates that they have control over their intense emotions and haven’t let their feelings overpower their reason.

## THE PROBLEM OF THINKING WRONG

A reader of the monthly magazine “*Al-Risala*” writes: “In one of your articles, you wrote that when one opportunity for success ends for a person, they should not be discouraged. This is because another opportunity is always close by, allowing them to resume their journey of progress. The question is, how can a person know that there is another opportunity available?” (Suhail Ahmed, New Delhi).

The key to recognizing new opportunities is to think openly, rather than with a closed mind. It’s important to rise above the tendency to blame others. An example of this is the Muslims of India. Before 1947, our leaders and newspapers told Muslims that they faced the Hindu majority in India and could never succeed here. Even after the partition in 1947, this mindset continued. All speakers and writers kept delivering this negative message to Muslims. Some even went so far as to claim that the majority community wanted to turn Indian Muslims into a second Spain.

Such negative propaganda distorted the thinking of Muslims to such an extent that they came to believe that no opportunities for success existed for them in India. Since 1947, I have been writing and speaking against this idea. Finally, about 40 years after independence, the mindset of Muslims began to shift. They realized that all kinds of opportunities were available to them in India. As a result, Muslims here are now continually advancing in every field.

The truth is that the world works according to the laws of nature, not the plans or schemes of any biased group. Even if a group or faction wishes otherwise, nature will block their way, and they will not succeed in controlling the course of history.

As mentioned, the world operates according to the unchangeable laws of nature, not the plots of any group. An uplifting aspect of this natural law is that it often supports the weaker party. It favours the smaller group over the so-called larger one. This law is stated in the Quran as follows: “Many a small group, by God’s command has prevailed against a large group.” (2:249).

Why does a weaker group outperform a stronger one, and how does the law of nature support them? The answer is that the Creator of nature has endowed every human being with immense potential. Every person is inherently gifted with extraordinary abilities. However, initially, these abilities are in a dormant state. All this high potential exists within a person in a latent form. It is up to the individual to transform this potential into actual reality.

The natural law is that this transformation happens under pressure. The more pressure placed on a person or group, the more their hidden talents surface. This is exactly what occurs with sugarcane. As is well known, every sugarcane stalk is full of juice. However, under normal conditions, this juice remains inside. The juice only flows out when subjected to extraordinary pressure. If you place sugarcane in soft cotton, its juice will never emerge. But when you put sugarcane in a crusher, the sweet juice inside is released.

The same is true for humans. People always improve under pressure. This principle applies to both individuals and groups.

The renowned British historian Arnold J. Toynbee effectively explained this in his book “A Study of History.” In this 12-volume series, he showed that all major civilizations throughout history were created by a minority group. In fact, it is the minority that has driven every significant event in history.

According to Toynbee, the principle is that a challenge from the majority group forces the minority to put in more effort. This challenge pushes the minority to use their abilities more than others to survive. The pressure of circumstances motivates the minority until they are able to perform heroic acts. Toynbee demonstrated this natural principle through real examples from twenty-one civilizations in history.

The same law of nature applies to Indian Muslims. Before 1947, India was under British rule. For political reasons, the British kept a balance between the country’s smaller and larger groups. When India gained independence on August 15, 1947, and entered the democratic era, this balance established by the British was disturbed. Now, Muslims became a minority, and Hindus became the majority. As a result, many problems arose for Indian Muslims that did not exist during British rule.

For Indian Muslims, this appeared to be a problem, but according to the law of nature, it was a challenge. In terms of its result, it was like awakening the dormant strengths of

Muslims. This awakening process started right after 1947 but initially happened unconsciously. Later, a second phase began, and this awakening became conscious. Now, it has progressed to a point where it can be seen everywhere.

Some time ago, there was a gathering of Muslims in Delhi. The topic was why Muslims are economically behind. Various speakers shared their views. In my speech, I said that the idea itself is wrong—that Muslims in this country have fallen behind. I argued that the reality is quite the opposite: almost every Muslim in this country has made progress since 1947. I pointed out that after the industrial revolution, there has been a worldwide economic boom, including in India. In such a context, claiming that Muslims are economically backward is an attack on the times. In fact, such a statement can be easily disproved.

Then, addressing the audience directly, I said that I am confident that every Muslim present in this hall is in a better economic position today compared to 1947. If anyone's situation is different, they should stand up and refute my statement. Not a single Muslim in the audience said that their economic condition is worse today than it was in 1947.

I conducted a formal survey on this issue and detailed my findings in my book "Indian Muslims." According to this survey, nearly every Muslim institution, organization, mosque, and school in India has grown tenfold or fourfold since 1947. Almost every Muslim family is living a better life today than it was in 1947. In the areas of education and economics, Indian Muslims have made significant progress



since 1947. This progress is so widespread that it can be confirmed by looking at any Muslim family.

An eye-opening example of this occurred in July 1999. The well-known American business magazine *Forbes* conducted a survey of billionaires worldwide, including those in India. The results of this survey were published in the July 5, 1999, issue of *Forbes* magazine. Afterwards, these results were reported in all Indian newspapers, such as *The Times of India*, *Hindustan Times*, and others.

According to the *Forbes* survey, the top billionaire in India at that time was a Muslim from Bangalore named Azim Hashim Premji. Additionally, three out of India's ten wealthiest individuals were Muslims. This report was published under the title "At the Top" in the July 14, 1999, issue of the *Intelligent Investor*. It was also published as "Very Rich" in the June 27, 1999, issue of *The Times of India*, New Delhi. Furthermore, this report has appeared under titles like "Richest Indian" in other newspapers.

## THE ISSUE OF COMPARISON

During a trip to America, I met some Muslims who had migrated from India to settle in the United States. I asked them why they left their homeland to come here. Everyone's response was that they found peace in America, but not in India. I said that this is only half the truth. Peace

is not tied to any country. Instead, peace has a price, and wherever you pay that price, you will find peace. This price is adjustment.

Then I pointed out that Muslims in America face the same issues they do in India. However, in India, Muslims tend to become intolerant when confronted with these problems. In America, they often remain silent about them. This is why they experience peace in America but not in India. I mentioned that in India, Muslims face issues such as interference in personal law, discrimination in employment, non-Islamic content in textbooks, and desecration of mosques, among others. These same issues are also present in America. However, the key difference is that in India, Muslims engage in protest politics over these issues, whereas in America, they tend to ignore them and move on. It is this difference in how Muslims respond—more than the difference between the countries—that has led to unrest.

This example illustrates how easily people fall into making incorrect comparisons. In fact, most errors in thinking stem from comparing things incorrectly. When the comparison is accurate, thinking is correct; when the comparison is flawed, thinking is flawed. In this world, only those who understand this simple rule of thinking can form correct opinions. Those who do not understand it will never be able to reach sound judgment.



## CHAPTER TWO

# THE LAW OF NATURE

*Nature is humanity's greatest teacher. Nature is the silent library of life. If a person learns lessons from nature, it will be enough to build their life.*

## THE HUMBLE BILLIONAIRE

In June 1999, a surprising news story was published in the media. It reported that the wealthiest person in India is a Muslim from Bangalore. His name is Azim Hashim Premji.

The details of this event can be found in *The Times of India* (June 27, 1999) and other newspapers and magazines of that time. According to these reports, Mr. Azim Hashim Premji has accumulated so much wealth that he has become the richest person in India, surpassing even Kumar Mangalam Birla and Dhirubhai Ambani.

His extensive business empire ranges from soap to computers. Due to his father's death, he could not finish his engineering studies. However, today, hundreds of engineers and non-engineers work in his businesses. "He is extremely hardworking and has unique qualities. For instance, he speaks very little. Once, while experts were gathered around his table discussing a project, Mr. Azim Hashim Premji did not say a single word during the entire meeting. He simply took a sheet of paper and a pencil and quietly made his notes. He is also remarkably humble. Despite his wealth, he travels in economy class on flights and never stays in five-star hotels. Once, when he arrived

at Bangalore airport, the office car wasn't there to pick him up despite prior notice. He quietly took an auto rickshaw to his office and began his work without showing any displeasure.

Success can be attained anywhere, as long as one meets the necessary conditions of hard work and effort.

## HARMONY WITH NATURE

No one can fight an earthquake. Similarly, no one can build their life in the present world by fighting against the laws of nature. The only viable approach for humans when facing nature is to find harmony with it. One must design their life to align with the laws of nature. Beyond this, the only other possible outcome is destruction, not construction or progress.

If you want a lush green tree in this world, you need to start with a seed or a small sapling. Then, you must wait a long time before the tree grows to your desired size. Breaking this natural law will only prevent you from ever getting the tree you want.

This example applies to all areas of life. Whenever you plan something for your life, along with your desires and goals, you must also keep in mind the reality that you have to achieve your plan in a world that does not always match your wishes. You should plan your projects considering these external laws of nature and manage them accordingly. This is the only wisdom that, when followed, can lead to

the success of any individual or group effort in this world.

Success in the world is another way of saying acting in harmony with nature. Conversely, failure occurs when a person cannot align with the natural system. Success is half the result of personal efforts and half the result of staying in harmony with nature.

## PHASES OF TRAINING

Humans are potentially the noblest creatures. Yet, this status is only granted to those who, through their effort, turn this potential into reality.

The condition of humans is exactly the same as that of other things in this world. For example, iron is a metal that is extracted from the earth. In its initial form, it is just raw ore. After extraction, it goes through several additional stages, even being melted in extremely high heat. After this process, it progresses to become what is called steel.

In the same way, a human being is initially like ‘raw ore.’ Within them lies all the potential to become a noble human being. However, an ordinary person only becomes a noble and developed individual when they go through all the stages that are necessary according to the law of nature. The most important thing in these stages is patience and endurance. This means that when a person faces difficulties, instead of running away from them, they should face them

courageously. He may encounter bitter experiences from people, but instead of succumbing to anger and hatred, he should endure them with positive feelings. In the journey of life, he may face losses and failures. Despite this, he should not lose heart and should continue his journey with renewed determination each time.

These are the experiences in life that truly make a person human. They bring out the hidden potential within and transform one into a complete individual. The unpleasant experiences of life serve as training stages for a person. Without going through this training course, it is impossible for a person to become a noble human being.

## LEARN THE RIGHT LESSON

In the garden, there is a rose tree. Flowers bloom on its branches, and along with them, thorns grow. Seeing the thorns with the flower, a poet says:

*Hifazat phool ki mumkin nahin hai*

*Agar kaanton mein ho khoye hareeri*

“The flower cannot be kept secure,

If the thorns possess a silken nature.”

It is true that flowers coexist with thorns in nature. But the purpose of the thorns is not to serve as harsh guards for the flower. This is the poet’s imagination, not the lesson intended by nature.



By growing both thorns and flowers, the lesson nature truly aims to teach is this: pleasant things exist alongside unpleasant ones in the world. A person should develop the courage to accept both.

Another poet, inspired by this second lesson, has said:

*Gulshan-parast hoon mujhe gul hi nahin azeez*

*Kaanton se bhi nibah kiye ja raha hoon main*

“I love the garden, and not just its flowers;

I’ve learned to live peacefully even with its thorns.”

Life is ultimately about the art of endurance. Someone who delights in flowers but gets angry at thorns can never truly succeed in this world. Such a mindset goes against the way nature is designed, and anyone who opposes that design cannot expect to find success.

The beauty of a flower is its own protection. Its attractiveness and fragrance are enough to ensure that, in the garden of the world, it will find a place and stay safe from harmful forces. Similarly, if a person develops a remarkable quality within himself, he too can live in the world like a flower—free from the threat of thorns.

## THE PRINCIPLE OF GIVING

On the branches of a tree, green leaves grow. For a while, they remain the decoration of the branch. But as soon as their greenness fades, the tree refuses to keep them.

Eventually, they break free and fall to the ground—only to mix with the soil and end their own existence.

Why does this happen? The reason is the law of nature. As long as the leaf is green, it draws energy from the sun and passes it to the tree. But when its greenness ends, this ability also ends. After that, the leaf becomes unnecessary for the tree. So the tree separates it and lets it fall to the ground.

This is the fundamental law of the present world: gaining without giving simply does not work. Everything here operates on the principle of being beneficial, not on the principle of taking without giving. The sun always provides light and warmth to our world unilaterally; it takes nothing in return. The air constantly moves to supply oxygen to all living beings on earth, yet it demands no compensation. Rivers flow down from mountain heights and spread across the land, delivering life-giving water to people, yet they ask for no payment.

This is the cosmic ethic that humans must also embrace in their lives. Humanity, too, must build its life on the principle of beneficence rather than exploitation. Those who do so will join the great caravan of the universe. Those who fail will find themselves without a place in this world, which operates solely on the principle of beneficence.

## THE SECRET OF GREATNESS

Mighty mountains stand upon the earth. The peak of Mount Everest rises five and a half miles above sea level. Why are such enormous mountains on the earth? Not to showcase their greatness. In fact, the mountain, by casting its shadow on the ground, shows it is not interested in being great. It prefers humility, not pride or vanity.

The mountain serves the earth, not for show. It spreads across the land to help keep the earth's balance. Since about two-thirds of the Earth's surface is covered by deep oceans, there was a risk that the planet could lose its stability and become unlivable for humans. Therefore, mountains were raised on land to help preserve this balance through the natural process of elevations and depressions.

This is one of nature's fundamental principles for the world. Many things exist here, and each has been given a unique quality by nature. However, these qualities are not meant for one thing to see itself as greater than another or to boast over others. Their purpose is for each to contribute as much as possible in its own area of service.

This same temperament must be cultivated by human beings. Humanity has also been endowed with various distinctive traits. However, these unique qualities are intended solely for individual performance—not so that someone, upon acquiring them, may become arrogant and claim superiority over others. For well-rounded human development, it is essential that a person not only knows himself but also understands others and acknowledges them.

## THE RACE OF LIFE

There are countless fish in the sea, both small and large. These fish constantly swim in the water. The small fish are always at risk of being eaten by the larger fish. If a small fish asked the sea how long the large fish will keep eating the small fish, the sea would reply, 'Until the small fish grow big enough that they no longer fit into the mouths of the large fish.'

Life is the essence of this race. The entire system of this world is built on the principle of competition. The answer to this issue is not to generate a storm of complaints and protests against it. Such a storm of protests is not aimed at some imaginary oppressor but directly at the system of nature, and it is well known that no complaint or protest against nature will be effective.

Furthermore, this competition system is not about oppression or injustice. It serves as a ladder for growth and progress for everyone. Without this system of competition, everyone would become stagnant. All aspects of life would come to a complete standstill.

Everyone has two sides: one related to potential and one related to reality. When someone is born, they are a child in reality but a complete human in potential. In the same way, every newborn is, in reality, someone who knows nothing yet, but in terms of potential, he is a person who carries within his mind the capacity to achieve great things. This applies to every aspect of life. Every person has hidden within him a wealth of extraordinary possibilities. These possibilities become real only when he enters the struggle of life with courage and determination.

## LESSONS EVERYWHERE

The entire universe serves as a lesson for humanity. This lesson is like a vast divine book, with a message written on each page for people. Every particle and leaf holds words of wisdom. However, every particle and every leaf contains words of guidance, though all of it is conveyed in a silent language. If a person can learn to read this cosmic book, he will discover in it everything he needs to build a truly noble life in this world.

The arrival of morning after night conveys that in this world, every unpleasant situation is inevitably followed by a new pleasant one. The sun suggests that if you want to be loved by people, live a life that benefits others. Green trees symbolize that this world has the potential for something as vibrant as a tree to grow from something as dry as soil. A flowing river indicates that no obstacle in this world can block your path, as long as you have the ability to keep going despite the challenges.

Observe the birds. At night, they become silent at their roosting spots, but when dawn breaks, they start chirping in the trees. In this way, the birds send the message to wake up joyfully and enthusiastically, and to continue your efforts fully in the daylight.

Similarly, every part of our world offers a valuable lesson. This world, as a whole, is the greatest encyclopedia of lessons. It has everything a person needs to build their life.

## THE SYSTEM OF NATURE

It is evident that contemporary Muslims are dealing with certain issues. Muslim writers and speakers constantly discuss these issues day and night. Their overall view is that all these problems stem from oppression and conspiracies by others. They believe that Muslims' problems result from these conspiracies and that the solution is to fight against them.

But this is just flawed thinking, and this flawed thinking is our biggest problem. The mistake these people make is that they treat a law of nature as if it were a conspiracy by other communities. It is like blaming human beings for the mud that appears after rainfall.

It is a law of nature that human beings compete in this world, with one group challenging another. Because of this natural order, people are often jolted by others—individuals or groups move ahead by pushing others aside. This very system becomes a driving force for human progress.

In such a situation, if the affected group complains and protests, it will not bring any real benefit. Instead, they should rebuild their strength. They should adopt the principle of patience and prepare themselves. By embracing the idea of making up for losses, they should take action on their own.

In the present age, new sources of power have emerged—such as technology and scientific education. Muslims have fallen behind other communities in these fields, and as a result, they find themselves vulnerable everywhere. The only solution is for Muslims to overcome their intellectual

and practical shortcomings to such an extent that their progress itself becomes a strong competitor to others.

This is the only viable path to success in this world. As for the current style of protest politics and agitation-based demands, Muslims will gain nothing from them—even if such protests continue for another hundred years. These protests are not directed against human beings; they are, in effect, directed against the Creator of nature. And who can ever succeed by opposing the Creator of nature?

## LAW OF NATURE

William Penn was born in London in 1644 and died in 1718. A great advocate of religious tolerance, he participated in both religion and politics. One of his sayings is as follows:

“Let the people think they govern, and they will be governed.”

William Penn said this based on his study of history. But this is not something related only to history; it is, in fact, a universal law of nature. It is established by God himself according to His creation plan. This natural law set by the Almighty God has been described in these words in the Quran:

We alternate these days among humanity. (3:140)

By days here is meant the day of victory and defeat, of domination and subjugation. In this world, just as everything else is for the test, so is political power. That is why it is

granted to each group by turns so that every group can be tested. In this world, the state of domination and power is for the test, just as the state of subjugation and submission.

What is required from man is that when he is granted power, he should not suffer from the psychology of pride and arrogance. And when he finds himself in a state of subjugation, he should not fall prey to negative psychology. Either of the conditions should be acceptable to man as a matter of divine ordainment. In both states, man's eyes should be set on shouldering his responsibilities rather than on the right or wrong attitude adopted by others.

This is a belief of significant reformatory influence, which keeps people away from political activities of negative nature. It enables men to save their capabilities from being wasted and always engage in beneficial and result-oriented actions. The loss of power is from God. Protest against it is to protest against God. And is there anyone who can succeed in his protest against God?

## CHALLENGE, NOT REVENGE

What happened to the Muslims in Spain is commonly explained as the revenge of the Crusades. The Crusades had ended by the late thirteenth century. Maulana Shibli Nu'mani (1857–1914), a prominent Indian Islamic scholar, interpreted all such events up to the First World War



(1914) in the same way. He expressed this view in the following verses:

*Kahaan tak loge hum se inteqam-e-fatah-e-Ayoubi,*

*Dikhaoge humein jang-e-Saleebi ka sama kab tak?*

How long will you keep taking revenge from  
us for Salahuddin's victory?

How long will you keep showing us the scene  
of the Crusades?

This view still persists among Muslim intellectuals. Thus events from Palestine to Bosnia are again put into this same revenge-based explanatory box. But that explanation runs counter to both the Quran and the laws of nature.

The era of Ibn Khaldun was exactly the time when the Muslim rule in Spain ended. In his *Muqaddimah*, he outlined this law of history and nature: every political empire or rising civilization ultimately passes through a period of decline. (see Ibn Khaldun's chapter: "States have natural lifespans just like individuals").

The truth is that the world's order is based on the principle of challenge. The Quran clearly states this principle:

- "We bring these days to men by turns." (3:140).
- "...you are each other's enemies!" (2:36).

One nation's rise becomes a challenge to another. That challenge awakens the abilities of the humiliated people; they rise and can defeat the dominant nation. Therefore, competition—in the form of a challenge between the

victorious and the defeated—continues in various forms. That competition, that challenge, is the only ladder of all human progress. In this process, one nation falls and another rises, yet overall humanity's journey moves forward toward development. The defeated nation can meet the rising challenge and become dominant again; but complaints and protests will not lead it anywhere in God's world.

A revenge-based interpretation only creates feelings of hatred. In contrast, an interpretation based on natural laws inspires a person to face the challenge before him and regain his lost position—with even greater strength than before.

## CONSIDERATION FOR OTHERS

Let us consider that you are driving your car on the road when you see another car coming from the opposite direction. At that moment, you have two choices. One is to continue driving in the middle of the road as before. The other is to steer your car to the side and let the oncoming vehicle pass.

What should you do in such a situation? You always steer your car to the side. If you keep driving straight, your car will crash into the oncoming vehicle. The outcome will be that instead of reaching your destination, you might end up in a cemetery or end up in the hospital with injuries. But when you move your car to the side, both you and your

vehicle remain safe, and you reach your destination without any harm.

This is the secret of life in this world. No vehicle is alone on the road; many other vehicles are also running on the road. Therefore, everyone has to consider others. The same applies broadly to all human life. You are not alone in this current world. Many other people are also living their lives and pursuing their activities with full energy. In such a situation, the secret to success in the broader scope of life is the same as in a road journey: striving for your goals while giving due consideration to others.

Just as you are aware of your own feelings, you must also understand the feelings of others. Just as you know your own plans, you must also be aware of the plans of others. Just as you seek your own benefit, you must also understand what others' interests are and how they plan to achieve them. In this world, only those who, along with understanding themselves, also understand others, succeed.

## THE NATURAL WAY

Whenever a nation-building plan is proposed that requires long-term efforts to produce results, people immediately say it will take too long and that they lack the patience for a long wait. However, the truth is that this is a backward comment.

Look closely, and you'll see that avoiding long-term plans in favour of quick fixes only prolongs the journey to your goal. A long-term plan will eventually be finished, but rushing for shortcuts just wastes time, as those paths never lead the traveler to their destination.

A person who wants to plant large branches and instantly see a lush, green garden before them will never understand the method of planting and gardening if you explain it to them. They will say that it is too long a process. However, if you look at it from a future perspective, their own plan is infinitely longer. This is because someone who plants branches will never see a garden, even in a thousand years. But for the person who plants saplings, there will eventually be a time when they own a lush, green garden, whether that happens 25 years later or 50 years later.

Just as there are no shortcuts in gardening, there are no shortcuts in building a life. This task will inevitably be achieved through a long-term plan, whether we start it today or many days later when the first valuable opportunity has slipped from our hands.

This method of nature was not created by any human. It was made by the same God who created the world and established this law for it. Just as a person cannot create another world to live in, it is impossible for them to create another law for themselves.

## GOING AGAINST NATURE

Shri Guru Golwalker (1906-1973), the brains behind the RSS, has categorically opposed the concept of a uniform civil code. His opposition is based not on religion but on nature. His stand is that a uniform code is not at all practicable on account of its being unnatural. He expresses it thus: “Nature abhors uniformity.”

This applies not only to the uniform civil code but also to life in its entirety. The system of life is based wholly on the principles of nature—principles which stand on their own strength and will last for all eternity. An individual or a nation has no option but to conform to them. None can oppose them, whatever the circumstances. Flying in the face of nature is of as little use as attempting to combat an earthquake, or trying to halt an avalanche with an out flung arm.

It has repeatedly happened throughout the history of the world that individuals or groups, having come into power, have imagined—quite falsely—that they could do whatever they wanted, namely, break up the prevalent map of life and replace it with a map of their own choice and fabrication. To this end they have launched major initiatives which have been baneful for humanity as a whole. But history tells us that every such effort has met with ultimate failure, and that the system of nature has emerged unscathed. This law of nature has been in operation right from the time of Chengiz Khan (1162-1227) to Nadir Shah (1883-1933), from the

times of Hitler and Joseph Stalin (1878-1953) down to present-day dictatorships. There is not a single exception throughout the entire span of human history, one of the principles of nature being that it is peace and not war which is sustainable in this world. Here it is justice and not injustice which endures. Here it is modesty and not arrogance which eventually finds a place in the sun. Running counter to this law is like beating one's head against a brick wall.

## STATEMENT OF REALITY

One approach is to support your point with arguments; another way is to simply state it without any arguments. There is an American saying:

A clear statement is an argument in itself.

That is, a clear statement is the strongest argument. Those who study the Hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) know that many Hadiths use this second approach. Despite this, they are so impactful that they have caused a revolution in the lives of millions of people.

The reason is that a clear statement becomes a proof in itself for the listener. This happens because human nature adds its own support to such a statement and completes it. Whatever is lacking in the argument is supplied by human nature itself.

All truths are inherently part of human nature. They are

instinctively stored in a person's subconscious. When someone accepts a truth, it is because it matches their innate understanding. When a statement connects with the listener's own nature, there is no need to present arguments or evidence to prove it.

An example of this is when someone is thirsty. If you offer them a glass of water, there's no need to give a speech about the importance of water or provide scientific arguments to show that water is necessary and beneficial for humans. The person's natural sense of thirst helps them understand the value of water without any explanation.

Similarly, simply stating the religion of nature can also be highly effective. The key is that it must genuinely reflect reality. It should contain no unnatural elements. It must be so closely aligned with actual reality that it becomes a pure expression of innate knowledge. Because of its accuracy, it should fully resonate with human nature.

## TOLERANCE: THE WAY OF NATURE

Tolerance is a universal principle. The lion and the elephant are both powerful creatures and natural rivals, yet they coexist in the same forest. This is possible only through tolerance. It has been observed that when an elephant and a lion cross each other's path, they quietly go their separate ways without showing any animosity. If, as a general rule,

elephants and lions did not display this mutual tolerance, every chance meeting would mean a fight to the finish.

Nature has taught this method to both the lion and the elephant. In the same way, nature has placed within the human body a complete system of tolerance. In medical science, this is known as biological tolerance. It refers to the ability of a living organism to endure contact with a substance—or to tolerate its introduction into the body—without experiencing harmful effects:

“The ability of an organism to endure contact with a substance, or its introduction into the body, without ill effects.” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 10, p. 31)

This ability of the body to accept foreign elements is the bedrock of our entire system of medical treatment. Medicines administered during illness can be very harmful to the body as a whole. But the body accepts them, despite its susceptibilities, when correctly prescribed. It is thanks to the ‘tolerance’ of the body that medicine can enter it and effectively heal a diseased organ without there being any harmful side effects to other organs.

It is imperative that there should be the same show of tolerance in human society too. What the jungle beasts do as a matter of instinct and the human body does under nature’s compulsion should be performed by man in the full consciousness of its moral necessity. If an individual is to live peaceably with his fellow men, he must follow the path of tolerance as a matter of deliberate policy.



When people live together, there are bound to be differences, friction, complaints. This will happen in any family, society and country as well as, at the international level, such problems are often much more acute. But regardless of the level of contract, in any human interaction, there will always be unpleasant situations.

What is the remedy? The best answer is tolerance, on an individual as well as on a collective basis. That is the only practical method of living together if there is to be peace and progress. Without the spirit of tolerance, there can be no uplift or progress of the human race.

We should not make the mistake, however, of regarding tolerance as a state of passivity. It is rather a realistic approach engendered by a positive state of mind. It certainly does not mean opting for an inferior choice under duress when a better choice was possible. The truth is that there is no alternative to tolerance: it is a practical necessity and not a social weakness.

It often happens that when a person is confronted with an unpleasant situation, their first impulse is to fight it, fully believing that their struggle will set things right. Yet, after imposing their will on the situation and adjusting it to their own terms, they eventually discover that this new state of affairs has aspects just as bad as—if not worse than—the original problem. Lacking the spirit of tolerance, they were driven into an unnecessary and ugly confrontation from the very beginning.

The policy of tolerance gives us the time and opportunity to make correct decisions about what course of action to follow. It makes it possible for us to adjust to adverse circumstances and to seek out new avenues by which to reach our goals. If, on the contrary, we reject tolerance as a correct attitude, and regard every untoward look, word or deed as a personal affront, we shall ultimately consider all human behaviour towards ourselves as 'evil'. This 'evil' will really be of our own making, and if we finally become engulfed in it, we shall only have our own ill-judged attitude to thank for it.

If an elephant and a lion did not tolerate each other, they would be inviting their own deaths. The very fact that they do tolerate each other gives them a new lease of life. One of the greatest advantages of tolerance is that it gives one freedom of action and the opportunity to shape one's life in a positive way. True success in life flows from the full utilization of this opportunity to act. Any denial of this opportunity, through intolerance, can bring only destruction in its wake.

## PRACTICAL WISDOM

An educated Muslim was employed in a good position in a government department. He had a dispute with his senior officer. When he returned home, he was under intense stress. He feared that the officer might damage his service

record and, as a result, block his promotion. Because of this tension, he developed such a severe headache that he lay down as soon as he reached home and was unable to do any further work.

I met him and told him that what he did was wrong. I shared a Hadith with him. The chief of a tribe came to Madinah to see Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). The Prophet told his companions to go and welcome him. On this occasion, the Prophet stated a principle: 'Treat people according to their status.' (*Sunan Abi Dawud*, Hadith No. 4842)

The commands of Shariah are all based on natural principles. It is a necessity of nature that people treat each other with respect. When one person interacts with another, they should do so in a way that does not cause humiliation. Everyone should feel they are being given proper respect according to their position. In a society where these customs are maintained, mutual love grows, and the foundation of social conflict is removed.

This is a principle of nature that has been repeated in various forms since ancient times. It is expressed in an English proverb as:

‘The boss is always right.’

This is essentially transactional wisdom or transactional Shariah. Observing it is extremely important for everyone. A society that does not follow this principle can never become a good society.

## ADOPT REALISM

If you are in the open and it starts raining, you run for shelter. This is not retreat; it is realism. Similarly, if an earthquake occurs, you leave your house and go to an open field. This is also not retreat; it is an acknowledgment of a natural reality. When it comes to the relationship between humans and nature, the solution to the problem lies in acknowledgment, not confrontation.

The system of rain and earthquakes was established in the world by the Creator of nature. Humans cannot change it. All they can do is take measures to protect themselves from its harm. The only way to protect oneself from its effects is to follow the principle of avoidance and move away from it. Therefore, you seek shelter when it rains and go to an open field during an earthquake.

The same goes for the principles of patience and restraint. Having patience and restraint is not a sign of cowardice or retreat; it is simply a matter of realism. This is necessary because the Creator of nature has given humans freedom as a test. Sometimes people use their freedom rightly, and sometimes wrongly. So, what can you do? If you argue with every person, you can't take away their freedom because it was given to them by the Creator of the universe. The only outcome of trying to take away people's freedom is that you will only hinder your own path.

In such a situation, the only proper attitude is patience. That means if bitterness and unpleasantness come from others, you should avoid them and keep moving forward in life.

Patience and avoidance are about oneself, not others. Impatience stops a person's journey, while patience allows it to continue successfully until they reach their destination.

## HUMAN NATURE

I met Abul Barakat Sahib (Nizampur, Azamgarh) in Delhi on December 3, 1991. During this meeting, he shared the following incident.

In the district of Azamgarh, near Mahal, there is a Hindu village called Tikurya. One or two men from the neighbouring village of Rasulpur came here intending to steal. It was night-time. When they reached a house, one of them knocked on the door. This house also belonged to a Yadav. He had raised his niece there, and at that time, only the niece was home. Her uncle had gone out for some reason.

Hearing the knock on the door, the girl went to answer it. She thought her uncle had come back. To confirm, she called out from inside, "Uncle!" The man outside heard this and replied, "Yes." After that, the girl opened the door. But when she opened it, no one was outside. Finally, she closed the door and went back inside.

After a while, there was another knock on the door. The girl went to the door again and called out to confirm, "Uncle!" A voice from outside replied, "Yes." The girl opened the

door again, thinking her uncle had returned. As they both stood at the door, the girl asked, "Where did you go after having me open the door earlier?" The uncle replied, "I hadn't come before." The girl then asked, "Then who was it that knocked on the door earlier?"

As they were talking, a voice came from the side saying, "I knocked on the door." The uncle asked, "Who are you?" He replied, "I am a thief." The uncle then asked, "If you are a thief, why didn't you just come in and do your work after the door was opened?" The thief said, "The truth is, when the girl asked from inside, 'Uncle?' I replied, 'Yes.' By doing that, I made myself her uncle. And an uncle can never steal from his niece's house."

## DISAGREEMENT

Disagreement serves as a test. When you have a disagreement with someone, recognize that God has placed you in a delicate trial to see if you are a true believer. Keeping disputes within respectful bounds reflects the nature of true believers. Those who escalate disagreements to destructive levels have undoubtedly strayed from faith and Islam.

When a person keeps disagreements within reasonable limits, there is a chance that during the exchange of ideas, one of them might realize the truth. In this way, the person who was like a lost traveler can find the right path again.

But when a person escalates a disagreement to the point of

destruction, the only outcome for them is to fall into the pit of misguidance. Such a person's mind becomes a factory of negative thoughts. They lose the ability to distinguish between reason and accusation. They cross the line from fair disagreement and enter into unjust dispute. They become oblivious to the sense of God's accountability. They make their ego their guide. Their goal is no longer to uphold the truth; instead, their own self-interest becomes their only focus. They drift further from God's mercy and completely fall into Satan's grasp.

Disagreement is completely natural. However, turning disagreement into destruction is an entirely unjust act. Those who transform disagreement into destruction face a severe risk of falling into God's punishment. It is possible that in the Hereafter they will be told, 'Today, you made Satan your guide in worldly life. Now, you have no share in the divine blessings of the Hereafter.'

Maintaining justice during a disagreement opens the door to paradise for a person. Departing from justice and fairness during a disagreement leads a person to the door of hell.

## SILENCE

Ernest Psiachari (1883-1914), a French writer, was in his youth a free-thinker and an atheist. But later he reverted to Christianity. Grandson of the famous historian, Ernest Rinan, Psiachari is ranked among those who made an effort

to bring about a spiritual awakening in France at the turn of the twentieth century. One of his sayings has been rendered in English in these words:

Silence is a bit of heaven that comes down to earth.

Silence is the language of nature. When one observes silence one finds oneself at one with nature, and surely there is no higher plane on which the human soul may exist.

Man cannot, of course, remain silent in the absolute sense. When he appears to be silent, he is so for others, not for himself. Remaining silent as far the external world goes, he starts conversing with his internal world.

Observing silence is a great act. When one is silent one's attention is diverted more to 'heavenly' matters than to 'down-to-earth' ones. One's ears are turned more to the whispers of angels than to those of men. Man's focus becomes his own self rather than extraneous matters. He eschews superficiality and engages himself with deeper realities.

When man speaks, he is in a limited domain, but when he is silent, he finds himself in the unlimited vastness of the world.

## THE BEGINNING OF DESTRUCTION

Euripides was a renowned tragic playwright of ancient Athens. He was born in 484 BC and died young in 406 BC. One of his sayings has been translated as follows:

Whom God wishes to destroy, He first makes mad.



This statement is very true. In other words, when a person or nation is in decline, their ability to think and understand becomes impaired. When the ability to think deteriorates, their actions also become wrong. And once people start making wrong actions, nothing can save them from destruction.

What does it mean when someone's thinking deteriorates? It means that instead of forming opinions based on reason, a person begins to rely on emotions. They no longer plan their life with regard to facts, but are instead driven by their desires. They become unaware of those around them and start living only within themselves. They ignore historical forces and material causes and try to build their castle in a world of fantasies.

This world is a world of realities and cause-and-effect. Here, individuals compete with one another, and communities compete with other communities. In this world, only those who prove superior in intelligence and ability earn the right to rise. The most successful people are those who use their minds to the fullest and make the greatest use of their intellect.

If a person lives in luxury and comfort for a long time, their intellect becomes paralyzed. If a nation remains in power for too long, its intellectual abilities become stagnant. This is the point when individuals and nations experience intellectual decline, which eventually leads to practical decline. It then becomes necessary to awaken their intellectual abilities again so that, in the light of reason, they can continue their journey.

## EXAMPLE OF A PLANT

One example from the natural world is a plant. A plant grows in a field, standing on its soft stem. Breezes pass by, but what does the plant do? When the wind blows from the west, the plant bends toward the east, and when the wind stops, it stands upright again. Similarly, if a breeze comes from the east, the plant bends toward the west, and when the wind passes, it returns to its upright position.

A delicate plant does not display rigidity against the wind. If it begins to resist and refuses to bend, it will not harm the wind, but the plant itself will suffer due to its stiffness. The wind will continue to blow, while the plant, due to its rigidity, will break and be destroyed.

This example of a plant offers a lesson from nature for humans. Through this example, humans learn that the world they live in experiences gusts of wind and storms. Compared to these, they are very fragile. They must adopt the principles of flexibility and adaptability against these gusts and storms. Their approach should be to uphold their innate human dignity while temporarily adjusting to circumstances. Make gentleness, along with firmness, a guiding principle in your life.

A plant bends in the wind so it can keep growing until it becomes a full tree. Similarly, when a person chooses gentleness and harmony, it ensures that their life's journey continues without stopping. Their journey goes on smoothly until they reach their destination.

## A NEW DAWN

In this world, no sunset is final. After every sunset, a new dawn awaits, as long as someone has the courage to turn their evening into morning. The most important event in this world is the daily setting and rising of the sun. This event reveals the greatest truth: after every loss, there is a new gain, and after every defeat, there is a new victory.

We live in a world not owned by any person but by God, who possesses more power than all other forces. When someone causes you to suffer a loss or when circumstances snuff out your light, God reminds us that in His world, everyone who is deprived is going to be restored, and every extinguished lamp is going to be rekindled.

The only condition to turn this divine possibility into reality is that a person, after losing their possessions, does not lose their courage. They should rise again after every fall and strive to regain what was lost. Bringing about a new dawn after the evening requires cosmic power. Then, in a world where such a great event is possible, why wouldn't it be relatively easier for an individual or a nation to rise again after a fall?

God has ordained that no one's defeat is their final defeat. In such circumstances, there's no room for losing courage after a setback. The truth is that a person should be as confident in their eventual victory as they are that the sun will rise again in the morning after the night.

People generally know ‘what has happened.’ They do not know ‘what can happen.’ This is why they fall into despair. If people understood this second point, they would never be hopeless. Because in this world, despair is temporary and hope is eternal.

## WEAK CONSTRUCTION

The time it takes for children to build a sandcastle is even less than the time it takes for it to collapse. This example shows what a strong and stable life is compared to a life built on weak foundations.

When a house collapses during rain and storms, it is not the external storm that causes it to fall; instead, it is the house’s own weakness that brings it down. When storms arise, thatched roofs are blown away, but stone-built fortresses withstand the storms and remain standing.

Every person builds their life through their actions. However, there are two kinds of construction. One kind lacks a solid foundation and is built only on the surface. Such a life is always vulnerable to setbacks. Even a slight gust of resistance can shake it. It lacks stability and strength.

The other kind of life is one built on strong foundations, with all its parts made from solid materials. Such a life cannot be easily shaken. The opposition of enemies and their conspiracies only serve to prove its strength.

Building weak structures takes very little time, which is

why people rush towards constructing weak structures. However, weak structures collapse daily and must be rebuilt daily. In contrast, a stable structure, once built, remains firmly in place for centuries. From a future perspective, the least amount of time is spent on constructing stable structures, but most people do not realize this truth.

If your aim is to build, then build a fortress, not a child's sandcastle. Once built, you will have no complaints of oppression, for no tyrant will dare to attempt breaching your fortress. And if anyone tries, they will surely break their own head, but they will not succeed in destroying your fortress.

## VICTORY AFTER DEFEAT

No matter how big a defeat is, it is always temporary. With better planning, it can become a victory. In this world, everything is temporary, including defeat. No defeat is permanent.

After losing, a person has two choices. One is to lose courage and remain disheartened after the battle. The other is to reflect on why they lost, identifying the reasons for the opponent's victory and their own defeat.

This second approach broadens a person's mind. It allows them to take action again with improved preparation. And someone who follows this method may not succeed the first time, but they will definitely succeed on the second attempt.

## NO END

In this world, failure is closely tied to success, and success is connected with failure. When someone fails, a new determination sparks within them to try again. New parts of their mind become active. Conversely, a person who has succeeded often becomes stagnant. They fall into complacency and rest.

In this way, defeat becomes a reason for new life for the one who loses, while victory puts the winner to sleep, depriving them of life. If a person understands this reality, they will never be hopeless. They will never become discouraged after failure, no matter how significant the failure may seem.

This world is a game of winning after losing and losing after winning. In this world, the successful player is the one who focuses on the game rather than getting distracted by winning or losing.

Defeat is only a temporary setback, not a permanent loss. It takes away external things, but it doesn't take away what's inside you. You can use what's within to find new success again.

## NO END

Opportunities may pass, but they are never exhausted—this is a lesson that every particle and leaf in the world demonstrates daily.

Our world was not made by any human, but by God, whose powers are limitless. If a human had created the world,

its possibilities would be restricted. However, since an infinite God created it, its possibilities and opportunities are also endless.

No matter how many opportunities slip away or how many options you lose, there is no need to lose hope. There will always be more chances and opportunities for you to build your future. When opportunities are plentiful, only an uninformed person would regret missed chances. When one vehicle leaves and another is coming, the traveler does not mourn the one that departed but waits for the next to continue their journey.

In the present world, the important thing isn't that a missed opportunity has slipped away. The real focus should be whether you've recognized the remaining opportunities and if you've awakened the passion within to use them to make your life successful again. If you achieve this, there's no need to worry about the first.

Life is about missing one opportunity and then seizing another. This is how others have achieved success, and this is how you can achieve success too. There is no other path to success, neither for others nor for you.

It is against the nature of the Almighty to create a world where opportunities are so limited that losing one leaves no other chances for a person.

## PATIENCE IS BRAVERY

Patience is a form of bravery, and impatience is a sign of cowardice. Those unwilling to be patient will ultimately have to live as cowards. Furthermore, hypocrisy is often considered another form of cowardice, which is the worst moral flaw of all.

In the present world, under the natural system, it often happens that one person has a complaint against another. One person may cause mental or physical harm to someone else. This is an unavoidable situation. This issue arose at the very beginning of human life in the conflict between Abel and Cain. It has continued throughout history, even during the times of prophets, and it will persist until the Day of Judgment and the end of the world itself.

In such a situation, no one has the power to live exactly as they want, free of complaints or disagreements with others. This kind of choice is impossible for anyone in the present world, whether they are righteous or unrighteous.

In the present world, the real choice lies between two ways of living. Either you keep getting into conflicts with everyone you meet, or you set aside complaints and disagreements and focus on building your life. If the first approach is like getting caught in the thorns of a flowering tree, the second is like overlooking the thorns and taking the flower.

However, the first approach is not sustainable for anyone because it equates to self-destruction and destroying one's family. No one is so foolish as to permanently risk



themselves and their loved ones. Practically, those who choose the path of impatience temporarily argue with others, and eventually, upon seeing its disastrous outcomes, they fall silent. But this silence often hides hypocrisy.

In the present world, you should practice patience. If you don't make patience a principle, you'll end up practicing it out of self-interest, which is called a double standard.

## A TRUTH

A person who is proven wrong on one issue is wrong on all issues. The only exception is someone who, after making a mistake, feels remorse and openly admits their error.

This is a psychological principle and an undeniable truth of life. The reason is that a person is a whole being. For someone to make a mistake is like a drop of water spilling from a glass. By observing that drop, you can understand what the glass contains. Similarly, by noticing one behaviour of a person, you can assess what kind of person they are overall.

However, there is a difference between a glass and a human. A glass is a static object, whereas a human is a dynamic being. A human has the ability to correct himself after making a mistake. This is known as repentance. The capacity for repentance has given humans a self-correcting mechanism.

When a person makes a mistake, if they become aware

of it and openly admit to it without holding back, they effectively correct their flaw, in a mechanical sense. They become a new person once again.

Not admitting one's mistake after making it is a serious issue, not just a simple matter. When someone fails to acknowledge their mistake, there is usually a specific reason behind it, such as a sense of superiority or fear of personal loss.

It is due to various weaknesses that a person does not admit their mistake, even after making a clear error. This is why Islam emphasizes the importance of admitting one's mistakes. When someone acknowledges their mistake, they remove many hidden flaws within themselves. Psychologically, it is like a cleansing bath. A besmirched person becomes clean and pure once again. Conversely, someone who refuses to admit their mistake remains in a state of spiritual impurity. They will never move forward and will always struggle to progress in the spiritual realm.

## THE CERTAINTY OF MORNING

Every evening is followed by a new morning, but only those who wait for it will experience it. In this world, the bright morning arrives on its own, but only those who wait for it will see it.

The greatest weakness of a human being is impatience. When faced with dark circumstances, they become anxious. They forget that the cycle of night and day in this world

teaches them every day that light will eventually come. No darkness can be so long that it prevents the arrival of a bright morning.

There are also hardships in the world. But if someone endures the hardships, sweetness inevitably follows. Here, a person also faces failures, but every failure is temporary. If someone can bear the sting of temporary failure, the phase that leads to success will inevitably follow.

In the present world, nothing is permanent. Likewise, success and failure are also temporary. Every failure is followed by success, and every success is followed by failure. Therefore, a person should stay moderate in success and keep balance and composure even when facing failure.

Just as morning arrives naturally, success likewise follows failure in this world. All one needs is the courage to wait. In this world, every failure is just a temporary pause, and every success is an inevitable future event. Just as evening is certain to arrive, so too is morning sure to follow evening. In such a world, there is no room for despair. When the entire system of the universe is on your side, there's nothing to fear.

## THE WORLD OF BOOKS

A person with a book is never really alone. The truly lonely person is someone who has nothing to engage his mind. A book provides the best mental stimulation. Therefore, someone who reads a book can never be truly alone.

What is a book? It reflects the author's study and experiences. Each book is like a silent companion. When we read a book, it's as if we're exchanging thoughts with someone. Reading one book is like having the company of one person, and reading many books is like being in the company of many people.

A person lives only for a limited time and then leaves this world. Without books, it would be impossible for us to learn about those who have passed away. However, in the form of books, a person's record remains even after they are gone. Through books, you can meet people from all over the world while staying in one place. You can benefit from the thoughts of people from every era while being in your own time.

Reading books boosts a person's knowledge. It expands their experiences from a personal level to the scope of universal humanity. A library of books is like a global gathering of people. By entering this gathering place, you can listen to anyone's thoughts at any time and meet people from anywhere at any moment.

The method used by the book lets you learn about others without traveling, and likewise, to introduce yourself to them. The largest gathering place is a room filled with books, and the best way to connect is with someone engaged in benefiting from reading. A book is a record of the greatest minds. It embodies the highest achievements of humanity. A book is a treasure of knowledge, and without a doubt, there is nothing greater in this world than this treasure.

## BEGINNING AND END

If you have found your beginning, you can also find your end. A true beginning is often the start of a true ending—when a person moves in the right direction, they inevitably reach their destination. Failing to arrive at the destination only happens if the journey started in the wrong direction.

The entire universe is arranged so that whenever a person starts a good action, the whole cosmos works together to see it through. When a gardener plants a seed in the soil, the entire world participates in nurturing it until it grows into a perfect, tall tree.

Similarly, when someone takes a right action in this world, the entire system of existence comes to their aid. Everything starts to support them so they can see their action through to completion.

If a person notices that the work he started is not making progress, then he should review his own performance and his plan. Certainly, there will be some shortcomings on his part that prevent his effort from reaching its goal.

A person should, therefore, think carefully before taking action. He should develop his plan after a realistic assessment. And once he puts his plan into motion, he should give his full effort without holding anything back. If he follows these steps, then what unfolds in the future will undoubtedly be the very thing he holds as an aspiration in his heart.

Understanding the beginning of the thread is to understand

its end as well. Hold tightly to the starting point—then you'll also hold the far end. It won't detach from you.

For a right beginning has no destination other than a right end.

## LOOK TO THE FUTURE

When a person's past and present have been lost, their future still remains secure. Someone can take away your past and present, but no one can take away your future. The deprivation of the past has already occurred, and the deprivation of the present is happening now, but the future is a time that is yet to come. In the future, all the opportunities that were possible for you in the past and present are still available, with even greater potential.

Therefore, if you have lost your past and present, do not grieve. Instead, plan your actions anew with regard to the future. It is possible that you may achieve such great success in the future that it compensates for all the losses of the past and present.

One of the secrets of life is the ability to forget. If your past and present have been ruined, forget them. Forgetting past destruction will instill in you the determination to put all your energy into building a new future.

If time were stagnant, you too would have to remain stagnant. In that case, your deprivation would become

eternal. But time is not stagnant; it is in motion. This is a great blessing. Because of this, when one opportunity is lost, another one comes forward. After losing one possibility, a person finds another, which they can use to move forward.

In the present world, no one can avoid loss. Here, both the great and the small face loss. The strong experience loss as well as the weak. Therefore, never become disheartened by loss. Every time you fall, make an effort to rise again.

The journey of time does not end with the past and present; it always moves towards the future. If you have lost hold of the past and present, grasp the thread of the future. You will reach the path to success once again.

## DIFFICULTIES ARE STEPPING STONES

Man is a hidden treasure of nature. The blows of hardships bring this treasure from within to the surface. The entire human history shows that those who faced the greatest difficulties became the strongest.

When a seed breaks open, a mighty tree grows from it. The same applies to a person's character. When someone faces life's pressures, their inner abilities surface. What was once hidden as a "seed" now appears as a "tree."

There are two types of people. One sees a difficulty simply as a difficulty. The other sees a difficulty as a challenge. Viewing a difficulty as just a difficulty leads to a mindset of

despair, while seeing it as a challenge encourages a mindset to confront it.

If you see a difficulty simply as a problem, even your current abilities will weaken. Your ability to think will become frozen. But when you see a difficulty as a challenge, new courage emerges within you. Your mind begins to work more effectively than before. You come up with new strategies to move forward.

A person who experiences only ease becomes limited, and his thinking becomes shallow. But a person who faces hardships and difficulties grows stronger, and his thinking gains depth.

Difficulty acts as a teacher. Through challenges, a person learns things that can't be taught in any classroom. Difficulty adds experience to a person's knowledge, turning what one has merely read or heard into personal discovery.

The difficulties in life are part of life's journey. They are there to help you rise from the bottom to the top and become the master of your hidden treasures.

## SELF-MASTERY

The individual who masters themselves will find it easier to influence others. A person shapes their own fate. Success involves overcoming personal weaknesses, while failure results from being overwhelmed by them.



If a person is self-centered, they will attract flattering people around them. Flatterers are undoubtedly the worst asset for anyone. If a person is impatient, they will become anxious at times when they should wait for the right moment, leading to unnecessary loss of future success. If a person only knows themselves, they will not be able to deal with others properly. To lead a successful life among people, it is essential to interact with them appropriately.

The truth is that the means to succeed lies within a person. Likewise, the causes of failure are also found within someone. One should first examine themselves, looking for the reason for every setback inside. What is inside you cannot be discovered by searching outside. The outcomes of working on oneself cannot be achieved by forcing others.

Within a person, there are two simultaneous types of abilities. There is the capacity for acknowledgment and the desire for denial. There is the inclination toward gratitude and the mentality of ingratitude. There is the nature of humility and the nature of arrogance. There is the tendency for honesty and the tendency for deceit. A person knows how to rejoice in others' success and also how to feel envious of it.

In this world, victory goes to those who master their inner negative desires. Defeat goes to those who are overwhelmed by their inner negative desires.

## STEADFASTNESS

There is a Persian proverb: “Hold to one door, but do so firmly” (*Yek dar gir o mohkam gir*). This is a natural law that applies to all aspects of life. If you plant a sapling and then move it every day, it will never grow into a large tree. Each time you dig it up, some of its roots will be severed. As a result, it will lose the ability to establish itself firmly and grow upward, spreading its branches in the air.

A person with a private job who frequently switches jobs and moves from one place to another will always be undervalued by others. However, if they remain loyal to one employer, they will be appreciated there. Through their actions, they will win their employer’s heart and eventually earn promotions. Conversely, constantly changing jobs will keep them troubled and prevent them from building a stable life. In this world, no success is possible without perseverance.

If a doctor frequently changes the location of his clinic, or if a shopkeeper repeatedly moves from one shop to another, neither the doctor nor the shopkeeper will ever be successful. Both will ultimately be deprived of progress.

When a person lives in a community, they build a reputation for themselves through their character. This reputation is the most valuable asset of every individual. If your reputation is that you do not lie, do not break promises, do not betray, do not harm anyone, never deviate from your principles, and perform your duties responsibly, then this image will be your greatest asset.

This image will only form if you stay in one place for a long time. If you frequently change locations, you won't create a clear image in people's minds. You also won't be able to earn trust, and you won't succeed in reaching a higher level of progress.

## TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE

A person who lives with a negative mindset is a product of history, while someone with a positive mindset is a creator of history. The former is influenced by historical circumstances, whereas the latter thinks beyond them and makes new history.

Unpleasant circumstances always exist in the world. There are always reasons for one person to complain against another. During such times, those who adopt a reactionary mindset become just products of history. They fall victim to their surroundings. These individuals are often involved in protest actions and are unable to achieve any meaningful progress.

In contrast, a true human being is one who thinks beyond circumstances and forms his own opinions independently of reactions. Such a person rises above history. They are in a position to shape the world rather than be influenced by it. They become makers of history.

All animals are shaped by history, but it is a human's role to

make history through their actions. They become history-makers by their own efforts.

A negative mindset can be deadly for a person. Someone who falls into negative thinking is essentially being harmed by their circumstances. In contrast, a person who shields themselves from negative tendencies and reactive thoughts stays alive despite external challenges. They have protected their existence from being lost.

The foundation of a negative mindset is outside a person, while the foundation of a positive mindset is within. A person with a negative mindset depends on others, whereas someone with a positive mindset relies on their own self. This alone is enough to show who can be called a superior human being. The most deprived and foolish person is one who had the chance to be creative in this world but chose to remain merely a product of circumstances.

## THE MOST DIFFICULT, THE EASIEST

“You made a mistake” and “I made a mistake”—these two sentences differ by only one word on the surface. However, in reality, the difference between them is so large that millions of people in the world can say the first sentence, but perhaps not even one person can say the second sentence.

The reason is that the first sentence negates the other person, while the second sentence negates the speaker

themselves. Negating others is undoubtedly the easiest task, but negating oneself is certainly the most difficult.

All the current movements that attract crowds are centered around the slogan “You made a mistake.” The main reason for the popularity of all successful movements and leaders is that they rise to prove some individual or a nation wrong. If they had risen with a message of self-negation, they would be strangers in their environment, and crowds of people would not gather around them.

“You made a mistake” is a false statement, while “I made a mistake” is a true statement. God’s law is that a false statement cannot take root in this world; it remains like a weed. In contrast, a true statement takes root in God’s world. It establishes its place both in the earth and in the vastness of the sky.

“I made a mistake” is a statement of enlightenment. It promotes growth in a person’s character, elevating them from a lower state to a higher one. In contrast, “You made a mistake” is a superficial statement. It doesn’t expose a person to deeper meanings; instead, it engages them in an activity that isn’t worth pursuing. “I made a mistake” is a form of correction, while “You made a mistake” can be destructive. “I made a mistake” reflects godliness, while “You made a mistake” reflects self-centeredness. “I made a mistake” exemplifies virtue, whereas “You made a mistake” simply demonstrates leadership. “I made a mistake” signifies piety, while “You made a mistake” indicates worldliness.

## BENEFIT IN LOSS

The world's system is designed so that even in loss, there is benefit. Even negative events have hidden positive sides. A recent example of this has come to light. Getting hit on the head might seem terrifying. In America, research is conducted on all kinds of topics. Some experts studied this and found that if the injury is within a tolerable range, it can activate the human brain and give it new life.

When the brain suffers a trauma, it awakens its abilities. A unique type of brain disorder, which can be detrimental to certain brain functions, can also enhance artistic abilities. This has been discovered in a recent study. Trauma to one part of the brain can activate some other brain functions. This was revealed by American doctor Bruce Miller, a neuroscientist working at the University of California and the director of the research team that conducted the scientific survey on this topic.

### **When brain damage sparks talent**

Washington: A rare form of dementia which causes the loss of many brain functions can also heighten the artistic talent of those afflicted, according to a study, reports Reuter. Damage to one part of the brain may somehow release functions that were previously suppressed, neurologist Dr Bruce Miller from the University of California at Los Angeles, who conducted the study, said yesterday. (*The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, May 2, 1998)

The system of the modern world is designed so that not only do beneficial things offer advantages, but even those that seem harmful on the surface have hidden benefits. In such a world, there's no reason for anyone to despair under any circumstances.

## THE FLOW OF LIFE

Light is the fastest thing in the universe. It travels more than 186,000 miles in one second. But it always moves in a straight line. If sunlight is coming toward your room through the window and the window is closed, the rays cannot bend and enter through the door instead. They will simply strike the closed window and stop; they will not take any other path.

Water, on the other hand, behaves differently. When it encounters a blocked path, it finds another way. For example, if you're standing on a mountain and watching a spring flow from the top to the bottom, you might see a large rock right in the stream's way. At first, you might think the rock will stop the water. But soon, you'll notice the water moving around the rock, flowing around it and continuing on its path.

The flow of human life aligns more with water than with light. A person's determination is like a flood that cannot be stopped. When on life's journey, there is no point where a

person's path truly ends. When one path appears blocked, there are always many other paths open. A foolish person might, without a doubt, lose hope and become discouraged upon seeing a blocked path or crashing into it. However, if you keep your eyes open and think logically, with the will to handle any situation, you will never face the disaster of having your path blocked.

## THE STRUGGLE OF LIFE

Life is a constant struggle. In this fight, only those who have the courage to turn their desires into real accomplishments can succeed.

A person may seem limited on the surface, but inside, he harbours unlimited desires. His abilities and courage are without limits. That's why, when he faces life's challenges, the vastness of the world starts to feel narrow to him. Every success begins to seem incomplete. Every achievement makes him feel he hasn't reached everything he aimed for.

In such a situation, what truly forms the foundation of a successful life? If we define a successful life as one where a person gets everything they desire completely, experience shows us that this kind of fulfillment is impossible in this world. If success means achieving all that one wants, ultimately, only despair will result. For someone with this mindset, there are only two possible outcomes in life—despair or suicide.



The truth is that the secret to a successful life in this world is one thing: instead of focusing on the destination, you should make the quest itself your goal. The desires a person feels inside are, in reality, a yearning for the truth.

In this world, only the person succeeds who makes the recognition of truth his goal and discovers the secret of living in alignment with higher realities. In contrast, those who make material glitter their ultimate aim can never find true contentment.

The principle of this world is straightforward—the bigger the goal, the greater the progress.

## SAFE DISTANCE

The Quran states that God said to the descendants of Adam, “Go down from here as enemies to each other” (2:36). This means that in the world of trials we currently face, humans are meant to live in circumstances where differences and competitions naturally arise, sometimes escalating to enmity and even leading to violence and bloodshed. This situation aligns with the divine plan of creation, making it as impossible to eliminate as it is to remove thorns from a tree.

Now the question is: what should be done to build a successful life in such a situation? Healthy living cannot be achieved amid constant conflict and confrontation. The presence of moderate and balanced conditions is essential for creating a healthy life.

The answer to this has already been given by the Creator Himself: patience and avoidance. In a world full of enemies, the only way to succeed is to steer clear of conflicts. When faced with provocation, unpleasantness, and harmful experiences, they should be ignored. For greater benefit, one should accept minor losses.

The same principle of enmity applies to animals in the jungle. What do the animals do? Each one, guided by nature, keeps a safe distance from enemies or rivals. This is the only natural principle that has sustained jungle life for millions of years.

Maintaining a safe distance is a natural principle. In the Quran, this is called 'I'raaz' (avoidance). On the road, you keep a safe distance from other vehicles to ensure you successfully complete your journey and reach your destination. This same principle is essential at home, in the marketplace, and in all aspects of social life. Everywhere, we must keep ourselves at a safe distance from others. It is the only way to succeed in this world; without it, a successful life is not possible.

## MAINTAIN A BALANCE

Athletes perform a show called tightrope walking. In this, two poles are set up in a field, and a thick rope is stretched between them. A boy stands on the rope on his feet, holding a long pole in both hands. Using this pole to keep

his balance, he walks along the tight rope from one end to the other.

This is not just about the tightrope walker. In this world, everyone has to do the same. When a person walks on the ground, every moment they are like a tightrope walker. If they lean too much to the right while walking, they will fall to the right. And if they lean too much to the left, they will fall to the left. A person keeps a balance on both sides while walking, which is why they successfully stay on their path. Otherwise, they would fall here or there on the ground.

The same goes for life overall. In this world, a person's entire life is like walking a tightrope. Here, one must keep a balance between various conflicting demands. Success means maintaining this balance, and failure means losing it.

In family life, a person must maintain a balance among various relatives. In social life, one needs to keep a balance between different groups. In international affairs, leaders must balance between different countries and governments. No aspect of human life is immune to the challenge of maintaining this balance.

To successfully maintain this balance, a person must live a thoughtful life. They should stay cautious at all times and continuously self-assess. It's important to live beyond biases by considering both themselves and others. Those who practice mutual respect and consideration will find success in this world.

## DESIRING MORE THAN ONE'S RIGHT

Desiring more than one's rightful share is to deprive oneself of what is truly theirs. When someone only seeks what is rightfully theirs, the entire universe supports them. But when they want more than their fair share, the universe turns away from them. That's why the first person succeeds, while the second fails.

When you only ask for what is truly yours, you're seeking something that legitimately belongs to you, something that justice indicates should come to you. However, when you ask for more than your fair share, it's like you're requesting something that, according to justice, belongs to someone else. Why would the other person be willing to give you their part?

The moment a person begins to desire more than what is rightfully his, he falls into contradiction. To claim what belongs to him, he presents one kind of argument; but to seize what belongs to someone else, he uses a different argument. In this way, he weakens his own case. He effectively defeats himself. With two contradictory arguments, he ends up proving that if the first thing is his, then the second cannot be his — and if the second is his, then the first cannot be his.

Whenever a person seeks more than their fair share, they become inconsistent. They use one argument to justify what they believe is theirs and a different one to take what belongs to someone else. This weakens their position and ultimately cancels itself out. They show with two separate

arguments that if one thing is theirs, the other cannot be, and vice versa.

An example of such a person is someone who chases two rabbits and catches neither. Likewise, a person who tries to take more than their fair share will lose both their original rights and the extra desires they pursue.

In a way, human history demonstrates this reality in practice.

## COMPLETE DESTRUCTION

Raymond Gram Swing once said, “The alternative to peace is not war; the alternative to peace is annihilation.”

This statement was true in the past, but today it has become true and correct to the utmost. Modern weaponry has made it completely impossible for any person or nation to achieve positive outcomes through war. Now, those who choose war should know beforehand that they are choosing death for themselves, not life and progress.

If you face a problem, handle it patiently and with tolerance, making sure your efforts stay within peaceful boundaries. If you choose the path of war and conflict instead, you won’t succeed in resolving your issue. Instead, you’ll bring on more unsolvable problems and irreversible destruction.

No matter how complicated a problem appears, you must understand that you only have two choices: either accept

the current situation and keep working peacefully, or go into conflict and risk destroying yourself. There are no other options available to you.

In ancient times, war could serve as a way to solve problems, but today, war has become a major source of the biggest problems. The widespread destruction caused by modern warfare is the greatest catastrophe of all. Therefore, now a person only has two options: either work for peace or stay silent.

## MORAL DECLINE

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817–1898), an Indian Muslim reformer and educationist of nineteenth-century British India, was labeled a lackey of the British by his opponents. Similarly, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888–1958) was called an agent of the Hindus by his critics. Why was this? The reason was that these opponents noticed that the British respected Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Likewise, they observed that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad enjoyed respect among Hindus. Out of their hostility, these opponents refused to acknowledge that the respect these individuals received among non-Muslims was due to their personal virtues. Instead, they falsely claimed that these titles implied they gained their status only through opportunism, not genuine merit.

Such statements may seem like criticism, but in truth, they are acts of baseness, and baseness is certainly the most contemptible form of immorality.

Criticism is a natural right of every individual. Everyone has the right to point out something wrong in another person and to voice it openly. However, this right is meant for rational disagreement, not for fault-finding and slander. Those who resort to meanness during disagreements actually reveal more about themselves than the accusations they aim to make against others.

Such characters have existed throughout history. Even during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions, there were such wicked individuals. They still exist today, and they will continue to do so until the Day of Judgment, when people will no longer have the chance to falsely accuse or defame others.

Healthy disagreement is entirely beneficial, but slander is completely evil. A society in which slander becomes common, where people begin labeling one another with derogatory terms, soon becomes a breeding ground for moral decay. There is no worse state for any society than this.

CHAPTER THREE

IN THE DISCOURSE OF  
OCCURRENCES

*A successful plan depends on a balance between  
human desires and natural laws.*



## THE ISSUE OF INTRODUCTION

There is a saying: “As is the social introduction, so is the social interaction.” In other words, how a person introduces themselves to their environment will influence how the environment interacts with them. This is a fundamental principle with possibly no exceptions.

Once, I was traveling from Delhi to Hyderabad. At the Delhi Airport, when I went through security, I noticed that other passengers’ bags were being opened and checked. I had a small bag with me that contained only a change of clothes and a copy of the Quran. Believing my bag didn’t contain anything that needed inspection, I asked, “Does this need to be opened?”

The man in police uniform standing on the other side of the table responded somewhat sternly, “Why not?” I immediately opened my bag. The man rummaged through it and found nothing objectionable. Finally, he picked up the book and asked, “What is this?” I replied, “The Quran.” As soon as the word “Quran” left my mouth, the man’s demeanour completely changed. The person who was speaking harshly and indifferently before began to speak softly and respectfully.

Why did this difference happen? The simple reason is that at first, in the eyes of the person mentioned, I was just someone with a bag. But later, I became someone with the Quran in his eyes. As long as he saw me only as a person with a bag, he considered me just another traveler. However, once he recognized me as a person with the Quran, his perception of me changed; he started to see me differently.

If you want your environment to treat you well, it's important to present yourself appropriately. The way you introduce yourself in your environment will shape how it interacts with you—nothing more, nothing less.

## MERIT PREVAILS

Mr. Muhammad Hanif (born in 1951) resides in Delhi. He is a Superintendent in the Customs and Central Excise Department. He does not hide his Islamic identity in his office; rather, he introduces the Quran and Islam on every occasion. Despite this, he was awarded the Presidential Award in 1999, which is considered a high government honour.

This is a remarkable event. The process involves a decision to award this prestigious honour based on a 15-year record. Each year, three senior officers from the department evaluate and report on the performance of the individual in question. Over 15 years, 45 officers participate in

this reporting process. If even one officer's report is unfavourable, the person is not considered worthy of this national award. After the committee's nomination, the file is sent for approval to about half a dozen government offices and ultimately reaches the President of India.

How did an Indian Muslim earn this remarkable award? The answer is straightforward: outstanding performance and good manners. In this regard, Mr. Muhammad Hanif's record is exceptionally impressive. As for his good manners, a specific incident can give us insight into his character.

During the 1996 recruitment for sweepers, a high-caste Hindu boy came for an interview at Mr. Hanif's office. Mr. Hanif told him that sweepers had to clean drains and sweep floors, and asked how he, being from a high caste, would handle such tasks. The boy replied that he was willing to do anything for his livelihood. Mr. Hanif hired him but, aware of the situation, assigned the boy to dusting work in the office instead of cleaning drains and sweeping.

Some time later, Mr. Hanif was transferred from that office, and a Hindu officer replaced him. One day, the boy came to Mr. Hanif's house and said that after Mr. Hanif left, he was reassigned to cleaning drains and sweeping, tasks from which Mr. Hanif had exempted him. Mr. Hanif felt sorry for him and called the new officer to discuss the boy's situation. He expressed his wish that the boy continue with the dusting work instead of cleaning drains and sweeping. Following Mr. Hanif's request, the new officer restored the boy to the dusting job.

Mr. Muhammad Hanif shows the same respect and kindness to everyone in his office. As a result, he is respected by everyone, from junior employees to senior officers.

Similarly, Mr. Hanif carries out his official duties with complete honesty. Although he often encounters opportunities for extra financial benefits in his line of work, he completely refrains from accepting such income. He lives within the limits of his legitimate salary and never accepts any unlawful earnings.

Mr. Muhammad Hanif's qualities are his true assets. These are the very attributes that made him deserving of the aforementioned national distinction. This shows that in this country, all kinds of high opportunities are fully available to a Muslim. The only condition is that he follows the path of high morals and excellent performance. After that, he will have no reason to complain about his environment.

## DARE TO TAKE RISKS

Walter Bigelow Wriston (1919–2005) was an American banker who served as chairman and CEO of Citicorp. He was the chief executive of Citibank (which later became Citigroup) from 1967 to 1984. He once observed, “Failure is not a crime. Failure to learn from failure is.”

When Jim Burke became the head of a new products division at Johnson & Johnson, one of his first projects was

the development of a children's chest rub. The product failed miserably, and Burke expected that he would be fired. When he was called in to see the chairman of the board, however, he had a surprising reception. "Are you the one who just cost us all that money?" asked Robert Wood Johnson. "Well, I just want to congratulate you. If you are making mistakes, that means you are taking risks, and we won't grow unless you take risks."

One of the ever-present features of our present world is that no one knows for certain what factors will be conducive to the success of any venture. Given our human limitations, the only possible course is to take the initiative in spite of being unable to forecast the result. This is the risk factor.

No doubt there are apprehensions about taking risks. But in the present world nothing can be achieved without a certain amount of daring. As the proverb says, 'no risk no gain'.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CITY

Chicago is a city in the United States. The literal meaning of its name is "wild onion." Historically, the city was known for its filth, crime, and poor housing, which gave it this reputation. However, today Chicago is considered a beautiful, well-regarded city.

The modern history of Chicago is largely linked to Richard J. Daley. Born in 1902 and passing away in

1976, Daley became Chicago's mayor in 1955 and held the position until his death. After taking office, he initiated a comprehensive urban renewal plan. Under his leadership, Daley transformed the old Chicago into a modern, vibrant city.

Daley's success can be mainly credited to the fact that he made rebuilding Chicago a personal responsibility for each resident. He motivated every individual to believe that it was their duty to help renew the city and that they were the ones who could make it happen. Daley fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility by giving every citizen a powerful motto: "I will do it."

This motto is perfect for any large project. Everyone should approach a task with the mindset, "This is my responsibility, and I am the one who must finish it." When every member of society adopts this attitude, the successful completion of any plan becomes certain.

At one point, Chicago had a tarnished reputation. However, the main challenge was not about changing the city's name, but about changing the mindset of its residents. Simply renaming the city would have been ineffective. But by shifting the attitude of its people, even a deteriorated city could be transformed into a thriving one.

A slogan targeting others only causes division and chaos within society, while a slogan for oneself promotes growth and development. The first type of slogan results in destruction, whereas the second encourages construction.

## A PERIOD OF TWENTY FIVE YEARS

Albert Sabin, an American scientist was born in 1906 in Poland. His parents migrated to America when he was only fifteen years old and it was here that he died on March, 1993. After a long and hard struggle spanning over a period of twenty five years he succeeded in inventing a polio vaccine which could be used orally. Whereas hitherto fore it was generally given by means of injections. It is estimated that about 500 million people have so far benefitted from this invention.

Yet Albert Sabin, a truly deserving candidate, was denied of the Nobel Prize. Still he did not fret himself to death. Instead he said: 'I only ask for a place of work'.

During the course of his research he had to suffer from great frustrations, but without being affected from his failures he continued to engage himself devotedly to his research work, ultimately his research reached to its successful conclusion. He used to say: "No matter how good you are, you cannot be a scientist unless you learn to live with frustrations."

This is also a general principle of success in this world. Here any great success awaits only that courageous person who can devote himself to his work unceasingly for a period of twenty five years; who can continue his onward journey through frustrations; who can rise again after every fall; who can always remain active for the attainment of its goal whether or not he receives recognition and applause.

Those who complain of non-recognition, who are afraid of unfavourable circumstances; whose eyes are set on problems rather than on opportunities can never achieve great success in this world.

## MAN AND OPPORTUNITY

This is an—Pubilius Syrus, a Roman writer of the first century B.C. who wrote in Latin is recorded as having said: “A good opportunity is seldom presented and is easily lost.” An observation which may well be taken out of the Roman context and universally applied. For it is a matter of common circumstance that chances to make progress in this world do not conveniently present themselves at every juncture. They are few and far between. But most people, unconvinced of how imperative it is to realize their special importance, fail to grasp them in time. Thus golden opportunities are lost forever, and all that remains is regret at having so foolishly missed them.

The same is true of the Hereafter, but on a scale barely appreciable by human beings. There are the wholly different dimensions of eternal bliss or eternal damnation to be taken into consideration. Everyone, of course, has been given opportunities in the present world to act in the interests of his own salvation in the life after death. But these are opportunities which very seldom present themselves. And



then death—the great cut—off point—comes and puts an end to opportunities for all time.

After death, when man's eyes are opened he receives a severe shock. Now he finds himself doomed to eternal regret at having squandered unparalleled opportunities, thanks to his own ignorance, foolishness and lack of any sense of timeliness.

Everyone in this world should behave as a morally responsible servant of God and everyone is given equal opportunities to do so. Yet, in the Hereafter, there will be some who will flounder on the question of missed opportunities, while there will be others who will pass the divine test because of opportunities seized and turned to good advantage. It will be quite obvious on that Day which of God's servants availed of opportunities to serve Him, and which of them did not.

This ultimate reckoning should make us examine our lives with greater earnestness. As we are sufficiently aware of the fact—considering that none of us are immortal — that we cannot go through life allowing one opportunity after another to slip through our fingers? We cannot surely expect to be offered unlimited chances for our own salvation. And once death intervenes, looking for alternative possibilities beyond the grave becomes meaningless. There we are ineluctably faced with an eternity of success or an eternity of failure.

## THE LADDER TO SUCCESS

G.D. Birla (Ghanshyam Das Birla, 1894-1983) was one of India's most notable industrialists. He began his career during the British era with humble roots and achieved legendary status in his lifetime. He is rightly considered one of the founders of the Indian industry.

A biography of Birla titled "Karma Yogi Ghanshyam Ji" has been published. The preface was written by his son, K.K. Birla, and appeared in a special edition of *The Hindustan Times* on April 20, 1994. Here is an excerpt from it:

G.D. Birla initially worked as a broker for a British firm in Kolkata. He did his job with dedication and honesty, earning the respect of his colleagues. On the surface, Birla appeared content with his work. However, he occasionally entertained the idea of starting his own business, though making such a move was difficult given the circumstances. Therefore, he kept working hard as a broker.

One day, in the company building, Birla got into an elevator to go upstairs. Inside, there was an Englishman who, upon seeing Birla, told him to get out, claiming that the elevator was not for Indians. This incident was both humiliating and provocative. However, Birla did not respond by anger toward the Englishman. Instead, this event motivated him. According to Birla's son, the lift incident deeply affected him and led to an immediate decision:

"The lift incident served as a catalyst and prompted him to make an early decision." (p. 8)

Birla left his corporate job and started his own business. With focused dedication and hard work, he eventually became a prominent industrialist in the country. It's natural for life to have negative experiences. A wise person is one who turns an negative experiences into an opportunity for further progress.

## NO DESPAIR

A man was walking along a path when he suddenly noticed a chasm blocking his way. He felt that moving forward might now be impossible. After pausing for a moment, he thought deeply. It occurred to him that if he took a few steps back, he might find an alternative route. He did exactly that. After walking a short distance back, he discovered another path. He took this path and continued forward.

When one path seems closed to you, don't lose hope. In this world, paths are available in all directions. By leveraging your strengths and abilities, you can find another way to reach your destination.

In this world, a path is only shut to those who see obstacles but not opportunities. For those who see opportunities, there is never a closed path.

History is full of many examples of people who faced obstacles or blocks for different reasons. Still, they did not give up. They used their intelligence, learned from others'

experiences, and asked for advice. As a result, they found solutions to their challenges. They created an open way for themselves, helping them continue their journey and ultimately achieve success.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPETITION

Aditya Vikram Birla was the grandson of the late Ghanshyam Das Birla. He died on October 1, 1995, in Baltimore, USA, at the age of only 51. At the time, he was the chairman of an industrial empire worth 8,000 crores. Through his exceptional talent, he expanded his business from India to international markets.

Mr. Aditya Birla was highly intelligent and well-educated. He realized early on that protectionist policies were not beneficial for India's industry. He used to say that business can only grow when it meets international standards:

“Business can progress only when it is internationally competitive.”

He was a very ambitious person. Someone once commented about him:

“The world was his market and efficiency was his strategy.”

He was highly against the Indian government's protectionist policy. He once said, “We are not afraid of competition; let competition be afraid of us.”

This is the key to life and progress in this world. God designed the system of this world based on competition. In this world, only those who have the courage to face competition achieve greatness. It is impossible to reach significant success through protection and privileges.

Facing challenges builds a person's strength. It raises an ordinary individual to an extraordinary level.

## THE WEAK CAN ALSO BE POWERFUL

Georges Bidault (1899-1983) was a French politician. While it is hard to agree with his general views, one of his sayings is especially meaningful. He said:

“The weak have one weapon, the errors of those who think they are strong.”

The biggest weakness in this world is to think of oneself as powerful. A person who starts to believe they are powerful is likely to make mistakes. Such a person, in their arrogance of power, becomes careless about strategy. And for someone who becomes careless about strategy, defeat is certain because no one in this world is so powerful that they don't need strategy.

Whenever someone feels that their opponent, in their arrogance of power, is tormenting them, they should realize that their opponent is now giving them a weapon against themselves. In such cases, one should try to become familiar with their opponent's activities.

A person's study will inevitably lead them to realize that a certain weakness has developed in their opponent and is gradually growing. The person should identify this weakness and fully exploit it, and they will surely succeed in defeating their opponent.

In this world, the weak can also be strong, and the strong can also be weak. God has not granted anyone complete weakness or total power. Everyone has the chance to succeed, even in seemingly tough conditions. The key is to use their God-given intellect wisely.

## THE WISDOM OF WAITING

In November 1991, I visited Bombay. During my trip, I met Haji Akbar Khan Sahib, an elderly merchant from Bombay. He had developed a new product and invested a considerable amount of money into it. However, contrary to expectations, the product didn't succeed in the market. The loss had a serious impact on Haji Sahib. His blood pressure rose, and he started to suffer from diabetes, among other health issues.

I visited his house, listened to his troubles, and prayed silently for him. When it was time for me to go, I wrote a sentence on a piece of paper, placed it in an envelope, and gave it to him, telling him, "Open it and read it after I leave." The message I wrote was: "Instead of placing your issue in the box of sorrow, place it in the box of patience."

A year and a half later, on June 8, 1993, I received a letter from Haji Akbar Khan Sahib. The content of the letter was as follows:

“On November 9, 1991, you visited my humble home, and after listening to my story of sorrow, you gave me a piece of advice: ‘Instead of placing your issue in the box of sorrow, place it in the box of patience.’

Believe me, your words had a remarkable impact on me. Psychologically, as I struggled to reach a high level of patience, I started to realize that my knowledge was quite limited. Today, as I receive the June 1993 newsletter, a year and a half after that incident, Alhamdulillah—thanks to placing my issue in the box of patience—the loss has been mostly compensated. The situation has improved significantly, and I am confident that the loss experienced in 1991 will, God willing, turn into a substantial profit in 1993. This serves as a powerful lesson: if patience yields such rewards in worldly affairs, just imagine the rewards it can bring in the hereafter.”  
(Akbar Khan, Mazgaon, Bombay 10)

## COOPERATION FOR A GREATER CAUSE: THE PROPHET’S LESSON

When Prophet Muhammad migrated from Makkah to Madinah, it was a difficult and dangerous journey, forced on him by the oppression and persecution from the disbelievers

of Makkah. Despite the risks, the Prophet chose a non-Muslim guide, Abdullah bin Uraiqit, from Makkah. This guide helped him navigate and safely lead him from Makkah to Madinah. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2263)

This event teaches us that when it comes to cooperation, there should be no distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims. The focus should be on the importance of the task itself, not on a person's religion or background.

The Prophet Muhammad consistently adhered to this principle. For example, after the Battle of Badr, seventy non-Muslim prisoners were brought to Madinah. Many of them were literates of that time. The Prophet declared that anyone among them who could teach ten children in Madinah to read and write would be set free. As a result, the first school in Islamic history was established, and all of its teachers were non-Muslims, as per the Prophet's order.

This principle is extremely important in all aspects of life. When choosing a colleague or employee, focusing solely on their religious or community background can reduce the quality of the work. Such an approach hampers the work from being done to a high standard.

The right approach is to evaluate the task objectively and select the best person for it based on their abilities. In other words, individuals should be chosen based on merit, not on religious or communal ties.

Selecting people based on merit promotes the progress of the work itself. However, when factors unrelated to merit are prioritized, those factors will take over, reducing the quality of the work.



## THE DISPOSITION TO LEARN

It is said about the second Caliph, Umar Farooq, that he would learn something from everyone. An example of this is found in a narration: once he asked a companion what is piety (Taqwa). The companion responded, “O Leader of the Faithful, have you ever walked on a path with thorny bushes on both sides?” Hazrat Umar replied, “Yes.” The companion then asked, “What did you do in such a situation?” Hazrat Umar said, “I gathered my garments and carefully walked through.” The companion said, “That is Taqwa.” (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 1, p. 164)

Umar bin al-Khattab used the same approach in daily life. He would ask camel herders about camels and goat herders about goats. Likewise, he would inquire about topics related to each person’s profession. This way, he asked questions within their areas of expertise and learned new things from everyone he met.

In modern times, this is called the “spirit of inquiry.” From a scientific standpoint, it is extremely important. The fact is that only those who have this inquisitive spirit become great scholars. Such a spirit is very essential for everyone, whether they are ordinary people or hold high positions.

Generally, people are more eager to speak than to listen. However, this tendency is a constant obstacle to the growth of knowledge. People with this attitude can never

reach meaningful scholarly progress. When you speak, you stay where you are, but when you listen, you expand your knowledge. The right scholarly attitude is to listen more than you speak. Whenever you meet someone, try to gather information by asking questions.

A vast amount of information exists everywhere, but only those who understand how to acquire it can truly share in it.

## ON THE BRINK OF HISTORY

The American war of Independence was fought from 1775 to 1783. Having seen its consequences some of America's leaders subsequently began to advocate peaceful methods of gaining political ends instead of violence. One of these was the second American president, John Adams, who came to be known as a non-political politician.

When Britain under the Paris treaty gave the US its freedom in 1783, its history radically altered course. Now the maximum importance began to be given to education, scientific research, industry, city planning and character building of the new generations.

The same happened in the case of Japan. Up to the end of the Second World War, Japan had followed the path of militancy. But its experiences during the war led

it to change its priorities. Now militancy was totally abandoned. Instead, all attention was diverted to the field of education, with progress in science and technology as its target. As a result of adopting this reverse course, as they called it, the Japanese saw dramatic changes within a period of forty years.

This stage of taking the reverse course comes to every nation. In the event, it is those who show the ability to adapt themselves to changing sets of circumstances who are successful. Those who fail to adapt are doomed to failure. The US and Japan both provide examples of the benefits of adopting this reverse course. On the other hand, there is India. After Independence, Mahatma Gandhi wanted to lead the nation along this path. But India was unable to follow this path of reverse action, and as a result, it could not achieve the progress.

For the Muslims too this hour has come. Because of continuing to bear grudges against others they had futilely adopted a policy of militancy over a long period. But now it is high time to abandon this externally directed policy and focus instead on internal matters. That is, they must first admit their own shortcomings and then direct their full attention towards their own construction. This being the only solution to the problems faced by the Muslims, they ought wholeheartedly to adopt this policy.

## ONE'S OWN RESPONSIBILITY

An elderly British citizen told me that during the Second World War, Sir Winston Churchill, Britain's Prime Minister and popularly acclaimed military leader, gave to the people of Britain the motto:

It all depends on me.

This is an excellent motto and one that is just as relevant in time of peace as it is in war.

My brother, Abdul Muheet Khan, who is an engineer, told me of an incident at a training camp he had attended in Chandigarh, which is a good illustration of this motto. This camp, which was to be inaugurated by an Indian minister, had been arranged for the principals of various polytechnics, and a British professor had been invited to address them. When the minister was about to start his inaugural address, the power suddenly went off and the loudspeakers went dead. There was no battery on hand as an alternative arrangement. However, there was a battery available in the polytechnic's workshop.

The principals who were present for the training began looking around for a peon or an attendant who could be sent to the workshop to bring the battery. But as soon as the British professor realized what had happened, he himself dashed to the workshop, picked up the heavy battery and came running back to connect it to the loudspeaker system. The microphone immediately started functioning again.

Such an attitude on the part of an individual, whatever

his community, is the underlying cause of the collective progress of the society to which he belongs. Similarly, at the national level, progress and development are directly correlated with the prevalence of this spirit among the people.

It is common practice that when a wrong is observed in society, proposals are made to enact new laws or introduce administrative changes in the hope of correcting the problem. However, the legal system and the administration have their limits and can only be partially effective. Genuine reform can occur only when the spirit of reform is awakened within the people themselves.

## A SCIENTIST

Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931) was a well-known American scientist. In his childhood, his teacher labeled him an incompetent student. However, through hard work, he became a great scientist. When Thomas Alva Edison was an eight-year-old boy in school, an incident happened. One day, his female teacher, while talking about flight, explained that humans cannot fly because they don't have wings, but birds can because they do have wings. The other children accepted this explanation, but Alva had a different idea. He raised his hand and said, "Madam, but a kite flies even though it doesn't have wings." The teacher couldn't

answer his question. Instead of admitting she didn't know, she made it about her pride and made the situation worse, which led to Alva being expelled from school. She called him a foolish boy who talked too much.

Thomas Alva Edison made many scientific discoveries, such as wireless communication, the telephone, electricity, photography, electric light, and more. About one hundred inventions, both major and minor, are credited to him. As a child, Thomas Alva Edison asked numerous questions. When his female school teacher could not answer them, she took it as a matter of her pride and failed to see Edison's potential. However, Edison's mother was not hindered by such ego issues. She quickly recognized that Edison's frequent questions were actually a sign of his creative intelligence. With maternal love, she guided Edison on the path of knowledge and discovery, eventually helping him become a great scientist.

## NATION OR CROWD

Begum Shaista Ikramullah (1915–2000) was one of Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah's most dedicated supporters. She worked under his leadership and served as a member of Pakistan's Constituent Assembly from 1947 to 1954. She also served as Pakistan's ambassador to Morocco from 1964 to 1967, among other roles.

In the May 1991 issue of Reader's Digest, she wrote an article about Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, sharing various memories of him. She mentioned that, initially, the Muslims of India were not aligned with the Muslim League. However, under Mr. Jinnah's leadership, the 1945-46 elections saw the Muslim League secure 85% of the Muslim seats in Indian states.

She also recalled how the Quaid (Mr. Jinnah) often said, "The Quaid used to say that he had fashioned a nation out of a mob. Today, seeing all our internal squabbles, I sometimes think that we have gone back to being a mob."

Many people mistake gathering at rallies for true unity. However, such gatherings only show a temporary coming together of a crowd, nothing more. Turning a crowd into a united nation is very different from a rally or procession. Genuine unity happens when people, on a deeper level, develop a shared mindset and build stable character within themselves. They should be willing to support each other, setting aside their differences. Unity arises when individuals go beyond personal interests and live for higher human goals. True unity is seen in everyday life, not just in temporary rallies or processions.

## CONDITION FOR SUCCESS

A person was descending a staircase at night. Although he had good vision, there was no light on the stairs. One of the steps was somewhat broken. Because he could not see

it, he couldn't place his foot properly on it and slipped, falling down.

Another person was walking on the road. It was daytime, but the walker was blind. On one side of the road, a manhole cover was open. Because he was blind, he couldn't see it and stepped into the hole.

To find one's way in this world, two things are needed together—eyes and light. If a person has eyes without light, or light without eyes, the outcome is the same: he will stumble into a pit and suffer harm. Only when both are present can one walk safely on the path.

The same principle applies to all of human life. The principle for success in life is the same as shown in the mentioned incidents: having both vision and light at the same time.

There is a nation whose individuals possess the intellect given by God, but they lack knowledge. In this condition, it is as if they have eyes but no light. Despite having eyes, such people wander aimlessly on the paths of life.

In the same way, there can be a nation whose people are educated, but whose thinking has become unhealthy. Their hearts are filled with hatred and irritation. Such a nation may have light, but it has no eyes. People in this condition cannot move ahead safely; sooner or later, they will crash into some obstacle and face destruction.

This is the real core issue in a nation's progress. Those who sincerely want to uplift a community must work on this inner mindset. Giving speeches in other fields will achieve nothing. This alone is the true key to success in this world.



## A DIFFERENCE

On August 15, 1995, I met Mr.. Rajmohan Gandhi during a meeting in Delhi. He is the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and is now 60 years old. He shared that he once attended a conference in Japan. There, a Japanese delegate told him that for the past fifteen years, he had been participating in various conferences. He found that at any international conference where both Japanese and Indians were present, the chairperson always faced two difficulties:

1. To encourage the shy Japanese to speak.
2. To convince the Indian delegate to finish his speech.

A person with a serious demeanour, a desire to learn, and a passion for work will resemble the Japanese mentioned in the above statement. Such a person prefers listening over speaking because listening enhances their knowledge. Their focus is on their practical responsibilities, and someone who concentrates on these responsibilities tends to speak less. An active attitude naturally decreases the tendency to talk.

The other type of person is someone who lacks seriousness, has no desire to expand their knowledge, and avoids hard work. This individual resembles the Indian described in the aforementioned statement. Such a person is most interested in talking excessively because they are unaware that there are other things they need to learn. They will speak nonstop, feeling that by talking more, they can compensate for their lack of effort.

Talking a lot and doing little shows an unserious person, while talking less and doing more indicates a serious person.

## NATURAL LIFE

Once, I visited a gentleman at his house. There, his four young children (two girls and two boys) were playing. I noticed they kept complaining to their father about each other—"He hit me," "She took my toy," "He pushed me," "She said this to me," and so on. Despite these complaints, they kept playing together. Their relationship remained unaffected.

Why did their mutual love endure despite the complaints? The answer is the blood relationship. They were all brothers and sisters, bonded by blood. This blood tie overshadowed their complaints. Despite their differences, it kept them united.

This is a symbol of nature, illustrating how people should live in this world. People should live in a way that even when disagreements and complaints happen among them, their relationships do not break, and they continue to live together in harmony and love.

In this world, it's inevitable that people living together will have complaints against each other. A life without complaints isn't possible here. The goal shouldn't be to eliminate complaints from society but rather to stop them from turning into hatred.

In the case of siblings, what prevents complaints from turning into hatred is the blood relationship. For the general population, moral principles serve this restraining function. A blood relationship is a natural bond, and therefore, there is no reward or incentive attached to it. However, moral principles are adopted by a person through their own will. Such a person voluntarily commits themselves to a set of standards. Therefore, the individual who upholds this moral discipline is deserving of a great reward, both in this world and in the eternal life of the hereafter.

## SELF-CONFIDENCE

In 1975, South Korea planned a steel factory project. They applied for a loan from the World Bank to fund it. Following protocol, the bank sent a team of experts to Korea to assess the situation on-site. After evaluating the conditions, the team reported that, given Korea's current circumstances, the project was not feasible. As a result, the World Bank refused to grant the loan.

However, the people of South Korea did not lose hope. They looked for alternative sources and somehow managed to build their factory. Twenty years later, this factory became the second-largest steel plant in the world. A World Bank expert visited Korea again to inspect the factory. After a thorough examination, he wrote that what they had said twenty years ago was correct. However, they

had overlooked one factor in their assessment: the endless supply of self-confidence that the Korean people possess.

Self-confidence is a God-given trait. It is equally accessible to all. However, some people take advantage of it, while others do not utilize this God-given quality.

For example, if the Korean people had begun saying after the bank's refusal that the bank officials were biased, that they did not want their progress, and that they aimed to keep them economically backward, their self-confidence would have been suppressed. Instead of focusing on action, they would have concentrated on complaints and protests. As a result, their innate sense of self-confidence would not have surfaced. This God-given trait would have remained hidden inside them, yet they would have been deprived of its practical benefits. Korea's atmosphere would have been filled with complaints, but no steel factory would have been operating.

God has given humans a wide range of superior abilities in abundance. However, using them is reserved for high-spirited individuals who have a positive mindset and are completely free from negative thoughts.

## THE POWER OF DIGNITY

There is an incident involving the former Vice President of India, Mohammad Hidayatullah (1905-1992). This incident was shared with me by his PA, Mr. Athar Siddiqui, MA.

He told me that a delegation of Sikh leaders from Punjab once came to meet Hidayatullah in New Delhi. According to their traditions, they were wearing kirpans. The security personnel at the official residence of the Vice President told the Sikhs to leave their kirpans outside before going in to meet the Vice President. The Sikhs were not willing to leave their kirpans outside.

The situation escalated. The security officer called the Vice President's secretary by phone and explained what was happening. The secretary ordered them not to let anyone in with their kirpans, and if they tried to enter that way, to arrest them.

Mr. Athar Siddiqui said that he sensed the seriousness of the situation, so he immediately went inside, met with Mr. Hidayatullah, and informed him about the developing circumstances. He explained that the behaviour of the security officer and the secretary was completely unwise. He suggested that Mr. Hidayatullah directly instruct the military officer not to stop the Sikhs and to let them enter with their kirpans. Mr. Hidayatullah understood the seriousness of the matter and accordingly gave instructions to the security officer over the phone.

Afterward, the Sikh delegation entered with their kirpans. As soon as they reached Mr. Hidayatullah, they removed their kirpans and placed them at his feet. They said, "Do you think we would stoop so low as to come here and attack you with these kirpans? You are like a father to us. We could never even think of doing such a thing."

Wisdom is the greatest power. If you choose the path of wisdom, even an armed enemy will lay down their weapons and, recognizing your humanity, fall at your feet.

## FORESIGHT

In May 1992, a man from Andhra Pradesh visited Delhi. He brought mangoes as a gift for us. While handing over the basket of mangoes, he mentioned that when he bought them from the market in his hometown, they were in perfect condition. However, because of the intense heat during the trip, most of the mangoes spoiled.

I remained silent. At that moment, a “gardener” was also present at the gathering. Looking at the mangoes, he said, “Brother, these mangoes didn’t spoil because of the heat. They spoiled because of a mistake on your part.”

Then the gardener asked him if the mangoes he bought from his local market were ripe. He said, “Yes.” The gardener explained that this was the reason they spoiled. The truth is that ripe mangoes are meant for local consumption. When mangoes need to be transported over long distances, unripe mangoes are purchased. If you had bought unripe mangoes, not a single one would have spoiled, and they would have all arrived here in good condition.

This incident highlights the importance of foresight in handling matters. When you create a plan to be

implemented in the future, simply knowing the present isn't enough. In such cases, it is crucial to understand what lies ahead and look beyond today to anticipate events that may happen tomorrow.

A plan is made now, but its results always appear later. Planning essentially involves preparing for the future. To create a successful plan, it is important to rely on careful thought rather than fleeting excitement and to take a realistic approach instead of an emotional one. More focus should be given to predicting future conditions rather than just dealing with current problems.

## A LIFE OF WELL-BEING

Within a religious scholar's (Alim) circle, there was someone very close to him. The scholar valued and trusted this person more than anyone else. He helped this person start a business, and he succeeded, becoming wealthy.

One day, this person was with the scholar. The scholar strictly forbade him from doing something. The person became upset, responded harshly, and left the scholar's presence. A few days later, when his anger had cooled, he returned to apologize. The scholar replied, "There is no need for you to apologize. I have already resolved this matter in such a way that I used to see you by my standards, but now I will see you by your standards. "

This is the only successful principle for living a life of well-being in this world. In one word, it can be summarized as: treat people according to their standards, not yours.

If someone does not live up to your high expectations, lower your expectations of them. If they do not accept your boundaries, stop demanding those boundaries from them. If someone is not willing to be your close confidant, start thinking of them as an ordinary person. If you can't control someone, try to find a peaceful way to manage the situation. If they are not willing to meet your expectations, let go of those expectations. If they are not suitable for the role you assigned them, simply remove them from that role and assign them to another.

Life is about adjusting to external realities. We live in this world by adapting to the sun, wind, rain, mountains, and sea. The same principle applies when dealing with people. If you treat people with the principle of adaptation, the world will become a source of happiness and well-being for you.

## IMAGINARY FEARS

On July 21, 1996, a tragic event took place in Subramanyapura, Bangalore. A boy named G. Harish Babu, who was a fourth-grade student at Vivekananda Higher Primary School, locked himself in a room at his home,



poured kerosene over himself, and set his clothes on fire. As a result, he died from his burns. According to newspaper reports, the cause was his fear of failing in the exams:

“Fear of failure in examinations.”

The boy’s father, G. Gopinath, stated that Harish came home from school as he normally did. He told his mother, Leela, that his teacher wanted to see her. So, Leela went to the school. Afterwards, Harish went into the kitchen, locked the door, and set himself on fire. When neighbours heard the commotion, they rushed over. But when they broke open the kitchen door and pulled the boy out, they discovered that he had already died from the fire.

When Harish’s mother, Leela, reached the school, she received his report card. She was very happy to see it because her son had scored 379 out of 600 marks. However, when she got home, her joy turned to sadness as she found out that her son had committed suicide (*The Times of India*, July 22, 1996).

If Harish Babu had waited a few more hours, he would have realized that his fear was completely unfounded. He had passed the exam with good marks, but his imaginary fears consumed him to the point that he took his own life out of fear.

People often misjudge situations and become caught up in fears, only to find later that those fears never come true. When something is not immediately reachable, put it in the waiting category instead of seeing it as impossible and falling into despair and hopelessness.

## SECOND CHANCE

There is a degree college in Delhi run by a Hindu organization. A job opportunity for a lecturer was announced. Among the applicants was a Muslim candidate. During the interview, a Hindu candidate was chosen, and the Muslim candidate was not selected.

When I met the Muslim candidate, he was very upset. He saw the situation as discrimination. He considered writing to the newspapers to reveal the college's bias. I advised him against it. I told him that he has only missed one opportunity. In life, a second chance always comes after the first. You shouldn't be discouraged by losing the first chance but wait instead for the second one.

A year later, the same college announced another opening for a lecturer post. When the notice appeared in the newspaper, the Muslim candidate applied once more. This time, along with the Muslim candidate, there were also two Hindu candidates, each supported by two influential Hindus. This created a tricky situation for the college authorities. They couldn't choose both Hindu candidates, and selecting one would upset the supporter of the other.

To address this sensitive issue, they decided to select the Muslim candidate instead of either of the two Hindus. This Muslim candidate is still working at the same college and has now built his own house in Delhi.

This is the secret to success in life. If you miss your first

opportunity, don't get discouraged. Instead, wait patiently for the second chance. If you do this, the second opportunity will surely come, and the success that slipped away in the first attempt will likely be yours the second time. The world is full of opportunities. After every missed chance, another one appears, just like a bright morning follows a dark evening.

## PAST AND PRESENT

A father owned a fertile piece of land. He planted some seeds and told his sons, "I may not live to see it, but twenty years from now, you will see an orchard of fruit-bearing trees here and benefit from it." After twenty years, the sons looked at the land and saw only a barren field. There were neither trees nor fruit.

The sons investigated and discovered that their father mistakenly believed pieces of rock were seeds. The father had watered the land and sprinkled something, but they were not seeds; they were pieces of rock. Clearly, an orchard grows from seeds, not from pieces of rock.

If you observe a nation whose leaders, for a hundred years, have organized grand movements, spoken beautiful words, and given the people great hopes, but now the country is falling into ruin, you will see that none of its affairs are well ordered. From any perspective, it lacks the solid foundation on which nations stand.

In this case, it is accurate to say that past leaders did not plant seeds of trees but instead scattered pieces of rocks in the name of seeds, and such pieces of rocks never grow into a thriving garden for any nation.

The present is always shaped by the past. As the past was, so is the present. If an individual or a group inherits a present with nothing for them, they should not blame oppression or conspiracies of others but recognize that they didn't take meaningful actions in the past. As a result, they have no genuine results in the present.

Accepting your past shortcomings motivates you to revise your actions today. By acting differently now, you can achieve what you couldn't before.

## AN EXEMPLARY TALE

Last summer, on June 28, 1995, I met Mr. Abdul Muhit, a retired Joint Director of Technical Education now living in Faizabad, U.P., who related some of the experiences he had during his service tenure. The following is one which struck me as being of particular interest.

Mr. A.M. Khan did a B .E. degree in electrical engineering at Banaras Hindu University in 1955. Some years later, in 1963, a vacancy for a Senior Lecturer was advertised in the private polytechnic of Chandauli (Distt. Varanasi). The successful candidate was expected to function as the head of the department of electrical engineering.

The interview for this post was to be held at the official residence of J.B. Tandon, the Commissioner of Varanasi, who at that time was the President of the Managing Committee. In his capacity as President he was present at the interview.

Professors Ram Saran and Garula were the other members of the interview board. The latter had taught Mr. Khan at the Banaras Hindu University.

Prof. Ram Saran started by putting this question to Mr. Khan:

“Do you know what an instrument transformer is?”

Mr. Khan had not even begun to answer the question when Prof. Garula, addressing the commissioner Tandon said: “He is the best candidate. There is no question of interview.

Then he said to Mr. Khan: ‘Mr. Khan, you can go.’

Prof. Saran kept quiet. Mr. Khan took his papers and left the room. After one week he received his appointment letter, appointing him as the Senior Lecturer of the Chandauli Polytechnic and the Head of the Department of Electrical Engineering. Subsequently, he continued to receive promotions until he retired as Joint Director, Technical Education.

Often we come across youths who tell us that no employment is available. But the truth is that there is an absence of worthy candidates. Mr. Khan received such an unexpected response only because he had worked very hard at his studies, always securing good marks. His performance and character throughout his studies were highly commendable. Prof. Garula and others thus formed a good impression of him. This was why he had become the first choice.

Every institution and office wants good workers, because without competent people, no workplace can function effectively. No one is an enemy of their own interests, which is why no one can afford to ignore a good worker.

Good, dependable workers are generally in demand. If you fulfill the needs of others, you will be sought out by them.

This world runs on the principle of give and take. Here no value is placed on grievances, protests and demands. The simple rule practiced in this world is that of giving and receiving in equal measure. If you want employment, you must make yourself useful. You must develop the skills that others genuinely need. Then, you will have no complaints against them—and they will have none against you.

In time, you will realize that you do not need to chase employment. Employment will begin to chase you.

Whenever you want a place in this world and others aren't willing to give it to you, don't blame them. Instead, recognize that there's a flaw inside you that makes you unappealing to others. Then, focus on fixing that flaw. Afterward, you won't have any complaints about others.

## HONOUR IN SERVICE

On January 1, 1997, I met Mr. Mohammad Minhaj Akhtar, M.A. (born 1979), from Patna. He is a businessman living in Patna. He told me about an incident from Bihar.

A father had two sons. One son pursued education, worked hard, and became a doctor. Afterward, he started his practice and moved into a separate house with his wife and children. The other son could not pursue education and remained illiterate. Eventually, on the advice of others, he opened a barbershop in the neighbourhood.

The son who was a doctor gained a respected status within the community, while the son who was a barber was considered less respected among the people. Some individuals told their father that because his son who was a barber lived with him, people often referred to him as “the father of the barber.” They suggested that if he expelled this son from the house, people would naturally start calling him “the father of the doctor,” and he would earn a respected position in society.

The man replied, “I do not like being called the father of the barber, and surely by now, I would have expelled him from the house. However, the compulsion is that he is the one who manages the household expenses. If I expel him, it would become difficult to run the household.”

This is the miracle of service. Service inherently has a miraculous influence. No matter who you are, if you begin serving people and meeting their needs, and if your image in the community becomes one of fulfilling people’s needs, you will earn respect and a higher standing among others without any extra effort.

Serving others wins their hearts. The person who wins people’s hearts achieves everything; afterwards, there is nothing more to accomplish.

## THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

Mr. Jameel Ahmad (Madras) shared an incident about a Muslim trader from Vaniyambadi—a town in the Tirupathur district of Tamil Nadu—Haji Mohammad Ibrahim, who established a school there in 1910. This school has since grown into a college and is operating successfully. Haji Mohammad Ibrahim dedicated himself to this school. At that time, there was a severe financial shortage, so he would leave his house daily with a begging bowl in hand. He would meet people and ask for donations for the school. Some would give a little, and some would give more. He would collect all the money in that bowl and, in the evening, deposit it into the school's account.

One day, Haji Mohammad Ibrahim visited a wealthy trader in Vaniyambadi. As usual, he had his begging bowl in hand. He asked the Muslim trader for a donation for the school. The trader refused to give a donation. Instead, he scolded Mohammad Ibrahim harshly, saying that he was ruining his business by pursuing the school. Mohammad Ibrahim listened to the trader's words in complete silence. He did not respond to his remarks. In the end, Mohammad Ibrahim said to him, "I put everything that everyone gives into this bowl. What you have given, I have also put into the bowl." Saying this, he greeted the trader and calmly returned home.

This simple sentence had such a profound impact on the trader that he couldn't sleep all night. His restlessness persisted the next day and night as well. Finally, on the third



day, he called Haji Mohammad Ibrahim, apologized for his behaviour, and then brought gold coins from his house, filling Ibrahim's bowl with them. If Mohammad Ibrahim had become angry at the trader's words, it would have led to a pointless confrontation. However, by responding to the negative attitude with a positive one, mere words were enough for his victory.

## BE CONTENT

Former Bangladeshi military leader General Mohammad Ershad (1930–2019) came to power through a military coup in 1982. Later, another military coup occurred, and the current government filed several corruption charges against him. He was initially sentenced to thirteen years in prison for illegal possession of weapons and later received an additional seven-year sentence for financial corruption.

A news article in the Lahore daily "*Nawa-i-Waqt*" (June 8, 1993) summarizes the events involving General Mohammad Ershad. General Ershad and his wife Roshan were convicted by a special court in Dhaka of corruption related to land transactions and sentenced to 77 years in prison. He helped several individuals acquire land in a prime area of Dhaka and then bought some of that land from them at low prices. He built a structure called "Janta Tower" on this land and paid a large part of the construction costs himself. Since

this amount exceeded his income, the court ordered all the involved properties and the building to be confiscated by the government. Currently, both he and his wife are in jail.

Such incidents emphasize the importance of the concept known in religious terms as contentment. General Ershad's tragic downfall happened because he couldn't practice contentment. He was not satisfied with his rank as General and aimed to become President. He was not happy with small plots of land and sought larger ones. He wasn't content with a single-story house and wanted to own a thirteen-storey building.

If they had been content with what they naturally received, they could have lived a peaceful and happy life. But instead of being satisfied with what they had, they chased after what they didn't have. As a result, in their greed for more, they ended up losing even what they already owned. The key to life's problems is contentment, not greed.

## THE BENEFIT OF AVOIDANCE

During a trip to Pune, the locals told me that on September 22, 1991, a Ganesh Chaturthi procession was scheduled to happen. On the same day, it was also the 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal, and the Muslims planned to hold their Milad-un-Nabi procession. If both processions took place on the same day, a clash was unavoidable, which could lead to

communal unrest and turn a day of celebration into a day of sorrow for the city.

The wisdom of the Seerat Committee in Pune prevented this problem. They held a meeting to decide what to do in such a situation. By consensus, they chose the approach of avoidance. As a result, they changed their date and postponed the Milad-un-Nabi procession by a few days, holding it on September 27. This way, both the Hindu procession and the Muslim procession took place peacefully on different days, avoiding any conflict.

All the people in the city were very pleased with this incident and appreciated the Muslims' wisdom. The police, in particular, expressed great happiness and praised the Muslims' actions. They met with the Muslims to thank them. The lack of conflict is seen as a personal achievement for the police, and undoubtedly, the officers wanted this accomplishment to be noted in their records.

When the Seerat Committee of Pune decided to change the date, they immediately published this news in Marathi newspapers. This informed Muslims across Maharashtra. As a result, in other locations where both processions were scheduled on the same day, Muslims also rescheduled their procession. Ultimately, the entire state of Maharashtra was protected from potential loss of life and property.

The most effective way to prevent communal riots is through this method of avoidance. Whenever this strategy has been used, conflicts have been prevented. It is the only way to diffuse the bomb of discord. Riots always happen because of anger, not conspiracy.

## THE JUMP TO SUICIDE

On the front page of the Delhi daily, *Hindustan Times* (November 17, 1995), there is a story with a picture. It is a story of a dead person that offers a painful lesson to the living.

Sarika Hora, the 20-year-old niece of Mr. M.N. Arora from Delhi, was a third-year engineering student in Pune. In October 1995, she visited Delhi with her family to celebrate Diwali. On October 27, she boarded the Goa Express at Nizamuddin Railway Station to return to Pune and continue her studies.

At the railway station, her family bid her farewell. She was happily heading toward her destination with a fellow student. The train had an internal passageway between each pair of carriages. Between Gwalior and Jhansi, the eager girl got up to move from one coach to another. She reached the vestibule of the coach. According to regulations, there should have been a stepping plate between the two coaches, but for some reason, it was not there. She did not notice this. She attempted to step from one coach to the other, but she did not succeed. Her foot landed in the empty space between the coaches. Suddenly, she fell under the rapidly moving train, and within seconds, her body was torn to pieces.

This is more than just a train trip. In life's bigger journey, there are often moments when we need a stepping stone to move from one stage to another. At those times, the first

step is to pause and make sure there is a solid foothold to help us move forward. Trying to move ahead without such a support is like taking a reckless leap, instead of taking a step toward progress and success.

Is there anyone who will learn a lesson from this incident?

## ONE DAY

In Delhi, there is an Islamic institution called Madrasa Islamia Arabia Faizul Quran in the Mehrauli area. It was founded by Maulana Muhammad Talha and Maulana Bashir Ahmad Rashid Al-Amini in 1992. On July 24, 1994, its first religious educational gathering was held. The chief guest was Maulana Muhammad Siddiq Bandwi. At their invitation, I also attended this event.

Leaving Nizamuddin, we traveled through different parts of Delhi. As we reached Mehrauli, we saw the Qutub Minar, which stands tall and is visible from far away as the tallest structure in the area. The Qutub Minar was built in the 13th century by Qutb-ud-din Aibak. Records show that the Qutub Minar in Delhi still remains to honour his victories:

“The Qutub Minar in Delhi still stands to commemorate his victories.” (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 8, p. 362)

However, as I observed it, I realized that this tower, with its towering height, symbolizes an even greater truth: success comes through action, not by birth.

Qutb-ud-din Aibak originally served Muhammad Ghori as a slave. However, because of his outstanding performance, he began to move up in ranks. After Sultan Muhammad Ghori's assassination in 1206, he took over and, using his wise strategies, became the ruler of Delhi. Although his reign was short, he was badly injured during a game of horse polo and died in 1210.

The possibilities for success in this world are endless. Here, even an ordinary person can achieve the status of a king. The only requirement is that they wisely use their God-given abilities.

## ATTAIN EXCELLENCE

On March 25, 1992, in Melbourne, the final match of the Cricket World Cup took place. Pakistan defeated England and won the World Cup. This remarkable achievement was accomplished under the leadership of its captain, Imran Khan. Subsequently, a flood of congratulatory messages poured in for Imran Khan, not only from Pakistan but from around the world. *The Times of India* (March 26) featured the headline:

Pakistan rule the world with a flawless display.

In this context, newspapers published an interview with India's famous player Mr. Manoj Prabhakar. It was recorded by the video magazine Sports Channel. Mr. Prabhakar said: India needed an Imran Khan-like captain to motivate the team. I think there should be some gap like age between the team and its captain. You can see the way Imran is doing his job. He is marvelous. We need that type of captain who can be a good leader. That is what we need. Otherwise, we have the best team. (*The Times of India*; *Hindustan Times*, March 26, 1992)

People value excellence. When someone displays excellence, observers can't help but be impressed. Excellence surpasses support and opposition, earning its own recognition. If you achieve excellence in any field, people will feel compelled to appreciate and acknowledge you, even if you seem like an outsider.

## GOD'S LAW

This is the story of a shopkeeper who sold ghee (clarified butter). At first, he was a small retail seller. Over time, his business expanded until he became a wholesale ghee trader. He had an accountant, called Munim Ji, who had been working for him from the very beginning.

Munim Ji's lunch would come from his home every day. His son would bring the meal in a tiffin carrier that was

unusually large. People joked with Munim Ji, saying he was eating alone but ordering enough food for ten people every day. This routine went on for years.

One day, after lunch, his son was walking back with the tiffin carrier when he tripped and fell on the shop's stairs. The tiffin carrier also fell, and all the containers spilled open. It was revealed that all the containers were filled with ghee.

The shopkeeper saw what was happening and immediately understood why Munim Ji had been carrying such a large tiffin. He then took Munim Ji into the storage room. The shopkeeper said, "You see how many containers are filled here in my warehouse. You have been with me from the start. You also know that 15 years ago, when I began this business, I had very little capital. I used to bring just one container of ghee and sell small amounts. Gradually, my business grew, and today, I am one of the city's leading wholesale dealers. Now compare your situation to mine. For years, you've been taking ghee in your tiffin daily, yet your condition remains the same as it was before. During that time, God has greatly elevated my status. Now you can see for yourself who is truly benefiting—the one being exploited or the one doing the exploiting.

The Creator of this world has designed it so that only those who earn their living through honest means will thrive. Those who engage in illegitimate earnings will ultimately suffer downfall and ruin.



## PATIENCE IN THE FACE OF PROBLEMS

There was a village where people had very sharp tongues. In this village, two men opened shops—one was young, and the other was old. The young man's shop soon shut down, while the old man's shop kept thriving. Today, the old man is the richest person in the village, and everyone speaks to him with respect.

The reason for this is when the young shopkeeper saw the customers speaking harshly, he started to push back against their sharp words. As a result, the verbal conflicts grew into physical fights. People attacked him, and eventually, he closed his shop and left the village.

The secret of the old shopkeeper's success was that he ignored people's sharp tongues and harsh words. He focused solely on their "pockets" and turned a blind eye to their "words." As a result, he achieved remarkable success in his business.

This is a story of worldly success, but the same principle applies to success in the hereafter. To succeed in the hereafter, one must also patiently endure people's wrongdoings. A person who does not adopt patience in this world cannot succeed in the "business" of the hereafter.

To succeed in the hereafter, believers have the responsibility to make people aware of God and His creation plan. By fulfilling this duty, they will attain paradise in the hereafter. Additionally, when believers carry out this divine obligation, they are rewarded with honour in this world as

an initial reward. However, if they lack patience, they will be deprived in both this life and the hereafter.

In summary, the current situation for Muslims is that they are arguing over issues they should be patient about, and they wrongly call it jihad. In this world, it is unavoidable that Muslims will face injustices from others. Believers must step away from these problems and focus all their attention solely on fulfilling their duties.

## THE MIRACLE OF PATIENCE

On July 23, 1993, I performed the Friday prayer at the Sang Tarashan Mosque (Paharganj) in Delhi. The neighbourhood around this mosque is entirely Hindu. After 1947, the mosque was shut down, and locals used to dump trash there. In 1982, a Muslim from Delhi, Mr. Muhammad Saeed Bilai (born 1953), considered reclaiming this mosque.

He made efforts to reopen, clean, and repair the mosque. The next challenge was how to populate it, since there were no Muslims living nearby. So, he set up a madrasa by hiring a teacher. About two dozen Muslim children moved in and studied there. This way, the five daily prayers were established.

Mr. Mahmood Saeed Bilali informed his acquaintances about this mosque, and soon many people began coming for Friday prayers. The mosque would be filled with

worshippers. To help the students and worshippers, Mr. Bilali planned to build a canopy by covering half of the courtyard with a roof. He started the work, creating a framework and beginning the roof construction.

This incident occurred on March 19, 1991. Suddenly, about 150 Hindus, mostly young men, gathered and declared they would not allow the construction of the roof. They threatened, saying, "If you don't take down this roof, there will be bloodshed, and your mosque will not remain standing." One student went to the police station and informed them of the situation. Soon, a large number of police officers arrived, including senior officials. After assessing the situation, the police stated that the construction was within legal boundaries, so no one could stop it. They told the Muslims, "You go ahead and build the roof; we are here to ensure your safety."

Mahmood Saeed Bilali wondered how long the police could keep protecting him if he continued construction. Eventually, he would have to face the local Hindus, who might not only dismantle the roof but also destroy the mosque, and no one could stop them. While he was lost in these thoughts, an elderly man from the Hindu crowd stepped forward. He said, "Mian Ji, these people are very agitated right now. They could do anything. Don't be stubborn; take down the roof."

Bilali immediately took advantage of the situation. He said, "Just as this elder is respected by you, he is also respected by me. I accept his advice." Then he told his workers to take down the roof. As a result, the roof was dismantled.

By that point, 25,000 rupees had already been spent on the construction.

The incident had a very positive impact on all the Hindus in the area. They all became more sympathetic toward the mosque and its community. Now, five daily prayers are held with the call to prayer broadcast on loudspeakers, Friday prayers are conducted regularly, an Islamic school is in operation, and magnificent Taraweeh prayers are offered during Ramadan, among other activities. Despite everything, there is no obstruction from the Hindus. They often say, "If you need anything, let us know. If any Hindu bothers you, inform us immediately, and we will handle it."

On December 6, 1992, when news spread that the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya had been demolished, tensions erupted across Delhi. Hindu-Muslim riots broke out in several areas. This region also experienced unrest, especially since there were 23 Muslim children inside the mosque at that time.

Mahmood Saeed Bilali was in the Jama Masjid area at the time and couldn't do anything. However, the neighbouring Hindus became their protectors. They personally came to the mosque, took the children to a nearby school, arranged their food and drinks, and then safely escorted all the children back home.

If Bilali had been stubborn and confrontational, it would have caused stubbornness and confrontation on the other side as well, leading to conflict. But when he took a stance of gentleness and humility, it generated the same response from the other side. As a result, the atmosphere of conflict changed into one of peace.

## THE FIRE COOLED DOWN

On February 8, 1993, a seminar took place at the conference hall of Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi. The event was organized by the Zakir Husain Institute of Islamic Studies, and its theme was “Religion and Humanitarianism.” Among the speakers was Dr. Bishambar Nath Pandey. In his speech, Dr. Pandey shared some incidents, including the following one:

In 1926, a Hindu procession took place in Balaghat, Madhya Pradesh. Led by Swami Satya Dev, the procession was scheduled for a Friday. Around ten thousand Hindus, playing music and shouting slogans, reached the front of the mosque during the Friday prayer.

Karamat Hussain was a well-known political activist in the city. He had learned about the procession in advance. As a result, he and about a hundred of his associates arrived at the mosque early. He had beforehand given each of his associates a garland of flowers. When the procession stopped in front of the mosque, he instructed the Muslims to remain completely silent. Then, following a carefully devised plan, Karamat Hussain and his associates exited the mosque and stepped onto the street. They did not ask the procession to change its route or stop the slogans. Instead, they said, “We welcome you.” Saying this, they moved in front of the procession and began garlanding each Hindu.

After this, the entire atmosphere changed. The heads of the

### THREE MINUTES

procession members bowed, and their slogans stopped on their own. Those with the intent to fight started embracing the Muslims. What could have escalated into hostility turned into a situation of friendship.

Every human being is, after all, human. When a person becomes an enemy of another, it is only under temporary provocation. If this temporary fire is cooled with wisdom, the person will return to their original nature. Then the same individual who temporarily appeared to be your enemy will become your friend.

### THREE MINUTES

Syed Imtiazuddin Desnavi is an engineer. In 1967, he was stationed in a village called Lonavla in the Pune district as part of his service. One day, while he was praying Taraweeh with other Muslims in the mosque, loud noises were heard from the street. A Hindu procession was passing by the street adjacent to the mosque. When they reached in front of the mosque, they stopped and started playing loud music. During Taraweeh, the prayer ends with Salam after every two rak'ahs. When the Imam finished two rak'ahs and said "Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah," the worshippers suddenly became upset. Some people started to stand up to tell the procession to be quiet and move along because they were disturbing the mosque. Syed Imtiazuddin suggested

that they sit for a few minutes and engage in dhikr (remembrance of God), and the procession would continue on its own. As a result, all the worshippers sat quietly.

In a meeting on March 20, 1994, Syed Imtiazuddin said that just three minutes had passed when the noise started to fade, and shortly afterward, it stopped completely. The procession paused in front of the mosque for only three minutes before moving on by itself.

In contrast, if some Muslims had come out onto the street to stop the procession, the people involved might have become more stubborn. This would have increased tensions on both sides, ultimately turning the procession into a matter of pride for both groups. The situation would have kept escalating, eventually resulting in what is known as communal violence. On one side, the Taraweeh prayers in the mosque would have been disrupted, and on the other side, the village would have been thrown into chaos of fire and blood.

A similar contrasting incident occurred in 1980 in Moradabad. During Ramadan, a non-Muslim procession passed in front of the mosque and started playing loud music. The Muslims gathered in the mosque for prayer were unwilling to observe the “three minutes” of patience. They came out and tried to stop the procession. As a result, Moradabad experienced a horrific riot. This shows that there is only a three-minute window between peace and conflict. If you can endure the situation for three minutes, peace can be maintained everywhere, but if you can’t, conflict will erupt everywhere.

## TWO NEWS STORIES

If you look at *The Hindustan Times* or *The Times of India* from June 16, 1993, you'll find two very different types of news stories. On one hand, both newspapers reported that a Delhi businessman, Krishan Kumar (45 years old), was returning from the Punjab National Bank (Keshav Puram) with four lakh forty-five thousand rupees. On his way back, around noon, four young men in a white Maruti car stopped his scooter. They shot him with a revolver, causing him to fall, and then fled with his briefcase.

On the other hand, another story appeared in both newspapers. A Delhi head constable, Prem Pal (Karol Bagh), was patrolling at night when he found a briefcase near the Surya Kiran Hotel. When he opened it, he discovered, among other papers, ninety-seven thousand four hundred rupees in cash. He immediately closed the briefcase and turned it in at the police station exactly as he found it. The station officials are now working to find the briefcase's rightful owner.

This symbolic news story shows that society always has both good and bad people. Therefore, when forming an opinion about any society, one should be very careful. One should not favour one side completely or the other.

Regarding the news mentioned earlier, if someone only considers the incident involving Krishan Kumar and then generalizes it to claim that all Indians are murderers and robbers, that opinion would be incorrect. Similarly, if



someone looks at the incident involving Prem Pal and concludes that all Indians are extremely honest, that would also be inaccurate.

The real truth is that every society consists of both kinds of people. We must live in this world as if we are walking on a path that has both thorns and flowers. For a traveller on such a path, there is only one strategy for a successful journey: to avoid the thorns and enjoy the flowers while continuing toward their destination.

## POSITIVE PLANNING

Syed Mansoor Agha (born 1945) resides in Delhi. His hometown is Meerut. On July 1, 1996, during a meeting, he shared an experience that teaches a valuable lesson.

In 1963-64, he was a student at Meerut College. His Political Science teacher was Mr. K.C. Gupta. When Mr. Gupta began lecturing on the political history of India, it was very disturbing for Mr. Agha. The same was true for his classmate, Mr. Mustainur Rahman. In his lectures, Mr. Gupta presented the history of the partition and political events in a way that blamed all the Muslims. The two students discussed what they should do. They decided that getting angry or upset would not help. Instead, they needed to prepare themselves to intellectually oppose Mr. Gupta's arguments.

According to their plan, both of them began spending their free time in the library. They studied India's political history and the records of the partition. With thorough mental preparation, they started attending classes. Whenever Mr. Gupta presented a distorted interpretation of history, Mr. Agha and his companion would immediately correct him, providing full references and questioning why he said such things. They would point out that a certain book stated it differently and that a particular historian had described it in another way.

This went on for a few days. Finally, one day, Mr. Gupta called both students into his room. He said, "I have a lot of respect for you both. You have corrected me and shown me the light." After that, Mr. Gupta's teaching style completely changed. From then on, he treated both Muslim students with great respect.

This is the best way to solve such problems. Issues are always addressed through constructive methods, not destructive ones.

## HONOUR OR RESPONSIBILITY

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao recently expanded the central cabinet. Among the new ministers is a 29-year-old woman, Selja Chaudhary. She has been appointed as the State Minister in the Ministry of Education,

Government of India. In an interview, responding to a question, she said:

I didn't believe it was true when I heard the Cabinet Secretary's voice on the other end of the line informing me of my new office. I did not exactly jump but I was really very happy. (*The Pioneer*, New Delhi, July 12, 1992, p. 5)

This symbolic incident underscores why our leaders, even after fifty years, haven't been able to turn the country into a land of peace and progress. The reason is that those who took power after independence have prioritized the honour of their positions over the responsibilities that come with them. People with such an attitude can never bring about an era of development and prosperity. Those who focus on the prestige of their office will only use it as a tool for personal advancement. They have no real concern beyond promoting themselves. They are willing to sacrifice the entire country for their own gain, even trading the whole nation for personal benefit.

In contrast, a person who focuses on the responsibilities of a position trembles when they attain it. For them, the position becomes such a burden that it crushes their personality. While the former welcomes the position with laughter, the latter does so with tears of sorrow. For those who see the position as a responsibility, attaining it becomes synonymous with the desolation of their own lives. Yet, it is precisely these individuals who manage to transform the country into a thriving and prosperous garden.

## KEEP A DIARY

One of the events from Prophet Muhammad's migration journey involves Suraqa bin Malik bin Ju'sham. This incident is narrated in some detail by Ibn Hisham. The summary of the event is that when Prophet Muhammad left Makkah for Madinah, the Quraysh of Makkah announced a reward of one hundred camels for anyone who captured him. Driven by the desire for the reward, Suraqa mounted his horse and chased after the Prophet. Just as he was about to catch him, his horse stumbled, and he fell to the ground. From this incident, Suraqa became disheartened. He said to himself, "You have been made safe from me, and this matter is completely clear." After this, Suraqa changed his mind. He called out to Prophet Muhammad and Abu Bakr, saying, "O people, I am Suraqa bin Ju'sham. Give me some time to speak with you. By God, I will not deceive you, nor will you hear anything from me that you dislike." The Prophet instructed Abu Bakr to ask him what he wanted. In response, Suraqa requested a written statement that would serve as a sign for him.

The Prophet Muhammad said, "Write it for him, O Abu Bakr." Suraqa recounts that afterward, Abu Bakr wrote a statement on either a bone, a piece of paper, or a shard, and threw it toward him. Suraqa picked it up, placed it in his quiver, and then returned. (*Seerah Ibn Hisham*, Vol. 2, p. 103).

In today's era, this incident shows that carrying a pen and paper with you, both when traveling and at home, is

a Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. In modern times, the easiest way to follow this practice is to always bring a pocket diary and a pen. Use them to note important daily information. Keeping a diary is a very useful habit and is also a Sunnah of the Prophet.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS

According to a 1999 survey, the wealthiest person in India that year was a Muslim from Bangalore named Azim Hashim Premji. That year, his net worth was 176 billion rupees. This suggests that opportunities for progress in today's world is limitless. It is even possible for someone from a minority community to succeed and surpass those from the majority community. (*Times of India*, June 27, 1999)

At the 37th convocation ceremony of the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology (Bombay), Mr. Azim Hashim Premji shared his experiences in his graduation address. It becomes clear that Azim Hashim's success results from 25 years of continuous hard work. For a long time, he dedicated his abilities fully to his business. On the other hand, he repeatedly traveled across the country to recruit highly skilled young people, building an excellent team through their efforts. He learned from his own experiences as well as from others. He states that the greatest secret to success is never-ending hard work. Through long-term planned efforts, he achieved his current success. Azim

Hashim said, “The future is not what happens to you, but what you make of it.”

In this world, anyone can reach the same level of achievement as others. The only requirement is to take the necessary steps toward the success they want.

What are those actions? They include having a clear vision of the goal, a firm determination to achieve it, dedicating all one’s abilities to it, making a united effort through capable individuals, drawing new courage from every challenge, and continuously increasing one’s knowledge. These are the principles of success in this world. And for anyone who fully embraces these principles, progress becomes as certain as the sunrise after dusk.

## KNOW THE FUTURE

John Bate was a British merchant in the 17th century. In 1606, he imported some currants. When taxes were imposed on his goods upon entering the country, he refused to pay the tax. He argued that it was a royal tax issued solely by King James I (1566-1625) through his authority, without the support of any law enacted by Parliament. To address royal financial issues, King James I had implemented such taxes.

The lower court judge upheld the validity of the tax, citing the King’s absolute power. John Bate then appealed to the High Court. At that time, Sir Edward Coke was the Chief Justice of the High Court. After reviewing the case, he

ruled in favour of John Bate, stating that the King did not have the authority to impose any tax on his own without Parliament's consent.

King James was furious about this decision. Using his royal prerogative, he removed Justice Coke from his judicial position and reinstated the royal tax law through his decree. (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 3, pp. 240-14)

Almost four hundred years have passed since this incident. Today, the situation has completely changed. It is universally accepted in the UK and other countries that Parliament is the supreme legal authority. Neither the king nor any other personality is above it; all are subject to its authority.

In the present world, everyone is speaking words that will become meaningless in the future. People are engaging in actions that will hold no value in the life after death. The successful person is the one whose words and actions have significance in the hereafter, while the unsuccessful person is the one whose words and actions become insignificant in the afterlife.

## THE SUCCESSFUL FORMULA

Dr. Ahmed Sultan of Bangalore was a unique individual. He was part of the family of Tipu Sultan. However, unlike his ancestors, his belief was that love is the greatest weapon. He passed away on December 13, 1999, at an age of approximately sixty years:

Whenever he visited Delhi, he would meet me and share instructive examples of his “successful formula.” Once, his son went out in the car at night. When he returned at eleven o’clock, he parked the car outside and hurriedly entered the house, quickly going to his room. Shortly after, there was a knock at the door. Dr. Ahmed Sultan opened the door to find two young Hindu men standing outside. They angrily said that his son had hit their scooter and then ran away. Instead of responding defensively, Dr. Sultan gently invited them in, saying that they could discuss the matter inside.

The two men came inside, and Dr. Sultan seated them at a table and said, “It’s cold this season. Let’s have some tea first, then we’ll talk.” A little while later, their anger had dissipated, and they left happily.

Once a young Hindu man came to him, crying and saying, “I am facing a major problem. Please help me solve it.” He explained that he had made a mistake, and as a result, his father had thrown him out of the house. Six months had passed, and his father still hadn’t forgiven him. Dr. Sultan advised, “Do not try to explain yourself to him. Quietly go to your father, place your head at his feet, and say, ‘Father, please forgive me for my mistake.’”

The young man followed this advice. When he got home, his father scolded him. Without replying, the son fell at his father’s feet. This act stirred the father’s paternal feelings. He lifted his son up and hugged him. In a few minutes, all conflicts were resolved.



Dr. Sultan visited a city where the local Muslims told him that soon, a procession by dedicated Hindus was to take place. They had heard that these Hindus were making extensive preparations and planned to march through the Muslim neighbourhood. Dr. Sultan said, "There is no need to worry. Follow my advice, and there will be no riot here." He suggested, "On the day of the procession, buy two dozen garlands from the market. When their procession reaches your mosque, come out with the garlands and say to the Hindus leading the procession, 'We welcome you,' and then place a garland around each of their necks." The Muslims did exactly as advised. As a result, the day that could have witnessed Hindu-Muslim clashes turned into a day of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Once, while walking on the road near his home in Bangalore, Dr. Sultan was hit by a car driven by a Hindu. Dr. Sultan fell to the ground, sustaining injuries in several places. The Hindu man stopped his car, approached Dr. Sultan, and said, "Please get into my car, and I will take you to the hospital." Dr. Sultan replied, "You must leave immediately. This is a Muslim area. If the Muslims see you here, they will not let you go without harm." Insisting firmly, Dr. Sultan sent the man away. From that day on, the Hindu man became Dr. Sultan's lifelong friend.

Dr. Sultan held no hatred for anyone. He saw everyone through love and affection. This is why he succeeded in using the successful approach mentioned earlier. In this world, love is the most powerful weapon, but the ignorant wrongly believe that hatred is the strongest.

## AN EXAMPLE

This likely happened in 1981. A young Muslim man met me in Delhi and began to cry as he shared his story. He was educated and had a good job, but for some reason, he lost it. This incident left him so despondent that he confessed to me that sometimes he thought of committing suicide. I told him there was no reason to despair. He was still young, and Insha'Allah, he would work for many more years. So why should he worry? I asked him for his diary and wrote this sentence in it: "A gardener sometimes uproots a plant from its place only to replant it in a better spot."

Then I said, "Go to one of the Gulf countries and try to find work there." He went to an Arab country and returned after a few days, saying that he couldn't find a job. I told him that efforts are not made just once but repeatedly. On my insistence, he went again. This time, he found a good job there. He has been there for almost twenty years now and is very successful.

Numerous incidents teach us that success comes after effort. However, effort isn't a one-time act; it's an ongoing process. The act of striving should continue not only after failure but also after success. Additionally, effort must align with the intended goal. For example, when a doctor runs a clinic, it's crucial that people don't see him as being solely interested in money, with no concern for patients' recovery.



## CHAPTER FOUR

# THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

*The growth of a seed into a tree is not left to chance.  
Likewise, a person's success is not accidental but the  
natural outcome of following certain principles.*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE

**A**mong all the riches of the world, the greatest wealth is knowledge. There is no greater wealth in this world than knowledge. A thinker has said:

“Learning makes a man superman.”

That is, knowledge can transform an ordinary person into an extraordinary one. The difference between animals and humans is that animals have limited information. It is not possible for an animal to increase its knowledge. In contrast, the defining trait of humans is their ability to continually expand their knowledge. The capacity of the human brain in this regard is unlimited. That is why a person continues to increase their knowledge throughout their life. The mind has no limits, and therefore, the increase in knowledge has no bounds.

In the development of the human personality, knowledge plays the most important role. It is, in fact, knowledge that transforms an ordinary person into a great one, that makes an average individual extraordinary.

Knowledge allows a person to expand their personality. They can learn about history by reading books. Through study, they become aware of global events. Knowledge

helps analyze information and uncover new truths. They can learn lessons from the past and present to predict the future. By understanding the thoughts of people worldwide, they can move forward in history.

Knowledge elevates a person from animalistic existence to true humanity. It allows individuals to gain intellectual nourishment from the entire world, helping them better shape their lives. With knowledge, a person can plan their life more effectively and successfully. Without knowledge, everyone is an incomplete human, but with knowledge, everyone becomes a complete human.

## LOVE CONQUERS ALL

When you stand in front of a human statue and speak harsh words or words of love, it will not react in either case. It won't get angry at your harshness nor show joy at your kindness. But a living person is different. They get angry at harsh words and become gentle when they hear sweet words.

Most events in social life reflect this human trait. When you speak harshly to someone, they become your enemy and start planning revenge against you. However, if you speak to the same person with love, they become your friend. One type of speech drives people away from you, while another type brings them closer.

This is the most tried-and-true formula for a successful

social life. If you want to live an honourable life in society, and if you want people to support you instead of becoming obstacles, then adopt just one principle in your life: approach everyone with gentleness and love.

The principle that it is disastrous to follow is: “Be kind to those who are kind and harsh to those who are harsh.” In contrast, the correct principle is: “Be kind to those who are kind and also to those who are harsh.” If someone becomes upset with you for any reason, do not respond with anger. Instead, overlook their bad behaviour and treat them well. Respond to their bitter words with sweet ones. Even if they harm you, strive to benefit them. You will then see that the person who appeared to be your enemy will become your close friend.

## PRUDENT STRATEGY

Merchants don't just start a business and then sit back, assuming it's now others' responsibility to come and buy whatever they wish. Instead, they take additional steps to promote their trade, continuously working to develop and expand it.

One common approach is selling products at a discounted rate. For example, a person might start a biweekly magazine priced at ten rupees per issue, but for a limited time, he will offer it for only two rupees. This reduced price is known as an introductory offer. Similarly, when

someone opens a store, he may initially sell an item worth one hundred rupees for just seventy-five. This is known as a launch discount.

This principle is not limited to commerce; it applies to all collective matters. Whenever you want to build relationships, influence a group, or bring others closer, you must follow the same approach. In this world, you can only earn a place among people by making concessions.

In India, for various historical and non-historical reasons, relations between Hindus and Muslims have become strained, and Muslims have borne the brunt of this tension. The only practical way to improve relations between the two communities is for Muslims to take the initiative—using the same approach that, in business, is called an introductory price or an inaugural discount.

This isn't about weakness or submission; it's about wise strategy. In personal dealings, everyone naturally uses this approach. What we need now is to apply the same wisdom to community matters. No other method can solve the current problem.

## MORNING AFTER DARKNESS

One person said, "The evening has come." Another replied, "Say instead: morning is on its way." If you only see the present, you might notice nothing but darkness. But if you



look with the eye of the future, you'll catch the light of dawn rising on the horizon.

Most people focus on today. When their present feels bleak, they assume that life has nothing good left to offer. But true wisdom is looking toward tomorrow. Experience shows that the future often brings opportunities no one has even imagined.

The earth keeps turning nonstop. Evening comes again and again, and morning rises just as surely. Those who only see what is nearby, when faced with evening, will say, "The twilight of life has arrived." But those who look farther claim, "Do not see evening as the end—see it as the start of a new dawn."

In life, every hardship is actually a prelude to new ease. It signals renewal. A person should not give in to despair but should awaken their mind, set their thoughts in motion, and keep moving forward.

What a person gains in this world is small compared to what still remains. Even after losing something minor, the opportunity to gain something much greater still exists. One may lament the loss of a grain of sand, forgetting that an entire mountain still stands as a challenge to his resolve. He may grieve over the loss of a single drop, forgetting that the vast ocean of God's creation is still there, waiting for renewed effort.

In this world, no loss is permanent. After every setback, a new opportunity for success always exists. The wise are those who let go of what is gone and focus on what is still to come.

## IGNORANCE AND WISDOM

The ignorant person said, “I have ruined my past and present.” The wise man replied, “But the future is still intact.” A person’s life doesn’t end with just the past and present. The future is a vital part of life. So, why mourn what’s lost from the past and present when the future remains entirely in your control?

A person might regret what has passed, but the future still lies ahead. If someone doesn’t let their emotions be overwhelmed by the bitterness of the past but instead focuses that energy on the future, they might not only recover what was lost but also potentially gain even more.

The past is gone, and the present is slipping away. The only thing left is the future. So, why mourn the days that are gone or the moments that are passing? Focus your energy on the days still in your grasp. This is not only possible but also the smart choice.

The ignorant person always looks backward, while the wise person looks forward. The ignorant only knows what has already happened, but the wise knows what could still occur. Don’t be ignorant—strive to have your name listed among the wise.

When someone has the choice to be wise and the option to stay ignorant, why choose ignorance? Why remain in darkness when the doors to light are wide open?

Life is a continuous journey, moving from the past to the present and then to the future. A person who remains

stuck in the past or present essentially denies the true nature of life. And one who denies reality, in effect, denies themselves. For such a person, changing reality becomes impossible.

## NO FAILURE

A unique aspect of the prophetic vision is that it perceives a “no” as a potential “yes.” This is based on the divine design of the world, where nothing is ultimately insurmountable. Every difficulty inherently carries ease within it. This reality of life is articulated in the Quran with the words: “So, verily, with hardship comes ease, verily, with hardship comes ease” (94:5-6).

The biographer of the Prophet, Ibn Ishaq, states that in the eighth year of Hijra, while traveling from Makkah to Taif, the Prophet of Islam went through a narrow and challenging mountain pass. He inquired about the name of this path. The people said, “*Al-Dhayyiqah*” (Difficult). The Prophet replied, “No, rather its name is *Al-Yusra*” (Easy). (*Seerah Ibn Hisham*, vol. 2, p. 482)

This incident demonstrates the prophetic way of thinking. The Prophet sees everything in the world through God’s perspective. That is why even difficulties seem like ease to him, because God created the world with the idea that ease always goes hand in hand with hardship.

The study of Prophet Muhammad’s life shows that he faced

severe hardships in his homeland. Nevertheless, he achieved the greatest success in the world. This is an undeniable fact.

The Quran states that in the life of the Messenger, there is a good example for you (33:21). This example or model is not limited to a specific aspect but covers every part of life. Just as he demonstrated the methods of prayer and pilgrimage through his actions, he also showed how to face challenges and turn difficulties into ease.

The Prophet Muhammad set a powerful example of possibility in the modern world through his actions. He achieved his greatest success in very difficult situations, even turning enemies into allies. He brought people from opposing sides into his own ranks. Despite facing extremely tough conditions in his environment, he used his wisdom to completely turn those circumstances to his advantage.

## CONQUERING ONESELF

Edmund Hillary, born on July 2, 1919, in Auckland, New Zealand, showed an early interest in mountaineering. He started by climbing mountains in his own country and later, in 1951, attempted along with a team to scale the heights of Mount Everest, a 29,028 foot high peak in Nepal. This attempt was not successful. Then, for the second time in 1953 he again set out to climb it with a British team. His guide in this venture was a Nepali, Tenzing Norway. Reaching the summit of Mount Everest on May 29, 1953, he became the first person to set foot on the highest point of the globe. He

immediately became known all over the world, and received a knighthood on July 16 of the same year.

He subsequently wrote a book on his mountaineering exploit, published in 1955 under the title of *High Adventure*. One of the lessons of this book is that, “it is not the mountain we conquer but ourselves.”

This sounds very simple, but it is a remark of great profundity. It would be true to say that every victory in this world is the result of conquering one’s own self. Each conquest necessarily entails a hard struggle. But, first and foremost, the aspirant to success must prove himself equal to that initial struggle, then he must show his unflagging determination to reach his ultimate goal. Only then will the world acclaim him as a conqueror.

Be it mountaineering or any other exploit, man has first to pass the test of a hard struggle. He must then prove that he is capable of exercising patience and restraint. The day a man furnishes proof of this ability, is the day that he will stand victorious, for all the world to see, on the highest pinnacle of success.

## BUSINESS ACUMEN

A Muslim man in Delhi is regarded as a successful motor mechanic. The secret to his success can be learned from one of his experiences:

In 1982, the news spread that the Maruti car, manufactured by the Japanese company Suzuki, would soon be available

in the market. This Muslim man immediately realized that once the Maruti cars started running on Indian roads, the need for their servicing and repairs would also begin. At that time, anyone who knew how to work on these cars would certainly be very successful.

The Muslim man knew that Suzuki in Japan had been making and selling the same car in Pakistan for the past ten years. Thousands of these cars were on Pakistani roads. So, he decided to go to Pakistan to learn the trade. He traveled from Delhi to Karachi and stayed there for two months, learning how to repair and service Suzuki cars. Then he returned to Delhi.

When the Indian-made Maruti cars started running on Indian roads, he had already gained the necessary skills. As a result, he began working on Maruti cars. Customers valued his work, and he earned a good amount of money by servicing Maruti cars.

If you think about it, you'll see that the success of the mentioned Muslim man depended on three things: awareness, foresight, and action. He knew that Suzuki company cars were in use in Pakistan. Then, he forecasted that soon the servicing and repairs for these cars would begin in India. Finally, he had the courage to take the necessary steps to seize this opportunity.

These qualities define commercial acumen. Someone with this skill is likely to succeed in the world. Success is a fifty-fifty split; it relies fifty percent on opportunities and fifty percent on the ability to seize those opportunities.

## UNNECESSARY CONFRONTATION

Mr. Albert Hourani (1915–1993) was a prominent Lebanese-British historian specializing in Middle Eastern studies, best known for his influential book, *“A History of the Arab Peoples.”* He argues that the optimal political approach for Arab countries is secularism. According to him, a nation is more likely to achieve progress when religion and politics remain distinct. In his words:

“The separation of religion from political life seemed to be a condition of successful national life in the modern world.”

In modern times, the enlightened class argues that religion should be kept within the private sphere. They believe that separating religion and politics is essential for creating a peaceful society. In contrast, contemporary Islamic supporters strongly oppose this view, asserting that religion and politics are inseparable. They claim that the two are interconnected and cannot be separated.

This unnecessary debate stems from dichotomous thinking. These individuals see only two options: religion with politics or religion without politics. As a result, they view each other as foes and start fighting. However, there is a third view, which relates to gradualism. This approach involves practically accepting the sphere in which the current system allows religion to operate without debate and using it as a starting point to begin one’s work intellectually.

The simple solution to this conflict is for the Islamist group to accept what the secular group defines as a clear separation and practical division. Even within this framework, the Islamic group can continue to peacefully promote its ideas, a freedom it already fully enjoys. In such a situation, there is no cause for concern.

## CONSCIOUSNESS, NOT A SYSTEM

In today's era, Japan's remarkable development has become an accepted fact. Japan didn't reach this level of progress through protests, but by raising awareness among its people. An expert on Japanese affairs, Robert Hayes, has written that Japan has made quality a core part of how its individuals think. He expressed this idea in these words:

“You don't get quality into a product by inspection, you have to build it in.” (*Hindustan Times*, December 28, 1986, page 9)

That is, you cannot achieve quality production solely through the inspectors' examinations. You must instill a sense of quality in every worker.

After World War II, considering what America had done to Japan, America was seen as Japan's enemy number one. When Japan started its post-war rebuilding, the first step was to rid its people of negative thinking. They interacted with Americans, rising above feelings of hatred and



revenge. As a result, Japan avoided wasting its energy on unnecessary negative actions. By overcoming this negative mindset, Japan effectively turned its enemy into a source of strength.

America's Bell Laboratories were the first to invent the transistor. If the Japanese had harboured feelings of hatred against America, they would not have been able to learn from them. However, because of their positive mindset, they quickly adopted this invention. Before Bell Laboratories could produce transistors in large quantities, the Japanese had already manufactured them on a massive scale, capturing the global market. Similarly, fax technology was discovered in America, but Japan was the first to commercially benefit from it.

## THE HIGHEST GOAL

A team from an Arab country arrived in Mumbai and stayed at a hotel. They needed to hire employees for their country, so they placed an advertisement in English newspapers. A well-educated young man from Delhi saw the ad and sent his documents to them. In response, he received an interview invitation from Mumbai.

The young man headed to the railway station in a rickshaw, accompanied by a friend who was seeing him off. Along the way, a group of unruly boys were playing in the street.

As the rickshaw passed by, one of the boys yelled rude words at them, and another threw a stone. This angered the young man's friend. He wanted to stop the rickshaw, get out, and confront the boys. But the young man grabbed his hand, made him sit down, and said, "Let it go; we don't have time for this."

The young man had a clear goal. He wanted to reach the station on time, catch the train, go to Mumbai for the interview, and then earn ten thousand rupees a month in an Arab country. This goal made the insults and stones thrown at him seem trivial. He ignored them and kept going.

This is the same attitude Muslims should adopt on a larger scale. Muslims are those who have made spreading the message of truth their purpose. The high value of their mission makes everything else seem trivial. They hear harsh words, and stones are thrown at them, but they pay no attention to these things. They keep moving forward, saying, "We don't have time for such petty matters."

The young man's goal was to earn ten thousand rupees a month, but for a believer and a preacher, the goal is much higher—it is Paradise. For them, God's promise is that anyone who spreads His message and endures any hardship or harm for His sake will be rewarded with eternal Paradise in the Hereafter. They understand that patience is the price of Paradise. So how will they gain entry into Paradise in the Hereafter if they do not remain patient in the face of people's harm?

Turning away from worldly distractions leads to success in this life and the Hereafter.

## TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE

One type of person speaks little but accomplishes a lot. The other speaks extensively but does very little. The first is genuine, while the second, although in human form, has a non-human personality in its human-like shape.

During the Emergency in India (1975-77), Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed was the President. A Muslim man from Uttar Pradesh approached him and said, "The police have arrested my brother under the MISA law and imprisoned him, although he is completely innocent." Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed noted the brother's name and address and sent the man away. He thought that Fakhruddin Sahib had not paid much attention to his plea. However, when the man traveled by train and returned home, his brother had been released and was back home.

The story was that after sending the man off, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed instructed his secretary to call the collector of a specific district and inform him that a person with this name was in his jail, and the President had inquired about his well-being. When the collector heard this, he became frightened. He thought the person he had jailed was an important figure, which is why the President was asking about his well-being. So, he immediately had him released from jail.

A gentleman from Delhi once told me, "I have connections in English newspapers. I can help Muslim youths find positions there. But, unfortunately, they don't seem interested."

Later, I met a young Muslim man who had completed his M.A. in English and was also hardworking. I sent him to the aforementioned gentleman. The man wrote a letter for him, without naming the addressee, stating:

“I am not personally acquainted with him. You may take his résumé and assess him according to your own test.”

Needless to say, the young man did not make use of this letter.

In life, what you do matters more than what you say. Being quiet and action-oriented makes a person valuable. Conversely, talking a lot and doing little makes a person worthless, both in the eyes of others and in the eyes of God.

## UNCONSCIOUS DISCOVERY

Mahir ul Qadri (1906-1978) was the editor of the Urdu magazine *Faran* (Karachi) and also a famous poet. One of his verses:

*Pehle har shay ko hum awaaz kiya jata hai*

*Phir kahin naghma ka aaghaz kiya jata hai*

First, everything is harmonized;

only then does the melody start.

This verse conveys an important truth about life: preparation is necessary before any action. Without creating favourable

conditions, no effective action can be taken. In social life, to bring about any event, it is essential to first align various social factors in its favour. A melody initiated without harmonizing the environment will practically be meaningless noise, failing to become a song that captivates hearts.

However, it seems that for Mahir ul Qadri, this was just a poetic point and not a deliberate discovery. This is clear from the fact that he went against this principle in his own life. After Pakistan was created, Maulana Abul A'la Maududi launched an unsuccessful campaign for the "Demand for Islamic System" without establishing the necessary social conditions. It was as if he started the melody without matching the elements. Yet, Mahir ul Qadri fully supported Maulana Maududi in this pointless campaign, even though his earlier verse suggested he should have criticized Maududi's approach.

Most people say nice things like they do in "poetry recitals," but they can't turn them into real actions. This is because those statements aren't their intellectual discoveries. They say these words appropriately for the situation, but they aren't part of their thought process. These aren't their well-thought-out opinions that they can't easily change.

Getting an idea as a conscious thought is one thing, but verbally expressing it in speech or writing is a completely different matter. A truth becomes part of a person's mind only when they consciously understand it. And a truth is reflected in a person's actions only when they have consciously grasped it.

## A PROVERB

There is a Japanese proverb that translates into English as:

“Chase one rabbit, and you will get it.”

If you try to catch two rabbits at the same time, what will happen? One rabbit will run east and the other will run west. You might run east to catch one and then west to catch the other. The result is that both rabbits will run far away, and you won't be able to catch either. In contrast, if you chase just one rabbit, all your energy will be focused on that one, making it easier to catch.

This issue isn't just about the “rabbit”; it applies to everything. In life, it's common for a person to see many things that seem desirable. They start wanting each one. But in trying to get many things, they often end up losing even the one they could have had. If they focused all their attention on just one, they would almost certainly succeed in getting it.

An example of this is the Kashmir issue. The partition of India and Pakistan was based on population demographics. According to this, Kashmir should have been part of Pakistan, since the majority of its population was Muslim. However, why did Kashmir not become part of Pakistan? The primary responsibility for this rests with Pakistani leaders. In 1947, when the Indian subcontinent was divided, Pakistani leaders aimed to seize both Hyderabad and Kashmir—Hyderabad because its ruler was Muslim, and Kashmir because most of its population was Muslim.

They wanted to apply the logic of the ruler being

Muslim in Hyderabad's case and the logic of the majority Muslim population in Kashmir. This was like chasing two rabbits at once, and for those who try to chase two rabbits simultaneously, it's doomed that they won't catch even one.

## A HUNDRED YEARS

A hundred-year journey is never achieved just by writing the number one hundred on a paper calendar. Those who are behind in reality can't catch up by using grand words. To move forward, one must rely on the facts.

The Earth completes a hundred-year cycle by revolving around the Sun a hundred times in its long orbit. The same is true for humans. If a person wants to reach a certain distant goal, they must travel toward it for a long time. Only then can they reach their desired destination.

If someone wants to attain a high position in society, they must first gather all the necessary resources through diligent effort. Only then can they truly achieve high status. Similarly, if a nation aims to become developed, it must go through a phase of preparation first. Without completing the essential stages of preparation, it cannot become a developed nation.

Progress and success always stem from preparation. Preparation comes first, and its results follow. If you want to achieve results without preparing, it's impossible in

the present world. You can't start the journey of life with results; it always begins with preparation, or it will never start at all.

Why do people feel envious when they see someone else's progress? It's because they want to reach the same results without putting in the preparation. When they don't succeed, they become jealous of the other person. However, if they had prepared as the other person did, they would likely achieve the same results.

If you want to cover a journey of a hundred years, you must advance one day at a time. On paper, you can write any word you like, but to shape the world of reality according to your preferences, there is no other way but through genuine effort.

## THE VIRTUE OF PATIENCE

What is patience? Patience is the ability to control oneself during moments of strong emotion or provocation. It involves holding back one's feelings before taking any retaliatory action, considering what the right reaction is at that time and what action would be more effective.

Sometimes, patience simply means holding back one's emotions. Other times, it involves avoiding any retaliatory action. And in some instances, patience is about taking action, but making sure it is a well-thought-out, deliberate move rather than just an emotional reaction.



A question may come up: if an adversary harms someone, should they endure it patiently or try to counter it?

The answer is that patience does not mean enduring harm unnecessarily. Patience means that when an unfavourable situation arises, you calmly assess whether your retaliatory action will lead to a positive outcome or just increase your harm. Patience is about protecting yourself from further damage, not about risking yourself needlessly.

Patience can mean either taking action or holding back. The situation decides which type of patience is needed at any moment.

The difference between patience and impatience is that an impatient person jumps into the storm of circumstances without thinking about the consequences. A patient person, on the other hand, calmly evaluates the situation when it happens, talks with others, and then makes a move based on careful decision-making to ensure it is as effective as possible.

Patience is a strategic approach, while impatience is acting impulsively based on the immediate situation, without regard to wisdom or foresight.

## NO ILL WILL

No one has enough power to hurt someone else without first hurting themselves—every act of evil starts as an evil within oneself before it can impact others.

If you want to obstruct someone's progress, you first need to ignite the fire of envy within yourself. Only after sparking envy can you begin to scheme against another's success. If you aim to harm someone, you must first turn your own heart into a place of destruction. Only then can you direct your destructive plans at someone.

The worst evil in this world is wishing harm on another because even if you don't succeed in hurting them, you end up hurting yourself. Destroying someone else is beyond anyone's power. However, when a person schemes against another's downfall, they undoubtedly risk their own ruin.

If someone tries to harm another person, they cannot do it without first filling their mind with negative thoughts about them. They begin to plan hurtful actions and move in a negative direction. But all of this only destroys their own peace and well-being. In trying to harm someone else, they actually harm themselves.

If you succeed in your actions against someone else, you will still suffer significant losses of your own time, energy, and resources. In trying to hurt another, you also end up hurting yourself. What good is there in such actions?

Wishing harm on others is not only an ill-wish for them; it's also an ill-wish for yourself. A person should strive to be their own well-wisher if they cannot be a well-wisher for others. If you're not willing to give to others, at least don't deprive yourself. If you don't want to live for others, then at least live for yourself.

## THE MATTER OF LIFE

In the marketplace, everything has its price. The principle of the marketplace can be summarized in one phrase: “You get as much as you give.” No less, no more. The same rule also applies to human life. Someone wisely said, “Give the world the best you have, and the best will come back to you.”

If you are a well-wisher of people, then people will be well-wishers of you. If you speak kindly to others, you will receive kind words in return. If you become a person who loves others, then you will be surrounded by love.

This world is a place of give-and-take. Here, a person gets only what they have given to others. People demonstrate to others exactly what they have shown themselves to be.

This means that creating a good environment to live in is within a person’s own control. If you become a friend to others, you will find yourself surrounded by friends. If you tolerate the unpleasant things from others, you will find neighbours around you who will tolerate your unpleasant behaviours. If you help others, then you will find a world where everyone is busy helping you.

If you know how to live like a flower, you will naturally create a flower bed around you. But if you carry thorns with you, the world you find yourself living in will be nothing but a tangle of thorns and brambles.

## THE HUMAN CHARACTER

Ibn Abidin al-Shami (1784–1836), a prominent religious scholar, wrote that no one can attain leadership unless they have some admirers who praise them and some enemies who criticize them. (*Hashiyat Ibn Abidin*, Vol. 1, p. 24.)

The truth is that the world is a place of testing. Every event that happens here naturally involves learning and growth. The same is true for someone who rises to a leadership role. When a genuine person, by God’s grace, steps into leadership, they become a test of character for the entire society.

Those who seek the truth, who have a deep desire to find truth, and who see truth as the highest priority—even above themselves—are free from psychological burdens. They accept the emerging leader as the voice of their hearts. Among these people, the leader becomes a beloved figure. They sincerely recognize him, pray for him, and dedicate their best words and feelings to him.

In contrast, the situation is different for those who live in their own arrogance, who do not seek the truth but rather follow their own desires. When such people see someone rising, they immediately fall into jealousy. They begin to feel that the rise of this person is equivalent to their own decline. These people burn with the fire of envy. They become committed to defaming the emerging individual. They hurl false accusations against him. They are ready to stoop to any low act within their power to bring him down. Every person of leadership is a test. In this test, one type of people succeed, while the other type fails.

## TWO APPROACHES

The only secret to success in this world is to start with what is possible, while the biggest cause of failure is putting your strength and energy into chasing the impossible. The entire history of human success and failure can be explained by these two principles.

In other words, one could say that a violent approach leads a person toward destruction, while a peaceful approach leads to success. A violent approach is always caused by impatience. In contrast, a peaceful approach is adopted by those who can demonstrate patience and tolerance during contentious matters. The power of peace is the greatest power, and patience allows a person to effectively harness this power for success.

Most people often fail to distinguish between what they should do and what they can do. Because of their immature awareness, they chase after their desires, thinking they are making progress toward their goals. Eventually, they realize they have only wasted their time. Even when they use their time and energy fully, they end up with nothing to show for it.

Humans are naturally beings who seek standards. Everyone has a vision of an ideal world in their mind. However, the unavoidable truth is that in this world full of challenges, no one can fully reach their perfect vision. In reality, the only thing achievable is for a person to be willing to accept less

than their ideal standards. They should let go of the idea of what should be and focus on what can realistically be achieved as their goal.

When you aim to achieve something impossible, frustration and anger will come up inside you. But when you work toward what is possible, you'll feel confident. Your effort will stay peaceful. In the first case, your mindset turns negative, while in the second case, your thinking becomes positive. Greater human qualities will grow within you.

## NO REVENGE

Before seeking revenge, remember that revenge can be avenged—this is an important truth of life. Anyone aiming for a successful life must fully accept this reality.

When someone causes you pain, a desire for revenge ignites inside you. You may want to retaliate to soothe the fire in your heart. However, it's important to remember that if someone hurting you has triggered a desire for revenge, won't the same desire for revenge arise in the person you hurt in return?

This cycle of vengeance causes more harm and unrest. To break free from it, one must show restraint and wisdom. Instead of aiming for retaliation, choose forgiveness and peace. Doing so not only protects you from more harm but also helps create a more harmonious and just society.

In life, grasping and practicing this principle is crucial for genuine success and inner peace.

Surely, this is how it will be. After your revenge, they will seek revenge as well. This will start a cycle of evil. You will have to endure one pain after another. Therefore, wisdom lies in adopting the approach of overlooking and ending the matter at the earliest stage.

Taking revenge on someone is not a simple task. You have to use your energy to get back at them. Without investing a lot of time and money, no one can truly take revenge on another person.

Therefore, adopting a forgiving attitude and overlooking offenses not only saves your resources but also breaks the cycle of vengeance, leading to a more peaceful and harmonious life.

Now, even if the person seeking revenge succeeds in their plan, it comes at the expense of losing some of their own assets. Ultimately, what one gains from revenge is only psychological satisfaction, nothing more.

However, if the same amount of time and money is invested in a positive effort (such as a business), it remains preserved in a different form and eventually returns to the individual with additional profit. Using your strength for revenge means losing your strength. Using your strength for a positive task means regaining it with added benefits. In such a case, one should invest their resources in gaining rather than losing.

## RESILIENCE

If, after losing everything, you still hold resilience within you, then remember that you have lost nothing—because resilience is undoubtedly the most valuable possession. In fact, resilience itself is everything in life.

A person's true strength is his resilience. It is from resilience that he generates great ideas. Through resilience, he takes initiative. With resilience, he faces risks. Using resilience, he overcomes challenges. Resilience helps him stay steady through life's ups and downs. Resilience builds noble character, which is the key to achieving progress and success.

A resilient person is someone who can rise above superficial matters, form opinions unaffected by the environment, and face dangers and losses without breaking. They have the strength to sustain themselves, even if everyone abandons them and they are left without material resources.

Lack of resilience is the biggest weakness, while resilience is the greatest strength. If someone loses their resilience, even with ninety-nine possessions, they might ruin themselves over losing just one. But if they can keep their resilience, they will bounce back after losing ninety-nine possessions because they still have one.

A person who lacks resilience falls early, while a resilient person continues to live with strength and purpose. What the unresilient see as a challenge, the resilient turn into a stepping stone. Where the unresilient stop with an excuse,



the resilient find a new way forward. The unresilient see only the dark side of events, while the resilient focus on the bright side.

The history of progress is basically the story of persistent people taking action.

## A BIG HEART

A person with a big heart is always successful, while someone with a small heart is always a failure. In this world, success depends on the size of a person's heart. The principle is simple: the bigger the heart, the greater the success.

To achieve any real success in this world, one must rise above immediate circumstances. One must manage people by rising above their behaviour. One must give to others without worrying about what they have given or not given in return.

Such a character cannot exist without a big heart. That's why, in this world, no great success is ever achieved without a big heart. Whether in one country or another, whether in one era or another, at every place and at every time, this is the one principle that remains true. There are no exceptions to it.

The small-hearted person, on the other hand, constantly complains about others over every minor issue. He gets

caught up in trivial matters that could easily be ignored. Such a person ends up stuck in the middle of the road and cannot reach his ultimate goal.

In contrast, the big-hearted don't get bogged down by minor issues, and keep moving forward successfully. They maintain their determination through all challenges. They aren't discouraged by setbacks. For such individuals, it seems destined that they will reach their goals. They will overcome the low points and ultimately reach the highest peak.

In this world, a person wins through the strength of his heart. In the struggle of life, whoever loses heart also loses the abilities he already has. But the one who keeps his heart full under all circumstances enhances his abilities even more.

The true realm of all success is a person's own heart. Don't focus on the outer world; focus on the world inside your heart. There you will find everything you truly want to achieve.

## YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Everyone has already lost their yesterday; the successful person is who doesn't lose their today. The past is gone. Now, all you have is today. So, why lose today?

Most people regret not making the most of their past day, and in doing so, they end up regretting today. This is sacrificing today for yesterday. It destroys what you have by

focusing on what you didn't have. A wise person is one who prevents themselves from this double loss.

If you've lost your yesterday, don't see it as gone; instead, view it as a source of learning. This way, even your lost investment transforms into a gained asset. Incorporate the value of past experiences into your current resources, and you'll discover that what you lost has come back to you with added worth.

Mourning over the past is like wasting part of your potential. Why make such a mistake? Why start a new day with incomplete potential? Empty your mind of yesterday's sorrow and focus all your strength on your new day's plans. This is the true way to lead a successful life.

You may worry about yesterday as much as you want, but yesterday will never come back. What is gone is gone, and what remains, remains. Forget what is gone and hold on to what remains with all your might. This is the only secret to achieving success in this world. There is no other way to reach success here.

## THE NEXT PARAGRAPH

Life is a long, tedious story. Only the person who consistently focuses on the next paragraph of the story can read it successfully. Every person's life is this kind of story, whether they are small or big, whether they live in ordinary circumstances or in lofty and splendid conditions.

The truth is, life often involves tough experiences. Regrets over missed opportunities, the pain of past events, memories of being mistreated by others, and complaints about one's own flaws and limitations—these can all lead a person's thoughts in a negative direction. When someone is affected by these, their life can become stuck.

In such a situation, wisdom is to look forward rather than backward. One should focus on future days instead of past ones.

Everyone is creating their life's story with words and actions. However, no one knows what future stages will come or where the story will ultimately go. Therefore, it is important to embrace each new stage and keep moving forward, aiming to write the next chapters of the story.

In life, true significance comes not from what one has achieved but from how one has lived. It is possible for a person with a low income to lead a good life, while a wealthy person might end up living poorly. An uneducated person might show more wisdom in their dealings, whereas an educated person might prove to be inept in handling their affairs.

Don't focus on what you're achieving in life. Instead, focus on how you're living your life. The person who knows how to live a good life is the one who has truly succeeded in this world. He is the one who has led himself to the future he was meant to realize.

## PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The real secret to success in this world is to put problems aside for the future and focus on opportunities—there are always problems, but there are also chances to succeed. Only those who ignore the problems and take advantage of the opportunities will succeed.

The solution to problems is not to fight them but to use the opportunities that are available despite the problems. Whenever you face problems, look for the possibilities that still exist despite the challenges and where you can act freely.

Identify those opportunities and focus your efforts on them. If you do this, you'll soon notice that by taking advantage of opportunities, problems begin to resolve themselves. Achieving what is possible also grants you what was previously out of reach.

In life, all significance comes from action, and action can only occur within the realm of possibility; it is never practical to act within the realm of impossibility. When you start to act within the possible realm, it means you're directing your practical efforts where they can be most effective. Such effort naturally produces results.

On the contrary, when you get involved with problems, it means you are putting your practical energy into areas where, despite your efforts, no positive result is possible. Such work is likely to be wasted and fruitless.

Problems themselves are not the main issue; the true focus

should be on opportunities. By directing your attention and effort toward opportunities, you can ultimately gain control over your problems in the future. However, if you stay stuck in problems, you will end up with neither opportunities nor solutions.

## FALLING AND RISING

Not falling is not an achievement. The real achievement is when you fall and then get up again—the person who has never fallen hasn't accomplished anything. The true achiever is someone who falls and then rises to walk once more.

Someone who has never fallen has not truly moved because in this world, everyone who moves will inevitably fall at some point. So, what value is there in never falling? The core of humanity is about moving forward. Humans are made to walk, not to sit still. And when they walk, it is natural that they will encounter falls.

Not falling indicates stagnation, while falling indicates movement and action. One should not be ashamed of falling but should view it as a sign of their vibrant humanity. When they adopt this outlook, they will quickly get up and stand again after falling.

“Not falling is no achievement” means, in other words, that not walking is no achievement. True achievement lies in

rising again after falling—which means that real success is to keep moving forward. The one who stands still will, of course, avoid falling. But those who walk have only one story in this world: they fall again and again, and rise again and again.

When a person falls and then gets up to walk again, it shows that falling has become a source of new courage for them. By falling, they gather new strength for themselves.

Instead of sitting still, keep walking, and after falling, get up and stand again. This is the secret to success in this world. You cannot create a new world for yourself, and therefore, you cannot avoid falling—for the Creator of this world has designed it that way.

## DELAY, NOT FAILURE

Defeat is merely a delay, not failure — it is just a temporary phase for someone; it doesn't define their final outcome. In such cases, there's no reason to be discouraged by defeat.

The journey of life is never easy. Ups and downs are unavoidable. Sometimes, a person experiences a loss or setback for various reasons. But in life, every loss or setback is only temporary. Don't get discouraged by such events. Keep pushing forward. If it doesn't happen today, you will definitely succeed tomorrow.

Loss isn't just a loss, nor is defeat simply defeat. They can also carry some benefit. When someone experiences a loss or defeat, they often gain new insights. Their abilities are reignited. Therefore, gaining new experiences can make up for what was lost.

Initially, when defeat occurs, a person may feel frustrated. But if he keeps trying, new successes will soon bring him so much happiness and satisfaction that he will forget the past. The joy of winning will quickly erase all the sorrows of failure.

A person should always look ahead, focusing on tomorrow instead of today. This makes it easier to handle temporary setbacks. With future victory in mind, they will forget today's defeat. For them, evening is not just a time of day but a sign of the upcoming morning.

Experiencing temporary defeat isn't necessarily a result of your shortcomings; it's part of the natural order. This world is built so that defeat often follows victory, and failure follows success. So, what occurred was meant to happen. In such moments, there's no reason to be discouraged.



## ACCEPTING DEFEAT

Accepting one's defeat means committing to try again and regain what was lost. Facing defeat after a loss isn't weakness; it's the first step on the road back to victory.

If you refuse to accept defeat, you stay stuck at the point of loss, unable to move forward. But the moment you accept it, your journey of renewal begins immediately.

Accepting defeat is recognizing that you have fallen behind in the race. Refusing to accept it, on the other hand, is like pretending you're still ahead. Someone who is actually behind but imagines themselves in front lives only in false illusion. And those who live in illusion can never succeed in this world governed by cause and effect.

Accepting defeat after losing is an act of courage. Refusing to accept it is an act of cowardice. A person should always aim to show bravery and never fall into cowardice.

In life, there are sometimes losses and victories. The truly elevated person is someone who rises above both, forming judgments unaffected by either. Those who demonstrate this higher ability are the ones who reach their destination. Those who fail remain trapped in life's storms and never fulfill their goals.

The person who accepts defeat has, in fact, uncovered the secret of victory within defeat. Outwardly, he may lose for the moment, but inwardly—in the eternal realm of the spirit—he remains a winner. He has not let his practical defeat turn into a defeat of the mind. Conversely, the one who refuses to accept defeat makes it a source of pride. And when pride rules, one mistake inevitably leads to another. Such a person keeps on losing, with no hope of ever winning again.

## BOOSTER ROLE

Abu'l-Qasim Ferdowsi Tusi (c. 940–1020 CE) was one of the greatest Persian poets. Ferdowsi's "*Shahnameh*" is a well-known Persian epic that proudly tells the stories of Iranian heroes like Rostam. Regarding Rostam, Ferdowsi said, 'It is I who have made Rostam the champion, otherwise, he would have been just an ordinary wrestler from a village in Iran':

*Manesh kardeh-am Rustam-e Pahlavan*

*Va gar na liyeh boud dar Sistan*

What Ferdowsi considered as personal pride in his poetry is actually a natural law. Just like in volleyball, where there's a setter and a hitter—the setter's job is to set the ball up, and the hitter's role is to hit the ball forward to keep the game going. Similarly, in the system of life, according to God's plan of creation, one person lifts another and helps push them forward.

This principle is so universal that even prophets are not exempt from it. For example, Prophet Joseph (Yusuf) entered Egypt as a slave and was later imprisoned. Eventually, he rose to the highest position in the Egyptian government. This rise was part of God's plan, but on the surface, it was the King of Egypt who acted as a supporter for him.

The same observation applies to anyone who has achieved a significant position in any field. From this perspective, you can see a supporter behind every notable individual. It is rare to find a person in history who rose without the help of a supporter.

In this situation, the booster should avoid falling into the trap of self-importance. He should not believe that he is the sole reason for someone's advancement. The truth is that if the booster looks at it honestly, he will also see that another booster's help was involved in his own progress. The booster should realize that what he achieved was not solely his own, but it was God who used him to carry out His will.

## WISE STRATEGY

Disputes can only be resolved through wise strategies, not simply by demanding they end. This principle is unquestionably correct. There is no other solution to conflict.

When two human groups coexist, it is natural that they will often encounter differences and disputes. For example, the slogans of one group might upset the other. One group may not show the same sensitivity toward another community's place of worship as the community that considers it sacred. There are different situations where one group might develop grievances against another. The answer to these grievances isn't to complain immediately but to overlook them. The best solution is to practice tolerance and patience in disagreements instead of resorting to conflict and revenge.

We cannot fight against nature, and reacting to differences is like fighting against it. Such differences happen naturally. In these cases, going along with nature is the best solution; fighting it will never fix the issue.

Every problem has a solution, but it only comes through wise strategy. If, when a problem arises, we don't give in to frustration but instead calmly consider the whole situation, seeing the problem as just a problem and not as a matter of reputation or dignity, we will surely find an easy way to solve it.

Whenever a problem occurs, shield yourself from falling into negative emotions. Concentrate your mind solely on developing a strategy. Then, you'll see that the problem is resolved as if it never existed.

## POSITION OF INFLUENCE

A gardener needed to plant a sapling. He dug a hole in the garden and poured a bucket of water into it to soften the soil. After a while, the water had vanished. Upon inspection, he discovered that there was an underground hole through which all the water had drained away.

This principle of nature is demonstrated practically by water. Water did not try to force its way through the hard spot in the hole. Instead, it found a point of penetration within the hole and entered from there.

The same principle of nature also applies to human life. Whenever you aim to accomplish something in society, whether it's a worldly task in a material sense, a religious activity, or a spiritual pursuit, you should first study your environment to find your entry point.

Identify the spot where you can easily make a way for yourself. Starting from that point allows you to create more opportunities later on.

The same principle applies to all human efforts. Every task has a beginning and an end. It's important to understand the difference between them. Starting from the initial point allows one to reach the intended goal. However, if someone tries to begin at the endpoint of a plan, they will go nowhere, no matter how long they keep trying in the name of action—this is the law God has set for this world.

Knowing the endpoint of action is enthusiasm. Knowing the starting point of action is wisdom.

## PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

One principle of nature is caution. Based on this principle, precautionary measures are taken in various areas of life. Often, if these measures are implemented early, potential accidents can be avoided. For example, hernia is a medical condition. When someone develops this condition, it becomes necessary to go to the operating room. However, taking preventive steps for this condition can nearly eliminate its occurrence. One such step is wearing specific underwear. Hernia does not happen suddenly; its early symptoms appear well in advance. If a person begins wearing the specific underwear as soon as the initial symptoms show, they can prevent developing this disease.

In modern times, high-quality underwear has been developed for athletes. These are called athletic supporters. These athletic supporters are highly effective precautionary measures that provide an almost certain guarantee against the disease of hernia.

Similarly, there are precautionary measures to prevent communal disputes. These measures are highly effective in stopping such conflicts. For example, addressing mutual misunderstandings, quickly countering rumours, forming peace committees in every community, adopting a reconciliatory approach instead of confrontation when disagreements occur, treating the opposing party as fellow human beings rather than enemies, and resolving disputes on the principle of “give and take.” When a conflict arises, it is essential to adopt a fraternal rather than hostile approach toward the person or group involved.

The Creator of the present world has set up precautionary measures for every issue. A person should learn these methods and use them to protect themselves from facing adverse situations.

## THE LAW OF LIMITS

If you take a square piece of paper and start folding it, you will only be able to fold it up to eight times. After that, the ninth or tenth fold becomes impossible. This principle applies whether your paper is the size of a

postcard, a daily newspaper, or a very large poster. In every case, your folding will stop at eight folds. It won't go beyond that. This is the Law of Eight, established by nature. No change to it is possible. Similarly, in every area of life, there are limiting laws that restrict activities at a certain point. Even the most powerful person cannot break these limits.

In this world, an atomic bomb can only be dropped once; no one can repeatedly use atomic bombs. People are free to say cruel words, but turning those words into reality isn't possible for them. Someone may demolish a single place of worship, but they can't destroy all places of worship. A person might gain power through negative slogans, but no amount of power is enough to make those slogans historically significant.

This unchangeable law of nature is the greatest guarantee of peace and security for every person in this world. As long as this world exists, this law will inevitably stay in force. It will only stop existing when the world itself ends, and no one remains to speak cruel words that scare people or to create malicious schemes that cause insecurity among them.

This immutable law of nature, in its quiet voice, is saying, "O people, save yourselves from your own injustice, for there is no one outside of you who can target you with your own oppression and corruption."

This very Law of Eight is called the Law of Repulsion (*Daf'*) in the Quran (2:251; 22:40), meaning the law of restraint that forces everything to stay within a set limit.

## STORM WITH WATER

A poet's quatrain captures the essence of life with simple grace. The translation reads:

He asked, "Shall I ride the camel?"

"Yes, ride the camel," was the reply.

"But what about the hump?" he inquired.

"The hump will be there," they said.

He asked, "Shall I enter the river?"

"Yes, enter the river," was the reply.

"But what about the storm?" he asked.

"The storm will be there," they said.

He asked, "Shall I pluck the flower?"

"Yes, pluck the flower," was the reply.

"But what about the thorns?" he questioned.

"The thorns will be there," they said.

In these few lines, the poet briefly depicts the reality of life. This reflects the truth of life in this world. Where there is a camel, there is also a hump. No camel with a smooth back exists here. In the river, there are storms; no river is completely calm and free of turbulence. Similarly, in the garden created by God, if there are beautiful flowers, there are also sharp thorns.

This means that anyone who wants to achieve something in this world must understand from the beginning that the road to success is never direct. Success only happens after overcoming obstacles and difficulties. Someone who



lacks the courage to face problems and challenges shouldn't expect to find success in God's world.

God's world remains as it was created. It is certainly impossible for us to change it. In such a situation, the only way for a person to live and succeed here is to align themselves with the established system of nature. Any other path will only lead to failure rather than success.

## THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SUCCESS

A particular opportunity for success knocks on a person's door only once. Yet in this world, new opportunities to succeed appear every day. But they also pass by every day. And once an opportunity is gone, it never comes back in the same way again.

Success depends on seizing opportunities. When a major opportunity appears, it doesn't last long. So, it's important for someone to recognize it immediately. The person who notices an opportunity early will benefit the most. On the other hand, someone who hesitates to recognize it will miss out on the full rewards.

In life, some moments are essential; missing these moments is a loss that can't be recovered later. Often, people don't realize when these key moments happen. In their carelessness, they let these moments pass by. Later, they understand what they've missed, but by then, there's nothing left to do except regret.

## TEN SAYINGS

Whenever you hear a knock on your door, pay close attention. Who knows, a great opportunity for success might be waiting right outside. Take advantage of each opportunity because once it's gone, it won't come back.

Most people fail simply because they miss their opportunities. They protest against others, but the hard truth is that they did not make use of those opportunities when they had them.

## TEN SAYINGS

I came across a book published in America, written by a successful American businessman. He based this book on his 20 years of business experience. The book highlights two business principles in bold on each page. The author states that top performers have always advanced through positive habits.

*The Book of Excellence: 236 Habits of Effective Salespeople* by Byrd Baggett (First published January 1, 1993)

The author compiled these positive habits into 236 short sentences. After reading the book, I chose ten sentences, which are as follows:

1. A bad attitude cancels all other positive skills.
2. Be as critical of yourself as you are of others.
3. You are not learning anything when you are talking.

4. Excellence is not optional.
5. Take an active, not passive, role in helping your community.
6. Customers love humility.
7. Patience is a virtue. Don't give up.
8. There is no replacement for effort.
9. Success does not come easily. Are you willing to pay the price?
10. Stop, listen, and think before you respond.

These sayings express the natural wisdom that, when embraced, can guarantee a person's success in life. They are the key to achieving success.

## THE CONDITION FOR SUCCESS

Half of success depends on giving your best effort, and the other half is avoiding actions that would make your efforts useless. Therefore, success is about balancing what needs to be done and what should be avoided.

For example, if someone opens a shop in the city and decorates it beautifully, that is the necessary effort in running a shop. However, if they also engage in undesirable actions like cheating in transactions or mistreating customers, their shop will fail. Similarly, a person might study medicine and open a clinic, stocking it with all necessary equipment. But

if their interactions are so poor that every patient leaves unhappy, such a doctor will not succeed. This is because, on the one hand, they did the required work, but on the other hand, they failed to avoid actions they should have stayed away from.

This principle applies to all areas of life. No matter what a person does or what field they are in, it is crucial for them to meet these two conditions. Someone who follows one condition but ignores the other can never succeed in this world of cause and effect.

Most failures in the world come from breaking this principle. Everyone must take positive actions toward their goal while making sure they don't get caught up in unhelpful activities. For example, if a person keeps fighting and arguing while trying to build their life, they will not succeed in reaching their goal.



## CHAPTER FIVE

# THE GUIDE TO LIFE

*It is important for everyone to have a guidebook that offers helpful advice through different stages of life and keeps them from getting lost along the way.*

## THE LAW OF NATURE

Two men passed each other on the road, both riding bicycles. They nearly collided, causing both bikes to stop. This led to an argument that escalated into a fight. Both men got hurt, and instead of going home, they had to visit the doctor.

In this incident, the bicycle collision itself did not injure either of them, but it was the argument and quarrel that followed that caused both of them to get hurt. A wise person once expressed this idea in these words: “Another person does not harm a man as much as he harms himself through his own foolishness.”

Think about this: The summary of all the riots and disturbances in our society is simply this. It starts with a minor incident that, at first, doesn’t cause much damage. But then people get emotional, and the resulting conflict leads to serious harm and destruction.

Life is like a road. In the journey of life, thousands of people run their own races at the same time. Naturally, sometimes one person bumps into another. When this happens, the best action is to be patient and settle the issue immediately. If patience isn’t exercised early on, the situation can worsen, and even if the initial collision didn’t cause much damage, the resulting fight could lead both sides to ruin themselves.

Someone has said, “You cannot eliminate the people you

dislike from the world, but you can make your life pleasant by coexisting with them.” This is a truth supported by all of history. If that’s the case, why push against an impossible obstacle? Why not carve your path in a possible field? Just as you have to live in this world, others do too. The world isn’t for just one person but for everyone. In such a situation, realism means accepting the existence of others just as you want your own existence to be respected. Give others the same rights you desire for yourself. If you adopt this mindset, you’ll see that the seemingly thorny world transforms into a garden full of flowers for you.

When you give others the right to live, you protect your own right to live. If you deny others their rights, society will face such problems that you will also lose your rights. The truth is that being kind to others is ultimately being kind to yourself, and harming others is harming yourself. In this world, giving leads to receiving, and taking leads to losing.

Someone has said that waiting can also be a solution to a problem. However, people often lack the patience to wait. This means you shouldn’t be distressed by current hardships. It’s entirely possible that you’ll gain even more in the future. To illustrate this, consider the following example.

A father had two sons. One worked hard in school, while the other did not put effort into his studies and remained uneducated. As a result, the educated son achieved success and progress, whereas the uneducated son failed to make any significant advancements. Consequently, the educated son gained respect and prominence within the household, while the uneducated son was deprived of respect and esteem in his own home.

This is the story of two biological brothers. Sometimes,



even though two individuals may be brothers and children of the same father, differences can appear between them. These differences happen according to the laws of nature and do not necessarily cause any real harm. In the example mentioned, the brother who achieved great success had children who enjoyed playing and entertainment and did not work hard. However, the children of the less successful brother were motivated by a strong work ethic. The lack of progress their father experienced became a catalyst for them. They started to work diligently day and night. As a result, the situation changed in the next generation. The successful brother's sons, having become negligent, did not accomplish much, while the hardworking sons of the other brother made significant progress, making up for their father's setbacks. Within a single generation, the entire story changed.

One brother received his rewards in the present, while the other received them in the future. Ultimately, they both ended up equal. This is a law of nature in this world. This law applies to individuals as well as to nations. Throughout history, if one nation falls behind another, it should not become discouraged or frustrated. Because what has happened is temporary, not eternal. The cycles of history will continue, and soon the world will see that those who were ahead have fallen back, while those who were behind have moved to the front.

"History is shaped by nature, not by any human," is a very meaningful statement by someone. Whenever a nation finds itself oppressed compared to another, it should understand that what has happened is governed by the laws of nature, not by someone's tyranny. Therefore, one should focus

their thoughts on understanding the laws of nature rather than wasting energy on hatred and revenge against any nation or group.

Do not blame other nations or external forces for your hardships; instead, understand the laws of nature and work to align them in your favour. You have fallen because you were caught in these natural laws, but by understanding and aligning with them, you can stand up again.

## THE MESSAGE OF NATURE

One day last summer, during a short stay in Kashmir, I went for a walk with some Kashmiri friends. We eventually reached a part of the countryside which had wide open spaces all around. We had come to a broad, green valley, surrounded by snow-capped mountains. From various places beneath the snow line, rivulets of water gushed forth like fountains. Pure, clean water could be seen flowing all around us. The burbling, rushing sound of the water, whispered in our ears like the voice of nature itself.

I paused to stand near one such spring. Its water course was about two feet across. Then I noticed that there was a large round stone right in the center of its onrushing waters, when the water reached the point where the stone bulged in its path, it did not attempt to break the stone in order to have a straight path for itself. It simply turned to the right and left of the stone, then flowed quietly onwards. Without any confrontation with the stone, it had carved out its own course.

I remarked to my Kashmiri friends how wonderful it was that such sights were to be seen all over Jammu and Kashmir. It is as if nature is sending out its message through these springs. These natural phenomena voicelessly tell us not to clash with the rock, but simply to flow on either side of it.

The principle of the flowing spring applies to all roads worldwide. Many vehicles travel on these roads at the same time. Each vehicle turns right or left to avoid collisions and find its own path. If these vehicles didn't follow this principle, the road would cease to be a road and would become a massive graveyard.

The lesson from the spring was a turning point in my life. It revealed to me the secret to living. After that, I adopted this approach in my life and started advising others to do the same.

In this world, social life is like a busy road. Everyone driving on it follows the advice announced by the flowing spring. What remains is to apply this method to other parts of life as well. This is the only way to build a successful life and a peaceful society.

Whenever someone encounters an obstacle or sees another person blocking their way, their first instinct is often to remove that obstacle or person. They begin to believe that their journey can't continue until it's cleared.

However, this thinking is flawed. Just as there are thousands of stones in the path of a flowing stream, there are also countless obstacles on life's journey. If the requirement is that all these obstacles must be removed before starting, then the journey will never begin. One obstacle after another will arise, and a person will keep battling these obstacles until their last moment.

In such a situation, the practical approach is to keep moving forward while ignoring the obstacles. When someone views things this way, they'll see that obstacles have limits. Despite these obstacles, open paths are everywhere. If you shift your focus from the obstacles and look around, you'll find a nearby way to keep moving toward your goal.

In this world, a person's choice isn't between a life with or without conflict but between a conflict-free life and one that leads to destruction. Everyone must decide which path to take.

## NATURAL PROTECTION

Mike Wooldridge, the BBC Bureau Chief in New Delhi, visited our office on January 16, 1998, with his TV team. He recorded an interview with me for their English broadcast.

One of his questions was: "The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is generally considered an anti-Muslim party. If the BJP wins the twelfth Indian parliamentary elections to be held in February 1998 and forms the central government, do you see it as a threat to Muslims?" I replied, "Not at all. Any political party that wins an election and comes to power does so only for a few years, and its power is never absolute. We have a formal constitution here. Every government has to operate under this constitution, not independently of it."

They said that the Indian Constitution grants the ruling

party the power to impose an emergency, which Indira Gandhi used in 1975 to declare one, thereby gaining the authority to take arbitrary actions. Similarly, if the BJP comes to power and declares an emergency, they would gain unlimited powers under the same constitution, enabling them to do whatever they want against Muslims.

I replied, “Such a kind of holocaust is not repeatable in human history. You cannot drop an atomic bomb again and again.” This means such a grave event is never repeated. You can drop an atomic bomb only once; it is not possible to drop one repeatedly.

I stated that, based on this principle, I had the courage to declare on December 4, 1992, when the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya was demolished, that no other mosque in this country would be demolished. People regarded the December 6, 1992 incident as a comma. I said that it is not a comma, but a full stop.

And you know that this is exactly what happened. The demolishers had a list of many more mosques they intended to target, but the law of nature erased their list like a wrong letter. It was no longer possible for them to repeat December 6 with any other mosque.

When the Babri Mosque was demolished on December 6, 1992, Shiv Sena leader Mr. Bal Thackeray said he was proud of those who brought it down. However, in newspapers from the same month, Bal Thackeray’s statement appeared stating that neither a mosque nor a temple should be built on the site of the Babri Mosque. Instead, both communities should be given land to build a mosque and a temple in a more confined area, and a national memorial should be built where the Babri Mosque once stood. In this regard,

the Congress party apologized to Muslims, saying that although Congress was in power at the time, they could not save the Babri Mosque. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) also announced that the issue of the temple and mosque is not on its agenda.

The system of this world is designed so that no great evil can last forever. Whenever significant wrongdoing or serious crime occurs, opposing forces start to gather right away. In the end, a situation develops where such evil or oppression can't happen again.

If someone tells you they will bring the sky down on your head, you should not argue with them. Instead, stay silent, knowing that it's beyond their power to do so. Similarly, if a political party or leader uses lofty words against you, consider whether such things are even possible before taking action. If it's not possible, then there's no need to worry. No one in this world has the power to turn their words into reality. Only things that match the facts become reality, not just spoken words.

## INDIRECT BENEFIT

If you plant lentils in your field, you will get both an immediate and a long-term benefit. The immediate benefit is that you will harvest a crop of lentils. The long-term benefit is that bacteria will gather on the roots of the lentil plants, and these bacteria will take nitrogen from the air and add it to the soil. This way, your field will gain nitrogen fertilizer.

Similarly, every action has both direct and indirect benefits. People usually only recognize the direct benefits, while the indirect benefits stay hidden from their view. Direct benefits can be observed with the naked eye, but to perceive the indirect benefits, one needs intelligence and insight. That's why people often only notice the first benefit and remain unaware of the second.

In this world, great successes are reserved for those who can see beyond immediate benefits and recognize the indirect ones. The direct benefit of an action is usually quite limited. The larger benefit is the one that appears indirectly. Not only are indirect benefits hidden from plain sight, but they also take longer to show themselves.

Indirect benefits are definitely more important and meaningful than direct benefits. The direct benefit can be measured, but the indirect benefit cannot be quantified.

If there is a pile of garbage on the road in front of your house and you clean it up, the immediate benefit is that the area becomes tidy. However, the indirect benefits are much greater. This action cultivates a positive attitude within you. It improves your reputation in the community. It encourages constructive values in society. It helps establish moral traditions. People start praying for you and sending good wishes. As a result, you build trust among others. If you later want to undertake beneficial work in your area, many will step forward to help because your earlier action has earned you respect in their eyes.

Those who only focus on the direct benefits of their work can only complete small tasks; accomplishing something significant is not meant for them. Major achievements are for those who look beyond immediate

gains and see the indirect benefits.

To understand the importance of indirect benefits, it is crucial for a person to have a broad perspective. They must be able to look beyond the present for the sake of the future, accept temporary losses for long-term gains, and recognize the value of an action even if it benefits others. Such a person has a vision that not only perceives visible things but also sees the unseen.

Only those who have foresight can work with an eye on indirect benefits. These are people who can plan strategically and understand not only their own desires but also the natural laws that exist outside of themselves and operate independently.

If you want to accomplish something significant, the first thing you need to develop is a big heart. Without a big heart, you can never achieve great things.

In other words, the indirect approach can be called the wise approach, and in this world, no great success can be achieved without a wise approach.

## POSITIVE THINKING

I have read about the life of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). There was an incident I found particularly inspiring. This incident is not just a story; it holds a secret to life and is the key to success in this world.

Swami Vivekananda had a Christian friend who greatly admired him. One day, this friend decided to test Swami



Vivekananda. He invited Swami Ji to his home for a meal. When Swami Ji arrived, he was seated in a room. In that room, there was a table with many religious books stacked one on top of the other. At the bottom of the stack was the Bhagavad Gita, the sacred Hindu scripture, and on top of it were books from other religions.

When Swami Ji entered the room, his host said, “Swami Ji, look at this. What is your comment on it?” One possibility was that Swami Ji might have reacted angrily upon seeing it, saying, “By placing my religion’s book at the bottom, you have insulted my religion. Did you invite me here for this humiliation?” This could have led to a quarrel between the guest and the host.

However, Swami Ji didn’t react that way. Instead, he smiled at the sight and gently said to his host, “The foundation is very good.”

The incident with Swami Vivekananda shows how he turned a negative situation into a positive one. What appeared to be a bad event was made into something good by him.

This is the secret to living in today’s world. Here, there are thorns alongside flowers. With good people, there are also bad ones. Therefore, one often has to endure harsh words. One faces hatred and sometimes encounters disrespect from others.

In such situations, the key to success in the present world is knowing how to coexist with thorns and flowers, to love even those who harbour hatred, and to find ways in negative comments that can be turned to your advantage.

My life experience has taught me that humans are not made of stone. Every person has a tender heart inside their chest, just like anyone else. Every human born into this world is inherently human; no one is born a wolf.

## OVERLOOKING

If someone speaks harshly to you for any reason, don't focus on their words. Instead, see the tender heart hidden inside their chest. Don't let their harsh words affect you; reply with kind words. If they give you thorns, give them the gift of flowers. You will then see that the person who seemed to be your enemy can become your friend.

It has been observed that when someone encounters something they dislike and becomes angry upon hearing it, it affects their perception and understanding. Their intellect does not function properly, preventing them from responding effectively to others.

If you don't get angry when provoked, the first benefit is for yourself. Your mind stays clear, helping you respond better. Someone who loses their temper can only throw stones, but someone who controls their anger speaks the language of reason, which is a thousand times more powerful than the language of stones.

A positive-minded person embraces their full potential, while a negative-minded person only lives with part of their potential.

## OVERLOOKING

I naturally tend to listen carefully to everyone and try to learn from what they say. The benefit of this is that I always gain something useful from each person—an experience or insight that proves beneficial.

Once, while I was in a village, I overheard two men talking.

They were friends, but one harboured a grievance against the other. He kept repeating his complaint over and over. The other man tried hard to solve the issue, but when he saw that the grievance wouldn't end, he finally said: "Let us set this matter aside and live together as before."

At first, this seems like a simple statement. In reality, it holds a great secret of life. No two people are ever exactly alike. Just as no thumbprint matches another, each person differs in thought, feeling, and preferences. The question is: how can someone live a pleasant life in society amid such differences?

The answer is simple. When disagreement comes up, try to resolve it. If it can't be resolved, both parties should agree to set it aside and not argue anymore.

This principle applies everywhere—at home and outside, with your own people and with strangers. In this world, there is no simpler formula for a peaceful life.

Since everyone thinks differently, it is impossible to force others to fully adopt your way. Differences are natural; they will never go away. Trying to eliminate them only causes more problems, not peace.

The practical approach is this: set aside grievances and keep living in harmony. Everyone has traits that you might dislike, but they also have qualities that shouldn't cause complaints. Learn to distinguish between the two. Once you do, you'll realize that the other person is just as normal as anyone else.

In this world, we are forced to live together. A life of isolation isn't possible. Whenever people live or work side by side, conflicts will naturally happen. The only way

forward is to overlook the conflicts and build a life based on what is free from complaints.

Overlooking is not a sign of weakness; it reflects a higher principle of life. It is the approach taken by those who set ambitious goals. In this world, only those who overlook unpleasantness can move forward. Those who cannot get past it remain stuck and never reach their destination.

## NOT DIFFICULT

One of the most important lessons I've learned from the Quran is that, during the early days of Islam, when Muslims were few and faced intense oppression from their opponents, they often wondered how to keep going despite such great hardships.

At that time, a verse from the Quran was revealed to provide guidance on this matter. The verse was: "*Inna ma'al-'usri yusra*" (Quran, 94:6), meaning you should not be discouraged by hardship, because with hardship comes ease. This verse does not say that ease comes after hardship, but rather that ease exists alongside hardship. In other words, where there is difficulty, ease is present at the same time.

This means that the Creator of this world has designed it so that every problem has a solution. Where there is a challenge or difficulty, there are also opportunities to move forward. In this world, problems and solutions are like twin brothers who are always together.

In my life, I've faced losses and failures many times, but I've always followed this principle. Whenever I reflected on the situation, I realized that where a problem existed, the solution was also there. For example, when average effort wasn't enough to reach a goal, I understood that putting in more effort could make a difference.

Once, I saw about a hundred schoolchildren come out of their school and onto the street. They wanted to walk on the sidewalk, but the narrow sidewalk couldn't hold them all as a crowd. Following their teacher's instructions, they formed a long line in pairs, making it easier for them to walk along the sidewalk. They didn't spread out across the whole street, which would have caused traffic problems.

The students had no chance to spread out to the right and left. Instead, they moved forward and backward to find their way. Watching this, I realized what it means for ease to go along with difficulty. This example perfectly shows the idea. The experience of navigating the road provides guidance for all other parts of life.

The idea of ease within difficulty is an unchangeable law of nature. These two elements are inseparable. It is nature's way that whenever a problem occurs, it naturally moves toward its solution. Like an automatic system, nature brings ease along with difficulty.

For example, when someone faces a tough situation, natural processes naturally cause the particles in their brain to become more active. This triggers a new awareness in their mind, making them think more deeply than before. As a result, they become able to solve the problem with clearer thinking and greater strength.

If a rock blocks your path, find a way around it. When a

## NO HURRY

problem cannot be solved through confrontation, seek its solution with patience and strategy. If speaking proves ineffective, choose silence. When physical strength alone isn't enough to accomplish a task, rely on your intellect and wisdom.

This is the only principle for building a successful life in this world. The successful person is the one who discovers this principle and uses it to their advantage. The unsuccessful person is the one who fails to uncover this principle and, as a result, is unable to plan their actions correctly.

## NO HURRY

When I was young and lived in a village in Uttar Pradesh, I longed to have a mango tree in my yard. One way was to plant a small mango sapling and wait patiently for it to grow over the years. But in my youthful eagerness, I wasn't willing to wait that long. I wished for a fully grown mango tree to suddenly appear in my yard.

There, I had a mango orchard. Among the trees was a five-year-old one that had grown taller than a person and was thriving. I hired several workers to tend to it. They dug around it all day, and finally, by evening, they hauled the tree on a large cot. A hole was dug in the courtyard, and the tree was planted there.

I was very pleased with myself, thinking I had accomplished in one day what usually takes five years, by planting a big

tree. However, when I woke up the next morning, I saw that the leaves of the tree had wilted. Still, I didn't give up. I watered it generously, trusting the leaves would turn green with enough water. But that didn't happen. The next day, the leaves wilted even more. Within a few days, the tree had completely dried up.

This experience from my youth was very tough for me. It became a lifelong lesson. It deeply ingrained in me the understanding that there are no shortcuts in life. Life is a long journey, and it must be completed over an extended period, no matter what.

After this incident, I realized that in this world, a person's efforts are like a fifty-fifty partnership. This means that in any task, one part is human effort, and the other part is nature's role. Every event in the world occurs through the alignment of human actions and natural processes. If a person desires something quickly, but nature's way is not the way of haste, then merely wanting it quickly will not produce results. This incident has made me cautious about this matter for life.

The relationship between humans and nature can be compared to a gear wheel. In a gear wheel, both gears move together in sync. If one gear tries to turn faster on its own, the whole system will break down. The human gear is fragile, while the nature gear is strong. In such a case, if a human tries to increase their gear's speed, the only outcome will be that the human gear will break. This is because the nature gear is so powerful that it won't break under any circumstances.

My experience with the tree became a lasting lesson in my life. After that, I never tried to rush something that naturally

takes time to develop. Since then, I have always considered what the true starting point for any endeavour is. You can't begin your journey from the middle or the end; you must always start where nature intends it to begin.

Aspiring to get a result today that is meant to come tomorrow is not an easy task. It is like fighting against the laws of nature. It creates a world within a world. Such an effort will never lead to success. In this world, every human success is achieved by aligning with the laws of nature. A person who fights against these laws cannot accomplish anything for themselves here. This is an absolute truth with no exceptions.

## LIMITS OF POWER, LAWS OF LIFE

On August 2, 1990, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein sent his troops into Kuwait and took control of it. This was clearly an act of aggression. Soon after, on August 6, the U.S. chargé d'affaires in Baghdad, Joseph Wilson, met Saddam Hussein and delivered a message from President George Bush. The American envoy, using diplomatic language, warned Saddam that he had committed an act of aggression. Any differences he had with Kuwait should have been resolved through mutual dialogue, not force.

But Saddam Hussein, then intoxicated by his sense of victory, responded to the American diplomat with the following words, reported in English:

“Give my regards to President Bush and tell him that the Al-Sabah family has now become history.”



Saddam's message was clear: Inform President Bush that Kuwait's ruling family, the Al-Sabah, is now just a thing of the past.

The very next day, on August 17, Saddam went even further and declared that Kuwait no longer existed—it had become Iraq's 19th province.

But the story didn't end there. At Kuwait's request, the United States intervened directly. Washington warned Saddam Hussein to withdraw his forces from Kuwait by January 15, 1991. Saddam ignored the ultimatum. On January 17, 1991, the US launched a massive attack on Iraq. Saddam's forces were completely defeated in defense, and by March 1, 1991, the war ended with Iraq's worst defeat.

After this, the U.S. imposed a strict blockade on Iraq from all sides. This destroyed Iraq's economy. Helpless, Saddam Hussein was forced to accept all of America's demands. Finally, on November 10, 1994, under his leadership, the Iraqi parliament met and unanimously passed a resolution recognizing Kuwait as an independent state. On November 14, 1994, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz met the U.N. Secretary-General in New York and formally conveyed Iraq's decision in writing (*Times of India*, November 15, 1994).

Saddam Hussein wanted to create history on his own terms, but in the end he simply became a name in history. This proved that he understood only his present; he was completely unaware of what his future would turn out to be.

This is, in fact, the story of every human being in the present world. Everyone knows their today, but no one knows their tomorrow. A person is aware of their own actions, but they are unaware of the actions God's angels are recording

against them. They imagine themselves capable of passing judgment on others, whereas in truth, they do not even have the power to decide their own fate.

The lesson from this incident is that no one can claim victory over another's land. A plan to take someone else's property to expand oneself will never succeed. In this world, everyone has the right to live and grow, but no one can erase another to move forward.

Events show that progress made within one's own limits is steady and lasting, while the progress gained by taking someone else's share is never stable. In the end, such a person suffers double loss: he loses what he had, and the other's share was never really his to take.

Whether a person is of humble status or a holder of political power, no one is exempt from this law of life. No one is so powerful as to escape it. This law is as unchanging for one person as it is for all others.

## THE REAL ISSUE

Maulana Shakeel Ahmed Qasmi (38 years old) is the Head Teacher and Sheikh-ul-Hadith at Madrasa Imdad-ul-Islam in Meerut. On December 18, 1993, I met him in Delhi. He shared an experience that is very instructive.

He said that in November 1992, Mr. Inderjit Singh Ahluwalia, an educated Hindu from Sadar Bazar (Meerut), visited his madrasa. Mr. Ahluwalia stated, "I want my two sons, Gaurav Ahluwalia and Charlie Ahluwalia, to learn

Urdu and Arabic. Please arrange a tutor for them.” Maulana Qasmi asked why he wanted his children to learn Urdu and Arabic. Mr. Ahluwalia replied, “I want my children to have an open mind and to think beyond narrow-mindedness.” It should be noted that Mr. Inderjit Singh Ahluwalia is affiliated with the RSS and is an active member of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Maulana Shakeel Ahmed Qasmi believed that if he assigned a madrasa student to this task, they might not do it well. So, he decided to take on the task himself. When he told Mr. Ahluwalia about this, Mr. Ahluwalia was very surprised. But, after Maulana Qasmi’s insistence, he agreed. Mr. Ahluwalia then asked, “Maulana Sahib, how much do we need to pay you each month?” Maulana Qasmi responded, “Nothing. This is a joyful task for me. The only reward I need is the satisfaction of seeing some people in an area where Urdu is fading, learning Urdu and Arabic.” After some discussion, it was decided that Maulana Qasmi would go to their home to teach Urdu to their children.

Maulana Shakeel Ahmed Qasmi started teaching Urdu to these children using Maulana Ismail Merathi’s “Reader.” This program began on December 1, 1992, and continues today. During this period, these Hindu children have completed several readers. They can now write correctly and read Urdu newspapers like “*Qaumi Awaz*” easily. They have also begun learning Arabic through “*Minhaaj-ul-Arabiyya*.” Currently, they are studying the second part of “*Minhaaj-ul-Arabiyya*.” Urdu has become so prominent in their household that even Mr. Inderjit Singh Ahluwalia has started learning Urdu from Maulana Qasmi. In addition

to Urdu books, he has also purchased the comprehensive “*Feroz-ul-Lughat*” dictionary to support his Urdu learning.

Mr. Ahluwalia consistently helps Maulana Shakeel Ahmed Qasmi in every possible way. He is always ready to cooperate with him on all occasions. For instance, since Mr. Ahluwalia lives in a Hindu-majority area, whenever Maulana Qasmi finishes teaching and leaves, Mr. Ahluwalia sends his children to accompany him for quite a distance so that people do not see him as a stranger.

This example illustrates the current issue in India. The real problem in modern India isn’t “Hindu sectarianism,” but the disconnect between Hindus and Muslims. If interactions and engagement between Hindus and Muslims were to start through any means, then all conflicts would disappear as if they never existed.

Distance breeds misunderstanding, while closeness encourages friendship. It is a common experience that misunderstandings often occur where Hindus and Muslims are separated. Conversely, increased interaction naturally leads to better relations between them.

Before 1947, India was an agrarian society where Hindus and Muslims often interacted due to rural life. After independence, India transitioned into the industrial era. The demands of industry caused families to disperse and people to move more frequently. This resulted in the breakdown of shared lifestyles and the loss of earlier relationships. Today, this is a significant reason for the distance between the two communities.

The solution is for Muslims to increase their presence in educational institutions and actively take part in modern

economic and social activities. They should also follow the example set by Maulana Shakeel Ahmad Qasmi, as mentioned earlier. Insha'Allah, this will bring back a time of harmonious interactions between communities.

## THE POWER OF THE HUMAN

An 18-year-old Christian youth from Bombay named Greenwell Gomes committed suicide. According to newspaper reports, he had passed his HSC exam that year and wanted to enroll in a B.Com program. However, he was informed that admission would not be possible without a “donation” of fifteen thousand rupees. This news severely affected Gomes’ mental state, leading him to take his own life in a state of distress (*Hindustan Daily*, Bombay, July 1993).

On the other hand, there is another example from the same country. A man was unable to admit his son to a good hospital simply because he couldn’t afford the cost. Determined to change this, he decided to establish a hospital that would not only provide high-quality care but also ensure that no one would be turned away because they couldn’t pay. He set out on this mission and eventually succeeded in opening such a hospital. Today, this hospital operates successfully, and thousands of people have benefited from its medical services.

Such decisive moments happen in everyone’s life. During these times, the direction the mind chooses determines the path one will take. In these situations, it is important to

have a helpful guide who can stop one from going down a negative path. This guide offers mental support when one's own mind struggles to think clearly.

For the young man in question, it was also possible to see the educational setback not as an obstacle but as a challenge. He could have told those demanding a fifteen-thousand-rupee donation, "If you think you can block my path, you are greatly mistaken. You are underestimating the power of a person. The strength of an individual is greater than any barrier that could stand in their way. No one can stop them from advancing."

After that, the young man could have decided to create an educational institution where students could enroll without needing donations or bribes. If he had made this choice and committed to it with determination, he might have succeeded in establishing a new, respected school that admitted students solely based on merit, with no requirement for donations.

The biggest cause of failure in this world is discouragement, while the greatest secret to success is perseverance. The young man's suicide was due to his loss of courage. Had he not lost heart and made establishing a new educational institution his mission, he would have discovered that many people in this world would support him and collaborate with him in every way. Although he seemed alone in his initial attempt, he would not have been solitary on his second try. As a poet rightly said:

"The journey is the condition; many support  
the traveler, and countless shade-giving trees  
line the path."

This verse was first recited to me by a merchant in Delhi. He was born into a merchant family, but due to certain circumstances, he faced the tragedy of becoming completely isolated. He no longer had a home or business in Delhi.

This incident occurred during his youth. He did not lose heart. He started by setting up a stall on the sidewalk with minimal goods. From morning till evening, he worked diligently. Though he earned only a few rupees after great effort, he continued his hard work despite all unfavourable conditions. Gradually, he began to find helpers.

A merchant began supplying him with goods on credit. Another person helped him find a shop, and yet another assisted him in finding a home. Step by step, he continued to climb the ladder of success until he became a successful merchant in Delhi.

If a person stays persistent on a path and is also principled and upright, success is guaranteed. Nothing can stop him from achieving his goal of success.

## LOSING ONE'S HOME

On the 28th of March, 1995, a Mrs. Indu Vahi committed suicide by jumping from the 8th floor of Asia House, a building situated on Kasturba Gandhi Marg, quite close to Connaught Place, in New Delhi. As the chief newsreader in the Hindi Department of All India Radio, she had been allotted a two-room residential flat on the first floor of Asia

House, which is a government building. When she retired last year at the age of sixty, she was required to give up this flat where she had lived for the last twenty years. The last date for vacating was the 31st of March.

Mrs. Vahi, widowed in 1989, became very depressed after retirement, even although she had the company of her daughter Sonia and her son-in-law, Ashok Kumar. According to *The Hindustan Times* (29 March 1995), she had purchased a house in Radio Colony, Trans-Yamuna, before her retirement. However, she reportedly felt deeply dejected about moving there—possibly due to the lack of civic amenities compared to her government-allotted residence, which was centrally located near the elegant shopping hub of Connaught Place. This feeling of despondency overwhelmed her to such an extent that she climbed to the top floor of Asia House and leapt to her death.

When I read this news item, I felt that it was indeed a tragic incident. Then I said to myself, “there was someone who could not bear the thought of shifting from a comfortable flat to a humble dwelling. But what of one’s condition if one were to be totally deprived of shelter?”

Even if people do not commit suicide, they still have to die. After death, the realization will come to them that all their possessions have suddenly been snatched away. On that day, every house owner will become homeless. Only those upon whom God looks with favour, those whom He grants an abode in Paradise, will ever again be householders.



## ATTEMPT TO LEARN

During my youth, when I was still in Madrasa, we discussed camels in class one day. Afterwards, the teacher asked, “Tell me, are a camel’s hooves split or united? Are they like the split hooves of a cow or the united hooves of a horse?”

In our class, there were about two dozen students at the time, but none could answer the question with certainty. Only guesses were made; some said they were divided, while others said they were united.

The teacher then delivered a speech. He explained that this was a simple question, yet none of you could answer it confidently. The reason is that you lack knowledge about the camel’s hoofs and are unaware of your ignorance. This is similar to the Arabic proverb: To say “I do not know” is half of knowledge.

The teacher said, “When I asked you whether a camel’s hooves are split or joined, none of you admitted that you did not know. Yet, experience shows that you were unaware of this. If you had acknowledged your ignorance, it would have sparked what is known as the ‘spirit of inquiry’ within you. You would have developed a desire to learn more about it. Whenever a camel passed by, you would have immediately observed its hooves and then, with certainty, determined whether a camel’s hooves are split or joined.”

Most people are unaware of their own ignorance, which keeps them from escaping it. For an individual, the spirit of

inquiry is extremely important. The pursuit of knowledge starts with recognizing one's own ignorance. Someone who admits they lack knowledge keeps trying to learn more and approaches everything with curiosity. Conversely, a person unaware of their ignorance remains stuck in it and fails to turn their lack of knowledge into learning.

All scientific discoveries stem from the spirit of inquiry. The extensive knowledge we've gained about the universe and nature in modern times is thanks to this spirit. These aspects of the universe have existed for millions of years, but ancient humans accepted everything without questioning. This lack of curiosity limited their understanding of cosmic mysteries. Today, due to various factors, humans strive to understand the essence of everything. This effort is called the spirit of inquiry, and it is this very spirit that has led humanity to all our current discoveries.

No matter what level of progress a person aims to reach, the spirit of inquiry is extremely important for this goal. The more this spirit is awakened within someone, the more they will expand their knowledge, and the greater their progress will be.

The present era is called the "Age of Information." In this age, the amount of information has become extremely vast. Because of this, a spirit of inquiry is more important than ever. In the past, a person could learn a lot with little effort; now, even with a lot of effort, they can only achieve a small part. Therefore, gaining more knowledge has become more vital than ever. Major progress today depends heavily on having enough information.

## BETWEEN PAST GLORY AND PRESENT REALITY

In Riyadh's Arabic monthly *Al-Faisal* (Dhul-Qa'dah 1413 AH/May 1993), an article titled *Al-Atfal Qalbi* was published. In it, a remark by Israel's former Minister of War, Moshe Dayan (1915–1981), about his Arab opponents is quoted. The remark appears in Arabic as follows:

“The Arabs tend to deceive themselves and others, and they do so without deliberate intent. They are always inclined to speak of the glories of their forefathers—of Salah al-Din, of the battles of Hattin and Yarmouk. While they do this, we smile, for they see themselves in the mirror of past glory, while we see them in the mirror of the present. If only they would ask themselves why they always speak of the great ones of their past, yet find no great ones in their present to speak of.” (p.3)

This condition is not limited to the Arabs; it is the same with Muslims everywhere. Today, Muslims in every land live by recalling the greatness of their predecessors. Yet to live on the memory of bygone heroes is an opiate for oneself and a cause of ridicule for others.

The sound and useful course is self-accountability: to recognize one's own weaknesses and shortcomings and to strive to remove them. To take pride in the fame of past greats only traps a person in false pride. It wastes time rather than making use of it.

Moshe Dayan's statement is deeply meaningful—that Muslims see themselves in light of their past, while we see them in light of their present. A Western observer expressed the same idea differently: that the case of Muslims today has become a case of paranoia.

A paranoid character is one who begins to live by the psychology of "My father was a king." Such people are always absorbed in self-pride. But others experience the opposite, for they see them according to their present condition and deal with them accordingly. Thus such people fall prey to hatred and frustration, feeling that others do not acknowledge them according to the status they imagine for themselves.

Living in the greatness of bygone people, in its outcome, is nothing but destruction. It gives rise to two major disadvantages.

First, those who fall into this psychology lose the capacity for independent thought and action. Their minds move only within the circles of their predecessors' thinking. They take exaggerated praise of past achievements as a substitute for real work. Such people can never become people of action themselves.

Second, they form entirely false opinions about the people around them. Since others see them according to their present, they do not give them great importance. This attitude, though fully based on truth, is taken as belittlement by those living in the tales of their forefathers. As a result, they wrongly come to believe that everyone else is their enemy.

Such people either do nothing at all, or, if they act, their planning is always based on the assumption that all others are unjust and prejudiced against them. Such planning is not based on facts, and planning that is not grounded in reality can never, in God's well-ordered world, succeed.

## UTILIZATION OF TIME

I wasted time before, and now time is wasting me. If you didn't make use of your time in the past, you'll struggle to do so in the future. As a result, your downfall will keep growing.

Time is a person's most valuable asset. It exists so that one can use it to achieve success. Someone who wastes time not only squanders it but also wastes themselves. The harm caused by this negligence affects only the individual.

Use your time either for preparation or for working toward your goals. This is the right way to use time. If you're not engaged in preparation or striving to achieve your objectives, you're wasting your time.

Wasting the time you're given is undoubtedly the greatest loss. It is a loss for which no compensation exists. You can recover lost wealth, but you cannot restore lost time.

Time is wealth; in fact, time itself is wealth. With time, you can gain other things, but you cannot purchase time

with anything else. Therefore, you should be especially cautious with your time.

Time passes quickly; grab it before it slips away. You have to take control of your time.

The person who wastes time will eventually realize they're only watching it pass without actually using it.

## WINNING HEARTS

The principle of life, summed up in one word, is this: you get what you give. If you send hatred to others, you will receive hatred back. If you offer others love, you will also be given love in return. If you become a source of solving problems in your community, the entire community will start to see you as its leader.

God has endowed service and benefit with great appeal. It has the power to attract people's hearts. Such a person becomes popular among others. He gets everything he wants from others because he has given them everything they wished for.

Become a well-wisher for others, and you will face no complaints from them. Serve others, and nothing of yours will stay unresolved.

In this world, everyone is required to live in harmony with others; no one can lead a solitary life. In such a situation, the recurring question is: what is the best way to interact

with others? The answer is not to try to force others to your will but to adjust yourself. Don't focus on taking from others; instead, aim to be a giver. Don't see complaints as a problem; rather, let go of them. Don't turn disagreements into conflicts; instead, handle them with kindness despite differences. Even if someone appears to be your enemy, don't harbour hatred. This is the way to win hearts, and once you win hearts, there is nothing left to conquer.

## WAITING IS WISDOM

Proverbs in different languages often stem from long human experience. Each proverb serves as a guideline for success. One such English proverb is:

“Wait and see.”

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), the well-known American writer, said:

“The hero knows how to wait as well as to make haste. All good abides with him who waited wisely.”

Sometimes in life, there are moments when one must make an immediate decision. However, if a person misses the chance to make a prompt decision, the right course of action is not to panic or rush into pointless actions. Instead, they should wait. Wisdom lies in knowing when to act quickly and when to set a matter aside. In reality, waiting is also an action. It is not a trivial task. To wait means trusting the natural order and becoming a seeker of God's decision.

If making the right decision at the right time is success, then choosing to wait in unfavourable conditions can also be a form of success. The difference is that one produces results now, while the other produces results later.

## THE DIFFERENCE IN THINKING

The English poet Frederick Langbridge (1849-1923) certainly gave us food for thought when he penned the following couplet:

Two men look out through the same bars  
One sees the mud and one the stars.

This same point was made—rather more effectively—by a Persian poet who said; “The difference between you and me is only one of hearing. Where you hear a door close, I hear it open.”

*Tafawot ast mian e shenidan e man o to,  
To bastan e dar, man fath e bab mishenawam.*

There is no rose without thorns, but one who broods on the existence of thorns without giving any thought to the beauty of the roses above them is like the man who looks at mud in preference to the stars. Social conditions are always a combination of roses and thorns, mud and stars; and it is only the wise man who knows how much importance to give to each. The man who concentrates solely on thorns and mud will be the man who can only hear doors closing and never hear them opening.



Most social problems are problems of the mind. They are almost always capable of being solved by changes of attitude and ways of thinking. It is a question of inculcating right ways of thinking at the appropriate stage in a man's spiritual development. Only then will he be a worthy, positive, social being.

The truth is that this world is a test of intelligence. Those who use their intellect will find their way, while those who don't will face nothing but ruin as their fate.

The sea is full of waves and surges. Anyone who wants to steer a boat through it must deal with the waves and storms to reach their goal. In the jungle, there are thorns and predators. The animals living there have no choice but to find a way to survive amid the thorny bushes and their hunting enemies.

The same applies to human society. Among people, there are individuals of various kinds whose interests often clash. Disagreements and conflicts happen for multiple reasons. This ebb and flow, these differences, have always been part of social life and will continue to be. They cannot be completely eliminated under any circumstances.

In such circumstances, there is only one possible path to life and success for a person: to adopt the principle of "despite" as their policy. Despite opposition, they should strive to make people their allies. Despite conflicts, they should find the secret to a joyful life for themselves. Even when faced with enmities and conspiracies, they should keep moving forward with the conviction that their positive actions can overcome all negativity.

In this world, a person must reach for the flower despite the thorns. Here, one must strive to stay healthy and fit despite the numerous germs of illness. Similarly, in this world, a person should not become discouraged by unfavourable conditions, nor should they waste time complaining and protesting. They should live in harmony with the realities they cannot change, carefully avoiding obstacles that hinder their journey. Instead of reacting emotionally to antagonistic remarks, they should respond with strategic wisdom. They should be content with receiving less now so they can receive more in the future. They should endure hostility with patience, hoping that today's enemies will become tomorrow's friends.

## THINK SOLUTION, NOT COMPLAINT

Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273) holds a very high status among Muslims. His *Masnawi* (Mathnawi), consisting of nearly 26,000 verses, is highly esteemed among Muslims. This revered work has served as a guiding book for scholars for centuries.

In 1258, the Mongols destroyed Baghdad and ended the Abbasid Caliphate, establishing their oppressive rule over the Muslim world. At that time, Rumi was about fifty years old. Through his *Masnawi*, he shared spiritual and moral lessons with Muslims, aiming to uplift their spirits.

Along with this, he also guided Muslims on contemporary issues. In his Persian Masnavi, he used parables and allegories to instruct Muslims on what they should and should not do in such circumstances. One helpful tale is the story of the lion and the rabbit, which is detailed in the “First Book” of the Masnavi. The essence of this story is as follows:

In the forest, there was a lion who, every day, would attack animals to satisfy his hunger, capturing them to serve as his food. As a result, all the animals lived in constant terror and fear. Eventually, they came up with a solution. They talked with the lion and persuaded him not to attack them. Instead, they agreed to send one animal to him each day as a tribute.

The proposal was implemented. Each day, a lottery was held to decide which animal would be the lion’s meal. The animal whose name was drawn was sent to the lion. In this way, all the animals coexisted peacefully in the forest. Eventually, the lottery chose a rabbit’s name. This rabbit had already developed a plan: when its name was drawn, it would not allow itself to become the lion’s prey. Instead, it planned to use strategy to eliminate the lion.

According to his carefully planned schedule, the rabbit arrived at the lion’s den an hour late. The lion, very hungry, became angry over the delay. Seeing only a small rabbit further upset him.

The rabbit spoke softly and humbly: “Sir, the situation is that another lion has entered your territory. The animals had sent two rabbits as your meal today, but the other lion

attacked us. He captured one of us, and I managed to escape and come to you.”

The lion’s anger shifted to the other lion. He roared, demanding to know who dared enter his forest. “Take me to him so I can deal with him myself.” The rabbit then set off with the lion. He led the lion around and finally brought him to the edge of a well, where he said, “Sir, the other lion is inside this well. You can see him for yourself.”

The lion looked into the well and saw his reflection in the water. Thinking the rabbit’s story was true and that another lion was really inside, he roared, and the “other lion” roared back. Unable to tolerate the idea of another lion in his territory, he jumped into the well, attacking his own reflection. He then died in the well, falling victim to his own mistaken anger.

Thus, a rabbit used clever strategy to defeat a foe as mighty as a lion. Rumi concludes by saying that the rabbit’s plan was like a trap for the lion. How remarkable was that rabbit who managed to outsmart the lion:

“The snare of deceit was a lion’s trap,  
How remarkable was the rabbit who seized the lion!”

This parable provided guidance to the Muslims of Rumi’s era. Rumi did not encourage Muslims to take up arms. He did not suggest that all the forest’s inhabitants should unite and attack the lion, promising them the title of hero if they succeeded, or martyrdom if they failed. Instead, Rumi

stressed that such actions were unnecessary. His message conveyed strategic wisdom rather than martial bravery.

In contrast, Rumi guided Muslims toward wise strategies. He promoted a path of life rather than one of death. In his proposed approach, a person might start by taking a humble stance, but eventually, they reach greatness and success. This advice of Rumi remains as relevant today as it was when he first expressed it.

## ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY

In the February 1987 issue of *Reader's Digest*, an article was published titled "Dare to Change Your Life." The article shares several stories where people initially faced failure, losses, and hardships. Despite these setbacks, they did not give up hope. Even after missing one chance, they stayed focused on the next opportunity. This smart approach worked, helping them find success after an initial failure.

At the end of the article, the author states that life is full of second chances. What it takes to seize these opportunities is simply the ability to recognize them and the courage to act on them:

"Life is full of second chances. All we need for a second chance is the ability to recognize it and the courage to act."

Life is about seizing second chances. This truth applies equally to individuals and nations. History confirms this. In the

early days, Islam had no opportunity in Makkah. However, by making the most of the opportunity in Madinah, Islam created its history. Similarly, Western nations, unable to seize opportunities during the Crusades, later succeeded by taking advantage of intellectual opportunities.

In the present world, it often happens that a person misses the first opportunity, sometimes due to lack of experience and other times because of others' opposition. However, missing the first chance doesn't mean losing all opportunities. If a person doesn't get discouraged after losing the initial chance, they will soon find a second chance, which, if used wisely, can lead them back to their goal.

It's unwise to try to take opportunities that others have already claimed. Wisdom is in focusing on the remaining chances.

The situation can also be understood through the example of Japan. A report with a New York dateline, titled "Japan's Bid to Excel the U.S. in Supercomputers," which was reproduced in *The Times of India* (April 13, 1989, Section 2, Page 4), casts serious doubt on America's ability to maintain its lead in the field of supercomputers. Despite the United States' long-standing dominance in this area, it is expected that by 1990, Japan will surpass it by launching the fastest supercomputer in the world, which will be introduced to global markets. This grim outlook is further corroborated by a recent study conducted by analysts at an American computer corporation.

The Japanese computer, named SX-X, can perform 20

billion operations of scientific calculations in one second flat. At this rate, it is 25 percent faster than the fastest American computer. Besides its perfect performance, it has another speciality: its relative cheapness.

This supercomputer has a key role to play not only in scientific research, oil exploration, weather forecasting etc., but also in national security, particularly in the field of nuclear weaponry.

America may have destroyed Japan in 1945 with its 'super bomb,' but it could not take away Japan's potential. With its computers, and now this latest supercomputers, Japan revolutionized its own economy in a mere matter of 45 years. Destruction, however massive, can never put an end to opportunities for construction. And the power of construction undoubtedly far exceeds that of destruction.

## TICKET TO SUCCESS

In America, people who have immigrated from Asian countries are generally called Asian Americans. Most of these individuals arrived after 1965. Their current population in the U.S. is about 2%. Among them, some are Jewish, some are Buddhists, some follow Confucianism, and others belong to different religions.

In America, if Asian immigrants believe that their future success depends on someone from their community

becoming President, they might find the door to advancement completely shut. This is because the position of President requires being a natural-born citizen of the U.S., a rule that excludes Asian individuals. In their efforts to achieve this goal, Asian immigrants either fall into despair or try unsuccessful campaigns to change the American Constitution to remove this requirement, allowing one of their own to run for president.

However, Asian Americans did not make that mistake. Based on their actual circumstances, they understood that while chances to reach the presidential office were limited for minorities like themselves, there were plenty of opportunities to secure top academic positions. They saw education as their pathway to success. As a result, they put all their effort into education, which brought them great achievements. Even though they make up only 2% of the population, they now hold 20% of the seats in prestigious educational institutions.

This is the way to achieve success in this world. In life, some opportunities are open to a person while others are not. The height of wisdom is to take advantage of the opportunities that are available and to progress accordingly. If someone keeps banging their head against closed doors, the doors will not open, but their head may suffer. Especially today, education is the key to success, and opportunities to get this key are available to everyone, everywhere.

The principle that is the secret to individual advancement is also the key to the progress of nations and countries. In



this regard, Japan sets a commendable example to follow.

An American author wrote a book about Japan titled “Japan as Number One.” In this 250-page book, the author shows how Japan, after suffering total defeat in World War II, managed to bounce back and even challenge its conqueror, the United States. According to the author, the Japanese became masters of change instead of victims. While other countries were wrecked by outside forces, Japan came out stronger.

“Thus, they became the masters of change rather than the victims. Other countries were devastated by foreign influence, but Japan was invigorated.”

—Ezra F. Vogel, *Japan as Number One*, Harvard University Press, London 1979, p.256.

According to the author, Japan’s remarkable success mainly comes from its transformation following military and political setbacks. Japan shifted its focus from warfare to the pursuit of knowledge. In the third chapter of the book, the author highlights a single key factor behind Japan’s current achievements: the continuous passion for learning shared across the Japanese nation. The author writes:

When a foreigner visits Japan, Japanese people often instinctively think, “What can I learn from this person?” Similarly, the three million Japanese who travel abroad each year aim to find new ideas and concepts to bring back and use in their own country.

## A SPOONFUL OF SUGAR

A historical incident published in *The Times of India* Supplement, *The Neighbourhood Star* (March 18-24, 1989) has lesson for us all. It seems that when the first batch of Parsis from Iran landed on the west coast of Gujrat, their community leader—their peshwa—went straight to the ruling monarch, Yadav Rana and requested him to allow the Parsis to stay in his state. The Raja uttered not a word in reply, but simply handed the Peshwa a glass full to the brim with milk. This was meant to show him that his state already had its full measure of population and that there was no room for any more people.

The Peshwa did not answer in words either. His response was simply to add a spoonful of sugar to the milk and to return it forthwith to the Raja. This was his way of saying that the Parsis would sweeten their milk—not take possession of it. That is to say that their presence would add sweetness to the life of the state. The Raja was pleased with this response and gave them his permission to stay in Gujrat.

One thousand years have passed since this incident took place, and history has shown how the Parsi Peshwa's words came true. This was because the members of the Parsi community did not waste their time in launching demand and protest movements throughout the country. Instead, they contributed to the progress and development of the country by working harder than everyone else. They made

advances, particularly in the fields of education and industry, thus adding to the wealth of the country. In a situation where there were so many ‘taker’ groups, they achieved, by dint of consistent striving, the status of a ‘giver’ group. They knew the secret of the good life. In this world, it is the giver who prospers. Those who ‘sweeten’ the ‘milk’ of others find positions of honour for themselves. On the contrary, those who have only bitterness for others, will receive bitterness from them in return.

If you want to receive something, enter the world with a “gift card.” If you enter with a “demand card,” you will find nothing here.

On August 24, 1988, I met Mr. P.D. Malhotra, who was born in 1935. He has served as the Publications Manager at the Sahitya Akademi in New Delhi for about 30 years. He recalled that one day he was late leaving the office. When he finally stepped outside, it was already midnight. As he was riding his scooter, he reached a street where a police officer stopped him and asked to see his driver’s license.

Mr. Malhotra reached into his pocket, and alongside his driving license, he pulled out another card. Holding both cards, the police officer asked what the second card was. It was, in fact, an Eye Donor Card. This card bore the individual’s signature along with a statement declaring, “I have gifted my eyes to the nation. Kindly inform the nearest Eye Bank immediately on my demise and help them to fulfil my desire. Thanks.”

The police officer was initially very curt in his manner. However, upon seeing the Eye Donor Card, his tone changed instantly. Without further inspection, he said, “Go ahead, go ahead.”

In modern times, eye donation is seen as an act of nobility. TV appeals often use emotional language: “There is only one thing in the world that you can give to someone.” When the police officer saw Mr. Malhotra’s Eye Donor Card, he viewed him as a respectable and caring person. The card became a symbol of Mr. Malhotra’s generosity, softening the police officer’s attitude toward him.

In this world, those who give are also recipients. The person who gives to others will receive from others. Even if someone has not yet given in action but only intends to give, they become worthy of receiving.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Publius Syrus was a Latin writer from the first century BC. Born in the region of Syria during the Roman period, he died in Rome. One of his sayings is translated into English as follows:

“A wise man guards the future as if it were the present.”

The foolish person focuses on the present, while the wise person looks ahead to the future. The foolish person

sees an unfavourable situation now and reacts to it. The wise person uses foresight, thinking about how today's challenges will develop tomorrow. The foolish act based on what is immediate, while the wise plan their actions with the future in mind.

Every action, when judged by its outcome, is a future event. Actions are taken now, but their results always appear later. Therefore, it is correct to evaluate an action based on future outcomes. The rightness of today's action should be judged by how it will turn out when it concludes.

For example, if someone gets stung by a wasp and, in anger, decides to punish the wasps by putting their hand into their nest, the claim that they were only stung once initially by a single wasp becomes pointless. After they insert their hand into the nest, they will be swarmed and stung by hundreds of wasps, causing serious injury.

This world is for the wise; for the foolish, there is no outcome other than acting impulsively and then protesting when the negative results emerge.

The proper use of "today" is not to waste it, but to use it wisely. Those who understand this principle are the ones who achieve great success in the world.

A Western thinker once said, "A good soldier does not die on the first day of battle; instead, he survives so he can fight the enemy the next day."

This saying applies not only to famous, large-scale wars but also to everyday conflicts. If you find yourself in a

disagreement and immediately prepare for the final battle, you are a “poor soldier.” You won’t achieve much success in life by approaching every challenge with that mindset.

The reason is that, in many situations, a person is not able to fight effectively on the “first day.” Therefore, the wise person avoids confrontation initially. Instead, they focus on strengthening and stabilizing themselves away from the battlefield. This way, either their opponent becomes so weak that they surrender without a fight, or they themselves become so powerful that they can win every battle successfully.

The best example of this principle can be seen in the history of Islam. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) spent more than half of his prophetic mission in Makkah. During this period, his opponents subjected him to every kind of oppression. Still, he did not fight back. He stayed patient and endured quietly. After migrating to Madinah, when opponents waged war on them, he organized his army and fought them in defence when all peaceful options failed. Later, at Hdaybiyyah, he again chose to avoid war. Soon after, the enemy, without a battle, conceded defeat and laid down their arms.

On the “first day,” the Prophet demonstrated patience in the face of his enemies. On the “second day,” he met them in battle and achieved victory. However, the case of Hdaybiyyah was different: there, the “first day” was marked by patience, and on the “second day,” there was no need for battle at all—the enemy surrendered without resistance and laid down their arms.

## TWENTY YEARS LATER

It was Columbus who discovered America—this six-word sentence can now be said by anyone in less than six seconds. However, to make this event happen, Columbus had to spend twenty tough years.

Christopher Columbus, born in Italy in 1451 and who died in Spain in 1506, sought assistance from King John II of Portugal in 1484 for his sea expedition. However, the King of Portugal considered it unworthy and declined to help.

Columbus then sought help from Queen Isabella of Castile, but he received no positive response there either. Nevertheless, Columbus kept trying until, after eight years, the Queen provided him with ships and supplies.

On August 13, 1492, Columbus embarked on his first voyage with three ships. However, he did not reach the shores of America during this trip. Despite numerous challenges and hardships, Columbus stayed committed to his mission.

Finally, after his fourth voyage, Columbus successfully discovered the “New World” in 1504 (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 10, p. 691). Before Columbus, the world was divided into two parts. His discovery united both the “New” and “Old” Worlds into one. It was undoubtedly a monumental achievement, but it was only possible because Columbus and his companions, without losing hope, persevered for 20 years to complete this difficult mission.

This is the path to achieve success in this world. Every success here requires “20 years” of effort. Without this, no meaningful success can be achieved.

Success in this world always comes after a long struggle. A person starts with less and then reaches greater heights.

Neil Armstrong was the first person to travel to the moon. On July 21, 1969, he descended from the lunar module named Eagle and stepped onto the moon's surface. At that time, there was a direct communication link between Earth and the moon. After landing, the first message he sent to Earth was:

“That’s one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind.”

Armstrong meant that my landing on the moon at that moment might seem like just one person stepping onto the lunar surface. However, it marks the start of a new cosmic era. By safely landing on the moon, it would be proven that lunar travel is possible for humanity. This discovery will pave the way for further advancements, leading to a time when ordinary people will travel from one planet to another just as they travel across Earth today.

Every major achievement in the world follows this pattern. First, one person or a few people make sacrifices to achieve a breakthrough. In doing so, they create a new path for humanity's journey. This initial effort is extremely difficult; it's like moving a mountain. But once this initial work is done, the rest becomes much easier. A wide path then appears, allowing many people to travel along it.

When a farmer plants a seed in the ground, it may seem like a “small step” toward his goal, but this small step marks the start of his agricultural journey. This journey continues until the field is filled with a full harvest. This approach applies to all human efforts, whether in farming, gardening, or any other field.



## CHALLENGE, NOT OPPRESSION

Edmund Burke, (1729-1797) the Irish writer, statesman and philosopher, once observed that “he that wrestles with us, strengthens our nerves, and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper.” Saadi Shirazi (1210-1291 CE), the famous Persian poet, has expressed very much the same thought in the form of a parable in his book entitled *Gulistan*: “Don’t you see, when a cat becomes frustrated, it claws out the eyes of the lion.”

*Na bini ke chun gorbah aajiz shavad*

*Bar arad ba changaal chashm-e palang*

Each of these writers has seen something positive in adversity, and implies that neither passivity nor lamentation is fitting response to it. Each, by his words, encourages the sufferer to adopt a positive attitude and to launch himself on a positive course of action when confronted by difficulty or danger.

If an incident occurs against you by others, there are two possible reactions. One is to perceive it as oppression, and the other is to see it as a challenge. When viewed as oppression, a mindset of complaint arises, whereas viewing it as a challenge fosters a mindset of competition.

A complaining mindset leads a person to believe their only task is to start protesting and accusing the other party. They use all kinds of words to express their discontent. In contrast, a competitive mindset pushes a person toward

action. It encourages them to understand the situation and find a strategic response that, through wisdom and careful planning, can neutralize the opposing party's plans.

The mindset of complaint and protest drives a person down paths where they waste even their remaining energy in futile struggles. On the other hand, the mindset of challenge awakens a person's hidden potential. It gives them new strength, enabling even the weak to overcome the strong, and a cat to make a lion retreat.

The present world is a world of competition. In such a setting, a complaining mindset leads to destruction, whereas a strategic mindset leads to growth and progress.

Imagine you're walking down a path, and your garment gets caught on the thorns of a bush. What would you do in that moment? Instead of complaining, you would choose the path of strategy. You don't protest against the bush; instead, you think about how to resolve the problem.

A wise person knows that this strategy should also be used in human relationships. Even when dealing with others, conflicts can happen, and we might feel uncomfortable or think someone has wronged us. In such situations, instead of complaining, we should take a strategic approach.

Every issue in life is a challenge, not a sign of one person's injustice toward another. If a problem occurs and you see it as injustice, it can encourage a mindset of complaint and protest. This mindset may even lead to despair, making you believe that nothing can be done in your current situation. A complaint-driven mindset results in despair, which can then lead to a form of psychological self-destruction.

Conversely, if you see a problem as a challenge, your hidden talents will awaken. You will gain the courage to face the situation. In the first scenario, if your mindset was negative, it will now shift entirely to a positive one—this is the key to success and failure in the present world. In this world, anyone who thrives on complaining and protesting in the face of problems is headed for failure. On the other hand, someone who focuses on finding solutions when faced with issues will inevitably succeed, because every problem has a solution, and every difficulty has a remedy.

## EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE

Bruce Van Voorst, a veteran American journalist with a distinguished reputation as a war correspondent, has reported directly from several battlefields around the world. He has sent on-the-spot accounts of the war in the Dominican Republic, the uprising of Iranian revolutionaries against the Shah, the Iran-Iraq War, and the Gulf War.

*Time* magazine, in its issue of February 4, 1991, published some of his experiences, one of which dealt directly with the integrity and personal qualities of soldiers in combat. According to him, when the fighting begins, their performance is superlative. Whatever the odds, they carry out their duties with remarkable excellence. In his words:

“In battle, there are no ordinary soldiers; they are all extraordinary.” (p. 4)

What this American journalist has said about the soldier in battle being 'extraordinary' applies equally to all men in challenging situations. Man, by birth, has been endowed with great potential. In ordinary, everyday situations this potential remains untapped. But, whenever there is danger, a challenge, all his slumbering potential is awakened. If, prior to this emergency, only one bulb of the powerhouse was on, now all of its bulbs light up.

Now his brain races, his body is charged with renewed energy. His whole being takes on a heroic character, for challenges transform the weak into the strong, the foolish into the clever. Challenge may appear in the guise of a setback, but as far as its results are concerned, it is the greatest ladder to success. Before the challenge, all men are ordinary human beings, whereas after the challenge they become extraordinary.

Where, before the challenge, there had appeared to be no scope for advancement, after it, opportunities are legion.

Let us take the example of the young Muslim who went to stay with relatives settled in the U.S.A. After the completion of his education there, he took up a job for a period of two years. Then, feeling that he would like to go back to his own country to build his future, he returned to India.

When I met him some time after his return, he told me that he had been suffering from mental frustration ever since he had come home. All his friends and relatives had kept on telling him what a foolish mistake he had made in leaving the U.S.A. where there is much greater scope for a talented, qualified person than there is here in India.

My response to that was that the very opposite was true. "There is scope in India for the very simple reason that there appears to be no scope. That is because you are considering external rather than internal opportunities. The former relates to those opportunities that exist outside you, in the external world. While the latter relates to the natural capabilities of body and mind bestowed upon you by God. If you take stock of these qualities within you, you will begin to see opportunities all around you which you never imagined existed. Every opportunity for success which is available in the U.S.A. exists in equal measure in India. And, in fact, with the challenges posed by the Indian environment one can make even greater progress here than in the U.S.A."

This is not immediately obvious to people because their sights are usually set on external opportunities. This is why they are quick to point out that opportunities exist everywhere but on their own doorstep. What they fail to appreciate is the importance of the latent capabilities bestowed upon man by nature. That factor is much more important than mere opportunities.

It is only when man is challenged by life's difficulties that his latent potential begins to awaken. He is awakened from his slumber by the shock of circumstances. This awakening in his life is essential if he is to make any progress. If scope in America signifies the existence of external opportunities, scope in India means the kind of challenge which will awaken a man's potential to the fullest. The latter is far more precious than the former.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TIME

Lord Chesterfield was born in London in 1694 and died there in 1773. His letters addressed to his son, which were later published, described the art of success. In one letter, for instance, he writes, 'I recommend you to take care of the minutes, for the hours will take care of themselves.'

That is to say that if you can save your minutes, your hours will of themselves be saved. Taking care of the parts is just as good as taking care of the whole. This is because the whole is made up of parts.

Mostly people tend to neglect the part in favour of the whole. This mentality ultimately results in failure at some later stage.

Never waste a moment of your available time. By availing of your moments you can be the possessor of your months and years. Wasting minutes will cause you to lose months if not years.

If you are wasting, daily, just five minutes of your hour, this will amount to wasting two hours in twenty four hours. This will eventually come to 60 hours in a month, and 720 hours in a year. This is how the majority of people have been wasting most of their available time. A man whose life span is eighty hardly makes full use of 40 years of his time.

Time is your greatest asset. Be meticulous about saving it. All great success ultimately boils down to an accumulation of small successes. Once you are ready to achieve a small success, a big success will of itself come your way. Here is a practical example of how this apparently trivial piece of advice can have great results.

Molvi Lutfullah, born in 1802 in Dharagar (an ancient city of Malwah) was an ordinary tutor. He had not received any of his education in an English school even for a single day, yet his autobiography was published in 1857 by Smith Aldara and CO., London. It was titled: '*Autobiography of Lutfullah: A Mohammedan Gentleman.*' This book included a foreword by Mr. Edward B. Eastwick, F.R.S., F.S.A., who, in commending the excellence of the English written by Molvi Lutfullah, expressed his amazement at how an Indian could write such an exhaustive book in a foreign language.

How did Molvi Lutfullah come to be capable of writing a book which was not only published in London, but which was held praiseworthy for its language by the English publisher? The secret is expressed in this saying: "Little by little becomes great."

Molvi Lutfullah learnt English by his own efforts. He used to teach Hindustani, Persian and Marathi languages to the English employees of the East India Company. The number of his students is put at 100. It was this contact with the English that made him feel interested in learning the English language. He began studying English privately. By working hard continuously for eight years, he managed to have full command over it. He has written in his book that during those eight years, not even a single night passed without having committed to memory 10 words of the English language, or without having thoroughly learnt a few pages from Dr. Gilchrist's Grammer, a 'Ten words' appear to be of no significance, but when multiplied over eight years this step can turn a man into a foreign language writer capable of claiming appreciation even from native speakers who are masters of the language.

## THE TIGER'S WAY

A report in *The Times of India* (18 March 1991) stated, “tigers do not like to walk on the jungle grass. They fear that a thorn might pierce their soft feet. Therefore, they always walk on open paths or roads.”

Tigers, like all animals, are shaped by nature's lessons. They always follow methods directly ingrained in them by their Creator. Therefore, it is accurate to say that the tiger's cautious approach is nature's preferred way. For humans, this idea is reflected in Divine guidance: take your precautions (Quran, 4:71).

The world was created by God with a specific wisdom, which is why it contains both clear, straightforward paths and thorny bushes. These thorny bushes will inevitably remain in this world; removing them is not possible. Therefore, what needs to be done is similar to what a tiger in the jungle does, as taught by God: protect yourself from the thorny bushes and continue the journey by seeking and following the clear and open paths.

Just as a tiger avoids walking on jungle grass, we should navigate our lives by steering clear of conflicts with others. We should aim not to provoke anger through our actions. If others do become angry with us, we should soothe their anger with patience and use wise strategies to protect ourselves from their wrath.

The actions of the “king of the jungle” are not acts of cowardice but showcase true bravery. Similarly, when a person adopts this approach in society, it is not cowardice but genuine courage. The strategy of avoidance is that of the lion, not the jackal.



The Lord of the Worlds has one universal rule that applies to humans and all other beings alike. It is to shape one's life by ignoring unpleasant matters.

Imagine a garden of roses. You enter it, and the beautiful petals and fragrant flowers captivate you. At the same time, however, the thorns might prick you, causing your hand to be injured or your clothes to get caught.

In a rose garden, there are two ways to interpret the presence of thorns. One is to see them as caused by the gardener's actions. The other is to view them as a result of the natural law.

If you blame the gardener for the thorns, you'll foster resentment and complaints. But if you see them as a part of the natural law, you'll accept the presence of thorns and focus on avoiding them to reach your goal. One view encourages protesting, while the other motivates finding a solution.

The issues raised by the majority community in India are often seen by Muslims as problems caused by all their writers and speakers. As a result, they choose to protest. However, this approach is completely ineffective. It's like obsessing over the thorns on a rose. Thorns will always be on the rose bush, just as harsh words and challenges will inevitably exist in human society.

There is only one way to deal with these difficult and divisive issues: ignore them and keep moving forward in life while overlooking them. Such social issues are part of God's creative plan and, therefore, can never be fully eliminated. However, by accepting their presence, we can certainly continue our journey through life.

The ignorant person gets caught up in unwelcome matters, while the wise person moves past them without getting entangled. Basically, this is the key to success and failure in this world: getting tangled up in problems causes failure, while ignoring problems leads to success.

## WATER INSTEAD OF BLOOD

Mr Muhammad Afzal Ladiwala, 35, who lives in Bombay, recounted this incident at a meeting on February 24, 1991. On January 22, 1991, there was a cultural program at Rang Bhon (Dhobi Talao), which Afzal attended. The program ended around 11:30 p.m. After it finished, he went to Bombay VT station and took a train to Kurla; by then, it was roughly 12:30 a.m. The distance from the station to his lodging (Hillow Pul) is about two kilometers. He decided to take a three-wheeler and waited on the road. Just then, a three-wheeler appeared, and he had paan in his mouth. To call the three-wheeler, he quickly spat out the paan, and by chance, a passenger who was standing nearby ended up having the entire mouthful land on his foot.

The passenger immediately flew into a rage and said angrily, "You eat paan and you don't even know how to behave when you eat it." Afzal, who is a regular reader of Al-Risala, answered not with hot words but with cool ones. He said, "I admit my mistake. Eating paan was wrong,

and what I did afterward was wrong too.” The man grew angrier, but instead of replying to his provoking words with more provocation, Afzal said, “Please forgive me.” The man retorted that it was easy to do something wrong to someone and then say, “forgive me.”

Mr Afzal replied, “Brother, I am not asking for a formal forgiveness; I ask for it from my heart. Now please allow me to wash your foot.” When Afzal offered to wash his foot, the man softened a little, and after some more words, he finally agreed to let Afzal wash his foot. There was a tea shop nearby; Afzal went straight there and said, “Uncle, give me a glass of water.” When he brought the glass, the man had cooled down completely and said, “Give it to me; I will wash it myself.”

The man took the glass in his hand and washed it. One glass wasn’t enough to make him completely clean, so Afzal ran and brought another, continuing this process until the man’s foot was thoroughly clean. This incident happened outside the railway station. During the conversation, Afzal told the man, “Brother, if you were a M (Muslim), or even if you were a NM (Non-Muslim), I would have to do the same because Islam commands us to do so.” Hearing this, the man embraced Afzal and said, “Brother, I am a non-Muslim, and this is the first time in my life I have met a Muslim like you. If other Muslims were like you, all quarrels would end.”

Now the man was completely changed. Earlier, he had been burning with anger and a thirst for revenge, but now, feeling ashamed, he said to Afzal, “Brother, please forgive me. I caused you great trouble. Because of me, you had

to bring water, and you even missed your three-wheeler.” Afzal replied, “Please don’t embarrass me. The real fault in this matter was mine, and bringing the water was my duty, which I have fulfilled.” The man who, at the beginning of the incident, had been blaming the other, in the end admitted his own fault, felt ashamed, and began asking for forgiveness.

At the time this occurred, there was severe communal tension in the Jogeshwari area of Bombay, about fifteen kilometers from Kurla. Under those circumstances, if Afzal had responded to provocation with more provocation, the outcome could have been what has happened in many similar situations elsewhere: communal unrest, with loss of life and property. It could have been that instead of reaching home, Afzal, God forbid, would have been taken to the hospital, and Hindu-Muslim rioting in the area could have destroyed hundreds of families.

After telling the story, Afzal said: at that moment, I remembered the teachings of Al-Risala. It was the mindset Al-Risala had given me that kept me from becoming inflamed at the moment of provocation and, as a result, saved me from a terrible outcome. The glass of water I brought prevented hundreds of people from reaching that ghastly end where blood would be spilled on the streets. Words can act like fire or like ice: some words can stoke a man’s anger into a furnace, while others can cool his blazing temper. It is up to the speaker which of the two he chooses.

## AN EASY SOLUTION

Altaf Husain Hali Panipati (1837–1914) was a man of revolutionary thinking. He started a reform movement in Urdu literature and heavily criticized the tradition of classical Urdu poetry. He claimed that Urdu poetry had become mainly exaggeration, romanticism, and fanciful imagination, while it should be meaningful. As an example, he produced the *Musaddas*, also called “*Madd-o-Jazr-e-Islam*,” a very famous long poem written in 1887.

This criticism greatly angered those who took pride in Urdu poetry and considered it their glory. Hostile articles began to appear against Hali. The newspaper *Oudh Punch* of Lucknow often wrote about him in the worst possible manner, using titles such as:

*Abtar hamare hamlon se haali ka haal hai*

*Maidan Panipat ki tarah paimaal hai*

Shattered by our assaults is Hali's very state,

Trampled like Panipat's field beneath the  
weight.

Hali never responded to these abusive attacks. He silently continued his work. After a few years, his critics grew tired and fell silent. Someone asked Hali how his opponents had finally quietened down. In reply, without naming anyone, he recited this verse:

*Kya poochhte ho kyun kar sab nukta cheen hue chup*

*Sab kuch kaha unhon ne par hum ne dam na maara*

Why wonder now that every critic's voice fell still?

They spoke their piece—yet we remained  
unmoved, unheard.

The easiest and most effective reply to false opposition is to give no reply at all. False opposition is always baseless; it is destined to collapse on its own. To respond to it is like extending its life. If one remains patient, it will one day fall like a rootless tree. It can never long survive on God's earth.

The greatest killer of falsehood is time. Wait for time, and you will see that it destroys the mischief far more completely than any effort you could make to destroy it yourself.

This method is not confined to a single situation. In whatever matter the strategy of silent patience is adopted, it ultimately proves effective.

Some Christians youth wrote in black letters on Delhi's bridges and walls the phrase in English: "Jesus is coming soon." Afterwards, some Hindu youths, stirred by a spirit of retaliation, added words everywhere so that the phrase read: "Jesus is coming soon to become Hindu." The construction of the sentence itself showed that this was not the work of educated Hindus, for grammatically correct English would be: "To become a Hindu."

If a similar incident had taken place with Muslims, at once a certain superficial class of people would have begun shouting that it was an insult to the Prophet, an affront to Muslim feelings, and a challenge to their religious honour. Then some Muslim youths would have been provoked into retaliation, and soon the city would have descended into Hindu-Muslim riots. After that, so-called Muslim leaders would have issued statements proving the incompetence of the administration. Relief funds would be opened, and some would begin to claim credit

for services to the community. Hot headlines would be printed in Urdu newspapers, increasing their circulation. And as for the Muslim masses, their share would be nothing but further ruin.

But the Christians took no notice of this “provocative act.” The result was that the whole incident simply became a non-event.

On the morning of 19 February 1990, I stood near the Oberoi Hotel flyover in New Delhi, looking at the writing on its walls. On the wide road below, traffic rushed past on both sides. No one had the time to stop and read the words painted on the bridge. The writing remained there merely as a meaningless mark, waiting for rain and wind to erase it—before anyone even read it or absorbed any impression from it.

Any “provocation” so empty of substance, yet responded to with anger and violence, shows beyond doubt that those who react in this way are the most foolish of all fools.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) was the third President of the USA from 1801 to 1809. A man of great erudition, he had a knowledge of English, Latin, Greek, French, Spanish and Anglo Saxon. Historians have rightly called him an “extraordinarily learned man.” He studied all the disciplines from philosophy and science to religion and, in his later days, attempted an analysis of the New Testament

to discover what Jesus had really said, as opposed to what he is reported to have said.

In his will, Jefferson expressed the desire to have on his gravestone (Monticello), not an inscription to say that he had been president of America, but simply the words:

“Here was buried Thomas Jefferson... father  
of the University of Virginia”

Knowledge is the greatest treasures. This is one of the great truths of life. For those who have learnt the importance of knowledge, even the presidentship of the USA will appear lacking in significance.

Knowledge is the only branch of human existence which, having no outer limits, never becomes tedious for man. There is no field in which it cannot be put to use. It gives man a keen awareness, which helps him to discover the world, and enables him to understand things in depth. Knowledge, the currency with which you can buy everything in this world, is what sets man's feet upon the high road to success.

Knowledge is the key to all progress—for both individuals and nations. Whoever possesses knowledge, it is as if they have everything.

On February 5, 1987, Mr. Abdul Rahman Antulay (Barrister-at-Law and former Chief Minister of Maharashtra, who died in 2014) recounted an incident. Around 1954, when he was a law student at the Council of Legal Education in London, his English professor shared this story during a lecture while explaining a legal issue.



A large industrial factory suddenly shut down. The engineers tried to restart it but were unsuccessful. Finally, a renowned expert was called in. He arrived, examined the factory, and inspected its machines. Then he paused at one point and requested a hammer. When the hammer was brought, he struck once at a specific spot. Immediately, the machine started up, and the factory was operational again.

Later, the expert sent a bill for one hundred pounds. The factory manager thought the amount was excessive. He wrote to the expert: "You hardly did anything. You only struck once with a hammer. We cannot understand how you can charge one hundred pounds for that. Please furnish my client with further and better particulars."

In his reply, the expert explained that the bill was fully justified. He said that the one shilling was for using the hammer to strike the correct spot, and the remainder was for identifying the fault and pinpointing its exact location. In his words:

"£99.19 to diagnose the problem, and one shilling to pick up the hammer and strike the right spot."

In this world, the highest value belongs to knowledge. Out of a hundred, if one part is the value of labor, ninety-nine parts must be counted as the value of knowledge.

## AFTER DEPRIVATION

Samuel Butler, a well-known English writer of the 1800s, once said: “Life is the art of drawing sufficient conclusions from insufficient premises.”

Butler based this on natural reasoning. However, the concept presented by the Shariah regarding life is exactly the same. The Quran tells us that in this world, God has established a system where ease is paired with hardship:

“Indeed, with hardship there is ease” (Quran 94:6).

Once, the Prophet Muhammad saw a mountain path called *al-Dayyiqah* (the difficult one). He said, “No, in fact, it is *al-Yusra* (the easy one).” (*Seerah Ibn Hisham*, Vol. 2, p. 482) Islam teaches that a person should find ease within hardship and see a tough path as an easy one.

The life of the Prophet of Islam is the highest example of this teaching. He faced the harshest difficulties, but through wise planning he turned them to his advantage. He transformed disadvantage into advantage. The orientalist E.E. Kellet, referring to this quality of the Prophet, wrote: “He faced adversity with the determination to wring success out of failure.” (*A Short History of Religions*, p. 334)

In this world, on one side is man, who creates difficulties for other men. On the other side is God’s system, which has placed within every difficulty its own solution. To complain of human-created difficulties is, in reality, to see only man’s

actions and not God's. For if one were to see God's work, instead of complaining, he would set himself to use it.

In this world, after every failure, the possibility of new success remains. All that is required is that one should seize that possibility and make himself successful once again.

In *Al-Risala* (December 1988), the story of Canadian athlete Ben Johnson (b. 1961) was published. In the world championship race, he won first place with great success. However, the very next day, his gold medal was taken away, and a harsh decision was announced: he would be barred from all competitions for the next two years. For Ben Johnson, this was the greatest setback of his life. But he did not waste time protesting against the "unjust judges." Instead, he immediately began to plan anew for his training.

In November 1988, Italy's television network filmed an interview at his residence in Toronto, which was later reported in newspapers. According to *The Times of India* (29 November 1988), the world champion sprinter wept as he told the television camera that he had never knowingly broken any sporting rule. Yet he continued his training and dreamed of returning at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona. He said that his athletic record on the track was the result of thirteen years of continuous hard work.

He appeared visibly distressed. Remembering the painful moments after the Seoul Olympics, he broke down in

tears. Interviewer Gianni Minoli said that filming had to be stopped for five minutes because Ben Johnson could not control his sobbing.

Johnson explained that to get back on track, he trains six days a week, four hours a day. He said: "My work is only to run. Sitting idle is something I cannot even think of. My wish is to compete again. They have taken away my gold medal, not my speed."

The person who takes something from you always seizes what you own, but not your very self. Your being, along with all its abilities, still stays with you. Use what still belongs to you, and after every loss, you can create a new story of your own.

## DO NOT PROVOKE

In India, lions are found most abundantly in the Gir Forest Sanctuary in Gujrat. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were fewer than twenty lions there. But according to a census in May 1990, the number had risen to 280. Because of this increase, human life in the area came under threat.

A *Times of India* report dated August 22, 1990, noted that over the previous two years, these lions had killed sixteen people and injured 140 others. Following these incidents, a

team led by Mr. Ravi Chellam was appointed to investigate. Their findings indicated that although lions caused several attacks, many of these incidents were triggered by human actions that provoked the animals, rather than outright aggression. As the report states:

“The researchers have attributed most of the lion attacks on humans to provocations of the animals.”

A lion is a fierce predator and the biggest natural threat to humans. But despite its ferocity, it stays true to its nature—and that nature is not to attack people unless it is provoked.

This is one of the signs of creation, demonstrating how to protect oneself from the “predatory human being.” The only sure way to stay safe from a cruel person is to keep him within the limits of his nature. Before provocation, every person is guided by his nature; after provocation, he goes outside of it. In reality, it is nature itself that restrains man from cruelty and violence. Why take a step that breaks this restraint?

Before provocation, a lion is a harmless creature. Once provoked, it can become man-eating. Do not provoke the lion, and you will stay safe from harm.

Gentleness and patience are not signs of weakness. They are vital principles of life—taught by the Creator of nature to all His creatures.

There is an Arabic proverb: *al-samahu rabahun*—gentleness and open-mindedness in dealings always bring benefits.

This saying comes from human experience. Over thousands of years, people have tried both approaches: gentleness and

harshness. Experience has shown that harshness often yields the opposite of what one wants, while gentleness leads to results that are helpful and positive.

Imagine a simple scene at a train station. Two men are walking—one in front, the other behind. The man behind is carrying a large trunk. As he hurries forward, the trunk hits the foot of the man in front, causing him to fall onto the platform.

The man behind immediately stopped and, embarrassed, said: “Excuse me.” Hearing this, the man in front relaxed and replied: “OK, no harm done.” Both then continued on their way.

Now imagine the opposite. Suppose, in the same situation, both become angry. One shouts, “Are you blind?” The other retorts, “You are ill-mannered, you don’t know how to speak!” If such words are exchanged, the quarrel will escalate until they fight. At first, only dust was on their clothes; later, blood may be on their bodies. At first, only their clothes were torn; later, their bones may be broken.

Whether in family life or outside, whether in disputes within a nation or between nations—the principle remains the same. Gentleness and generosity of spirit end conflicts; harshness only makes them worse.

Gentleness is like pouring water on a fire; harshness is like pouring gasoline on it. The first puts out the flames, while the second makes them burn brighter.

## A FRIEND WITHIN THE ENEMY

Dr. Syed Abdul Latif (1891–1971) was born in Kurnool, Deccan. He gained fame for his English translation of the Quran and his other scholarly works. As a boy, without telling his father, he enrolled in a local high school. His father, who disliked the English language and their education, became angry when he found out and asked harshly, “What will you do by studying English?” The thin, frail boy replied, “I will translate the Quran into English.”

In 1915, he earned his B.A. with distinction, and in 1920, he was appointed as a lecturer in English at Osmania University in Hyderabad. Two years later, in 1922, a new opportunity emerged when the university chose four teachers for advanced studies in Europe, granting each an interest-free loan of thirty thousand rupees. Among them was Syed Abdul Latif.

In London, he sought admission to a B.A. (Honours) program. However, the head of the English Department at King’s College and other professors were so impressed by his ability that they exempted him from both the B.A. and M.A., allowing him to go directly to a Ph.D. His thesis, ‘The Influence of English Literature on Urdu Literature,’ was given three years for completion, but he finished it in two. The college approved it, and he was awarded the doctorate. Returning to Hyderabad a year early, he was immediately appointed professor at Osmania University (*Anjuman* by Hasanuddin Ahmed IAS, 1974, pp. 85-86).

In 1922, the English were regarded as the greatest enemies of Muslims. Yet these very “enemies” displayed such generosity toward a Muslim student—a generosity seldom found even in Muslim institutions. The truth is that even among enemies, one may find friends. But only those who rise above the categories of friend and foe, and see others simply as human beings, can discover such a friend.

The common tendency is to see your own group as “ours” and others as “outsiders.” But with an open heart, everyone is your own, and no one is a stranger.

Swami Rama Tirtha (1873–1906), also known as Ram Soami, was an exceptionally talented person. One of his most profound sayings was: “On the doors of life it says ‘Pull,’ yet most of us keep pushing instead.”

Fluent in English, he traveled to America in 1903 to share his message of faith. When his ship docked at the port of San Francisco, he disembarked, and an American came up to him for an introduction. Their conversation went like this:

American: “Where is your luggage?”

Swami Rama Tirtha: “This is all my luggage.”

American: “And where do you keep your money?”

Swami Rama Tirtha: “I have no money.”

American: “Then how do you manage your life?”

Swami Rama Tirtha: “I love everyone, and that love takes care of everything.”



American: “Then you must at least have a friend in America?”

Swami Rama Tirtha: “Yes, I have a friend—and that friend is you.”

With these words, he wrapped his arms around the American’s shoulders. The man was so touched that he became a loyal friend. He took Swami Rama Tirtha to his home, stayed with him during his time in America, and eventually became his student.

This world has no greater power than love. Through love, you can turn an opponent into a friend and make a stranger your own—if your love is genuine and not fake.

## SUCCESS THROUGH FAILURE

Mohan Singh Oberoi was born on August 10, 1900, in a village in Jhelum. His father was a contractor in Peshawar, but when Oberoi was just six months old, his father died. With limited resources, he was able to complete his matriculation in Sargodha and his intermediate studies in Lahore. However, financial difficulties forced him to give up further education.

Looking back, Oberoi recalled that this was a moment of deep anxiety. He realized that with such limited qualifications, he could not secure a job: “This was a moment of anxiety in my life as I realised that my qualifications would not get me a job.”

Excluded from government employment, he turned to business. In 1924, he started in a small role at a hotel. By 1939, when World War II began, he had already opened his own hotel in Calcutta. From that point, his ventures continued to grow steadily.

Over time, Oberoi built a hotel empire. Today, hotels bearing his name are present in almost every major Indian city and many abroad—in Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Gulf, Egypt, and Africa.

Denied a spot in one field, he made an even greater impact in another. One of the biggest secrets of success is that real achievement goes to those who can get up again after falling. If you don't find an opportunity in one field, start working in another that allows you to fulfill the hopes you had for the first.

Dr. Salim Ali (1896–1987) achieved remarkable distinction in the field of ornithology. India awarded him the Padma Bhushan. Britain presented him with a Gold Medal. Holland honoured him with the Golden Ark. The World Wildlife Fund gave him a prize of \$50,000. Three Indian universities awarded him honorary doctorates. He was also nominated to the Rajya Sabha, among many other honours.

Yet this remarkable success started with a setback. Born in the busy Bombay neighbourhood of Khetwadi, Ali finished his B.A. and looked for work. But, in his words, “every institution and every office seemed to have a board hung up saying No vacancy.”

That disappointment opened a new path. One day, he caught a small bird and noticed an unusual feature: its yellow neck. Curious, he began to research. He read extensively about birds; his interest deepened, and soon he acquired a simple pair of binoculars. Observing birds and recording notes became his daily routine.

Over time, he mastered ornithology so well that he expanded the field into new areas. Two of his books became classics: one describes 1,200 bird species of the Indian subcontinent, and another, *The Book of Indian Birds*, has been reprinted eleven times and read worldwide.

Though denied ordinary employment, he discovered a higher calling. Rejected by institutions on the grounds, he achieved international recognition by studying the skies.

## MAINTAIN DISTANCE

Many vehicles move together on the road: from the front, back, right, and left. Therefore, many rules are put in place to ensure safe road travel. These traffic rules are posted everywhere along the roadside so that passing drivers can read them and stay safe.

While driving along a road in Delhi, I saw a similar sign posted: *Maintain Distance*.

When I read it, I realized that these two words carry a lot of wisdom. This forms a complete philosophy that applies not only to road travel but also to life's journey.

In the present world, no one lives in complete isolation. Everyone must work among many others. Each person has their own interests and an ego. Everyone wants to move forward by pushing others down.

This situation requires us to always follow the principle of “maintain distance” in life's journey. We should keep enough space from others to continue our path without the risk of collision.

This very principle is emphasized in the Quran (28:55) as i'raaz—turning away with restraint. If you do not keep this wisdom in mind, your benefit may clash with another's benefit. A single harsh word from you could cause someone else's anger. A moment of carelessness might lead you into unnecessary conflict with others.

The consequence is similar to a road: an accident. A road accident stops a person's trip and can even end the traveler's life. Likewise, ignoring this principle in life will stop your progress. You might also lose your life or be erased from history like a mistake.

There are numerous examples of this throughout history. Whenever someone pushes their boundaries, they often face a terrible outcome.

Nitin Walia is a 3-year-old boy who lives with his parents, Vijay Pal Walia and Sunita, in Shahdara. He wanted to see

the zoo, so his parents took him to the Delhi Zoo. While observing various animals, they reached the enclosure of the white tiger. They paused to watch the tiger and its cubs. At this point, Nitin climbed over the railing and put his hand into the cage. The tiger, Neema, pounced and bit his hand. People hit the tiger with sticks, but by then, it had chewed the child's hand up to the shoulder. After surgery, the child survived but lost his right hand permanently.

According to a reporter from *The Times of India* (March 21, 1988), the child's parents blamed the zoo staff for the accident. They said there was no guard present near the cage at that time.

“The parents claim that there were no guards around.”

Often, when people have an accident, they immediately look for someone else to blame. However, in this world, such efforts are completely useless. Only those who control themselves can avoid accidents. Those who lose control will inevitably have accidents, no matter how many words they use to blame others.

At the zoo, a railing is placed four feet away from the cage of ferocious animals to keep people at a safe distance. Similarly, in every phase of life, there is a boundary. Those who stay within this limit stay safe. Those who go beyond the boundary cannot protect themselves from accidents, whether inside or outside the zoo.

## THE COURAGE TO FACE CHALLENGES

J.R.D. Tata ranks among India's greatest industrialists. At 85 years old, he was still flying airplanes and skiing on snow. When asked about the secret to his vitality at such an advanced age, he replied:

“One of the things that keep me young is the fact that I am prepared to live dangerously. You must be prepared to take risks—risk in business, sport, marriage, everything—to make life worthwhile.” (*The Hindustan Times*, 13 July 1991)

There is an American saying: “No risk, no gain.” Why do risk and danger lead a person to success? Because risk awakens hidden strength. It transforms an ordinary individual into an extraordinary one.

A person who never faces challenges and always avoids risks becomes lazy and complacent. His natural talents stay asleep. He is like a seed that never breaks open to grow into a tree, or a reservoir that never stirs into waves strong enough to cause a storm.

But when danger appears, when life is threatened by risk, a person's hidden potential awakens. The pressure of circumstances forces him to act, to draw on every ounce of strength.

Every person has great potential, but it remains dormant until activated by challenge. To awaken it, there's only one way: they must face danger.

A life of comfort may seem peaceful, but its high cost is an incomplete character. Such a person never attains the heights he could have reached.

On January 6, 1990, newspapers reported the surprising news that Mohammad Azharuddin had been unanimously appointed captain of the Indian national cricket team. He would lead the team on its tour of New Zealand. Many expected the position to go to Krishnamachari Srikkanth, who had recently captained India in the Sharjah Cup, the Nehru Cup, and the Pakistan tour.

At just 27, the Hyderabad batsman—often called the “wonder boy” of Indian cricket—became the second youngest Indian captain, after Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi, who took on the role at 21.

What lifted Azharuddin to such heights was his ability to face challenges without losing heart and to emerge stronger. In December 1989, during the Pakistan tour, his Test career seemed at risk. In the first innings of the Faisalabad Test, he was dismissed for a duck. But in the second innings, with a brilliant century, he rescued his career from collapse.

According to *The Times of India* (January 2, 1990), the selection committee chairman at the time, Raj Singh Dungarpur (1935–2009), explained the decision:

“He loves getting out of challenging situations, as was seen on the tour of Pakistan where he was on the verge of being dropped from the first Test, and that’s an important ingredient in leadership.”

This world is a world of challenges. Only those who confront them with courage succeed. The more deeply this quality is rooted in a person, the greater the success they are destined to achieve.

## THE POWER OF CONSCIENCE

Abul Barakat Alvi, a resident of Nizampur in Azamgarh district (U.P.), recounted an incident from his area during a meeting on August 29, 1989—an event that carries a deep lesson.

To the northwest of Azamgarh lies the village of Raida, situated on the banks of the Mujhoi River near the border of Faizabad. In this village, there are only four Muslim households compared to two hundred Hindu households.

In November 1987, a nilgai (blue bull) wandered into a sugarcane field. A local Muslim named Jhannu, a tailor by profession, wanted it hunted. He told a man from the nearby village of Makhdoompur, who owned a gun. The man came, fired, and wounded the animal.

Had the nilgai died instantly, no problem would have arisen. But since it fled, leaving a trail of blood, the Hindus became upset. When they learned that Jhannu had encouraged the shooting, they called a village council (panchayat). Jhannu was summoned, and the decision was made: he must pay a fine of one thousand rupees.



In that village, there was no shallow leader to mislead Jhunnu the tailor, nor was there any Muslim influence strong enough to deceive him in the name of communal pride. So, nature itself guided Jhunnu the tailor. He stood before the people and said: “I accept the decision of the panchayat. I am a poor man; I do not have ready cash. But I will sell the belongings of my house and pay it.”

Three days later, the Hindus’ conscience was stirred. They called another panchayat and said among themselves: “Here Muslims are very few and weak. If outsiders hear that we collected a fine from them, they will look down on us. People will say we oppressed them simply because they were weak. This will bring us dishonour.” By unanimous agreement, they decided that Jhannu’s fine should be canceled. And so it was.

Every person has a conscience inside. That conscience is essentially your representative within others. Use this natural representative, and you’ll have no reason to complain about anyone.

C.F. Dole (Charles Fletcher Dole, 1845–1927) once said:

“Goodwill is the mightiest force in the universe.”

This is not just the saying of one person—it is a fundamental truth about human nature. The Creator has made people in such a way that if they are treated badly, they flare up in anger; but if treated kindly, they are moved to gratitude and become more gentle toward the one who showed kindness.

This universal natural principle makes no exceptions for anyone—not even for friends or enemies. Speak harshly

to a friend, insult him, or hurt him, and you'll see how quickly he forgets the friendship. A spirit of retaliation will arise within him. The same person who once praised you will now be ready to attack you with thorns and fire.

On the other hand, speak softly to someone you see as an enemy. Address one of their needs, help them during a tough time—even something as simple as offering a glass of cold water when they're thirsty—and their attitude will shift. The person who seemed your enemy can become your friend and supporter.

By placing this trait in human nature, God has given us a powerful support. This quality has equipped even the weakest person with the strongest weapon of influence. Lions and wolves may be defeated with bullets—but human beings can be won over with nothing more than a shower of kindness.

It's so easy to win hearts. Yet, the foolish turn this simplest task into the hardest.

## APPLYING THE BRAIN

Sir C. V. Raman (1888-1970), the well-known Indian scientist, was born in Tiruchirapally and died in Bangalore. Besides being Director of the Raman Research Institute, he held many prestigious academic posts. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for physics in 1930.

Raman believed that science came from the brain and not from equipment. When one of his pupils in Spectroscopy complained that he had only a 1 KW lamp, whereas his competitor abroad had a 10 KW lamp, Raman told him: 'Don't worry. Put a 10 KW brain to the problem.' (*Sunday Review*, March 17, 1991).

This is wholly true. Everything in this world depends on the brain. A lack of equipment can be compensated for by the brain, but no amount of equipment can ever compensate for a lack of brain power.

None of the scientists born two to three hundred years before in the west had access to the superior equipment which is available to the university research student of today. Almost all of them worked with far less equipment. For instance, Newton worked with Kerosene lamps, as electricity had yet to be discovered. Yet it was scientists such as these who established the bases of modern western Science.

This principle thus applies to everyone. Whenever a person feels ill-equipped in terms of money or resources, they should strive to compensate by applying extra brain power, an ample substitute for all other shortcomings. Brain power, nature's greatest gift to humankind, is so astonishing in its reach that there is no deficiency for which it cannot provide a remedy.

Here is another instance of the power of the brain. Mr. Kamal Alig, who studied at Aligarh University from 1976 to 1981, gives us an example from his student days of how the brain can compensate for all shortcomings. It seems

that in those days he was a chain smoker (he has now given up smoking) and was in the habit of going on smoking late into the night, when he was studying for examinations. One night, at midnight, he had a great urge to smoke, but he had run out of matches, and even the heater was not working. His urge to smoke went on increasing, and his mind remained preoccupied with this problem for half an hour. Finally, he managed to think of a way to save it. His room was lit by a 100 watt bulb, and he thought that if he wrapped some light material around it, it would become very hot and start to burn. So he took an old, worn-out piece of cloth and did just that. Within five minutes the cloth had ignited. Mr. Kamal immediately lit his cigarette and began smoking.

This is called 'mental labour,' as opposed to physical labour with which people are better acquainted. Of the two kinds of labour, the superior kind is mental labour. All the great achievements in this world have been brought about through mental labour. Physical labour involves only the wielding of the mattock and the hammer. But it is mental labour which runs offices, factories and modern scientific establishments. If the former can bring us one rupee, the latter can bring us a million.

## THE LESSON OF HISTORY

In the early 17th century, Sir Thomas Roe (1581–1644) traveled from London to India and stayed for three years (1615–1618). He built relationships with the Mughal emperor Jahangir. One of his skills was knowing Turkish, which allowed him to speak directly with Jahangir.

When Roe arrived, Jahangir was in Ajmer. Roe stayed there for three years, sometimes invited to the royal court for conversations. Soon, Roe realized that Jahangir was very interested in painting. One day, he gave a painting to the emperor, who admired it greatly.

Roe sensed that the opportunity he had been waiting for had finally arrived. He requested something that seemed small and insignificant: permission to set up a trading post in the coastal city of Surat. Jahangir granted this request with a royal decree, allowing the English East India Company to establish their factory there.

At first glance, permission to establish a trading post in a single city might seem insignificant. The vast expanse of India remained securely under Mughal control, with all its grandeur and power intact. However, this small start in Surat provided the English with the foothold they would eventually use to dominate everything else. History later showed that those who accept less often succeed in achieving more.

This is the lesson of history—but few truly learn it. In this world, what matters most is securing the initial moment of an event. Whoever controls that beginning will, sooner or later, reach its ultimate conclusion.

India's independence movement can be traced back to 1799, when Sultan Tipu was killed fighting the British. After that, for over a century, resistance against the British continued through violent uprisings—bomb attacks on officials, plots to involve foreign powers, and similar disturbances.

Such methods were inherently dramatic and violent. At the very mention of them, the British would become alert and suppress them with full force. But when Gandhi entered the political scene, the entire course of the struggle changed. While earlier leaders demanded freedom through violence, Gandhi chose the opposite path: nonviolence. He declared that the freedom movement would proceed on a basis that the British considered trivial and unworthy of attention.

A notable example of this method was the Dandi March. For centuries, salt was produced along the Gujarat coast, but the British government had taken control of this industry. To peacefully oppose the law, Gandhi set out on foot from Sabarmati, traveling 240 miles in 24 days, until he reached the Dandi coast. There, by picking up a piece of salt, he symbolically broke the government's law.

When Gandhi announced this plan, British officials gathered to discuss it. One officer remarked:

“Let him make his salt. Mr. Gandhi will have to find a great deal more than a pinch of salt to bring down the British Empire.”

In this world, true success depends on a move that appears minor at first but proves unbeatable in the end. What may seem to an opponent like just a pinch of salt can, when the result comes out, turn out to be a mountain of salt.

## THE MIRACLE OF SERVICE

In the English fortnightly *India Today* (15 August 1990), page 68 featured a thought-provoking incident.

Mohammad Hanif Sulaiman, 35, is a Muslim barber from Lucknow. For the past ten years, he has been cutting Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav's hair. Initially, Mr. Yadav was only a political leader, but now he has become the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh.

One day, Mohammad Hanif Sulaiman told him, "You have achieved a high position. Please help me get a shop in Hazratganj Bazaar, Lucknow." Mr. Yadav agreed but later forgot his promise. Suleman waited patiently for a few months and then stopped visiting the Chief Minister's residence. When Mr. Yadav inquired about this, he learned that Suleman was upset over the broken promise and had therefore withdrawn.

When Mr. Yadav realized this, he directed his officials to find a shop for Suleman in Hazratganj. After extensive searching, they discovered that no shops were available in the area. However, the Power Department of the Lucknow Development Authority had an office in Hazratganj. By Mr. Yadav's order, this office was vacated and given to Suleman so he could open his shop there.

According to the reporter, at that time, 1,250 people were waiting outside shops in Hazratganj. However, Suleman jumped ahead of them all and, in just a day, bought a shop in Lucknow's most prominent market—worth about five lakh rupees then. He then started his business there under a signboard that read: Bombay Hair Dressers.

In response to a reporter's question, Suleman stated: "I deserved this much for all my seva (service)."

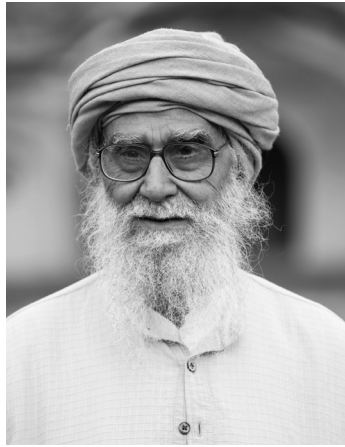
The miracle of service, in other words, can also be called the miracle of being helpful. If you can convince someone that you bring value to them, they will naturally be drawn to you. The easiest way to win people over is to become a source of value for them.

Every person is naturally repelled by one thing and deeply fond of another. The first is harm, and the second is benefit. If someone believes that you will cause them harm, or that you could be a problem for them in some way, they will begin to strongly dislike you. A person who causes harm can never be loved by anyone.

In contrast, when someone is seen as beneficial—even in small ways—people naturally gravitate toward them. A kind word, quick help for another's need, assisting someone through their struggles, or showing courtesy—any of these traits can make a person admired and respected. People start to see such a person as "one of their own," trust them with their secrets, and hold a soft spot for them in their hearts.

If you find yourself among people you consider strangers—or even enemies—then make yourself helpful to them. Use your words and actions to show that you are not a problem for them, but a valuable asset. If you succeed in doing this, you will discover that others have no complaints against you, nor will you have any against them. Soon, you will see that your entire environment has become your ally and supporter.





Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925-2021), an Islamic scholar, spiritual leader, and an Ambassador of Peace, was internationally recognized for his seminal contributions to world peace. The Government of India posthumously honoured him with the Padma Vibhushan Award in 2021 for his contributions to spirituality. Maulana authored over 200 books that delve into Islam's spiritual wisdom, the Prophet's non-violent approach, its relationship with modernity, and other contemporary issues. His English translation of the Quran and Quran Commentary are widely appreciated for their simplicity, clarity, and ease of understanding. In 2001, he founded the Centre for Peace and Spirituality International to promote a culture of peace and share the spiritual message of Islam across the world. Today, the CPS International network continues to carry this legacy forward.

*T*he shaping of one's life is the most important endeavor of every human being. Everyone longs to secure a meaningful and honorable place in the world, yet such a goal is never achieved by mere wishing. It calls for a clear vision, a well considered plan, and the courage to act with determination. Without these, no life can rise to true success on desire alone.

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ISBN 978-93-47638-27-5



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