

Understanding ISLAM

Festivals, Values and
Way of Life



COLLECTED BROADCASTS
FROM ALL INDIA RADIO (1968-1996)

MAULANA
WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

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(1968–1996)*

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WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

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FOREWORD

This collection contains the radio speeches delivered by the author. These speeches cover different topics, but what connects them all is that each one was originally broadcast on the radio.

My first speech on All India Radio, New Delhi, was broadcast on 9 June 1968. The title of that speech was “The Character of the Prophet of Islam”. After that, my speeches continued to be broadcast from time to time, eventually numbering nearly three dozen. This collection comprises the same speeches.

Some of the radio programmes, however, were in the form of discussions. One such programme was about Roza (fasting), held on 19 August 1978. In this programme, representatives from three religions shared their thoughts on fasting in a conversational format.

Another such programme was broadcast from New Delhi Radio on 18 and 24 September 1987. Around that time, an article by the writer was published in The Times of India (September 1987) titled “Not by Grievances Alone.”

Following the publication of this article, All India Radio, New Delhi, arranged an interview with the writer.

During the interview, the host asked questions about the challenges faced by Indian Muslims in relation to the article's theme. I answered those questions based on my own point of view. Since this interview was not recorded, it could not be included in this collection.

Radio is like an extension of the human voice. Through radio, a person can speak from a particular place, and with the help of transmission, that voice can be heard across the world—at the same moment, in the same tone, and in the same manner. Truly, modern means of communication are a great blessing from God. The surprising thing is that these modern tools have been among the least used for spreading the Word of God. Even in Islamic countries, the situation is not much different. This is a remarkable opportunity of the modern age, and yet it remains largely untapped.

All the radio speeches included in this collection were written in advance and read out in the radio studio. Apart from these, there are many speeches which were recorded extemporaneously. These days, I usually speak in that same way. There is no written record of such speeches, and I was not able to write them down afterwards either. For this reason, this kind of speech has not been included in the collection.

Wahiduddin Khan

New Delhi

30 October 1996

CHAPTER

ONE

THE CHARACTER OF THE PROPHET

That evening in Ta'if was terrifying—when the boys of the city were throwing stones at the Prophet of Islam and driving him out. He had travelled nearly fifty miles (about 85 kilometres) from Makkah to reach the summer capital of the chiefs of Ta'if, hoping to present the message of Islam to them. But instead of listening to his gentle call, the chiefs of Ta'if incited the city's mischievous boys to turn against him. They pursued him relentlessly until sunset, when the cover of darkness finally drew a veil between him and the street urchins.

His body was covered in wounds—from head to toe, he was bleeding. In that moment, exhausted and in pain, he took shelter in a grape garden.

Just imagine how delicate and challenging that time must have been for any person. He once told his wife Aisha that the evening in Ta'if was the most difficult night of his life. But even during such a painful moment, not a single harsh word escaped his lips against his enemies. Instead, he said: “I hope that God will bring from their descendants people

who will worship Him alone and not associate anything with Him.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 3231)

It was this very character of the Prophet that defeated his enemies so completely that all of Arabia accepted his message. No bias, hatred, or stubbornness could stand against his noble character. His upright nature kept winning people’s hearts (and minds) like magic.

Once, he said: “To maintain family ties is not just to be good to those who are good to you, but to be good even to those who break ties with you.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 5991)

A well-known story from Islamic history tells that some enemies of Islam once accused his noble wife, Aisha, of adultery. This was a false and baseless allegation. A man named Mistah, a relative of Abu Bakr, was also involved in spreading this slander. Abu Bakr used to support him financially because he was in need. When he found out about Mistah’s involvement, he stopped his financial help. Then a verse of the Quran (24:22) was revealed to the Prophet, teaching that if someone is in financial need, help should not be withheld because of their moral wrongdoing. Instead, they should be forgiven, and support should continue. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2661)

Another incident involving Abu Bakr is that once he was sitting with the Prophet when a man came and began to abuse him. Abu Bakr stayed silent the first time. Even

when the man insulted him again, he remained silent. But when it happened a third time, Abu Bakr replied. At that moment, the Prophet stood up and left. Abu Bakr asked, “O Messenger of God, were you upset with me?” The Prophet replied: “Abu Bakr, when you were silent, God’s angel was standing on your side. But when you replied, the angel went away.” (*Sunan Abi Dawud*, Hadith No. 4896)

“It is as if, when a person refrains from taking revenge in response to wrongdoing, God Himself steps in to avenge him on his behalf. But when a person chooses to retaliate on his own, God leaves the matter to him—and it is clear that no human being can avenge better than God.

Ali, cousin and Companion of the Prophet, narrates that once the Prophet took a loan of a few gold coins from a Jewish scholar. After some time, the Jew came to claim the repayment. The Prophet said, “At the moment, I have nothing to repay you.” The man responded, “I won’t leave you until you pay me back.” So, from Dhuhr prayer till the next morning, he stayed there holding him. By then, the Prophet’s rule had been established in Madinah. His Companions wanted to scold him and drive him away, but he stopped them. People asked, “O Prophet, a Jew is keeping you like a prisoner?” He said, “Yes, but I have been told not to do injustice.”

When the next day began, the Jew’s eyes were opened, and he was so deeply moved by the Prophet of Islam’s conduct that he chose to follow him. This man was one of

the wealthiest individuals in Madinah. Just a day earlier, he had confronted the Prophet over a few gold coins, but now—so profoundly touched by the Prophet’s noble character—he brought all his wealth before him and said, “You may spend it however you wish”. (*Dala’il al-Nubuwwah* by Al-Bayhaqi, Vol. 6, pp. 280–281)

Abdullah ibn Abi al-Hamsa narrates that once he made a business deal with the Prophet. The deal was not completed, and he asked the Prophet to wait while he went home. However, once home, he became so busy that he forgot his promise. After three days, he remembered and returned to that place—only to find the Prophet still waiting. He said, “You gave me a lot of trouble. I’ve been waiting for you here for three days.” (*Sunan Abi Dawud*, Hadith No. 4996)

Such actions are so powerful that even the hardest-hearted people cannot remain unmoved.

Aisha once narrated that a group of Jews came to meet the Prophet. They greeted him with the words, “As-saamu Alaikum” (death be upon you). Aisha couldn’t stay silent. She responded, “May you be destroyed, and may God’s curse be upon you.” When the Prophet heard this, he stopped her and said, “God loves kindness in everything.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 6024)

Truly, to win over an enemy’s heart, there is no weapon better than kind words. One can guard against physical

weapons—but no one can stand against the power of good character. In the face of such character, every person must eventually bow down.

Baraa bin Aazib recounts that during the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, the Prophet agreed with the Quraysh on three conditions. One of these was: If a Quraysh person joins the Muslims, they will return him. But if a Muslim comes to the Quraysh, they will not return him.

While the agreement was being written, a young Muslim named Abu Jandal arrived from Makkah. He had been imprisoned for accepting Islam. He came in chains, stumbling and bleeding. He cried, “Save me from the oppressors!”

It was an emotional moment. The Companions unsheathed their swords. Seeing Abu Jandal in this state, anyone might think the agreement should be broken to save him. But the people of Makkah said, “Muhammad! This is the first test of your agreement.” The Prophet, staying true to his word, said the treaty could not be broken. And Abu Jandal was handed back to them.

Outwardly, it seemed that the oppressed had been returned to the oppressors. However, the way this promise was fulfilled deeply influenced the hearts of the Quraysh. Although they brought Abu Jandal back and imprisoned him, the act of keeping promises impressed many in Makkah, leading to the swift acceptance of the message of

Islam. Even while in prison, Abu Jandal became a source of fear for them. Ultimately, they thought it wiser to release him and send him away from Makkah. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2731-2732)

Abu Hurairah narrates that the Prophet once sent a group of horsemen towards the enemies of Najd. On the way, they captured the regional leader, Thumamah bin Uthal, and brought him to Madinah, tying him to a pillar in the mosque. The Prophet asked how he was. Thumamah replied: “If you kill me, my tribe will seek revenge. If you show me kindness, I will be thankful. And if you seek wealth, I am ready to pay whatever you ask.” The Prophet ordered his release.

This was very unusual in those days. In tribal society, enemies were normally killed. But the Prophet didn’t kill his body—instead, he won his heart. Thumamah left, bathed in a nearby garden, and returned to the mosque. People wondered why. Then, he publicly recited the Shahada and accepted Islam. The Prophet had captured his soul.

Later, Thumamah went for Umrah. When people in the Haram heard he had accepted Islam, they said, “You have become faithless.” He replied:

“I have not become faithless. I have accepted the religion of Muhammad.”

At that time, one of Makkah's sources of wheat was Yamamah. Thumamah said to the people of Makkah: "Listen, not a single grain of wheat will reach you without Muhammad's permission." (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1764)

Character may seem like a small thing. But through it, a person can earn the greatest rewards.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 9 June 1968.

THE SACRIFICE OF THE PROPHET ABRAHAM

According to modern historical research, the birth of the Prophet Abraham took place in 1996 B.C. He passed away in 1821 B.C. at the age of 175. He was born in the ancient city of Ur, located on the banks of the River Euphrates. In ancient times, this region was known as Babylon. Today, it is called Iraq.

The people of Abraham's nation used to worship the sun, moon, and stars. They had created thousands of such gods. Among them, the sun and moon were considered the greatest. But Abraham never accepted the religion of his people. When he couldn't find peace in the corrupted environment of human society, he would leave the town and reflect on the system of the earth and sky in solitude. Free from external influences, his thoughts opened new doors of reality. He observed that the moon shines and disappears, the stars appear and then fade, the sun rises bright and then sets into the darkness of night. After contemplating these events, he concluded that these

objects, which follow the cycle of rise and fall, could not be God. God must be beyond the limits of rise and fall.

This was the first sacrifice in the life of Abraham—a life full of sacrifice and dedication to the truth. Youth is typically a time for pleasures, but he chose silent reflection as his companion. While others spent this time in carelessness, he gave it to deep thought. People often chase material success at this age, but he spent his best years seeking truth. The easiest path would have been to follow the religion of his ancestors. But like a revolutionary, he left traditions behind and chose the truth. He preferred “what should be” over “what is.” This was a great psychological sacrifice. Choosing truth against one’s surroundings always means being ready to give up everything. When he made this decision, God accepted it and opened the doors of truth for him, choosing him as a prophet. He was given the divine task of guiding his people to the truth.

After this, the second and most difficult phase of his sacrifice began. The king of his land, Nimrod claimed himself to be divine. Like many kings of that era, he had made people believe in his divine right to rule. He claimed the sun to be the greatest god, and that his family was its earthly form. Just as the sun rules the sky, his family—being from the sun—had the right to rule the earth.

In this way, sun and moon worship was not just a religious belief; it formed the foundation of the political system.

Today, politics may be based on democracy, but back then, it was based on divine kingship. This right was thought to belong to the royal family, believed to be descendants of the gods. Abraham's family played a major role in this system. His father, Azar (Terah), owned an idol-making workshop and was an official in the royal temple. At that time, his status was like that of the president of a ruling political party today.

Under these circumstances, Abraham had an easy path to success—he could inherit his father's position, support the system, and attain high status. But again, he chose the path of sacrifice. He openly said to his father, Azar: “Do you take other than God as your gods? I see that you and your people have clearly gone astray.” (Quran, 6:74)

Abraham did not follow the star-worship system like his father. Instead, he stood against it as a preacher and reformer. He rejected the system that had a top position ready for him and called for its change. He didn't try to succeed within falsehood; he made it his mission to reject it and speak the truth. As a result, he was thrown out of his home. People of his nation turned against him. Even the king became his enemy, because his message was seen as a threat to the political foundation of the kingdom.

Rebelling against an established system always means losing all opportunities within it. So, this decision turned Abraham's entire life into one of sacrifice. He became homeless. He was denied any share in family property.

He was no longer considered a successor to his father. In his society, he became a stranger. Among nearly 300,000 people, there was not one who supported him. The ruling government saw him as a threat because he challenged the belief that the sun and moon were divine, and that some people had the right to rule others because of that.

Abraham chose a life of hardship over comfort. He preferred being alone among people rather than popular among them. He gave up high positions and wealth and accepted a life of poverty. Instead of sitting in the king's court on a respected seat, he took the risk of angering the king and facing government punishment. And that's what happened. He was disgraced in society and thrown into the fire—but God saved him. After this, he was forced to leave Iraq and go to a foreign land.

This marked another, even more difficult, phase of sacrifice. A man from the most respected family left his homeland in helplessness, with only his wife, Sarah and nephew Lot. This small group of three travelled like nomads along the Euphrates, then through the coastal areas of the Red Sea, eventually reaching Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. But the people in those places also worshipped false gods—the same reason for which he had left his homeland. Then God commanded him to go to a dry, barren land in Hijaz and build a house for God among rocks and dry mountains. According to a narration in Bukhari, when Abraham came

to Makkah, there was no person and no water. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 3364)

At that time, people had abandoned God and worshipped man-made gods. But the rocks and mountains remained in their natural state. In that natural environment, he was assigned the task of building God's House, so that any servant who wished to worship only God could come and do so. Abraham crossed the coastal lands of the Red Sea, reached present-day Makkah, and built the Kaaba. A man born in comfort and honour chose loneliness, travel, and a hard life—for the sake of truth.

Abraham left Iraq at the age of 75. After living as a traveller for 25 years, a son was born to him, whom he named Ishmael (God has heard). At that time, he was 100 years old. Children born in old age are always very dear. And in Abraham's case, all friends and family had abandoned him. Now, he lived only with his wife and son. In such a situation, this promising child must have been extremely precious to him. But when the boy grew up and could walk with him, a harder test came. God ordered him to sacrifice his son for His sake. According to the Torah, the child was 13 years old at that time.

When Abraham reached 100 years of age, he saw a dream that he was sacrificing his son. Normally, dreams are taken symbolically. He could have interpreted it differently. But such was Abraham's spirit of sacrifice that he chose not

to interpret it symbolically—he got ready to act on it exactly as shown. At Mount Marwah, that unique event in history took place, witnessed by the earth and sky. The old father was about to sacrifice his beloved son with his own hands. But God stopped him at the last moment and saved Ishmael. A voice came from the sky: You have shown the final proof of submission and loyalty. Instead of the son, a ram was accepted as the sacrifice. From that moment on, this became a permanent tradition among all God-worshippers. It was commanded that people should sacrifice an animal each year on the same dates when Abraham had been ready to sacrifice his son for God.

The real purpose of that dream was to dedicate the beloved son to serve the centre of Tawheed (the Kaaba). That's why the command was given to settle Ishmael and his mother in the dry and empty land of Makkah. But this was shown in the form of a knife-based sacrifice—to make it clear that serving religion is no small thing. It means sacrificing oneself while alive. "Sacrifice" is the highest form of giving up. And only by reaching that highest level can a person become worthy to serve God's religion.

Abraham's sacrifice was not just offering his son. That was the final step of a long journey of sacrifice. His real sacrifice was that, when people gave their love to visible gods, he made the unseen God the centre of his love and belief. When falsehood looked strong through material means, he recognised and accepted a truth that had only

intellectual arguments. When joining falsehood could have brought him fame and success, he chose a tough and lonely path—for the sake of truth. While others lived in developed cities, he settled his family in a barren desert. All of this was possible only because of his exceptional spirit of sacrifice. Without such a mindset, none of this could have happened. Becoming a true servant of God always comes at a cost. A person who is not ready to sacrifice cannot become God's true worshipper.

Abraham lived a life full of truth. His life is the best example for God-worshippers. It teaches us: if you want to be a person of God, go beyond appearances and seek the deeper truth. Rise above your personal interest and make God's pleasure your goal. Be ready to sacrifice what is most beloved to you. Submit to God fully, without setting your own conditions. Abraham's life was the ideal example for his time, and it will remain the best model for all times—until the Day of Judgement.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 20 October 1980.

A COMPASSION FOR ALL THE WORLDS

The Prophet of Islam is described in the Quran as *Rahmatul-lil-Aalameen* (Mercy for all the worlds). Altaf Hussain Hali, a renowned Urdu poet, expressed the same in his *Musaddas* in these words:

“Woh Nabiyon mein Rahmat laqab pane wala”

(The one among prophets who was given the title of Mercy). The Prophet of Islam was the highest example of mercy. In the words of one historian, mercy is the key to understanding his personality. Everything he said, and everything he did, was based on the principle of mercy. He would speak only words full of mercy for human beings, and his practical life reflected only those ways that would bring mercy and goodness to society.

The religion he brought is described in the Quran with these words: God, through this religion, invites people to the House of Peace. That is why the religion he brought was named Islam, which carries the meaning of peace. He was a complete embodiment of peace, and he invited others to peace.

The Paradise he called people to has been described in the Quran as a place where there will be no useless or sinful talk—only words of peace will be heard there. In this way, he told people that if they want to live in the peaceful environment of Paradise after death, then before death, they must stay away from useless conversations and sinful actions. While living among people, they must show that their hearts are filled only with peace and goodwill for others. Without this quality, they will not be considered worthy of entering the beautiful homes of Paradise.

He taught people that when one person meets another, he should say: “*As-Salamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah*” – May God’s mercy and peace be upon you. This is not just a formal greeting, but a true expression of what is in one’s heart. It means the speaker is saying: I have only peaceful feelings for you. I care for your well-being so much that prayers of peace and safety flow from my heart for you. You should never fear anything from me. You are safe from my side, for nothing but peace and mercy will come from me.

The Prophet advised people to be of help to others. If they were unable to offer any benefit, he encouraged them to at least speak kindly. And if even that was not possible, then they should at the very least ensure that others remained safe from their harm (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2518). He even said that removing a stone or thorn from the road is a part of faith (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 35).

Among the worship practices he prescribed, one is *zakat*—giving a portion of one’s yearly income to those in need. This is like confirming through your wealth that you truly care for others.

The foundation of human ethics laid by the Prophet is this principle: “Prefer for others the good you prefer for yourself” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 13875). This principle offers mercy to all aspects of social life. Every individual clearly understands what they like and dislike. For example, everyone wishes to be treated with love, not hatred. Everyone desires to be dealt with honestly, not deceitfully. Everyone prefers that others speak to them kindly, not harshly.

If every person begins treating others the way he wants to be treated himself, society will become a place of peace and safety.

Among his many teachings, one very important one is this: even if someone treats you badly, still treat them well. Don’t match their behaviour—rise above it. Your behaviour should not be based on how others treat you, but on your own high moral values.

There is great wisdom in this teaching. The truth is that this is the only path to real success in this world. Even when others behave badly, one must maintain good conduct. Those who fail to do this can never reach true success. They cannot stay on the high path of character that they once claimed to follow.

This world is a place where every person is free. Everyone has the opportunity to do whatever they choose. The result is that it's not possible for all people to be alike. In a society of living, free individuals, complete uniformity can never exist.

Because of this, disagreements often occur—people clash, and complaints surface. If individuals decide to treat others well only when they are treated well in return—and badly if treated poorly—then peace and harmony will never flourish. That is why the Prophet taught: Even when people wrong you, treat them kindly. Even when people are unjust, do not respond with injustice. (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 17452)

The Prophet's character was described in the Quran as “a sublime character” (68:4), and his life demonstrated that he was the perfect example of such character.

Living with such high character is not easy; it requires a lofty purpose. He gave people a noble and pure goal—and the truth is, those who truly carry this goal in their hearts are naturally shaped into people of great character.

That goal is the recognition of God. It is to reach God. It is to draw closer to Him. Those who understand the value of this goal and become true seekers of God find that everything else becomes small. They can easily bear hurtful words, loss, and insult. Because they live on a

higher level—and those who live on a higher level do not worry about smaller matters.

One important aspect of the Prophet being Rahmatul-lil-Aalameen is that, for the first time in recorded history, he established humane rules for war and peace—and he himself followed them.

He completely forbade aggressive war. He said that war is only allowed when it becomes necessary for defense. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2966; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1742) In other words, never start a war—but if attacked, it is allowed to defend oneself.

The second principle he gave was that peace is always better and more desirable than war. Even when war begins, efforts for peace must continue. And if the other party offers peace, then war should stop immediately—even if the peace comes with one-sided conditions.

He was not only the teacher of these principles, but he also lived by them. He practised them in the best way. His speech was full of mercy, and his life was full of mercy.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 13 October 1989.

THE PROPHET OF MERCY

The Prophet of Islam has been described in the Quran (21:107) as *Rahmatul-lil-Aalameen* (mercy to all mankind). In another verse, the Quran says: You have indeed in the Prophet of God a good example. (33:21) From this, we understand that the Prophet of Islam was not only a mercy in his own self but also the best example of merciful and kind behaviour.

He gave us a guide of mercy through the Quran and Hadith. Along with that, he also showed the best practical example by living a life full of mercy. In his words, he was the Prophet of Mercy, and in his actions, too, he was the Prophet of Mercy.

There are two levels of mercy and kindness. One is to show kindness in normal and peaceful situations. The second is to remain kind even in difficult and harsh situations. Being merciful in such tough conditions means that even when others treat him badly, you still behave

well with them. You stay firm on your positive conduct without reacting negatively.

The Prophet of Islam demonstrated both kinds of mercy in the best possible way. People experienced kindness from him in ordinary situations, and also in times of difficulty. Here, we will mention some examples of both kinds of behaviour.

Anas was the servant of the Prophet. He served him for ten years. He says that during all that time, he never scolded him, nor asked why he had not done something. (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 2309)

When he advised people, his manner of speaking was so gentle that no one would feel hurt. Aisha says that if he came to know someone had done something wrong, he wouldn't name them. Instead, he would say: "What has happened to the people that they say or do such things?" (*Sunan Abi Dawud*, Hadith No. 4788) He would correct the wrong but never mention the person's name.

Abdullah ibn Umar says that once a man from the village came to the Prophet and asked, "How many times in a day should I forgive my servant? How many times should I overlook his mistakes?" He replied, "Forgive him seventy times." (*Sunan Abi Dawud*, Hadith No. 5164)

Similarly, he said: "O people, pay the wages of a labourer before his sweat dries." (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith No. 2443)

His quality of mercy was deep and consistent. His gentle and kind behaviour remained the same even when others

behaved harshly. He had risen far above the mindset of reacting with anger.

Anas bin Malik says that once he was walking with the Prophet, who was wearing a rough cloak with thick edges. On the way, he met a man from the village. He was needy, but instead of asking politely, he acted rudely. He pulled his cloak so hard that it left marks on his neck. Then he said, “O Muhammad, give me some of the wealth of God that you have.” He didn’t scold him. He smiled and instructed that he be given something. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 3149)

The Prophet had once taken a loan from a Jewish trader. One day, that Jew came and very rudely demanded his money. Not only did he speak harshly, but he also even said, “The people of Abdul Muttalib’s family are all like this—they don’t return loans.” Umar Farooq was present and became angry. He began scolding the man. But the Prophet stopped him and said, “O Umar, both I and this man deserved better behaviour from you. You should have advised me to repay gently and told him to ask politely.” (*Mustadrak al-Hakim*, Hadith No. 6547)

Even though three days were still left before the loan was due, he said to Umar, “Go and pay his debt.”

Once, the Prophet was sitting with his Companion in the Masjid-e-Nabawi, the mosque of Madinah. A villager came and stood in a corner of the mosque and began

urinating. The Companion became angry and rushed to stop him, but the Prophet stopped them. He said, “He is an ignorant man who does not understand the respect due to the mosque. Leave him be. Simply pour water over the spot where he urinated to clean it.” Then he advised his companion, “Your role is to make things easier for people, not to create difficulties or hardships for them.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 6128)

The entire life of the Prophet shows that even when people wished him harm, he always wished them well. His patience was always stronger than his anger. Even in the face of the worst provocation, he never became angry. When people spoke harshly, he replied with kind and soft words. People would throw thorns in his path, but he always prayed good for them.

Jarir says that he heard the Prophet say: “Whoever is deprived of gentleness is deprived of all good.” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 2592)

In another narration, he said: “God has revealed to me that you should all become humble. No one should feel proud over another, and no one should treat others unfairly.” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 2865)

Jarir bin Abdullah also reports that the Prophet said:

“Those who have no mercy in their hearts for others will be deprived of God’s mercy.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 7376)

The Prophet's example of kindness and gentle behaviour is not a fabricated story. It is a well-documented and verified part of history. This aspect of his life has elevated his Uswah-e-Hasanah (the best example) to a level unmatched in human history. He is the ideal model of noble character—and the ultimate example to follow.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 11 September 1994.

THE NOBLE CONDUCT OF THE PROPHET

The essence of religion is love—love for God and love for His servants. The highest feeling within a human being is the feeling of love. When a person directs this love toward God on one side and toward people on the other, then this is what is called religion. Love for God appears in the form of worship, and love for people appears in the form of good character and kind treatment.

In Islam, morals are given such great importance that it has been commanded: adopt the best character. In the Quran, this is referred to as “a sublime character” (68:4). This means that one should not behave well with others only when they behave well with you, but your way should be that even if others treat you badly, you rise above and continue your good behaviour.

The Prophet said: “The best among you is the one who is best in character” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 6035) And: “Treat people with good character” (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 1987)

A tribe once sent one of their men to Madinah to observe what the new Prophet was teaching. That man came, stayed with the Prophet for a few days, and closely observed him. Then he returned to his tribe and said: "I saw that he teaches people to adopt noble character." (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 3861)

The first revelation to the Prophet of Islam came in the cave of Hira. When he returned home from there, he was filled with fear due to this new experience and lay down covered in a blanket. At that time, his wife Khadijah said to him: "God will never abandon you, because you help the poor, and you support the orphans and widows." (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 3) This shows that kind treatment of the weak was already a special part of his personality even before prophethood.

The Prophet of Islam cared so much for the poor and orphans that in his entire life, there was never a time when a poor or needy person came to him, and he did not help them. He would always honour such people by seating them close to him. Sometimes it happened that prayer was about to begin in the mosque, and people were already standing in rows. At that moment, a poor man stepped out of the row and said, "I had some work, and I might forget it. If you allow me, may I go and finish it?" The Prophet stopped the prayer and told him, "Go, finish your work and come back." When the man returned after completing his task, only then did the Prophet start the prayer.

This gentle attitude has been beautifully described by Altaf Hussain Hali (1837-1914), an Urdu poet and writer, in his *Musaddas-e-Hali*:

“Woh Nabiyon mein Rahmat laqab paane wala—

Muraadein ghareebon ki bar laane wala”

(The one among Prophets titled ‘Mercy’—the fulfiller of the wishes of the poor)

Toward the weaker sections of society, he was so gentle that he would overlook their rudeness and still treat them with kindness. His Companion Anas bin Malik said that once the Prophet was walking along the road with him. At that time, he was wearing a rough cloak. A poor man came, grabbed one end of the cloak, and pulled it roughly. Then he said, “The wealth you have is not yours. Give me something from it.” This poor man behaved rudely, but the Prophet did not rebuke him. He smiled and ordered that the man’s need be fulfilled. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 3149)

The greatest test of sympathy and love is when someone treats you with hostility and causes harm. But in Islam, it is forbidden to treat such people harshly in return. The Quran commands that even enemies should be treated kindly. (*Quran*, 41:34)

The homeland of the Prophet of Islam was Makkah. The people of Makkah showed such hostility toward him that they forced him to leave. He then settled in Madinah, 300 miles away. But even there, the people of Makkah did not

leave him alone. They attacked him and tried to destroy his mission through war. But God helped him, and he became victorious over his enemies.

Then came the moment when the Prophet returned to Makkah as a conqueror. The same people who had once expelled him now stood before him—not just as enemies, but as individuals who could be considered war criminals by the standards of the time. According to common practice, they could have been sentenced to death. However, the Prophet neither arrested nor punished them—not even with harsh words. Instead, he proclaimed: Today is a day of mercy. Today, all of you are safe. (*Sirah Ibn Hisham*, Vol. 2, p. 412)

In the history of Islam, there is a well-known event called the Battle of Hunain. It occurred when the Prophet was going from Makkah to Ta'if with his Companions. On the way, a tribe suddenly attacked them. The Prophet fought in self-defence and was victorious. Six thousand men from the attacking tribe were captured and brought before him. But the Prophet did not take revenge. Instead, he released all of them with kindness.

In Islam, moral principles are not just philosophical ideas. They are deeply rooted in the faith. Because of this, moral behaviour in Islam is not just about being nice—it becomes a personal responsibility. According to Islam, this world is *Dar al-Imtihan* (a place of test). A person's entire life is a

life of trial. The greatest test lies in how people deal with one another. That is why it is said: The essence of religion lies in your conduct toward others.

Every person is under the watch of God. He is observing how one person treats another. In this matter, the poor, orphans, and weak people have special importance. A poor person, due to poverty, becomes insignificant in people's eyes. Society begins to ignore such individuals. So, treating them well requires special effort. That is why such treatment carries great reward.

According to Islam, the real test of a person is how they behave with the poor and the weak. The Prophet set the highest example of this in his life. The poorer and weaker a person was, the more kindness he showed to them.

In the same way, when it comes to enemies, people often feel the urge to take revenge. Treating them kindly becomes extremely difficult. But the Prophet, through both his words and actions, clearly showed that even enemies should be treated like friends. If treating a friend like a friend brings one reward, then treating an enemy like a friend brings a hundred times more.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 28 July 1996.

CHAPTER

TWO

THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF FASTING

All India Radio, New Delhi, organized a programme on the evening of 19 August 1978 at 9:30 PM. Its title was “What is Fasting?” It was a half-hour radio discussion in which representatives of three religions were invited to present the concept of fasting according to their respective faiths.

The writer of these lines represented Islam. The other two speakers were: Pandit Sachidanand Shastri (Hindu Dharma) and Archbishop Nasir (Christianity).

The writer was also appointed as the coordinator of this radio discussion. Each speaker explained, in the light of their religion, what fasting is, why it has been made obligatory, and in what form it exists in their faith.

Fasting—called Sawm in Arabic, Vrat in Hindi, and Fasting in English—exists in some form in every religion. Though its duration and method may vary, the practice is present across all traditions.

The reason for this is that fasting is a form of training in self-control (*nafs-kashi*), and this discipline has always been considered important in every religion. The kind of human being religion aims to shape is one who lives with his self under the control of his reason. Fasting prepares a person for precisely this.

A human being is made up of two parts—body and soul. The body is material and dense; the soul is non-material and subtle. When we constantly fulfil every desire of the body without restriction, the body begins to dominate and suppress the soul. Fasting is a way of putting boundaries on this freedom. It keeps the body in check and enables the soul to take charge.

Both of the other speakers expressed this same idea, each in their own way. What the writer said was that fasting is not only about its outer form. That is, it is not enough for a person to merely abstain from food and drink from morning to evening and consider the purpose of fasting fulfilled. The external form is just a symbol—it represents a deeper kind of spiritual and moral training.

The lesson is that a person must learn, while living in this world, to distinguish between what is right and wrong, lawful and unlawful. He must choose what is right and lawful and keep away from what is wrong and unlawful. This is what ultimately brings success in the everlasting life of the Hereafter.

Fasting, then, is actually a deep principle of life. In the world, a businessman must guard against extravagance. A student must guard his time from being wasted. A laborer must guard against laziness and dishonesty. In this way, a life of balance and discipline is the key to success in this present world. If a person does not protect himself from laziness, wastefulness, indulgence, and misuse of time, he cannot succeed in this world—a world designed as a test.

The same is true for the Hereafter. According to Islam, success in the Hereafter depends on living a fasting-like way of life. A person must adopt a pure and disciplined lifestyle before death to secure success in the life to come. He must guard himself against things that could ruin his eternal life.

Living in this protected way—avoiding those things which may lead to loss in the Hereafter—is the very lesson for which fasting has been made obligatory.

There is another aspect to fasting as well. A person who fasts all day feels the joy of food more deeply at sunset. In the same way, the one who abstains from what God has forbidden in this world will be the one to enjoy the true pleasures of the Hereafter. The fast of the day symbolizes the trials and struggles of worldly life. The evening meal symbolizes the joys and rewards of the life to come.

WHAT IS FASTING ?

What is fasting? Fasting is training in self-control. It is an exercise in discipline. For this training, something has been chosen that is among the most essential of all human needs—that is food and water.

In the month of Ramadan, food and water are given up from morning to evening for 30 days so that a person can develop the ability to leave something even when he desires it. The aim is to teach a person to live in such a way that when he takes something, he does so on the basis of principles, and when he gives up something, he does so with the same sense of discipline. His desire should be governed by conscious decision—not disconnected from it.

The act of giving up food and water in the month of fasting is actually a symbolic form of giving up. It does not mean that simply by avoiding food and drink for a fixed number of hours, the purpose of fasting is fulfilled, and after that, a person is free to do whatever he wants. No, the leaving of food and drink during fasting is just the beginning of a greater form of self-restraint. Through this practice of

giving up one thing during the month of fasting, a person becomes capable of giving up all other undesirable things throughout the rest of the year.

A person is a social being. He lives in a world surrounded by many kinds of men and women. In the course of these social interactions, unpleasant situations arise. These situations provoke anger and reactive behaviour in a person.

It is to guide a person on what to do—and what not to do—in such situations that fasting has been made obligatory. The lesson of fasting is that in such moments, a person should choose the path of self-restraint. Whenever anger rises in his heart or he feels provoked, he should suppress those emotions. He should be someone who controls his feelings—not someone who expresses them without thought.

Similarly, a person has many kinds of emotions—such as greed, desire, jealousy, pride, arrogance, selfishness, and so on. These emotions are not bad in themselves. In fact, they are the very emotions that bring energy and movement to a person's life. If these emotions are used within lawful limits, they are beneficial. But if a person begins to act on them freely without any concern for limits, they become a source of harm.

Fasting is a form of training that teaches a person to keep these emotions within proper limits. He should make sure to use these emotions within appropriate bounds. He

should set a conscious boundary for how far to go with them. The rule is: as long as these emotions are used for lawful personal benefit, they are acceptable. But when they begin to harm others, he must stop himself from acting on them.

The month of fasting has been described in Hadith as the month of patience. (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 7577) This means fasting is a form of training for living a disciplined life. Fasting enables a person to live according to principles, not without restraint. In the month of Ramadan, a person undergoes this training through fasting—and in the rest of the months, he should continue to live by what that training has taught him.

It is mentioned in Hadith: “Whoever fasts but does not give up lying and acting upon lies, then God has no need for him to give up his food and drink.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1903)

This shows that the outward form of fasting is to refrain from food and drink. But the real spirit of fasting is to give up falsehood and other bad actions. Fasting is actually a form of training to avoid evil. If a person follows only the outer aspect of fasting, but does not embody its inner and moral purpose, then such a person’s fast is not valid in the eyes of Islam.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 11 February 1993.

FASTING OF RAMADAN

While commanding fasting in Ramadan, the Quran states: So that you may guard yourselves against evil. (2:183)

The word used here is *Taqwa*, which literally means to protect oneself. For example, if a person walks carefully through a thorny path, that caution is *taqwa*. A believer must pass through life in the same way—protecting himself from harmful things. This careful and cautious way of life is called *taqwa*. And the month of Ramadan is a month of training for this *taqwa*.

In fasting, giving up food and water is symbolic. The real thing to give up is what God has made haram (unlawful). Temporarily leaving lawful things is just a small example of permanently staying away from forbidden ones. Because the one who is willing to give up what is halal (lawful) for the sake of God will be even more ready to leave what is haram. (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 23653)

The test of a person in this world is to recognize the difference between halal and haram. He should be

someone who can distinguish between right and wrong, and who chooses a disciplined life over a free and careless one. Fasting has been made obligatory to train believers for such a responsible life.

Fasting is not just about its outward form; its real spirit is also essential. That is why it is mentioned in Hadith that: “Whoever fasts but does not give up lying and acting upon lies, then God has no need for him to give up his food and drink.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1903)

During the time of the Prophet, some people fasted by avoiding food and drink, but they still engaged in backbiting, which is forbidden in Islam. When the Prophet came to know about this, he said that they had given up something God made lawful and then broke their fast with something God has made unlawful.

A life of taqwa can also be described as a life of caution. One type of person lives without any care or caution—saying or doing whatever he wants. The other kind follows a life of principle, choosing actions carefully and avoiding anything that goes against his values. This is how a muttaqi lives. A muttaqi is someone completely cautious, who submits his speech and actions to the will of God.

Fasting develops this same habit of taqwa and caution. The month of Ramadan trains a person to live the rest of the year as a cautious user of permissible things and an abstainer (fasting) from forbidden things.

During fasting, a person does not only give up food and drink. He must also give up many of his habits. He controls his desires. In doing so, he learns how to stay away from certain things. He learns how to live by giving up some of his wants and needs. Fasting is a form of deep training in self-control. Through fasting, a person declares that—let alone haram—he is even ready to give up halal for God’s sake.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the lunar calendar. In Islam, it is declared the month of fasting. Fasting in Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam and has been given great importance.

Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim have narrated that the Prophet said: “Every good deed of a person is rewarded from ten times to seven hundred times. But regarding fasting, God says: ‘It is only for Me, and I will reward it Myself. My servant gives up his desire and his food for My sake.’ The fasting person has two joys—one at the time of iftar, and the other when he meets his Lord. And the smell of the fasting person’s mouth is more pleasant to God than the fragrance of musk. Fasting is a shield. So, when one of you is fasting, he should neither speak abusively nor raise his voice. And if someone insults him or tries to fight him, he should say, ‘I am fasting.’” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1904; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1151)

In a Hadith, the month of Ramadan is called “the month of patience” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 7577). This shows

why fasting holds such a high status and why it has been promised unlimited reward. The reason is that fasting is the worship of that teaches us patience. Fasting is an act of endurance. By giving up food and drink, a person symbolically announces that he will live in this world with patience. He will remain firm on God's commands in every condition, even if it requires hardship and self-restraint.

The Quran says: Truly, those who persevere patiently will be requited without measure.
(39:10)

This verse tells us that, in God's sight, among all deeds, patience has the highest value. Any act of obedience that requires patience becomes so beloved to God that He promises a limitless reward in return for it.

This is the special status of fasting. Fasting is training in patience. Through the act of fasting, a person learns to control his desires and remain firm on God's command. He controls his needs for God's sake. He puts aside personal desires to fulfill the obligations of religion. Because fasting trains a person in this great quality of patience, its reward is also very great.

Because of this special aspect of fasting, it is said in a Hadith that if someone misbehaves with a fasting person, the fasting person should not respond badly. Instead, he should remind himself: "I am fasting." (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1894) It is as if one is saying, "I am in a course

of patience and self-control. If I lose my patience now and react, then I have destroyed the very purpose of fasting.”

Fasting certainly brings great reward. But this reward is only for the one whose fast becomes a fast of patience. The one who learns through fasting that while living among people, he must tolerate unpleasant situations. He must respond to harshness with gentleness.

Even if others create provocative situations, he must avoid getting provoked. Whatever wrong he faces from others, he should leave it to God—and continue to treat everyone with kindness.

There are two ways of obeying God. One is in normal situations. The other is in difficult and trying times. Deeds done in tough situations are always greater than those in ease. Patience is a great act—and fasting is a month-long training course for this act.

If seen deeply, the entire religion of God is a religion of patience. The whole Quran is a book of patience. Every teaching of Islam includes this element in one way or another.

To live an Islamic life in today’s world means that a person has decided to leave a non-Islamic lifestyle and bring his life under Islamic principles. This world is a place of test. That’s why, in every matter, a person is given two options. When someone chooses a religious life, he is leaving one path to follow another. This transition is not possible

without patience. That's why patience becomes essential in every Islamic action.

In this world, a person must turn away from the path of Satan and walk the path of God. He must abandon a life of desires and adopt a life of discipline. In dealing with others, he must avoid haram and interact only within halal boundaries.

To leave one path and firmly choose another, patience is necessary. The value of fasting lies in the fact that it develops this very patience in a person.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 7 February 1994.

FASTING: MORAL DISCIPLINE

Fasting is a form of worship. At the same time, it is training in moral discipline. Fasting helps a person live among others with high moral values. His behaviour with people should be responsible, not careless. Fasting teaches that freedom must be used within limits, not without limits. It is a lesson in self-restraint. This self-imposed disciplined way of life is the foundation of all reform.

According to a Hadith, the Prophet of Islam said that fasting is a shield. So, when anyone among you is observing a fast, he should neither speak indecently nor raise his voice. And if someone abuses him or fights with him, then he should respond: 'Indeed, I am fasting.' (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1904; *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 7693)

Fasting outwardly means giving up food and drink. But at the same time, it is connected to one's entire way of life. Just as fasting tells a person to stop eating and drinking; in the same way, it teaches him that if he is fasting, he should not speak harshly. He should not make noise. Even if someone abuses him, he should not respond in the same way. Instead, he should unilaterally ignore it.

This Hadith explains the spirit of fasting. It shows that giving up food and drink in Ramadan is a symbolic act. The temporary fasting from food trains a person for another, more permanent kind of fasting. Through this small physical restraint, a person is being prepared for a much broader form of self-restraint.

An Islamic life is essentially a fasting-style life. Islam teaches that a person should not live without limits. He must know the difference between halal and haram. He should speak kind and gentle words and avoid rude or harsh speech. He should deal with others justly and stay away from injustice. He should fulfill people's rights and avoid violating them. Fasting acts as a yearly course that trains a person to live in society with moral discipline.

A life of moral discipline demands unilateral patience. It is only possible when a person remains calm even after facing unpleasant behaviour from others. He forgives their wrongs and continues to treat them justly. This is a difficult test. That's why, in Ramadan, a person is made to practice patience with something as basic as eating and drinking. Because when someone learns to bear a big hardship, smaller ones become easier to handle.

It is mentioned in a Hadith that a believer and his faith are like a horse tied to a post with a rope. The horse roams around but eventually returns to the post. (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 11335) Fasting is like such a restraint.

You are fasting. Someone says something rude to you. You feel angry. But your dry throat reminds you that you are fasting. You control your anger. Instead of reacting, you respond gently and move on.

Someone causes you physical pain. You feel like hurting them back. But your weak and hungry body reminds you that you are fasting for God. Your hands and feet stop. The one you wanted to take revenge on—you forgive instead. You pray for him, and the matter ends there.

Satan attempts to mislead a person at various times. During these moments, fasting becomes a helpful aid. The discipline and worship of fasting soften the heart and purifies his soul. This serves as a shield, guarding against falling into Satan's traps.

All India Radio (National Channel),
New Delhi, 4 March 1994.

FAREWELL FRIDAY AND RAMADAN

Jumu‘atul-Wida‘ (Farewell Friday) refers to the final Friday of the month of Ramadan. In Islamic tradition, Friday holds special significance as the weekly day of congregational worship. Likewise, Ramadan is considered one of the holiest months in Islam. Since Jumu‘atul-Wida marks the close of this sacred month, its importance is further heightened.

It is mentioned in Hadith that the most excellent day among your days is the day of Friday. On Friday, people gather in larger numbers to remember God. They perform congregational prayer and take part in other communal activities. Due to the spiritual atmosphere created during Ramadan, the importance of Jumu‘atul-Wida becomes even greater than that of an ordinary Friday.

The month of Ramadan begins with the sighting of the new moon. On the last night of Sha‘ban, when people see the new moon of Ramadan, they say a prayer: May God bring this moon upon us with safety and peace, and may

He make it a moon of peace and Islam. With these elevated feelings, people enter the month of Ramadan.

During Ramadan, every person stops eating and drinking from morning to evening. In doing so, on one hand, he builds the habit of obeying God's commands, and on the other, he experiences what hunger feels like. This experience creates within him a sense of sympathy for the poor.

In Ramadan, acts of worship increase. Recitation of the Quran, remembrance of God, and the Tarawih prayers continue throughout the month, creating a devotional environment.

From the very first day of Ramadan, these spiritual activities begin in the community. Then the fourth week arrives, bringing the Friday known as Jumu'at al-Wida'. After passing through the blessings of Ramadan, when people walk toward the mosque to offer the Jumu'at al-Wida' prayer, a new spiritual feeling awakens in their hearts. They are filled with a sense of equality, goodwill, and brotherhood toward others. Because of these factors, the Jumu'at al-Wida' prayer becomes more meaningful than usual Friday prayers.

About Friday, it is mentioned in Hadith that there is a moment during the day in which, if someone prays to God, his prayer is accepted. The reason is that on Friday, a person is filled with deeper spiritual emotions than on

other days. Therefore, his prayer comes from a place of sincerity, and such heartfelt prayer is surely accepted.

On Friday, a person takes a bath and wears clean clothes. He performs ablution and actively walks to the mosque. There, he offers the Sunnah prayers and sits quietly to listen to the sermon of the imam. If all of this is done with sincere intention, it becomes a source of great reward, as mentioned in Hadith.

All things that go against the spirit of Friday have been clearly prohibited in Islam. Guidance about this has been given in both the Quran and the Hadith.

The Quran says that when people gather in the mosque for prayer, they should not be distracted by any unrelated engagement. In the time of the Prophet, once during the Friday prayer, some people became occupied with buying and selling. The Quran strongly warned against this and instructed that during prayer; one should avoid all irrelevant activities. (62:9-11)

It is mentioned in Hadith that if a person enters the mosque and begins stepping over people to reach the front rows, he is doing something sinful. (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, Hadith No. 1118) People should sit wherever they find space after entering. No worshipper should cause trouble to another worshipper.

In another Hadith, it is mentioned that when the imam is delivering the sermon, people should sit quietly and

listen attentively. If someone speaks during the sermon, another person should not respond by speaking again to tell him to be quiet. Instead, he should signal with a gesture. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 934) This teaches that if someone makes a mistake, others should avoid repeating the same mistake.

This is an important instruction. It tells us that any action that does not produce a useful result is wrong—no matter how good it may appear outwardly, or how well-intentioned it may be. Speaking is not always the right response. Sometimes, silence is more necessary, and speaking becomes an unwanted act.

It is mentioned in Hadith that when the Prophet led the Friday prayer, both his sermon and prayer were balanced. (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 21038) He did not make either of them too long. This is an important Islamic principle regarding group worship: the leader should be considerate of the people. He should not make things difficult by making them lengthy. However, in personal acts, if someone wishes to do more, there is no harm in it.

Friday is a special training day for the entire week. And *Jumu'at al-Wida'* is a special training day for the entire year. On this day, every person is reminded to stay clean and tidy. He is encouraged to live as a well-wisher for others. He receives training in discipline. He is reminded of the remembrance of God. He is given practice in unity

and togetherness. His sense of compassion for others is awakened—and more.

Friday is the day to do all those things together that one learns separately on other days. It is the day for collective performance of what is done individually on other days. If the other days are days of individuality, then Friday is the day of collectiveness.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 19 March 1993.

JUMU‘ATUL-WIDA

The last Friday of the month of Ramadan is known as *Jumu‘atul-Wida* (Farewell Friday). Friday holds special significance in Islam, and the month of Ramadan is itself a month of great importance. Thus, *Jumu‘atul-Wida* represents the combined virtues of both Friday and Ramadan. Naturally, this day awakens a deeper spiritual fervour among Muslims, and the day of Jumu‘atul-Wida becomes a day filled with even more mercy and blessings than usual.

In the month of Ramadan, the reward for worship is greater than in other months. Similarly, on the day of Friday, the reward for worship is greater than on other days. That is why, when Jumu‘atul-Wida arrives, Muslims perform their worship with more enthusiasm and love—because they believe that on this day, the reward for good deeds will be even greater.

On the day of Jumu‘atul-Wida, many more people observe the fast. Even children who are not yet required to fast also choose to keep a fast on this day. People recite

the Quran more than usual. They give more charity than on other days. They try to perform more good deeds than usual. On this day, mosques become completely filled, as the number of worshippers increases significantly.

Jumu‘atul-Wida is essentially a day of worship. But along with that, it also serves to promote social values. Meeting and greeting increases, which improves relationships. The large gatherings in mosques strengthen people’s faith and belief. The rise in charity builds an atmosphere of goodwill. The focus on bathing, cleanliness, and wearing clean or new clothes increases general interest in hygiene and neatness.

The special feature of *Jumu‘atul-Wida* is that people are both fasting and also attending the Friday prayer. Because of this, special spiritual feelings are created within them. Due to fasting, people are already trying to leave behind material concerns and connect with spirituality. *Jumu‘atul-Wida* gives them an opportunity to enhance this spirituality. It becomes a chance for more meaningful worship.

Friday is a day of collective worship in Islam. Many aspects are linked to this collective act. For example, cleanliness—as every Muslim pays more attention to cleanliness on this day. Punctuality—because if one does not manage their time from early morning, they may miss reaching the mosque in time. Social service—because when people

leave their homes and offices to go to the mosque, they also help the poor and needy on the way.

In addition, the Friday prayer becomes a great means of training in collective behaviour. Everyone stands in straight rows. They follow one imam in the actions of prayer. They sit silently and listen to the sermon. These actions are worship in one sense, and in another sense, they are training for building collective values. They help create unity and harmony within the community. Through this, individual life expands into collective life.

All the features that are special about Friday become even more special on *Jumu'atul-Wida*. *Jumu'atul-Wida* multiplies all of these qualities many times over.

The importance of *Jumu'atul-Wida* lies in the fact that it comes during the days of fasting. Fasting increases a person's sensitivity and creates seriousness and responsibility in him. It weakens the material side of a person's nature and strengthens the spiritual side. As a result of fasting, qualities like greed, selfishness, arrogance, and pride decrease. In their place, kindness, humility, and human sympathy grow stronger. When many people carry these heightened feelings in their hearts and gather in the mosque on *Jumu'atul-Wida*, they turn personal qualities into collective values. They transform personal acts into collective efforts.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 23 February 1995.

THE FESTIVAL OF EID

The tradition of celebrating Eid al-Fitr in Islam started after the Hijrah. When the Prophet Muhammad migrated from Makkah to Madinah, he observed that the locals held two annual festivals, marked by entertainment and sport. He told them that God had granted the Muslim community two better days: Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha (*Sunan Abi Dawud*, Hadith No. 1134). And thus, the Muslim celebration of these two festivals began.

Eid al-Fitr comes immediately after the end of Ramadan ends. That's why it's called the day of reward. During Ramadan, believers abstain from eating and drinking for a whole month. Now, on the day of Eid, they are free to eat and drink. So, Ramadan is the month of action, and Eid is the day they receive the reward for their efforts.

The beginning of Eid takes place with the sighting of the new moon. On the last day of Ramadan, all eyes look toward the sky. As soon as the new moon of Shawwal is seen, people say a prayer: O God, make this rising moon a moon of peace, safety, and obedience to You for us. Make this month a month of Your special mercy for us.

In this way, the Eid moon is not only a sign of joy for Muslims, but it also turns their attention to the Lord of the universe. It reminds them of God. They begin praying for themselves and for all humanity, saying: O God, let this new moon and the month it brings become a month of mercy and blessings for all of us.

On the night after sighting the Eid moon, Muslims offer special worship. They recite the Quran, offer extra (nafl) prayers, and make du'a. In this way, the new moon becomes a reason for a new spiritual awakening.

In the morning, people bathe and clean themselves. They wear new clothes, and children and adults leave their homes to go to the Eidgah or mosque. On the way, they keep saying:

God is the Greatest, God is the Greatest, there is no god but God, God is the Greatest, God is the Greatest, and to God belongs all praise.

In this way, all young and old gather at one place to offer two rak'ahs of prayer. Through this prayer, they practically demonstrate that one God is the Master and God of all, and all human beings are His servants and creation. After the prayer, the prayer leader (*imam*) gives a speech in the form of a sermon. In it, he speaks about the greatness of God and reminds people that all human beings are created by one God. Everyone should worship Him and live on His earth as obedient servants.

After the prayer, people meet one another. They congratulate each other on the day of Eid. They share in one another's happiness. This is called Eid Milan. Eid Milan is a way to increase mutual love. It means that a person should not celebrate alone but take part in others' joy so that the entire environment becomes full of happiness.

After that, people visit the homes of their relatives, friends, and neighbours. They greet each other with As Salamu Alaykum (may peace be upon you). They speak with affection and kindness. In this way, meeting and sharing meals becomes a means of fostering unity. And especially on Eid, these social values are further strengthened.

To make Eid a day of happiness for everyone, Sadaqat al-Fitr has been prescribed. It is instructed that well-off families should give a fixed amount of grain or money for each household member to their needy brothers and sisters, so they can also buy new clothes for their children, prepare good food, and enjoy the celebration of Eid like everyone else.

All these traditions ensure that Eid becomes a day of happiness for the whole society. It becomes a message of renewal and hope for all people.

Eid is a day of meaningful celebration rather than simply of joy and play. Eid should be celebrated with dignity and good conduct. On the day of Eid, the greatness of God is declared. That is why Eid should be spent in a way

that pleases God. As people greet each other on Eid, it is important that only such words be uttered that express love and goodwill towards others. Eid should be a time of both spiritual reflection and shared humanity.

In India, it is traditional to eat *sewian* (sweet vermicelli) on Eid al-Fitr. People exchange sweets and sweet dishes with each other. That is why, in this region, Eid al-Fitr is called *Meethi Eid* (Sweet Eid). In Egypt, it is known as 'Eid al-Kiswa (Eid of Clothing). During the time of the Fatimid Caliphs in Egypt, it became a custom to distribute clothes to the poor on Eid al-Fitr. Consequently, Eid al-Fitr became known as 'Eid al-Kiswa.

Similarly, Eid al-Fitr is celebrated in a special way in every Muslim country. Gérard de Nerval, a French traveler, visited Turkey in the mid-19th century during Sultan Abdul Majid's reign. He was in Istanbul on the day of Eid and described in detail how it was celebrated there.

He wrote that in every home in Istanbul, special meals and sweet dishes were prepared. Anyone could enter any home and be welcomed to eat, as meals were ready at all times. Rich or poor, every Muslim treated guests with joy and respect, within their capacity.

Festivals are found in every nation and culture. The purpose of any festival is collective happiness. Festivals are meant to increase mutual love and strengthen human relationships.

This is also the purpose of Eid al-Fitr. However, Eid al-Fitr is a meaningful celebration. It should be celebrated in a way that no one is harmed. On the day of Eid, everyone should try to give others a gift of happiness. Eid al-Fitr should be celebrated in a way that encourages harmony. Eid is the one celebration that truly becomes a day of joy for all.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 5 April 1992.

EID AL-FITR: A CELEBRATION OF LIFE'S VALUES

The meaning of Eid al-Fitr is the festival of breaking the fast, the festival of eating and drinking. It is called Eid al-Fitr because it comes immediately after the month of Ramadan. The month of Ramadan is a time of restriction on eating and drinking, and the day of Eid al-Fitr is the day of freedom from those restrictions.

One aspect of the connection between fasting and Eid is that the servant obeyed God's command for one month during Ramadan. Now, as a reward for that obedience, God grants the servant an opportunity to eat and drink freely. If Ramadan is the month of action, then Eid al-Fitr is the day of reward for that action.

From another perspective, fasting and Eid reflect the natural law on which the current world system is based. In this world, ease follows hardship. Before every success, effort must be proven. One must first endure hunger, and only then does the table of food appear.

Fasting and Eid are symbols of these two realities. Fasting represents the first phase, and Eid represents the second. This system teaches that to attain happiness and success in life; one must first pass through the valleys of effort and hardship.

When Ramadan ends, the crescent moon signaling the start of a new month in the lunar calendar appears in the sky. Upon sighting it, the believers say: “O God, bring this moon upon us with peace and security. Make it a moon of safety and Islam for us.” (*Musnad Al-Darmi*, Hadith No. 1729)

This teaches that the month of Eid is a month of peace and security. On this day, believers must pledge to live among people as well-wishers. They should speak words of peace and act in ways that promote safety.

On Eid day, young and old alike leave their homes, saying:

“*Allah-u-Akbar, Allah-u-Akbar.*” They gather at one place and perform two units of congregational prayer. This is a declaration that only God deserves greatness, and that they themselves choose the path of humility. They reject arrogance—both in relation to God and in relation to people.

After returning from the Eid prayer, people meet one another. They give gifts and serve food, and drinks. This, too, is symbolic. It means that the believers should live their lives in this same manner throughout the year. They should leave behind isolation and live together in

harmony. No one should be a burden on others. Every person should aim to be a giver, not a taker.

These acts on Eid are done without waiting for someone else to come first or offer something in return. On Eid, these actions are performed with a one-sided spirit, not a two-sided one.

This teaches that only those who are willing to follow the principles of humanity and ethics unilaterally can live with true moral character. In this world, one must maintain relationships even if others do not respond. One must love their neighbour even if the neighbour does not show love in return. One must make others their friends even if those others are unwilling to be friends. One must benefit others even if others do not benefit them.

Fasting and Eid come once a year, but they set the course for life for the entire year. Fasting and Eid symbolically teach the believers how to live on His earth. If fasting is a symbol of the beginning of life, then Eid is a symbol of the end.

After fasting, people become deserving of the reward of Eid. Similarly, people must fulfil their responsibilities in life to become worthy of their rights. They must observe limits to earn true rewards, be well-wishers toward others, so that others may be well-wishers toward them. They must live in society as givers so that they can also gain a respectable place in that society. People must behave

well with their neighbours and fellow human beings, unilaterally. Because those who behave well in this way, even their enemies can become their friends.

There is another deep contrast between fasting and Eid. Fasting is like a month of not doing, while Eid is a day of doing. Fasting is a time of pausing; Eid is a time of moving. Fasting is a month of silence; Eid is a day of speaking. Fasting is a month of stillness; Eid is a day of action.

The inherent difference shows that life requires both opposing sides. Sometimes, action is needed; other times, it's better to hold back. Similarly, there are times when speaking is necessary, and times when silence is better. Likewise, progress is sometimes essential, and other times, restraint is wise.

Fasting and Eid are both acts of worship, and at the same time, they serve as forms of training. In both fasting and Eid, there is an aspect of pleasing God. However, their practical structure also makes them a learning experience for broader life. Symbolically, they act as guides for the entire year.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 25 March 1993.

EID AL-FITR

The literal meaning of Eid al-Fitr is “the festival of breaking the fast”—a celebration that marks the end of fasting and the start of eating and drinking again. It is an annual Islamic festival observed on the first day of Shawwal, right after Ramadan. Eid al-Fitr is a simple and joyful celebration; nothing in it is mandatory or obligatory; all its practices are either Sunnah (recommended) or encouraged. While fasting is not allowed on the day of Eid al-Fitr, no specific actions have been made obligatory. Essentially, Eid al-Fitr is a day of joyful celebration and relief after a month of intense spiritual effort.

On the day of Eid al-Fitr, Muslims wake up in the morning, take a bath, wear new clothes, apply perfume, eat something sweet (like seviyan in the indian subcontinent), and then go to the mosque for the congregational prayer. There, they offer two rak‘ahs. In this prayer, the words “*Allah-u-Akbar*” (God is the Greatest) are said more often than in regular prayers. After the prayer, everyone prays

to God together. On the way to the mosque and while returning, they keep saying:

Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, La ilaha illallah, Wallahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, wa lillahil-hamd

God is the Greatest, God is the Greatest, there is no god but God, and God is the Greatest, God is the Greatest, and all praise is for God.

It is better for all Muslims in the area to gather at one place to pray—men, women, and children should all be present. They should go one way and return another. In this way, believers show their strong connection with God. After the prayer, people meet and greet each other. They visit the homes of family and friends. The young greet their elders with respect, while the elders give gifts and Eidi—money or small presents—to the young. This way, the whole day is spent in happiness, eating, and sharing joy.

This Eid al-Fitr is not just a national festival. It has a special meaning and is deeply connected to the Islamic way of life. According to Islamic belief, Eid is a sign or reminder of the Day when all greatness will belong to God alone. All honour will be given to those who lived in this world—at a time of test—as true and faithful servants of God. When the hard and difficult days of those believers are over, their Lord will bring them into an eternal world of joy and peace, from which they will never be removed.

According to Islam, a person's life has two parts: one before death, and one after death. The life before death is the time to do good actions. The life after death is the time to receive the results of those actions.

Before death, a person must live a careful and responsible life. After death, as a reward, he will be granted a life of complete freedom and happiness. The month of fasting is a sign of life before death, and the day of Eid al-Fitr is a sign of life after death.

In the life before death, a person must live by the will of God. Whatever he does, he should stay within the boundaries set by God and avoid what is forbidden. For example, he should always speak the truth and avoid lying. He should earn honestly and not resort to stealing or cheating. In dealing with others, he should always be fair and never be unjust. His heart should be full of love and care, not hatred or jealousy.

Fasting is a fundamental element of a responsible life. It reminds individuals to live carefully and with self-control in this world. During fasting, one ceases eating and drinking as per God's command. This involves altering one's routine, controlling desires, and following God's will rather than one's own. For one month, this constitutes a form of training. Fasting, therefore, imparts the lesson of a responsible life that should be led in this world.

After this period of discipline in Ramadan, the day of Eid al-Fitr arrives on the first of Shawwal, when all the restrictions are lifted and a person is free to enjoy the day. If during Ramadan a person has learned the lesson of life before death, then on the day of Eid al-Fitr, he sees

a glimpse of the life after death. Fasting is a symbol of a Muslim's life in this world, and Eid al-Fitr is a symbol of a Muslim's life in the Hereafter.

The month of fasting followed by Eid al-Fitr reminds individuals that if they live a disciplined life in this world in accordance with God's commands, they will be rewarded with a life of happiness in the next life. There, they will face neither restrictions nor any kind of hardship.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 3 August 1981.

ISLAMIC FESTIVALS

A festival is a day of shared happiness. It is an essential need for individuals and society. That's why, in every era and culture, festivals have always existed in some form or other.

On usual days, people remain busy with their own duties and work. So, there is a need for an open and casual opportunity for people to come together. Festivals provide this chance, where people of a town or community gather and share each other's happiness freely.

Similarly, in today's world, a person often lives under mental stress for one reason or another. Even if someone has all comforts and peace, after a while, he still experiences a mental state called boredom. This general situation has made festivals a natural need for every nation and every society, so that people can come together, forget their worries, and refresh their minds by meeting people.

Festivals are typically celebrated on specific national or historical dates. Every nation observes its own festivals on occasions of particular cultural or historical significance.

As a result, there is scarcely a day in the year when some community, somewhere in the world, is not celebrating a festival. (For a full list, see *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Micropedia, Vol. 24, pp. 73–75)

These festivals are typically marked by revelry and entertainment. Recreational programmes are organised, and people often celebrate by stepping beyond traditional social boundaries. Individuals from all sections of society participate in them—whether political, religious, or secular.

For Muslims, two such festivals have been prescribed: Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. These are two annual days of joy from a religious perspective. Eid al-Fitr falls on the first of Shawwal, and Eid al-Adha on the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah.

During the Makkah period, an organised Islamic society had not yet been established. That is why the system of Eid was also not initiated during that time. After the migration to Madinah, the Islamic society began to take organised shape. Just as other systems were put in place, the tradition of Eids was also started.

At that time, the people of Madinah had two tribal festivals. On these days, they held sports competitions, arranged poetry gatherings, and celebrated their historical pride. Overall, these festivals could be called national fairs.

When the Prophet of God migrated from Makkah to Madinah and saw these festivals, he replaced them with two new festivals—the Eids. One Companion, Aans bin

Malik, says that when the Prophet arrived in Madinah, the people had two yearly days of celebration and fun. The Prophet asked: What are these two days? They replied: These are old traditions. On these days, we play and enjoy ourselves. The Prophet said: God has given you two better days instead—a day of Eid right after Ramadan and a day of Sacrifice Eid. (*Sunan Abi Dawud*, Hadith No. 1134)

The Eids are, in fact, the Islamization of traditional, non-Islamic festivals. The real purpose of any festival is shared happiness. That purpose is fully preserved in the Eids, but casual and careless fun was reduced, and polite joy and meaningful celebration were added.

Different Hadiths about Eid have been compiled in *Mishkat al-Masabih*—particularly in the section *Salat al-Eidayn*, (The Prayer of the Two Eids: Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha) and in other parts as well.

The first thing to note is that the Eid festival is connected to the lunar calendar, based on the sighting of the moon. In this way, the appearance of the new moon becomes a heavenly announcement of the festival. But this joy is directed toward higher human values. So, in a Hadith it is narrated that when the Prophet saw the new moon, he said this prayer:

*Allahumma ahillahu alayna bil amni wal imaan
was salaamati wal islaam Rabbi wa rabbuka Allah
(Musnad Al-Darmi, Hadith No. 1730)*

That is: O God, let this moon come to us with peace and faith, safety and submission to You. My Lord and your Lord is God.

This prayer shows the kind of thoughts and feelings a person should have when seeing the Eid moon. It should create a desire in us that the coming days be filled with peace for all of humanity. That all people receive the blessings of health and safety. Seeing the moon participating in human joy, a person should feel that the entire universe is one big family of God—from humans to the stars in the sky—all are one, because their Creator is One.

Then, on the morning of Eid, everyone—young and old, men and women—takes a bath and wears clean clothes. They eat their favourite foods and thank God. After that, they walk to an open field or mosque and offer two rakats of prayer in gratitude. This is a public declaration that the joy they are celebrating belongs to the One who deserves to be thanked—God. After the prayer, the Imam delivers a khutbah, offering advice and reminding the people that happiness is the right of all, but it must be enjoyed within the limits of responsibility.

After this, people greet one another, give gifts, and exchange words of peace and congratulations. They celebrate joy—but in a way that their happiness does not cause discomfort to anyone. They celebrate, but without making noise. They celebrate, but cleanly, without littering

the streets. Their joy does not create problems for their neighbours. They celebrate—but with full awareness of the purpose behind the celebration.

One of the main acts emphasized during Islamic festivals is giving charity—either in the form of food or its monetary equivalent that Muslims give before the Eid-ul-Fitr prayer. This practice helps share personal joy with others in society. The goal is for everyone to have the means to celebrate. No one should be excluded from happiness.

According to one narration, Abu Bakr visited the Prophet's house on the day of Eid. At that time, two young girls were sitting with Aisha, playing the duff and singing traditional Arabic songs. Abu Bakr rebuked them, saying, "Are you engaging in such frivolous activities in the house of the Messenger of God?" The Prophet was lying down, covered with a cloth. He uncovered his face and said, "O Abu Bakr, allow them. Every nation has its own Eid, and today is our Eid." (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 952; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 892)

Islam teaches that joy should remain within the limits of good manners and humanity. But joy, by nature, does not always stay confined to rules. In the excitement, sometimes people may go a little beyond. That's why, along with setting boundaries, Islam also understands and respects human emotions. This means that if someone, in a moment of joy, expresses simple and harmless fun, the

elders of the community should overlook it. They should not suppress innocent happiness.

A wise saying reminds us: Eid is not for those who wear something new; it is for those whose mindfulness of God increases. (*Lataa'if al-Ma'aarif* by Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, p. 611)

This saying captures the true spirit of an Islamic festival: a celebration where joy is combined with gratitude to God; where enjoyment is tempered by moderation; where informality remains respectful; where food and drinks are savoured without excess; where human emotions are valued but guided by God's commands; and where entertainment is balanced with a meaningful and purposeful intention.

This is Eid—and this is the Islamization of festivals.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 21 February 1996.

EID: A FESTIVAL OF TOGETHERNESS

Festivals are found in all nations and countries. They exist in every society in some form. In fact, festivals continue all year round. Every day of the year, a festival is being celebrated somewhere. There is not a single day in the year that is free from festivals.

This is because a festival is a social need. It is something natural in human life. Throughout the year, people remain busy with their work and rarely get the chance to meet one another on a large scale. Meeting people is an important social need. However, as people lead busy lives, this need is often not fulfilled.

In the same way, it is also a fact that due to one reason or another, every person experiences some kind of stress or boredom. Everyone lives as if carrying a heavy mental load on their shoulders. Every person is, more or less, a case of tension.

A festival is a solution to this. To remove this condition, every society has maintained the system of festivals, so

that people can come out of their daily routines, meet one another, and celebrate together in an open environment. They break the circle of loneliness and join the larger circle of society.

Festivals are usually held on special historical days so that people become more interested in them. This is also the case with the festival of Eid. The day of Eid is fixed for the first date of the next month, right after Ramadan ends.

The month of Ramadan is the time when the Quran was first revealed (*Quran*, 2:185). That is why Muslims around the world fast during this month. It is a fast that is observed with great seriousness. By fasting during this month, Muslims cultivate spirituality within themselves so they can thank God for guiding them on the true path during this period.

Along with that, Ramadan is called the month of patience and taqwa. (*Quran*, 2:183; *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 7577) This means that fasting helps a Muslim live life according to the teachings of the Quran. In this way, the month of fasting holds special significance in Islam. That is why, as soon as Ramadan ends, the festival of Eid is celebrated on the first day of the following month, Shawwal.

If the month of Ramadan is the month of fasting, then the month of Shawwal is the month of eating, drinking, and celebrating. The last day of Ramadan shows that the restrictions are ending, and the first day of Shawwal shows that those restrictions are being lifted.

When the new moon of Shawwal is sighted in the evening, Muslims say: “O God, make this moon a moon of peace and spirituality.” In this way, the new moon is welcomed with the feeling that peace and happiness should spread in the world, and people should live a life of obedience to their Lord.

It is commanded that before Eid, all Muslims should give charity (sadaqah) to the poor people of the society, so that no one is left out of sharing in the joy of Eid. Everyone should be able to prepare for Eid in a basic and necessary way.

In the morning, all Muslims wake up early, take a bath, and stay clean. They wear new clothes. They apply perfume. They eat something sweet. They greet each other with Eid Mubarak. Then all people come out of their homes and gather in the Eidgah or in an open ground or a mosque.

Everyone gathers there to perform two units (rakats) of Eid prayer. During this prayer, it is repeatedly said: “God is the Greatest, God is the Greatest.” This means that in this world, greatness belongs only to one God. All human beings are small compared to Him. In God’s world, the right way for people is to live with humility and friendliness. No one should think they are above others or try to show off their greatness to others.

After the Eid prayer, the imam gives the khutbah. Everyone sits quietly and listens. In this speech, it is said that human beings are servants of God. All human beings are equal.

Every person will have to give an account of their actions to God. A person has the right to live a happy life in this world, but no one has the right to disturb the happiness and peace of another person.

After the prayer ends, all Muslims meet each other. They exchange greetings of Eid Mubarak with one another. They eat and drink together. They give gifts to one another. Staying within the circle of peace and good manners, they plan celebrations to share joy.

During the month of Ramadan, it is obligatory to fast and forbidden to abstain from fasting without a valid reason. On the day of Eid, however, it is forbidden to fast. The reason is that if fasting were allowed on the day of Eid, a person would again go into isolation. They would not be able to join people and celebrate the festival with others. They would not be able to take part in everyone's happiness.

The whole day of Eid is for celebrating joy and happiness. But the regular five daily prayers are still necessary for everyone. The instruction is that when the time for prayer comes, people should leave the entertainment programmes and immediately go for prayer and worship God as usual.

This teaches us that even in happiness, a person must stay within limits. Even during fun times, one should not forget God. Eid is a day of light-heartedness, but at the same time, a person must always remember that they have

obligations, and those cannot be abandoned, regardless of the situation.

Before the advent of Islam, festivals were common in Arab society, but they often involved crude and inhumane forms of celebration and entertainment. The Prophet of Islam advised people to abandon such forms of festivity and adopt a more refined and dignified way of celebrating. Accordingly, Islam introduced Eid as its own form of festival. Thus, Eid is essentially the Islamic version of a festival.

On Eid, be happy and have fun, but don't be noisy or disturb others. When you meet people, don't use bad language. Eat and drink, but stay away from things that can intoxicate you and from being wasteful. When you walk around, make sure not to make the streets dirty. Meet with others, but don't interfere in their lives.

Eid is more than just a festival of Muslims—it is a human festival. It does not give a message of narrowness or separation, but it gives a message of openness and togetherness.

Eid begins with seeing the new moon in the sky. This is a sign that Eid is a universal festival and is connected to the whole world. Then during Eid, all Muslims—young and old—come out of their homes. In this way, Muslims meet with one another. The day of Eid becomes a practical day of meeting and connecting with people. In the same

way, Muslims also invite non-Muslims to share in their celebration.

In this way, Eid increases the spirit of unity among people. It creates an atmosphere of coming together. Eid reduces tension between people and brings them closer to each other. Words of love and peace start echoing everywhere.

Eid begins with the new moon of Shawwal. So, Eid is a festival of new hopes. Eid is connected to the worship of God—this reminds the person of their true identity. Eid includes meeting others—this shows that all people are part of one family. Eid includes giving charity, feeding others—this gives the message to share your happiness with others. Before Eid, there is fasting—this points to the truth that in this world, responsibilities come first, and only after that, one receives their rights. Eid is, in one way, a yearly festival, and in another way, a complete lesson for everyday life.

All India Radio, Delhi (Hindi Varta), 21 February 1996.

WHY SACRIFICE?

It is mentioned in narrations that the Companions (Sahabah) asked the Prophet Muhammad: O Messenger of God, what are these sacrifices? He replied: This is the way of your father Abraham. (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith No. 3127) So, sacrificing an animal on Eid al-Adha is to remember that great historical event which took place four thousand years ago.

Sacrifice means committing to make the life of Prophet Abraham your ideal. It is not just a one-time yearly ritual, but a yearly expression of a lifelong way of living. If a person offers a sacrifice while understanding its real meaning, only then can we expect that they will follow its message throughout the year. And if they do not keep this real meaning in mind on the day of sacrifice, how can we hope that they will make it a model for the rest of the year?

Prophet Abraham was born in 2160 BC in the ancient city of Ur in Iraq. According to the Torah, he began thinking deeply at the age of 10. At that time, his people worshipped

the sun. They believed that everything they received came from the sun. He began to say that the sun and stars were all created by one God. Worship the Creator, not the creation. But when people hold something sacred, they become very sensitive about it. So, the people turned against him. To become a caller to the Oneness of God, he had to pay the price—it became difficult for him to live in his own country. Friends and relatives all became his enemies. The ruler of the time threw him into the fire. But God saved him through special divine help. When the entire nation rejected him, he finally left his homeland. Only his wife (Sarah) and his nephew (Prophet Lot) remained with him. He continued travelling through Syria, Palestine, East Jordan, Egypt, and the land of Arabia. There was not a single human settlement that accepted his call to the Oneness of God. Finally, he reached an uninhabited place in Hijaz (today's Makkah), and trusting in God, he settled his wife and child in that desert.

By this time, Prophet Abraham was old. He had already given everything in the path of God—his home, his family, his property, his wealth, his country. There was nothing left that he had not presented to God. Even when he was thrown into the fire, it was as if he had offered his life. But one final sacrifice still remained—the sacrifice of his beloved son. He had this child at the age of 86. Naturally, his only son was dearest to him. When this son grew up and could walk and run with his father, a command came

in a dream from God—to sacrifice his son in His path. After a lifetime of hardship and loneliness, now the only support he had—he was told to give that up too. And not just give it up, but to sacrifice it with his own hands. The aged father submitted to the command of God, and with unwavering devotion made ready to sacrifice his beloved son, rising above even the deepest love of his heart for the sake of the Almighty. Just then, a voice came from God: You have fulfilled the dream. After that, an angel brought a ram, and Prophet Abraham sacrificed the ram instead of his son. This event took place on the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah. That is why Muslims all over the world sacrifice an animal on this date. This sacrifice is like offering your own life. In this way, the person doing the sacrifice says through their action: O God, our lives are present for You. Today, we are offering this animal as a sign of surrender, and we are always ready—whenever You command—to present ourselves and our belongings in Your service.

One of the important supplications on the day of Eid al-Adha is: “My prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for God, the Lord of the worlds.” (6:162) From this we learn that prayer signifies a person’s life, and sacrifice signifies a person’s death. In prayer, a person turns to God with full attention, establishing a connection with Him. This same focus is necessary in all aspects of life. A person should live in such a way that their life becomes centered on God, just as their prayer is. The same

applies to sacrifice—a person should die in such a way that their death becomes a sacrificial death. One's death should not merely be a natural end due to old age, but the culmination of a life filled with sacrifices on the path of truth. Sacrificing the animal is a symbolic promise—that a person will continue giving everything in God's path, until their end comes in that very state.

Through this, we understand that for a sacrifice to be accepted, it must embody the same spirit of devotion seen in Prophet Abraham and Prophet Muhammad. The key to acceptance is that there must be genuine dedication behind the sacrifice—the kind of commitment exemplified by the prophets. True sacrifice comes from those who live every day as a sacrifice—not from those who only sacrifice an animal once a year. The essence of Abraham's sacrifice was that after giving everything in the path of God, when a man had nothing left but his life, he brought that as well and presented himself before God. But God, out of His mercy and kindness, accepted a ram in place of his life. The real meaning of sacrifice is to give up everything, even the last thing you have, for God—not to keep everything for yourself and only sacrifice one animal a year in God's name. About the reality of sacrifice, the Quran says: Their flesh and blood do not reach God: it is your piety that reaches Him. (22:37)

This means, what matters to God is a heart full of God-consciousness. Not the animal. The animal sacrifice is only an outward symbol of what lies within the heart.

If the inner state is not correct, then slaughtering an animal from the outside is like a shop that has no goods inside but hangs a fake signboard outside.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 28 October 1979.

THE REALITY OF SACRIFICE

The reality of sacrifice is that you give what you have so you can receive what you don't have yet. Sacrifice teaches this lesson: if you want to gain something, you must have the courage to lose something. If you want to live, be prepared to face death. Sacrifice is not a lifeless ritual. It is a living reality that is as deeply connected to life as the eternal laws of nature are connected to our universe. Sacrifice is not the end of action—it is the start of action. A small act can become meaningful when it represents a greater principle. This also applies to sacrifice. On the surface, it might seem like just offering an animal to God. But in reality, it is a powerful act because it symbolises something deeply significant—it is not just a fleeting or hollow ritual. Sacrificing an animal shows a person's dedication—a dedication to give up everything, even their life, for a higher cause.

To illustrate how a small act can symbolise something much greater, I will share an example from recent history. In November 1962, India faced a foreign attack on its

eastern border, posing a serious threat to national security. Fear spread throughout the country. At that time, one event demonstrated the spirit of sacrifice. In Ahmedabad, 25,000 young people made a collective pledge. They decided to fight to protect their country and resist any foreign attack—even if it meant risking their lives. After deciding this, each of them contributed one paisa from their own pocket. In this way, they collected 25,000 paisa. They then presented this amount to India’s Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. While handing over the money, they told the Prime Minister that these 25,000 coins symbolise 25,000 youths dedicating themselves to the nation—committing themselves to you. Each person had given just a small coin, which usually holds little value. But their contribution became incredibly meaningful because it represented a profound truth. Their 25,000 coins stood for 25,000 lives. Through these coins, it was as if they were offering their own lives to the country. By sacrificing one coin as a symbol, they were essentially showing their willingness to give their lives. Similarly, animal sacrifice is a symbol of commitment—a promise that a person is prepared to sacrifice everything, including their life, for a noble divine cause.

This world has been made by God in such a way that those who give up their own selves—are the ones who gain from this world. Sacrifice is a yearly reminder of this divine law, which we need to include in our daily lives. In

sacrifice, a person slaughters an animal in God's name. Then he eats its meat and feeds others as well. Eating from the food given by God is a daily human need. No one can live without eating. So, this common daily act is made special for one day, to become a great lesson. Sacrifice is a symbol of the fact that a person is ready to pay the price required to gain real success on God's earth.

This sacrifice is not something outside of the system of the world. It is a law of nature. Let us understand this with an example. If the seed of a tree is kept in cold storage, it will always remain a seed. But when that seed is put into the soil, something amazing happens. From that tiny seed comes a big tree that gives many more seeds—again and again. It makes the earth green and beautiful. People feel joy when they look at it. It gives many different benefits. What is the difference between the seed in cold storage and the seed in the soil? The difference is what we call sacrifice. The seed in the soil gives itself up—and so it becomes a great tree on earth. But the seed in storage does not give itself up—so it remains small and unimportant. A seed sacrifices itself, and then becomes a tree. A tree sacrifices its best part, and then makes a flower bloom. A flower sacrifices its beauty and then produces a valuable fruit. A fruit gives itself up—and then becomes the flesh and blood of the human who develops the earth and explores the skies.

All the possible successes that are kept for humans in this world—the only way to reach them is through sacrifice. To become excellent in knowledge, to reach the top level in business, to get a high position in politics, to grow in morality and humanity, to lift a family or a nation—all of this is only possible through sacrifice. The Creator of this world has made it in such a way that nothing great is achieved without the effort of sacrifice. If someone thinks they can achieve something big just by speaking big words or by doing small and casual actions, then that is only wishful thinking. This kind of success never becomes a reality in God's world.

So, how can it be possible in such a world that God becomes pleased without any sacrifice? Just as God has set a rule for finding or not finding anything in this world, He has also revealed the rule for finding or not finding Him. That rule is only sacrifice. The same condition that applies to finding something in this world also applies to finding God. If a person wants to please their Lord, they must sacrifice themselves for their Lord. God only grants everything to those who give everything to God. Without paying the price of sacrifice, no one can receive anything in the system that God has created.

The rule for success in this world is the same rule for success in the Hereafter. And because the life of the Hereafter is far more valuable than this life, the sacrifice required for it is also much greater. According to Islam,

our life is divided into two parts. A small part—a very small one—is in this world. And the bigger part—much bigger and forever—is in the Hereafter, which will come after death. The success of that world also depends on sacrifice, just like in this world. The next world is like a colony of the best and most mature human beings. Those who prove themselves to be the best in thought and action today will live in the gardens of Paradise in the Hereafter. And those who cannot show high human values will be thrown into the painful environment of Hell.

What does it mean to become a good person? It means that a person begins to live on a divine level. They develop God-oriented qualities within themselves. For this purpose, a person must fight against satan. They must fully clean their life from the influence of satan. This is a path of continuous sacrifices. Only that person will find a place in God's Paradise who develops the courage to make these sacrifices. For this, it is necessary that a person removes all useless thoughts from their mind and gives space only to the right and true thoughts—even if this mental cleansing feels like sacrificing their most beloved ideas. For this, it is necessary that a person builds their character on truth, even if it means giving up worldly benefits and personal interests. For this, it is necessary that a person bows to truth, even if it costs them their position of greatness. For this, it is necessary that a person makes truthfulness and principle their way of life, even if it means becoming unpopular in the world.

Throughout history, certain lifestyles have become widespread in the world. Some types of relationships are created. Some cherished ideas capture people's minds. People base their lives on these things. They attach themselves to a specific set of thoughts and actions, believing: I have joined the best group and tied my future to it. But when the call of truth comes to them, they feel as if this call opposes their personal interests. They believe it wants to break their relationships. They feel that the ideas they trusted—those ideas are proving to be useless. Because of this, accepting the call of truth becomes a significant act of sacrifice. It is like offering your entire life at the altar of truth. But this is the sacrifice that makes a person loved in the eyes of God. It is the sacrifice that unlocks the gates of eternal Paradise for someone. Sacrificing your own self is the only cost of Paradise. Without this sacrifice, no one reaches God's Paradise.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 1st November 1971.

SACRIFICE IN ISLAM

Hajj is a global and collective worship. Its dates are fixed according to the lunar calendar. The rituals of Hajj are performed in Makkah and nearby areas over five days—from the 8th of Dhul-Hijjah to the 12th of Dhul-Hijjah. During this time, on the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah, the sacrifice is done in Mina. The prayer recited while sacrificing the animal is:

“I have set my face with single-minded devotion toward Him who created the heavens and the earth, and I am not one of those who associate partners with God. My prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are all for God, the Lord of the worlds; He has no partner. So I am commanded, and I am the first of those who submit. O God, this is from You and for You. In the name of God, God is the Greatest.”

In this prayer, the purpose behind the method of sacrifice is clearly seen. The truth is, sacrificing the animal is only a symbolic act. The real thing required from the one doing

Hajj or the one offering sacrifice is their own personal sacrifice. The main goal is personal sacrifice. The animal sacrifice is kept only as an outward symbol.

What is meant by personal sacrifice? It refers to a person described in the mentioned prayer as *Hanif* (God-oriented) and *Muslim* (one who willingly submits to God). This means turning away from defiance and becoming fully obedient and faithful. It involves making God's command—not personal desire—the guiding principle of life, and viewing what one possesses not as a personal achievement, but as a blessing from God. Such complete surrender is the true essence and spirit of sacrifice. An offering is only a real sacrifice when it fosters this very spirit within a person. That is why it is said in the Quran: Their flesh and blood do not reach God: it is your piety that reaches Him. (22:37)

Food is a fundamental need for every human. No one can survive without it. Through sacrifice, this need has been transformed into a valuable lesson. The animal sacrificed in the name of God during Dhul-Hijjah is actually the same kind of animal people normally slaughter and eat. However, when tied to the sacred worship of Hajj, it serves as a reminder that just as you sacrifice an animal, you should also sacrifice yourself. The person who offers a sacrifice eats some of the meat and also shares it with others. If there is a large amount of meat, it is permitted to preserve it for later use.

The outward form of sacrifice is to slaughter an animal, but its inner soul and spirit is to dedicate yourself to higher human values—to give yourself up for a great purpose or ideal. Every action has an outer form and an inner spirit. This is also the case with sacrifice. Its outer form is the slaughter. Its real spirit is sacrifice.

If you think deeply, the most important thing needed to build a healthy society is that the spirit of sacrifice must stay alive in its people. It is the sacrifices of individuals that give life to a society or nation. This is the lesson given to the person who offers a sacrifice.

One example of this is found in the instruction given during Hajj. In the Quran, it is said: When you set out for Hajj, do not argue or fight. (2:197) That means, during the journey, do not get into conflicts with others. It is clear that no one fights for no reason. These unpleasant situations usually happen as a reaction. That is, someone does something wrong, and the other person gets angry and starts fighting back.

If you keep this truth in mind, then the meaning of the command is this: Even if something wrong happens, don't fight back. This is high-level moral behaviour, which is not possible without sacrifice. When a person controls the anger rising inside and sacrifices his negative emotions, then it becomes possible for him not to fight back even when someone does wrong to him. This sacrifice is the

foundation on which the good morals expected from a pilgrim (Haji) are built.

This kind of emotional sacrifice by individuals is the only way to build a healthy society. When many people live together, it is natural that sometimes someone gets hurt by another. One person's benefit may clash with another's. In such situations, if people start reacting and answering back, the society as a whole will be torn apart by conflict. The truth is that the only way to keep society peaceful is for people to show patience and tolerance toward each other, which means emotional sacrifice. That is, a person ignores complaints. He forgets the unpleasant things. He chooses patience and self-control in such matters instead of reaction and revenge.

The spirit of sacrifice is the only guarantee for the creation of a better society. If the people of a society don't have patience and a spirit of sacrifice, then peace and justice can never be established in that society. The sacrifices of individuals give life to a community. And the society whose people do not agree to walk the path of sacrifice—that society will not get the blessings of life and progress in this world.

The practice of sacrifice has existed in every religion. It is a sacred ritual where something is offered to God to seek His closeness and favour. This tradition has appeared in all faiths and throughout history. It is a humble offering

from a finite human being to the Almighty God. The last thing that can be offered is a person's own life. When someone is filled with God's greatness, they want to give their life to Him. At such a moment, it is as if God, out of His special kindness, accepts the sacrifice of an animal instead of a person's life. He then gives the person a chance to stay alive and continue working toward a divine purpose. The person's desire to give their life is turned into constructive efforts.

In Hajj, patience and control are not only limited to people, but the same instruction is given regarding animals as well. In the farewell Hajj, there is a Hadith with these words:

Ibn Abbas recounts that on the day of Arafah, he was travelling with the Prophet. The Prophet heard people shouting and observed camels being struck. He pointed his whip towards them and said: O people, calmness is essential for you, because righteousness is not about rushing. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1671)

All India Radio, New Delhi, 25 July 1988.

RENEWAL OF SACRIFICE AND SELFLESSNESS

The festival of Eid al-Adha, like other historical festivals, is a commemoration of a significant and transformative event. Every year, on this day, during the last month of the Islamic (Hijri) calendar, Eid al-Adha is celebrated, so that people remember the great event that occurred on this day and make a commitment to bring it into their lives. In one word, this day is a reminder of sacrifice and selflessness. It is a day for renewing sacrifice and selflessness.

The significant event that Eid al-Adha commemorates occurred approximately four thousand years ago. The father of prophets, Prophet Abraham, who was born in the civilised country of ancient Iraq (Ur), offered his son Ishmael as a sacrifice for a higher purpose. This sacrifice wasn't about putting a knife to the body, but it was like placing the knife of patience on his entire life. It was to ignore one's self for the sake of truth. It was about relinquishing smaller desires for a greater goal. It was about moving forward toward his

purpose, no matter what—even if it meant sacrificing his most cherished possession.

What is the relevance of Eid al-Adha for us? And what kind of sacrifice and selflessness does this day ask from us? To understand this, we need to know what the real meaning of the sacrifice of Prophet Abraham was. Only after understanding the importance of his sacrifice can we understand its value in our own lives and adopt it practically.

Initially, the story of Prophet Abraham's sacrifice is that he tried to sacrifice his beloved son Ishmael in accordance with a dream. However, God stopped him from doing so. Instead of his son's life, he was instructed to sacrifice a ram. Regarding Ishmael, God commanded that he be taken and settled in the desert of Arabia. This indicates that God's true plan was not the temporary physical sacrifice of the son but his lasting psychological sacrifice. At that time, settling someone in the desert of Arabia was equivalent to placing them in a lifelong state of sacrifice.

It was God's plan to bring about a far-reaching reformatory revolution in the world—one that would serve as a source of goodness and well-being for all humanity. To accomplish this, a team of individuals with the highest moral and spiritual qualities was needed. For the formation of this powerful team, God chose to work through the family of Prophet Abraham.

For this goal, it was necessary to assemble a group of people who were free from moral and cultural degeneration, in whom natural human virtues remained strong, and who embodied all the noble qualities called in Arabic as *al-muru'ah*—true manliness, moral courage. Such a generation could not be created within the artificial environment of cities and settlements. A simple and natural setting was required. This was the plan, and it was carried out through Abraham and Ishmael. Prophet Abraham sacrificed his son for this great purpose.

To fulfil this plan, Prophet Abraham took his son out of the urban life of ancient Iraq (Ur) and placed him in the uninhabited region of Arabia. At that time, there was nothing there except sand and stones. Because of a lack of water, there was no sign of life. However, the biggest resource in this empty place was the natural environment, where a person could grow according to his pure nature, where his natural human qualities had the chance to develop freely.

God chose this dry and barren place to raise the new generation that was needed. It became a significant desert training ground, where Prophet Abraham settled his son Ishmael. When Ishmael reached adulthood, he married a woman from the desert tribe. In this desert environment, the new generation began to form, which later became known as Banu Ishmael.

These were the Banu Ishmael, or the Children of Ishmael, among whom the selected individuals became known as the Companions of the Last Messenger (Prophet Muhammad).

The Prophet of Islam was born in this very nation, the Banu Ishmael. He gathered them under the belief of Tawheed (Oneness of God), and with them, brought about a global Islamic revolution that changed the direction of human history. These Banu Ishmael were unique people, full of noble human values. Professor Philip Hitti rightly called them a nursery of heroes.

The animal that is sacrificed on Eid al-Adha is not the actual sacrifice. It is only a symbol of the real sacrifice. In truth, we are supposed to sacrifice ourselves. The animal sacrifice is a symbolic sacrifice. It is done so that the high spirit of sacrifice stays alive in people. So that through a practical event, they remember what their life's purpose is and how they should move toward it.

The sacrifice of Prophet Abraham is a great example. But we are to follow it in its real spirit, not in its outer form. This example doesn't mean that in every age, people should go to the desert and repeat the same hardships that happened with Ishmael and Hajra in ancient Arabia. Later generations must adopt the spirit of that sacrifice. The outer form of the event is temporary, but its spirit has eternal value.

Prophet Abraham and Prophet Ishmael sacrificed themselves for a better future for humanity by leaving the civilized world and settling in the uninhabited desert. They left the lush and developed land of Iraq and moved to the dry deserts of Arabia. Despite outward differences, this same sacrifice is required from everyone within their own sphere. Everyone has their own “green Iraq.” And each of us must leave our own comfortable “green Iraq” and settle in our own version of the “desert of Arabia.”

We should ask ourselves: in today’s world, which part of the story of Prophet Abraham is needed, and what kind of sacrifice is God asking from us? In today’s conditions, whatever sacrifice is required to build a better world—no matter what its outward shape is—in its spirit, it will be the same as the sacrifice of Prophet Abraham. And the person who proves his dedication will earn the same reward that is given to his sacrifice.

Now think: in today’s times, what must we do to follow the way of Prophet Abraham? What is the sacrifice required from us today?

Prophets Abraham and Ishmael offered a very unique and special kind of sacrifice. It was such a deep and complete sacrifice that no one else in human history has ever repeated it. That’s why it is a standard and outstanding example for all humankind. Similarly, in the future, people must offer sacrifices based on their own situations and abilities. The day of Eid al-Adha teaches everyone this responsibility.

The field of sacrifice and selflessness is very wide. It can be something very small, and it can also be very big. When you are travelling by bus and you give up your seat for a woman or an old man, that is also a sacrifice. If you are an officer in an institution, and you step down to give the position to someone more capable, that too is a sacrifice. If you feel anger or hatred against someone, but you cool down your feelings with patience, that is also a sacrifice. If you have more material wealth and your brother has less, and you give him a portion of your wealth, that too is a sacrifice. In this way, the chain of sacrifices continues all through life, every single day. Without this kind of sacrifice, a better social life cannot be built.

In life, no great work can ever be done without sacrifice. Every big task always demands selflessness. To lift the nation, we must be ready to put ourselves in the background. To develop the country, we must accept personal loss. To raise humanity, we must lower our own flags. To improve collective life, we must control our desires. To uphold principles, we must crush our ego. To give peace to our neighbours, we must place restrictions on ourselves. All such actions are examples of sacrifice, and it is this kind of sacrifice whose importance is taught by the festival of Eid al-Adha.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 14 July 1989.

EID AL-ADHA

Eid al-Adha means the festival of sacrifice. The purpose of this yearly festival is to develop the spirit of sacrifice within a person. However, the real meaning of this sacrifice is not just to slaughter an animal. Slaughtering an animal is only a symbol of the real sacrifice, not the real sacrifice itself.

The sacrifice is in memory of Prophet Abraham. Every year, we remember this in our lives. Now consider the event involving Prophet Abraham. God had a special plan to fulfil through him. That plan was to settle his son Ishmael in a barren area of Arabia, where at that time, there was nothing but desert and mountains. In this tough environment, through generations, a strong nation would grow—full of the highest human virtues and equipped with every form of practical capability. Once this vibrant generation was raised, it would be used to bring about a new revolution, one that would provide the upcoming great reformer, Prophet Muhammad, with a powerful team of dedicated people.

In ancient Arabia, settling a child in such a place was equal to sacrificing him. This reality was shown to Prophet Abraham in a dream, as if he was slaughtering his son Ishmael. It was a symbolic dream. But Prophet Abraham, with full obedience, got ready to actually fulfil it. This proved that he was fully willing to give his child for God's great plan without hesitation.

God gave a ram at that time and told Prophet Abraham to slaughter it as a replacement to fulfil his dream, and to send his son into the desert for the real sacrifice. In that difficult environment, a new generation would be raised. When this generation is ready, it would lead a great revolution through its efforts and bring the world into a new age. From this generation came the Sahaba (Companions of the Prophet), who possessed superior character and sparked the great revolution in the world.

Eid al-Adha is a day to retell the story of Prophet Abraham as a festival. Prophet Abraham recounted it in a special way during his time. In the future, this Abrahamic act will continue, although its forms may vary.

On the occasion of Eid al-Adha, when a person sacrifices an animal, he says in Arabic words whose meaning is:

“Surely my worship, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are all for God, the Lord of the worlds.
O God, You gave this, and I return it to You.”
(*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith No. 3121)

This shows that the real sacrifice is the sacrifice of one's self. The real sacrifice is that a person hands over his whole self to God without trying to save it. He is slaughtering an animal as a symbol, making a promise to hand himself over to God, just like Prophet Abraham gave his son to God's plan and sacrificed a ram as a replacement. For Prophet Abraham, the slaughter of the ram was symbolic. In the same way, the sacrifice of an animal on the day of Eid al-Adha or during Hajj is also a symbolic act, not the main goal.

For this symbolic slaughter, the animal is the most natural choice. It means using a daily-life act for a big lesson. According to God's Shariah, a person often slaughters animals for food. That same act has been given a new title on this day. It's like turning an ordinary act into a source of a powerful lesson.

Eid al-Adha is a day to remember the story of Prophet Abraham as a festival. He reenacted it in one form during his time. In the future, this Abrahamic act will continue, but its forms may change. The symbolic act will always be the same, that is, the slaughter of an animal on Eid al-Adha. However, in spirit, the forms can vary. Whatever type of sacrifice Islam requires at a given time, it should be performed then.

Right now, in the present time, the big problem of Islam is that nearly all the highly capable people of the Muslim

community are caught in the love of instant gratification. They are not ready to work for long-term goals. They are putting all their efforts into things that bring fame. Work that gets published in newspapers, that brings immediate popularity, that gives a high public image—all the highly talented people are rushing toward such things. They are not ready to dedicate themselves to serious and quiet constructive work.

People sacrifice animals on the day of Eid al-Adha, but when it comes to real sacrifice—where they must offer their own selves and talents—they are not ready to dedicate themselves.

Today, what Islam requires is the same kind of sacrifice. We need to let go of worldly temptations and sacrifice for the eternal blessings of the Hereafter.

Using the method of animal sacrifice as a symbol for this needed action is like including this lesson in our everyday lives. According to God's law, a person often slaughters an animal for food. On the day of Eid al-Adha, the same animal slaughter has been turned into a symbolic act in memory of Prophet Abraham. In this way, something that already happens has been made a source of a great lesson.

On the day of Eid al-Adha, people first pray two units of Salah and then sacrifice an animal. These are two ways of expressing the same truth. Prayer is a promise of surrender and submission—and so is the sacrifice. In

Salah, a person demonstrates surrender through bowing and prostration (*ruku'* and *sajdah*). In sacrifice, he shows it by sacrificing his wealth and his self. Through Salah, a person says, "Wherever I need to bow before God, I will bow." And through sacrifice, he declares, "Wherever I need to give my life, I will give it."

In chapter 108 of the Quran, *Al-Kawthar*, Prophet Muhammad—and, by extension, his entire Ummah—is instructed to offer sacrifice. The translation of this chapter is:

"We have given you abundance. Pray to your Lord and sacrifice to Him alone. It is the one who hates you who has been cut off." (108:1-3)

Al-Kawthar means great and abundant good. That is, many blessings and goodness. The Prophet of Islam was given this *Al-Kawthar* in its perfect form. Later followers will be given *Al-Kawthar* according to their practical efforts.

The Prophet stood up with a pure message of truth. This kind of mission always demands sacrifice. This mission is surely the hardest task in the world. And the Prophet completed this mission through the greatest sacrifice. He had to give up everything in the path of this message.

He was cut off from his own people. His financial life was ruined. The future of his children became uncertain. Except for a few people, no one supported him. But he continued to strive with all kinds of sacrifice. Until finally, God sent him the glad news: We have given you

Al-Kawthar—meaning, all kinds of the highest success, in this world and the next, have been written for you forever. This prediction of the Quran came true completely in the years that followed.

Eid al-Adha commemorates the day of the pledge of sacrifice, which opens the door to all noble achievements. In this world, true greatness belongs only to those who are prepared to fulfil their responsibilities in every situation—those willing to endure hardships and make sacrifices to carry out the duties entrusted to them.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 23 June 1991.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SACRIFICE

Sacrifice, in its outer form, means to slaughter an animal in the name of God. But in its true meaning, it is to sacrifice your own self. The purpose of sacrifice is to create an inner feeling through an outer action. Outwardly, sacrifice is an external action, but in its spirit, it is completely an internal act.

In the Quran, while mentioning sacrifice, it is said: We have appointed for you the sacrificial camels as one of the symbols set up by God, in which there is much good for you. So invoke God's name over them as you line them up for slaughter, and when they have fallen down dead, feed yourselves and feed the needy—those who do not ask as well as those who do. We have thus subjected them to you so that you may be grateful. Their flesh and blood do not reach God: it is your piety that reaches Him. Thus God has subjected them to you, so that you may glorify Him for the guidance He has given you. Give glad tidings to those who do good. (22:36-37)

In this verse of the Quran, the animal sacrifice is referred to as a sign (*sha'air*). This indicates that the sacrifice

itself is not the ultimate goal; rather, it is a symbol or sign. The true purpose of this act is to foster taqwa. The intention behind the sacrifice is to cultivate the spirit of taqwa (righteousness) in a person through a meaningful symbolic act.

This can also be said in another way: the philosophy or real meaning of sacrifice is psychological sacrifice. The slaughter of an animal is training for the slaughter of one's emotions and desires. The message of the Quran is: crush the bad desires that rise inside you, defeat your inner evils.

A human being is a creature who is born with *nafs-e-ammara* (the commanding self or ego). While living among people, again and again, this *nafs-e-ammara* flares up. Feelings like anger, hatred, revenge, jealousy, spite, selfishness rise inside him. This is the test of a person. To pass this test, it is necessary that a person tries to control these emotions. He must be ready to suppress every such feeling.

This is called psychological sacrifice, and for the practical training of this inner sacrifice, the method of sacrificing animals has been prescribed. In the above verse, it is said that neither the meat nor the blood of animals reaches God—what reaches Him is your taqwa. This means that if the sacrifice of an animal does not become the sacrifice of inner self, then such a sacrifice is not acceptable to God.

In today's world, a person's whole life is a life of sacrifice. If a person is not ready for sacrifice, he can never live a true and meaningful life in this world.

In this world, a person has to fulfil his responsibilities even if he has to ignore his rights—and this is a form of complete sacrifice. Here, a person sees that lying can bring benefit, yet he prepares himself to speak the truth—this is not possible without sacrifice. Here, he leaves a benefit that is available to him, only because he does not truly deserve it—this, too, is a kind of sacrifice. After giving such different types of sacrifices, it becomes possible for a person to live as a truthful human being in this world.

The slaughter of an animal is training for these kinds of sacrifices. Through the animal's slaughter, a person is taught the lesson that at every point in life, he should be ready to sacrifice his inner emotions. For the sake of higher human values, he should sacrifice every such feeling that appears to be a barrier.

Whenever there is a downfall in an individual or a nation, it always occurs because the spirit of sacrifice disappears from them. When people begin to follow their desires. When people forget that to reach big goals, one must be ready to ignore small personal gains.

That is why the method of sacrifice has been made a yearly practice—so that people at least once every year

remember this essential value, so they keep refreshing it in their minds, and keep receiving the food of taqwa again and again.

When a person spends money to buy an animal for sacrifice, he reminds himself of the truth that this wealth is not his—it belongs to God. When he slaughters the animal, he makes a practical promise to God that, in this way, he is ready to sacrifice himself. When he distributes the meat, he builds the feeling inside that others also have a share in what he earns. The animal's slaughter is a symbol of the fact that a person should always be ready to reach the highest level of sacrifice for God's obedience.

The sacrifice of the animal is the beginning, and taqwa is the end. The slaughter of the animal is its symbol, and the slaughter of desires and negative emotions is its true spirit.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 2 June 1993.

WHAT NOT TO DO DURING HAJJ

During the days of Hajj, the things that are forbidden are the same things that are harmful in everyday life, too. These actions are forbidden in Hajj as a way of training. In Hajj, these prohibitions are followed with extra care so that a person becomes more alert about them and develops the ability to avoid them in daily life as well.

When a person is at home or engaged in business, he remains absorbed in his personal affairs and forgets the greater realities beyond them. For this reason, he is brought to the mosque five times a day to perform prayer, so that for a while he may step out of his private world, clear his mind of distractions, and turn with full concentration toward God. In the same way, during Hajj, a person is taken out of his limited world and brought to different places in Arabia for deeper spiritual experience. Hajj means being completely separated from worldly surroundings so that one can fully turn toward God.

Many important religious traditions are linked to Arabia. That's why the land of Arabia is the ideal place for the

Hajj rituals. Here is the Kaaba, which has been regarded as sacred for thousands of years. It is also where the stories of the sacrifices of the Prophets were recorded. This is where we find reminders of God's blessings on His faithful servants. It is also the land where the lives of God's last Messenger and his Companions left their marks. These historical connections give Hajj sites a unique sense of importance and reverence. When someone steps into this atmosphere, a deep spiritual history awakens in their mind. Naturally, their faith grows stronger. They become more serious and focused in obeying God's commands. Because of its special significance, God chose this place so that symbolic training for Islamic life can occur here, and then the individual returns to their usual environment to lead a more God-centered life.

During the days of Hajj, while performing special rituals, there are three important things that are forbidden for the pilgrim:

1. Do not hurt anyone with your words.
2. Do not kill or harm any animal.
3. Avoid things related to comfort and decoration, like cutting nails, combing hair, wearing stitched clothes, applying perfume, marital relations, etc.

When people live together, the thing that causes the most trouble is the tongue. One person often hurts another with his words. During Hajj, as so many people are together at

one time, there are more chances that someone may lose control of their speech and hurt another Muslim. So the season of Hajj is specially used for training in this matter. Hurting someone with words is generally forbidden in Islamic ethics, but in Hajj, it is made part of worship, so people take extra care to protect themselves from this social wrongdoing.

The Quran says: The pilgrimage is in the appointed months. Whoever intends to perform it during them must abstain from indecent speech, from all wicked conduct, and from quarrelling while on the pilgrimage. (2:197)

These are the three main ways in which people hurt each other with words: a person says indecent things, uses bad language about others, or argues and fights. All these actions are completely forbidden during Hajj. The purpose is to make a person more sensitive about them, so that when he returns from the spiritual journey, his tongue remains clean from such words forever.

Once a person wears the ihram for Hajj, hunting land animals becomes forbidden for him. Even accepting meat of hunted animals as a gift, pulling a bird's feather, helping in hunting, giving someone a knife to kill an animal—all these are forbidden for the pilgrim.

During Hajj, if there is a dangerous animal like a snake, the pilgrim is allowed to kill it. He is also permitted to sacrifice the animal as part of the qurbani (sacrifice),

which is a ritual during Hajj. Aside from this, killing or harming any animal is forbidden. While hunting animals is generally allowed, it is not permitted during Hajj. This serves as training to live with discipline and extra care. A person is always expected not to kill others or harm any living being. Although this is a general command for all times, during Hajj, this rule is extended even to animals to help individuals become more aware of it and follow it more strictly after returning from Hajj.

The summary of Islamic life in one word is: living with self-control. The journey of Hajj is specially designed for training in such a controlled way of life. This role of Hajj is explained in a Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad: “Whoever performs the Hajj in such a way that Muslims remain safe from his tongue and hands, all his past sins will be forgiven.” (*Tarikh Dimashq* by Ibn Asakir, Vol. 29, p. 362)

That means, during Hajj, the most important thing a person must protect is this: no one should be hurt by his words, and no one should suffer because of his hands. The Hajj that erases all sins is the one where a person returns with a peaceful tongue and a kind hand.

During Hajj, even things of comfort and decoration are made forbidden. The Hajj begins with wearing the ihram. Ihram is a simple dress—one white lower cloth and one white upper sheet. As soon as someone enters the

boundaries of *Haram* (the sacred area of Makkah), wearing ihram becomes necessary. This is a type of simple dress worn while visiting the Kaaba. This is the first symbolic step through which God reminds His servants that all human beings are equal. The outer things that people use to show off or think they are better than others are all meaningless in God's sight. God looks at everyone equally, just as all pilgrims wearing the same dress during Hajj look alike. So the ihram is a practical expression of Islam's teaching that all human beings are equal. Those who wish to be truly devoted to God must set aside every other 'garment' and unite by adopting the spiritual garment of piety. (Quran, 7:26)

The Prophet Muhammad was asked, "Who is the real pilgrim?" He replied, "The one with messy hair and dusty face." (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 2998)

These words show the real picture of a true pilgrim. Untidy hair and dusty body are signs of a purposeful person. When someone devotes himself seriously to a special mission, he doesn't have time for decoration. In Hajj, being told to adopt such a state is like being reminded of living a purposeful life. It means a person should be so deeply involved in God's mission that he forgets about his looks. He forgets temporary pleasures. In his passion to achieve a higher goal, he forgets his personal desires.

About Hajj, the Quran says: Make provision for yourselves—but surely, the best of all provision is God-consciousness. (2:197)

In ancient Arabia, people believed that bringing food and supplies for Hajj was a worldly act. They thought that anyone who set out for Hajj without food or goods was very pious and religious. Such people used to say about themselves, “we are the ones who trust only in God” (*Sunan Abi Dawud*, Hadith No. 1730). But the Quran made it clear that this kind of outward display is not true piety. Genuine piety is in the heart and mind, not in outward appearances. What a person must safeguard is not his food bag but his heart and mind—ensuring they are free from fear of anyone other than God.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 14 September 1981.

THE MESSAGE OF HAJJ

Before 1982, I had only read about Hajj in books. In 1982, I was blessed with the honour of performing Hajj myself. From both study and experience, the message of Hajj that I came to understand is this: a person should run toward his Lord, making his Creator the centre and focus of his life. Although Hajj is performed over a few days, it offers a lesson for a lifetime. It serves as a symbolic guide for the entire journey of a human being.

When a person leaves his homeland and his household to go on the journey of Hajj, he feels that he is travelling towards God. He is taking himself out of his worldly life and entering into the world of God. He is going to the place where God's house (Baitullah) is. Where the Prophet of God and his Companions' great deeds are recorded. Where there are signs of those people who lived for God and who gave their lives in the way of God. Along with that, the pilgrim feels that he is going to visit that place which God chose especially for the revelation of His final guidance.

In this way, the first effect of Hajj is (or should be) that the pilgrim's mind becomes God-oriented. He starts remembering God. His mind gets filled with thoughts about God. If until now his thoughts were going towards his own self, now his thoughts start moving towards God.

Whatever a person thinks about, their emotions get shaped accordingly. If you strive for your personal goals, your mind will revolve around your own self. But when a person is going towards God, then his mind connects to God. He starts remembering things related to God. He thinks that God created me. He gave me all kinds of opportunities. He made me capable of working in this world. With His help, it became possible for me to gather the resources through which today I am going towards Baitullah. Then, finally, that day will come upon me when death will arrive, and I will be presented directly in the court of God.

These things turn the journey of the pilgrim into a truly spiritual journey. Outwardly, he is on a physical journey, but in terms of his inner feelings, he is going through high levels of a meaningful, spiritual journey.

When the time to enter the Haram comes near, all pilgrims don on a new type of uniform. Every person puts on the same kind of unstitched clothes (ihram) on their body. This is a practical reminder that the pilgrim has now entered a new world. By removing his national dress,

he is as if separating himself from the way of life that his environment had taught him. He brings upon himself the feeling that God wants a person to have. Millions of people leave their own colours and get coloured in the colour of God.

After putting on the divine clothing of ihram on the body, the pilgrim's tongue also starts speaking divine words. Now the pilgrim starts raising the call of "Labbaik Labbaik." As if God was calling him, and he ran to His call and said: "O God, I am present, O God, I am present." The act of saying Labbaik Labbaik continues continuously by the pilgrim.

Saying "I am present" does not mean that I am present to live in Makkah. This is not a sentence of leaving the homeland, but a sentence of leaving the way of life. It means that I am present for your obedience. I am ready for whatever command You give, I will stand on it with all my heart and soul. The declaration of Labbaik is made by the person at the place of Hajj, but he has to practically prove it when he returns back to his homeland, in the days and nights where he lives his life.

When a person reaches Makkah, the first act he does is the Tawaf (circumambulation) of the Kaaba. Baitullah is a vast mosque. In the middle of its wide courtyard stands the historical building of the Kaaba, which was built by Prophet Abraham. The pilgrim walks around this Kaaba

in the courtyard of Baitullah. He circles it seven times. In this way, he is symbolically demonstrating the action that he will always move around God. He will give God a central place in his life and will live his whole life around God or a God-oriented life.

After Tawaf, the pilgrim performs Sa'i between the hills of Safa and Marwah. He goes from Safa to Marwah and then from Marwah to Safa. In this way, he walks fast and performs the Sa'i seven times. This too is a symbolic act. It is an expression of his determination to put his efforts in the way of God. During this act, apparently, the pilgrim is moving between two hills, Safa and Marwah, but in reality, this Sa'i is a symbol of struggle in the path of God, performed in the form of a repetition of a historical event.

The most important worship during Hajj is the one called Wuquf-e-Arafat. That is, reaching the plain of Arafat and staying there. This is a very strange scene. People from all over the world, saying "*Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik*," (I am present, O God, I am present), and wearing the same simple dress, gather in the vast and open field of Arafat. This is like a worldly rehearsal of standing before God in the field of resurrection. A gathering like this in Arafat reminds the pilgrim of the Day of Judgement. It makes him feel the biggest reality, and if a person really becomes aware of this truth, then his life completely changes. All his affairs start getting corrected automatically.

One of the acts during Hajj is to throw pebbles at Jamrah Aqabah. This is a symbolic act. By throwing pebbles at Jamrah, the pilgrim renews his commitment that he will hit Satan the same way and push him far away from himself. His relationship with Satan is not one of friendship, but one of enmity and opposition. If a person turns this symbolic act into a real action, if he truly pushes Satan away from himself, then all the evils within him will be removed. Because every kind of evil is created within a person by the teachings of Satan.

After this, the pilgrim sacrifices an animal in the path of God. This sacrifice is also a symbolic act. As mentioned in the Quran, it is counted among the *Sh'air* of God (symbols of God). The sacrifice of the animal is a symbol of sacrificing one's own self. By sacrificing the animal, the pilgrim, through the language of action, promises that he is ready to give everything in the way of God. Even if the time comes that he has to give his own life in the path of God, he will give his life. He will not hesitate to hand over his last precious possession to God.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 18 July 1987.

THE COLLECTIVE IMPORTANCE OF HAJJ

Hajj is one of the most important annual acts of worship in Islam. It is performed in the last month of the lunar calendar, Dhul-Hijjah. The rituals of Hajj are performed in and around the Kaaba (Baytullah) and the surrounding regions of Makkah. This worship is called the most comprehensive of all acts of worship, as it includes every type of devotional aspect. One of those aspects is collectiveness and unity. The aspect of collectiveness and unity is very prominent in the worship of Hajj. In the Encyclopaedia Britannica (1984), while describing Hajj, this sentence is written:

“About 2,000,000 persons perform the Hajj each year, and the rite serves as a unifying force in Islam by bringing followers of diverse backgrounds together in religious celebration.”
(*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1985, Vol.4, p. 844)

The Quran, when giving the command for Hajj, mentions:
“And We made the House [the Kaaba] a place of assembly

and a sanctuary for mankind”. (2:125) The Arabic word “Mathabah” used in this verse has a meaning similar to what we today call a “centre”—a place where people gather, a common point of reference, and a place of unity for all.

For the Hajj pilgrimage, people come from every country and nation. At the time of this writing, their number is about two million each year. During the Hajj season, Makkah and its surroundings are filled with people everywhere. They speak different languages and come from diverse backgrounds, yet once they arrive here, their minds become united. All of them worship together, and throughout Hajj, God remains the focus of their attention. In this way, Hajj is a form of worship that, through all its rites and gatherings, teaches the lesson of unity and focus.

The history of Hajj is connected to the lives of Prophet Abraham and Prophet Ishmael. These are two personalities who are not only considered prophets by Muslims but are also recognised as great prophets by the followers of other major religions. This gives Hajj a historical sanctity and greatness that no other act in the world possesses.

Prophet Abraham was born in ancient Iraq. Prophet Ishmael was his son. At that time, Iraq was a land of advanced civilisation. Azar, the father of Abraham and the grandfather of Ishmael, held a high position in the government system of ancient Iraq. For Abraham and Ishmael, Iraq offered abundant opportunities for success

and prosperity. However, driven by their innate search for the one true God, they left the fertile land of Iraq and journeyed to the barren desert of Arabia, where there was nothing to come in the way between the Creator and creation. Here, they built the House of God (Kaaba).

The act of Prophet Abraham and Prophet Ishmael can be described in other words like this: they chose not to make many gods their centre, but made the one God their centre. And for this purpose, they built the House of God (Kaaba), which is a global centre for the worship of the One God. This same centre of Tawheed is also the centre for performing the rituals of Hajj.

Let us now look at some of the aspects of the rituals performed during Hajj. The most repeated phrase by the pilgrim during Hajj is:

*“Allahu Akbar Allahu Akbar La ilaha illa Allah;
Wallahu Akbar Allahu Akbar wa lillahir hamd.”*

God is the Greatest, God is the Greatest. There is no god but God. And again, God is the Greatest, God is the Greatest, and all praise belongs to Him.

By repeatedly uttering these words through the pilgrim's mouth, a mindset is cultivated among all people that greatness belongs solely to God. All other forms of greatness exist only to be absorbed into this one ultimate greatness. This feeling is the greatest secret to togetherness and unity. Collectiveness and unity are never realized when

each person considers themselves great. On the contrary, when everyone sacrifices their individual greatness for the greatness of one, unity and togetherness are always achieved. Disunity is the division of greatness, and unity is the oneness of greatness.

Similarly, one of the important rituals of Hajj is Tawaf (circumambulation). People from all over the world who gather in Makkah during the Hajj season first perform Tawaf around the Kaaba. This is a practical acknowledgement that one's efforts should be centred around a single focal point. One should revolve within a single circle. This is the same concept seen at the physical level in the solar system, where all the planets revolve around a single central point, the sun. Similarly, Hajj teaches that one should make the One God the focal point of one's life and remain within the sphere of His guidance.

After this, the pilgrim performs *Sa'i* (the ritual of walking or running) between Safa and Marwa. They go from Safa to Marwa and then return from Marwa to Safa, repeating this seven times. This act teaches, in the language of action, that human endeavours should be within set limits. If there are no limits to one's efforts, some will run too far in one direction and others in the opposite direction. However, where the bounds of effort are established, everyone stays within those limits, returning again and again to the place where their fellow pilgrims continue their activities.

This principle applies to all the rituals of Hajj. Each ritual of Hajj teaches the importance of unity and collective action from various perspectives. They are practical demonstrations of moving in unison.

When these people from different countries reach the place of Hajj, they all remove their national dress and wear one common dress called ihram. To wear ihram means to wear an unstitched white sheet like a lower garment, and to place one white sheet on the upper body. In this way, millions of people wear the same kind and the same colour of dress.

After performing the various rites, all the pilgrims finally gather on the vast plain of Arafat. At that moment, an awe-inspiring sight appears: it seems as though all differences have disappeared, leaving only the shared bond of God's unity. Instead of divisions of colour, race, and geography, people stand united, just as their Lord is one.

When all pilgrims wearing ihram gather in the vast field of Arafat, if seen from a high place, it looks as if, despite differences in language, colour, status, and gender, all people have become completely one. At that time, different nationalities seem to merge into one big nationality. Truly, the display of collectiveness and unity at Hajj is so grand that probably no other example like it is found anywhere else in the world.

The Kaaba is the Qibla of worship for Muslims. Muslims face it five times a day while offering prayers. So, the worship direction of all Muslims in the world is the same. Usually, this is just a conceptual truth. But during Hajj, by reaching Makkah, it becomes a visible reality. When Muslims from all over the world gather here and pray facing the same direction, it becomes visibly clear that the Qiblah of all Muslims is one and the same.

The Kaaba is a tall, square-shaped structure. All people circumambulate around it in a circular path, which is called Tawaf. They line up in rows and walk around it in circles. This teaches people to unite and work together. It is a practical demonstration of moving together on one call.

This great system of unity also has an outward aspect—that all people are made to take off their national dress and wear one simple dress, the ihram. Here, the difference between king and servant disappears. The distinctions of Eastern and Western clothes vanish into the atmosphere. In the common dress of ihram, all people appear as if they have only one identity—that they are all servants of one God. No one holds any other status beyond this.

Although the prescribed rituals of Hajj end in Makkah, most pilgrims go to Madinah after completing Hajj. The old name of Madinah was Yathrib. But the Prophet of

Islam made it his centre in the last period of his life. From that time, its name became Madinat-un-Nabi (The City of the Prophet). Madinah is a shortened form of this. In Madinah, there is the mosque built by the Prophet. Here is his grave. Here are the traces of his prophetic life.

In this situation, when the pilgrim reaches Madinah, it becomes another great lesson of unity and collectiveness. In the Prophet's Mosque, they revive the memory that their leader is only one. They return with the feeling that no matter how many geographical and national differences they have, they have to walk on the path made by the one Prophet. They have to make one sacred personality their guide in life. No matter how different they are in many ways, their God is one and their Prophet is one.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 7 August 1985.

PLAIN OF ARAFAT

Arafat is the name of a dry mountain in Arabia. The wide valley that stretches from this mountain is also called Arafah or Arafat. The plain of Arafat is one of the important places of Hajj. The rituals of Hajj, which are performed over the course of about one week, involve all pilgrims passing through different areas around the sacred precincts—Mina, Arafat, Muzdalifah, and others. On the 9th of Dhul Hijjah, all pilgrims enter the plain of Arafat after the sun has passed its peak and stay there until sunset, engaged in worship, remembrance, and supplication. They listen to the sermon of the imam, which is like a reminder of the famous sermon of the Prophet of Islam during the Farewell Pilgrimage, delivered at this very place.

The importance of staying in Arafat is so great that the Prophet Muhammad said:

Hajj is Arafat. Whoever stood there for even a moment, day or night, his Hajj is complete. (*Nasb al-Rayah* by Al-Zayla'i, Vol. 3, p. 93) Among all the rituals of Hajj—which are around a dozen,

including putting on ihram, Sa'i, Tawaf, sacrifice, and stoning the pillars—the most important act is the stay in the plain of Arafat.

The road from Makkah going westward to Ta'if leads to a large, rocky plain about fifteen kilometers (12 miles) away. This is the plain of Arafat. It is around 200 yards above sea level and spreads over many miles. All year long, this field remains completely empty. If someone goes there alone, the vast emptiness feels quite overwhelming. But on one day, the 9th of Dhul Hijjah, hundreds of thousands of people gather here at the same time. The whole plain is filled with people and their rides. This seems like a symbolic picture of the Day of Judgement. Today, the field of Judgement is lying empty, but when the Day of Judgement arrives, all human beings will suddenly be gathered there, and the entire human race will stand in a vast plain before their Lord, waiting for His decision.

According to the set method, the pilgrim enters Masjid al-Haram on the morning of the 8th of Dhul Hijjah. After performing the Tawaf al-Qudum, he leaves for Mina early in the morning and stays there during the day and night. On the morning of the 9th of Dhul Hijjah, the pilgrim leaves for Arafat via Muzdalifah, and after traveling around ten kilometers, reaches the area of Arafat by midday. From afternoon until sunset, he stays in this plain. In the language of the Shari'ah, this stay is called Wuquf Arafat. During this time, the pilgrim spends all his moments in

prayer, worship, repentance, and seeking forgiveness. In the evening, he leaves from there for Mash'ar al-Haram (Muzdalifah). Just as Dhuhr and Asr prayers were combined and offered earlier in Arafat, Maghrib and Isha prayers will be combined and delayed in Muzdalifah.

Arafat has the special feature that it is mentioned clearly in the Quran. In the verse regarding Hajj, it is said: "When you return from Arafat, remember God at the sacred place." (2:198)

Many historical events are connected to the plain of Arafat. The first to perform the acts of worship here was Prophet Abraham, and the same actions are repeated every year by pilgrims when they arrive at this place. After Prophet Abraham, during the time of ignorance, people had changed the methods of Hajj. The Prophet of Islam restored Hajj according to the Abrahamic way.

When one reaches the plain of Arafat, one of the important thoughts that comes to mind is that this is a historical place symbolising how Islam traveled from its starting point to its completion. The plain of Arafat is the historical location where the Prophet Muhammad gave his last sermon, known as the Farewell Sermon.

The Prophet of God left Makkah in 1 AH and reached Madinah as a migrant. Apparently, this seemed like the end of the history of Islam. But with God's help, it became the beginning of a new chapter. Just ten years later, the

Prophet of God stood in the plain of Arafat as the ruler of the land and gave a sermon in the presence of nearly 150,000 devoted Companions—a sermon that became a turning point not just for Arabia but for the whole of humanity.

A Western biographer noted: “In fact, in the year 10 H., he was able to address at Arafat a gathering of Muslims numbering about 140,000 Muslims who had come for pilgrimage.”

The Prophet Muhammad performed Hajj in the last part of his life, known as Hajjat al-Wada‘ (Farewell Hajj). Around 150,000 Companions were gathered during this Hajj. It is reported that on the morning of the 9th of Dhul Hijjah, before sunrise, he left for Arafat. There, sitting on a camel, he made supplications and continued praying until sunset. He sat on a camel so that more and more people could see and hear him.

The supplication he made at that time is recorded in the books of Hadith with slight differences in wording. However, the purpose is not that every pilgrim should memorise and repeat the exact words. This prayer reflects emotions more than just words. In this matter, following the Sunnah means that every pilgrim should create in their heart the same religious feelings and divine emotions that were present in the heart of the Prophet and then repeat the words that came out of his mouth in the form of this prayer. The translation of that prayer is:

“O God, You are listening to my words and You are aware of my situation. You know my hidden and visible matters. Nothing is concealed from You. I am in distress, in need, and I turn to You in pleading. I seek refuge in You. I am troubled and fearful. I confess my sins and admit my wrongs. I approach You as a helpless person, seeking Your mercy. I am pleading before You as a sinful and humble being. I ask You in fear, as one struck by calamity, like a person whose head is bowed in submission to You, whose eyes weep for You, whose body humbles itself before You, and whose forehead is pressed to the ground in reverence. O God, do not leave me disappointed in seeking Your help, and be compassionate and merciful to me. O the best of those who are asked and the most generous of those who give!” (*Al-Mu’jam al-Kabeer* by Al-Tabarani, Hadith No. 11405)

This supplication of the Prophet in Arafat is a guiding and model prayer. It tells us what kind of emotions should rise in the heart of a pilgrim when he reaches this historic place. His inner being should be filled with spiritual restlessness, not just with movements of the tongue.

The stay in Arafat is like the completion of a person’s journey of faith. A person receives the knowledge of God and His Messenger. He moulds his life according to the guidance of God and the Prophet. Then the desire awakens in his heart to perform Hajj of the Kaaba and present his feelings of servitude before his Lord. He leaves his home

and sets out. During the journey, he remembers God. Seeing the places of Hajj, his religious emotions awaken. Until finally, he reaches the plain of Arafat—as though he has come to stand before his Lord.

God sees the spiritual states of this pilgrim. His mercy comes very close to him. God decides to forgive His servant. This is the reality mentioned in a Hadith—that when the Day of Arafah comes, God descends to the nearest heaven and proudly says to the angels:

“Look at My servants. They have come to Me with their heads messy, their clothes dusty from travel. They are saying Labbaik, Labbaik. They have come from far away. I make you witnesses that I have forgiven their sins.” (*Sahih Ibn Hibban*, Hadith No. 3853)

In another Hadith, it is said that God says to the angels with pride: “Look! I sent My Messenger to these people. They believed in him. I sent down a Book to them. They accepted it. Be witnesses that I have forgiven all their sins.” (*Kanz al-‘Ummal*, Hadith No. 12101)

The plain of Arafat is, in one sense, a field of unity. This is another aspect of the Hajj ritual. When people from different countries reach the place of Hajj, they all take off their national dress and wear a common dress, which is called ihram. Wearing ihram means putting on one plain white sheet like a lower garment and another plain white sheet draped over the upper body. In this way, millions of people are dressed in the same style and colour.

All these people perform different rituals and finally gather together in the wide plain of Arafat. At that time, a wonderful scene appears. It feels as if all human differences have suddenly vanished. People forget their individual identities and become immersed in the oneness of God. All human beings become one, just as their God is one.

When all pilgrims, wearing ihram, are gathered in the vast plain of Arafat, and one looks from a height, it seems that despite differences of language, colour, status, and gender, all human beings have become completely united. At that moment, various national identities appear to be merging into one great community. This is the collective aspect of Hajj. The display of unity and togetherness in Hajj is so vast that perhaps nothing like it exists anywhere else in the world.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 9 July 1988.

ETIQUETTES OF MADINAH

In ancient Arabia, there were three major cities—Makkah, Ta'if, and Yathrib. When the Prophet of Islam migrated from Makkah and made Yathrib his place of stay, the city came to be called Madinat-un-Nabi (the City of the Prophet). Later, this was shortened to just Madinah.

Going to Madinah is not a necessary part of Hajj. Without visiting Madinah, the Hajj is still complete. However, those who go for Hajj generally also visit Madinah. The reason is that Madinah has such a deep connection with Islam and Islamic history that, even though going there is not legally required, in practice it has become an essential part of a pilgrim's journey.

Travelling from Makkah to Madinah, praying in Masjid Nabawi, and sending peace and blessings (durud) upon the Prophet at his grave—although not part of the rituals or duties of Hajj—carry great reward. A pilgrim should certainly visit there. One should leave for Madinah after performing the Tawaf al-Wida (Farewell Tawaf) in Makkah.

Throughout the journey to Madinah, the pilgrim should consistently send blessings and peace upon the Prophet Muhammad. Upon arriving in Madinah, the pilgrim is encouraged to take a bath, then proceed to Masjid al-Nabawi to offer two Rak'ahs (units) of prayer, followed by supplication. After the prayer, they should respectfully approach the Tombs—a small enclosure within the Prophet's Mosque—where the Prophet Muhammad and his two Companions, Abu Bakr and Umar, are buried. The pilgrim should do so with the utmost reverence, reciting Salat and Salam (blessings and peace) for the Prophet. During the stay in Madinah, it is recommended that as many prayers be offered as possible in Masjid al-Nabawi. After praying and sending blessings in Masjid Nabawi, one should visit places in and around Madinah related to Islamic history. Seeing them brings memories of the time of the Prophet. For example:

- Jannat al-Baqi', where many Companions are buried.
- Masjid Quba, where the Prophet offered his first prayer in Madinah.
- Mount Uhud, where the second major battle between Islam and non-Islam took place.
- Masjid Qiblatain, where the command to change the Qiblah came during prayer—and so on.

While going from Makkah to Madinah, about twenty miles to the west is a place called Badr, a small town. In Ramadan of 2 AH, the first battle between Islam and non-Islam took place here. The opponents of Islam were advancing with the intention of attacking Madinah, but the Prophet came out to confront them. At that time, the Muslims were fewer in number and had less strength, yet they achieved an extraordinary victory. The place of Badr reminds the pilgrim that his greatest concern should be to remain firm upon the truth. Because if he does so, he will surely receive the help of God and gain victory over his enemies.

When the city of Madinah was surrounded by a wall, one of its gates was called Bab ‘Anbariyyah. During the Turkish period, there was a railway station here. Some remains of it still exist. The road from Makkah enters Madinah through Bab ‘Anbariyyah. As this area begins, one should increase in making duas.

The Prophet emphasised the respect of Madinah with these words: “Abraham declared Makkah to be a sacred place, and I declare Madinah to be a sacred place.” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1361; *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 3367)

The area between its two mountainous boundaries is all a sacred territory. No blood should be shed here, no weapon should be raised against anyone, and even the leaves of

trees should not be shaken—though it is allowed to shake leaves for animal feed.

The Prophet himself built Masjid Nabawi with his own hands and prayed there for the last ten years of his life. Regarding this mosque, he said: “Praying in my mosque is better than a thousand prayers in any other mosque—except for Masjid Haram.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1190; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1394)

In another Hadith, the Prophet said: “One prayer in my mosque is better than one thousand prayers in other mosques, except Masjid Haram. And one prayer in Masjid Haram is better than one hundred thousand prayers in other mosques.” (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith No. 1406)

Masjid Nabawi has many doors. It is better for a pilgrim to enter through Bab Jibra’il. But if it is crowded, any door may be used. One should never hurt anyone or argue with anyone in Madinah or inside Masjid Nabawi. Inside the mosque, there is a special place called Rawdah al-Jannah. This place has special excellence. The Prophet said: “The space between my house and my pulpit is one of the gardens of Paradise, and my pulpit is at my Pond of Kawthar.” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 9214)

Upon entering Masjid Nabawi, the pilgrim should pray two rak‘ahs. After prayer, he should ask God for goodness in this world and the Hereafter. If these two rak‘ahs are prayed in Rawdah al-Jannah, it is even better. However, if

it is too crowded, the prayer can be offered in any part of the mosque.

After the prayer, go to the place where the Prophet is buried, along with his two special Companions, Abu Bakr and Umar. One should visit the graves and stand respectfully in front of the Prophet and say:

“As-Salamu ‘alayka ya Rasool Allah wa barakatuhu.”

This means: “Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah, and His blessings.”

It is narrated that the Prophet said: “Whoever sends salam upon me, God returns my soul to me so I can reply to his salam.” (*Sunan Abi Dawud*, Hadith No. 2041)

After sending salam to the Prophet, one should also send salam to Abu Bakr and Umar and make dua for them.

The pilgrim should try to offer all five daily prayers in Masjid Nabawi, make abundant remembrance (dhikr), supplications (duas), and offer optional prayers, making full use of this great opportunity to earn reward.

It is also recommended for someone visiting Madinah to visit Masjid Quba and pray there. As mentioned in the Hadith of Abdullah ibn Umar, the Prophet used to visit Masjid Quba both on foot and on a mount, and he would pray two rak‘ahs there.

Similarly, visiting the graves in Jannat al-Baqi‘, and the graves of the martyrs—including Hamza—is Sunnah.

The Prophet used to visit them and make dua for them. He said: “Visit the graves, for they remind you of the Hereafter.” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 23005)

From the Hadith, we learn that the purpose of visiting graves is to remember the Hereafter. The state of those who have passed on reminds those still living of their own end.

Three miles north of Madinah is Mount Uhud. About it, the Prophet said: “Uhud loves us, and we love Uhud.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2889) Now, the population of Madinah has grown close to Uhud. Near this mountain is the site where the Battle of Uhud took place. The Prophet’s uncle, Hamzah, was martyred in this battle. His simple grave still exists within a fenced area. Beside him are the graves of other Companions.

There are many mosques inside and around Madinah besides the mosque of the Prophet. If the pilgrim has the opportunity, he should visit these mosques and pray there. For example: Masjid Quba, Masjid Ghamamah, Masjid Sittiyah, Masjid al-Fath, Masjid Banu Haram, Masjid Dhubab, Masjid Qiblatain, Masjid al-Fadih, Masjid Banu Qurayzah, Masjid Banu Zafar, Masjid al-Ijabah, Masjid al-Sajdah, Masjid Abi, Masjid Abu Bakr, Masjid Umar, Masjid Ali, Masjid Ibrahim, etc.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 9 October 1983.

JANNAT AL-MU‘ALLA

The land where Makkah is situated slopes downward on one side and upward on the other. The lower part is called Misfalah, and the higher part is known as Mualla. In the elevated section lies an ancient graveyard called Jannat al-Mu‘alla. It is located in the direction of Mina from Makkah. This graveyard is the resting place of Khadijah, may God be pleased with her. It also includes the graves of the Prophet Muhammad’s son, Abraham and his mother Aminah bint Wahb. The graves of his uncle Abu Talib and his grandfather Abdul Muttalib are also here. Notable figures such as the Companion Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr and the caliph Abu Jafar al-Mansur are buried here as well. The graveyard contains many other tombs—reminders of those noble individuals who once walked the earth just as we do today.

Homes are signs of the living, while cemeteries are signs of the dead. Cemeteries remind us that those buried there were once living individuals who, after completing their span of life, moved on to the next stage of existence.

When the names and stories of those buried are known, such cemeteries gain even greater significance. They become fragments of history—living pages through which later generations read about their predecessors, and by remembering the continuity of life, link their present to their past. A cemetery, in this sense, becomes a spoken testimony—sharing the stories of success and failure of those who came before us.

When a pilgrim or visitor to Makkah stands before Jannat al-Mualla, the site reminds them that the path they are walking is the very same, well-defined path that many others once walked. These are not the fading traces of a forgotten legend, but the enduring footprints of a caravan whose journey is etched in history.

In Arab tradition, cemeteries are not adorned with domes or solid constructions. The graves appear as slight elevations in a flat landscape—much like the simple, unpaved graves found in modest burial grounds elsewhere. Jannat al-Mualla is one such cemetery: a burial place free from human embellishment. It preserves the plainness of nature, not the artificiality of human design.

When a person stands before Jannat al-Mu'alla, the mind turns naturally toward those known individuals of history—those who were once born in the soil of Arabia, walked and spoke among their people, and now rest silently in this very earth.

1. Abdul Muttalib

Among the notable souls resting in Jannat al-Mu‘alla is ‘Abd al-Muttalib (497–579 CE), the grandfather of the Prophet Muhammad. When he chose the name “Muhammad” for him, it was virtually unknown among the Arabs. He served as the Prophet’s guardian until the age of eight. As the chief of Banu Hashim, he was a man of remarkable dignity and commanding presence.

During the time of Abdul Muttalib, a significant event took place: Abraha, the governor of Sana‘a under the king of Abyssinia, marched toward Makkah with an army of elephants to destroy the Kaaba. He camped outside the city and seized two hundred camels belonging to Abdul Muttalib. In response, Abdul Muttalib went to meet him. Abraha was struck by his dignified presence, received him with honour, and asked about the purpose of his visit.

Abdul Muttalib said, “I have come for my two hundred camels, which your men have taken.” Abraha replied, “You are appealing to me for your camels, but say nothing about the sacred House (the Kaaba), upon which your people’s honour rests, and which I have come to destroy?”

With calm conviction, Abdul Muttalib replied, “I am the owner of the camels. The Kaaba has its own Lord, and He will protect it.” (*Sirah Ibn Hisham*, Vol. 1, p. 44)

Indeed, God brought Abraha’s powerful army to ruin, and he failed in his attempt to attack the Kaaba.

The story of Abdul Muttalib serves as a lasting reminder that the Kaaba is a sacred House, safeguarded by none other than God Himself.

2. Abu Talib

Jannat al-Mu'alla also serves as the resting place of Abu Talib, the Prophet Muhammad's uncle. According to widely accepted accounts, although he did not embrace Islam, he supported the Prophet with unwavering dedication. He stood resolutely by his side against all opposition. While he did not abandon his ancestral faith, he remained a steadfast source of protection and loyalty until the end of his life.

When the Quraysh placed a boycott on the Prophet, forcing him and his family to seek refuge in the harsh valley of Shi'b Abi Talib, Abu Talib endured the hardship alongside him. The three-year ordeal took such a toll on him that he fell ill and ultimately died in the tenth year of prophethood (620 CE).

Although Abu Talib did not accept the Prophet's mission, he fully fulfilled his responsibilities as the family head, providing steadfast support and protection to his nephew.

3. Khadijah bint Khuwaylid

Khadijah bint Khuwaylid was one of the most noble and wealthy women in Makkah. Her father, Khuwaylid

ibn Asad, was a respected merchant who left behind a significant inheritance. Khadijah was first married to Abu Halah ibn Zurarah al-Tamimi, and after his death, to Atiq ibn A'idh al-Makhzumi. Both husbands passed away a few years later, and Khadijah inherited their wealth. Despite being a widow, she became the wealthiest woman in Makkah.

Nobles and wealthy men from the Quraysh tribe sought her hand in marriage. Around this time, through a business arrangement, she came into contact with the Prophet Muhammad. Though he had no material wealth, Khadijah was deeply impressed by his honesty and character. She herself sent him a proposal. The marriage took place when Khadijah was forty years old and the Prophet was twenty-five. Her grave in Jannat al-Mualla reminds every passerby that character is greater than wealth.

When the Prophet received the first revelation, she was the first to believe in him. During the early years of his mission, the Prophet faced great hardships, and Khadijah spent all her wealth in his support. She never hesitated. Every difficulty that fell upon him, she bore with him—not just as a wife, but as a true life companion in every sense.

Abu Hurayrah reports that once, while the Prophet was away from home, the Angel Jibril came and said, “O Messenger of God, Khadijah is approaching, carrying food. When she arrives, convey to her greetings of peace from her Lord and from me, and give her the glad tidings

of a palace in Paradise made of pearls, where there will be neither noise nor hardship.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 3820; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 2432)

Khadijah passed away in the tenth year of Prophethood (620 CE). Aisha once narrated that the Prophet, remembering her, said: “Khadijah believed in me when people rejected me. She affirmed my truth when others called me a liar. She supported me with her wealth when people withheld theirs from me.” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 24864)

Her grave stands as a reminder of one of history’s most exemplary women—someone who never became a burden on her life partner, and who stood by him through hardship just as she did through ease.

4. Abdullah ibn Zubayr

Among those buried in Jannat al-Mualla is Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr, a Companion of the Prophet Muhammad. He was born into Islam, and during the Prophet’s lifetime, he was regarded as one of the younger Companions. Alongside his profound awareness of God, he was known for his courage and wisdom. Wahb ibn Kaysan reported that Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr once sent him a letter of advice, in which he wrote: “The one who truly fears God is the one who endures trials with patience, accepts God’s decree with contentment, gives thanks for blessings, and submits

humbly to the command of the Quran.” (*Hilyat al-Awliya*, Vol. 1, p. 336)

After the caliphate of Ali ibn Abi Talib, Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr was regarded as one of the most suitable individuals in the Muslim world to take on leadership. He was distinguished by his bravery, wisdom, and piety. The people of Hijaz and Iraq pledged allegiance to him. However, in 73 AH, he was martyred in battle against Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, the governor under Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan.

His grave stands as a reminder of a man who bowed fully before God, but who never bowed before tyranny or injustice.

5. Abu Ja‘far Mansur

Abu Ja‘far al-Mansur (101–158 AH / 719–775 CE) was one of the most capable and strategic caliphs of the Abbasid dynasty. He founded the city of Baghdad in Iraq and developed it into the greatest center of learning and politics of its time. His era saw a major translation movement, with many works from foreign languages translated into Arabic. The well-known Arabic translation, known as *Kalila wa Dimna*, of the Sanskrit work *Panchatantra* was completed during this period.

Like many rulers, he took harsh measures against his political rivals and had several of them eliminated. Nevertheless, in terms of maintaining order and ensuring

justice for the common people, he was regarded as an effective and just administrator. It is said that Abu Ja'far al-Mansur wore simple, coarse clothing, sometimes with visible patches. Commenting on this, Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq said, "Praise be to God, who afflicted al-Mansur with personal poverty despite granting him kingship." (*Tarikh Al-Tabari*, Vol. 8, p. 81)

In the month of Dhu al-Qa'dah, 158 AH (775 CE), Abu Ja'far al-Mansur departed from Baghdad intending to perform Hajj. However, shortly before reaching Makkah, he fell seriously ill and died during the journey. He was buried in the nearby cemetery of Jannat al-Mu'alla.

6. The Prophet's Children

The Prophet Muhammad had four daughters: Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum, and Fatimah—all born to Khadijah. Of these, the first three passed away during the Prophet's lifetime. Fatimah, the youngest, died approximately six months after the Prophet's death, at around thirty years of age.

The Prophet also had three sons, all of whom died in early childhood. Qasim and Abdullah were born to Khadijah and passed away during their early years in Makkah. His third son, Abraham, was born to Maria al-Qibtiyya and died in 10 AH at approximately eighteen months old.

It is believed that the graves of Qasim and Abdullah, the two sons of Khadijah, are in the same cemetery in Makkah—Jannat al-Mualla. However, this is only known through oral tradition, as no verified markers remain in the cemetery today.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 13 November 1980.

FIFTEENTH SHA‘BAN

In the Quran, God Almighty says:

By the Book that makes things clear, surely
We sent it down on a blessed night—We have
always sent warnings—on that night every wise
decree is specified by Our own command—We
have been sending messages, as a mercy from
your Lord, He hears all and knows all, He is the
Lord of heaven and earth and all that is between
them—if only you would really believe—there
is no deity save Him: It is He who gives both life
and death—He is your Lord, and the Lord of
your forefathers. (44:2-8)

In these verses of the Quran, the blessed night (*laylatun mubarakah*) that is mentioned—according to one opinion—refers to the night of mid-Sha‘ban (15 Sha‘ban). According to this view, the night of 15 Sha‘ban is the night of God’s annual decisions. On this night, all matters for the coming year are decided. God Almighty turns His attention toward the human world. A large number of

angels gather, and a special atmosphere of mercy spreads over the earth.

According to this explanation, the date of 15 Sha‘ban is the date of rizq (sustenance) and divine gifts. On this night, angels record the matters of people’s destinies. Because of the special importance of this night, Muslims engage in zikr (remembrance) and worship. They repent from their sins and make firm promises to live righteously in the future. In this way, they seek to attract the mercy of God so that He may decree good for them.

Some narrations about 15 Sha‘ban are found in books of Hadith. While these narrations are not very strong in terms of authenticity, some of them are as follows:

Ali ibn Abi Talib reports that the Messenger of God said: “When the 15th night of Sha‘ban arrives, stand in prayer through its night and fast during its day. Because on this night, God descends to the nearest sky. Then He says: ‘Is there anyone seeking forgiveness, so I may forgive him? Is there anyone seeking provision, so I may grant it to him? Is there anyone in difficulty, so I may relieve his distress?’ This continues for all kinds of needs until the time of dawn.” (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith No. 1388)

According to another narration, Aisha says that the Messenger of God said: “Jibreel came to me and said: ‘This is the night of mid-Sha‘ban. On this night, God frees from Hell as many people as the number of goats of the tribe of Banu Kalb.’

But on this night, God does not look toward the one who commits shirk, the one who holds hatred in his heart, the one who disobeys his parents, or the one who drinks alcohol.”

Aisha says: “Then the Messenger of God said: ‘Do you allow me to worship on this night?’ I replied, ‘Yes, may my father and mother be sacrificed for you.’

Then the Prophet stood up, offered prayer, and made a long prostration, until I feared that his soul had been taken. I stood and touched his feet, and then I felt them move. I became happy. Then I heard the Prophet making this dua in prostration: ‘O God, I seek refuge in Your forgiveness from Your punishment. I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger. I seek refuge in You from You. You are full of glory. I cannot praise You as You deserve. You are as You have praised Yourself.’”

Aisha says: “When morning came, I mentioned this dua to the Messenger of God. He said: ‘O Aisha, learn this prayer and teach it to others. Because Jibreel taught it to me and told me to recite it in prostration.’” (*Shu‘b al-Iman* by al-Bayhaqi, Hadith No. 3837)

After reflecting on these verses and Hadiths, a few important points come to light. And these are the very points that should be focused on during the night of 15 Sha‘ban:

“The 15th of Sha‘ban is the night of God’s yearly decisions. On this night, God especially turns

His attention toward His servants. That's why one should engage in remembrance and worship throughout the night."

The most important act on this night is istighfar (seeking forgiveness). As shown in the Prophet's dua, every person should examine themselves, admit their mistakes, seek forgiveness, and make a firm promise to stay away from sin in the future.

God's mercy and rewards are granted on this night. But as mentioned in the Hadith, this is for the obedient—not for those who persist in disobedience. True hope in God's mercy is only for those who are willing to abandon wrongdoing.

Certain sins block a person from this mercy. Even on this special night, one may be deprived if involved in these sins: shirk (associating partners with God), hatred and jealousy in the heart, disobedience to parents, drinking alcohol, etc. It is necessary to stay away from such actions to receive the blessings of this night.

Everything has its manners. Similarly, 15 Sha'ban has its etiquettes, and only the one who observes these etiquettes will truly benefit from this night.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 19 February 1992

CHAPTER
THREE

QURAN'S ROLE

The Quran was revealed during the first half of the 7th century CE. The world of that time was vastly different from the world we live in today. A reflection on the difference between the two linguistic eras reveals that this transformation is largely linked to the intellectual revolution brought about in human history by the Quran and the movement it inspired.

At that time, various political, social, and economic issues plagued Arabia. But the first command given in the Quran was neither political nor economic. It was simply: "Read."

This meant that the Quran explained that the true beginning of any reform work is knowledge. The building of knowledge and awareness is the foundation upon which all reform must be built. This is the only truly effective method. If one begins from anywhere else, the results will never be deep or lasting.

The history after the Quran confirms that this was indeed the correct starting point. A complete revolution took place in the Arab world as a result, and its effects

eventually spread across the known world. Because the movement began with knowledge, all other good things followed naturally.

The second key message the Quran emphasised was freedom of thought. At that time, for thousands of years, the world had been under the rule of royal dictatorships. People were forced to think like their kings and accept their views as the final truth. This rule of force had closed the doors of human development for centuries. Growth in knowledge and thinking is only possible when people have the freedom to reflect and form their own opinions—and this freedom was absent in ancient times.

The Quran (2:193) refers to this system of forced thinking as a *fitnah* (a great trial). It made it a duty for those influenced by the Quran to stand against such systems and to work towards building one based on intellectual freedom. This revolution was also achieved through the influence of the Quran. The Quran created an atmosphere where every person was free to use their mind. Even an ordinary person could speak openly against a ruler or caliph. This marked the beginning of a new intellectual process in history, which, step by step, brought the modern era of freedom of thought.

Before the revelation of the Quran, nature was regarded as sacred and held in reverence. People believed it should only be worshipped or respected, not explored or altered.

This mindset hindered scientific investigation and mastery over the natural world. The Quran taught that nature was created for humans—to be studied, understood, and utilised for their benefit. (*Quran*, 45:13)

This Quranic teaching profoundly influenced people. For the first time in history, the idea of understanding and controlling nature took hold. People began to investigate nature, and after centuries of study, the revolution known today as the scientific revolution emerged.

Before the Quran, humanity was divided into high and low classes. The Quran strongly declared that all human beings are equally created by God. In the sight of God, all humans are the same. This message of human equality from the Quran deeply touched people and slowly transformed their thinking. This process continued over centuries, until a new social age emerged where all human beings were recognized as equals with equal rights.

Before the Quran, war was widely seen as the only way to achieve goals. As a result, one group was always fighting another. The Quran introduced God as a God of mercy, and the Prophet as a Prophet of mercy. It promoted values like peace, patience, and avoidance of conflict, and showed that the power of peace is greater than the power of war. In this way, for the first time in history, the path of peaceful struggle was opened.

The Prophet of Islam used this peaceful method to bring about a revolution in which so little blood was shed that it can be called a bloodless revolution.

Thus, a new thinking movement emerged in history—not based on violence, but based on non-violence. This movement continued, and finally in the 20th century, the idea of peaceful struggle was accepted around the world.

The Quran contains many verses that emphasize reflection and thought (*tafakkur wa tadabbur*). That is, people are urged: Think. Use your mind. Discover the secrets of the heavens and the earth.

The Quran opened people's closed minds. It replaced blind following with rational thinking. People's mental horizons expanded. On one side, their minds awakened, and on the other, they began to uncover the hidden laws of the universe and make use of them.

This intellectual revolution started in Makkah, spread to Madinah, then to Damascus, followed by Baghdad. It flourished further in Spain, and eventually reached different parts of Europe, until its influence extended across the entire world.

The Quran has left a deep imprint on the intellectual history of humanity. The truth is, without including the Quran, the intellectual journey of humanity and the history of its development cannot be fully understood.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 24 September 1996.

SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS AND SPIRITUAL BELIEFS

There are two phases of scientific progress. One is from Isaac Newton (1642–1727) to Albert Einstein, and the second is after Einstein (1879–1955).

Scientific progress is related to material development—that is, progress in things which are visible to everyone. On the other hand, spirituality deals with that which cannot be seen. The world of science is mortal, while the world of spirituality is immortal. After Newton, the scientific phase that began brought countless material advances. Matter was transformed, and a shining civilisation came into being. In contrast, spirituality remained unseen. In such a situation, many people began to think that spirituality was imaginary—and that only matter truly existed.

But the research of Einstein and other modern scientists challenged this view. Earlier, it was believed that everything in the world was made of atoms, and that the atom was a solid, indivisible particle. However, modern research split the atom, the belief of matter was a solid substance

disappeared altogether it was discovered that matter is not solid, rather, it was found that the micro sub-atomic world replaced the atomic world, where everything was reduced to unseen waves (of electrons). Once the atom was split, matter transforms into energy, which cannot be seen.

After the atom was split, matter itself became as invisible as spirituality once appeared to be. Because of this, modern scientists were compelled to say that our world is nothing but waves of probabilities.

In this way, modern scientific progress has shown that ultimate reality is invisible. Previously, spirituality and materialism were seen as two separate things. Now, matter itself has turned into something unseen, like the spiritual concepts. Following this change in the basis of scientific argument, proving the existence of God became as possible as proving the existence of the subatomic particles, which are both unseen. Science, in its early phase, seemed to deny spirituality, but after reaching its final stages, science began confirming it. Spiritual truths became more established and credible than ever before.

Spiritual belief is actually another name for belief in meaningful realities. Spirituality means recognising that the soul is more important than the body in human existence. That moral values matter more than material success. That inner peace is greater than outer beauty. All

these are unseen things, and in the first phase of science, such invisible things were considered unreal. At that time, it was believed there was no connection between science and spirituality. But now, when science itself has become a kind of spiritual knowledge, such views no longer hold ground.

This was the theoretical side of science and spirituality. Now, let us look at the practical side. Here, too, many people think that science and spirituality are in conflict—that the two cannot go together. But this belief stems from a wrong understanding of spirituality. If the correct concept of spirituality is kept in mind, then no such conflict remains.

In 1961, an international industrial exhibition was held in New Delhi. I too was among those who visited the exhibition. Each country presented its achievements in industrial progress. The American pavilion attracted the most attention because of a modern machine called a “flying motor car.”

I, along with many others, stood in a special area. A car arrived. The driver first drove it like a normal car on the ground. Then it rose and began hovering about four feet above the ground. It circled the area and then came back down.

We were told that the system of the car worked by taking in air from the top and forcefully expelling it downward,

creating a powerful air cushion between the car and the ground. The car floated on this air cushion—just like a boat floats on water.

Among the crowd was also a young sadhu, dressed in ochre robes, with dishevelled hair. He watched the demonstration with deep attention. A newspaper reporter, noticing his focus, asked him for his thoughts. The sadhu replied:

“After seeing this, a new question has arisen in my mind. Should I give up the life of renunciation and seek satisfaction in the world of material progress? This exhibition has made me think—should I choose the spiritual world or the material one?” (*Hindustan Times*, 20 February 1961)

Events like this may suggest that science and spirituality oppose each other—that to accept one, you must leave the other. But this depends on how you define spirituality. If spirituality means leaving the world, going into forests and mountains, and cutting off from society, then yes, it would seem opposite to science.

But if spirituality is understood differently, then there is no conflict. The second definition of spirituality is purity of soul and self. In this sense, spirituality is not disconnection, but a better connection.

Spirituality is not the opposite of science; it is the opposite of materialism. A spiritual person is non-material, not anti-

scientific. To be spiritual means not to live within material things, but within spiritual realities. Such a person has an inner mental life that no one can take away. They enjoy peace of heart and mind that is independent of external gain or loss. On the level of thought, they have discovered something they see as higher than everything else. Their sense of being is rooted in their inner self, not in material things outside of them.

In this world, every person lives between two forces: materialism and spirituality. No one can escape these two. Both are necessary. The only question is: which one should be primary, and which secondary? The person who gives primary importance to spirituality and secondary importance to material things is a spiritual person. The one who does the opposite is materialistic.

The key outcome of this is that spirituality becomes the guiding purpose of a person's life, while material possessions are regarded as basic needs. This does not hinder scientific progress—it continues unhindered. However, when scientific or material advancement is viewed as the ultimate goal, it leads to social imbalances—imbalances that are corrected when spirituality takes its rightful place in human life. Spirituality brings mental and moral well-being to the individual. Just as physical food strengthens the body, spiritual nourishment strengthens the mind and thought.

For an ordinary person, material things are the goal. For a spiritual person, they are a means. This difference in thinking results in a significant difference in how people live.

One benefit of spirituality is that a person gains the strength to endure loss. The modern world is full of competition and accidents. People often suffer loss. If someone considers material things their highest goal, they are crushed when faced with loss. They may become mentally disturbed—even suicidal. But a spiritual person can withstand loss with resilience. Because even when they lose material things, they still have something higher to live for.

A spiritual person is also free from the greatest evil—pride. Pride is always connected to material possessions. When people regard material wealth as the most important thing, they become proud upon acquiring it. They start to judge others based on their material status. Those with less are seen as inferior; those with more are considered superior. From this arises pride, and an artificial hierarchy forms in society.

But a spiritual person does not fall into this trap. For him, material things are tools, not a measure of worth. He regards material wealth as secondary, not primary. He does not become proud when he gains more, nor does he look down on others who have less.

Spirituality makes a person better for himself—and better for others.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 20 October 1984.

THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE OF ISLAM

When Islam began, there were two tribes living in the Arab city of Yathrib (Madinah). One was Aws and the other was Khazraj. These two tribes were always fighting with each other. But when they understood the truth of the religion of Tawheed brought by Muhammad, and they entered into Islam, their fights came to an end. Two enemy groups became friendly groups. People who used to fight for their personal interests became united and began to struggle for higher human goals.

Why did this happen? The reason was that earlier, both tribes only cared about their own greatness. The tribe of Aws tried to become greater than the Khazraj, and the tribe of Khazraj wanted to be above the Aws. In this way, two kinds of greatness kept clashing with each other, and they never reached agreement or harmony. But, when they discovered the greatness of one God through Islam, their separate greatness disappeared, and only one supreme greatness remained. Earlier, both tribes lived in separate

greatness; now they started living in one shared greatness. That is, the greatness of God, who is greater than all.

This is the greatest universality that Islam gives to a human being. Islam gives a person the belief in Tawheed. That is, God is One. He is the Creator of all. He is the Owner of all. He is the One who is running the system of the entire universe. Whatever a person gets is given by God. If God does not give, no one can get anything. This Tawheed is the foundation of Islamic universality.

When a person accepts this complete Tawheed, in his view, all greatness belongs to only one God. All other things become equal in his eyes. The various differences among human beings start to look artificial. All the different kinds of walls raised among people fall down. The differences made between one person and another based on caste, colour, race, geography, and other such things are erased. Every human becomes a servant, and one God becomes the Lord of all.

The belief in Tawheed creates this kind of global mindset in a person. The God towards whom one person runs, all people start running towards that same God. In front of whom one person leaves his pride, in front of that same God, all people become those who leave their pride. Without Tawheed, every person's focus is different; with Tawheed, the focus of every person becomes the same. This is surely the greatest universality; there can be no greater universality in this world than this.

The Arab nation had been living in the geography of Arabia for thousands of years. But no achievement of theirs was written in history. Before Islam, the condition of the Arabs was that they used to write poetry. They used to fight over small things. Sometimes a fight would begin among them, which would continue for hundreds of years from one generation to another.

But these same Arabs, when a revolution of thought came to them under the influence of Islam, they laid the foundation of a noble civilisation. They came out of their limited geography and spread all over the world. Those people who were earlier considered unimportant made the greatest progress of their time in all important fields of knowledge. The Arabic language, which earlier was just a local dialect, became an international language.

The reason for this was the universality and global nature of Islam. Islam opened their closed minds. They used to worship nature. Islam told them that nature is a creation and powerless. The only one worthy of worship is God, who is your Master as well as the and the Master of the whole world. 's Master. From this, they adopted the mindset that nature is not something to bow to, but rather to research and control. They used to divide people into Arabs and non-Arabs, Blacks and Whites, free and slaves, and high and low castes. Islam showed them that all people are children of Adam, and there is no difference between one human and another. From this, they developed a

universal and global mindset that considered the whole world their homeland and all humanity their family. Before Islam, they were cut off from the world. After Islam, they became companions and partners of the whole world.

Before Islam, the people of Arabia lived in a tribal age. When the revolutionary shift in thought based on Islam occurred, it transformed them into a global community. Before that Islam, their thinking was confined to limited goals. After Islam, their vision expanded so greatly that it crossed land and sea, reaching the entire world. Subsequently, no mountain was insurmountable enough to block their view, and no sea was vast enough to hinder their journey.

When Islam fostered universality among the Arabs, their status evolved such that individuals who once took pride in leading tribes became leaders of the world. Among them were scholars like Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Al-Razi (Rhazes), whose medical texts were translated into Latin and incorporated into European medical curricula. There was also a geographer like Al-Idrisi, who created the first world map for King Roger II of Sicily. Additionally, they were skilled in minting coins, to such an extent that the King of England, Offa Rex, invited a coin-maker from Baghdad to produce gold coins in his realm.

They made so much progress in navigation that a person like Ahmad bin Majid was born among them, who guided

Vasco da Gama by sea, when he left at the end of the 15th century to discover a sea route between Europe and India. Among them were distinguished experts in geography, such as Abu Ubaydah Muslim al-Blansi, an Andalusian scholar, whose research inspired Columbus to think that there must be other worlds to discover. So, with this awareness and courage, he left the shores of Europe and finally discovered the New World (America).

It is a fact that Islam is a universal religion and a cosmic ideology, and the history built on the basis of Islam supports this. The universality of Islam is not just a theoretical concept, it is a proven historical fact.

The universal principles of Islam are well illustrated in the story involving Rabi bin Amir, a notable Companion, and Rustam, the Persian commander. When the Arabs entered ancient Persia and defeated the Persians everywhere, Rustam invited Rabi bin Amir to his court. Rustam, who was the commander of the Persian army at that time, sat on a grand throne, wearing a crown of gold and jewels in his luxurious court. In contrast, Rabi bin Amir was dressed very simply and appeared modest. Rustam asked, 'Why have you people come to our country?' Rabi bin Amir replied:

“God has sent us, and God brought us here so that we take out whoever He wills from the worship of people to the worship of God, from

the narrowness of this world to its vastness, and from the injustice of religions to the justice of Islam.” (*Tarikh al-Tabari*, Vol. 3, p. 520)

In these few words, Rabi bin Aamir expressed the universal principles of Islam in a very brief yet very eloquent way. When a revolution of thought comes into a person based on Islamic teachings, he passes beyond the creation and reaches the Creator. He stands with the Lord of the universe, who is above all narrowness and limitations. Earlier, he was living on the level of creation; now, he begins to live on the level of God, who is above all the universes. Earlier, if he was inside a shell, he now finds opportunities for life in the vast world outside that shell.

Normally, a person is stuck among people. He keeps turning towards humans like himself. He only knows the ground under his feet. But when he finds God and becomes His worshipper, he rises above people. Human friendships and enmities become small in his eyes. He rises above human complaints and affections. His soul begins to travel in limitless vastness, where there is no question of getting entangled in small matters.

Before finding God, a person remains lost in the limitations of the world. After finding God, he rises beyond the limits of the world. To satisfy his hopes and dreams, he finds a higher level. This is the world where even loss becomes gain. Here, unpleasant things also turn into pleasant ones. It is the world, where pain becomes just as meaningful as joy and happiness.

Islam brings a person out of religions full of human complications. It takes a person out of false traditions and artificial religions. It introduces him to that real religion where on one side there is a human being, and on the other side is God. Where there is nothing between God and His servant. Where to meet God, one does not need to bind oneself in the chains of customs and traditions.

God is always reaching His servants, and in the same way, the servants of God can always reach Him. There is no barrier between God and His servant, so there is no need for any middle person to connect one to one's Creator, God Almighty. When a person reaches this eternal world, he finds God exactly at the place where he himself is standing.

Islam is the religion of Tawheed. In Islam, God is One, and all of creation belongs to that One God. Those who realise this pure Tawheed enter a boundless realm where there is only universality and eternity.

All India Radio, Bombay, 17 October 1986.

MORAL CONDUCT

When people live together in the world, it often happens that one person comes into contact with another. This happens both inside the home and outside the home. At such times, treating others with decency and justice is good character, and dealing with them through cruelty and injustice is bad character.

The very first sign of good character is that you should be a well-wisher for others from your heart. You should always wish good for others. You should have love in your heart for others, not hatred. Seeing others progress should not make you feel jealous, and seeing others in a bad situation should not make you look down on them. If you hear something about someone and you don't know the truth, you should take it in a good way. Because of it, you should not become suspicious of others.

What is the sign of being a well-wisher for others? A simple sign of this is that you begin to like for others what you like for yourself. If you want other people to acknowledge you, then you should also acknowledge them in the same

way. If you don't like others to insult you, then you too should never insult others. If you don't want anyone to take your wealth unjustly, then you should also completely avoid taking anyone's wealth unjustly. In this world, when a person deals with others, it can happen that he may have a complaint against someone. In such situations, the only condition to stay on the path of good manners is that you should have the habit of ignoring and forgiving.

If someone speaks to you harshly, do not respond with harshness. If someone hurts you, avoid holding onto feelings of revenge. Even if someone is ignoring you, do not withdraw from them. In this world, remaining true to good character means treating even those of poor character with kindness—and responding to wrong with virtue.

Good and bad character are closely connected to one's speech. Harsh words indicate poor character, while kind and gentle speech show good manners. A few words spoken can turn someone into an enemy—and the effect can be just as powerful in the opposite direction, with a few other words turning the listener into a close friend.

An important trait of good character is having a spirit of generosity and openness towards others. If someone speaks to you harshly, you respond patiently and speak kindly in return. Even if someone causes you harm, you still seek to benefit them. Even when you receive nothing from

someone, you still try to offer something to them. And if someone tries to provoke you, you keep your composure and respond with dignity, without being provoked.

Character means that kind of good behaviour in which there is the spirit of decency, well-wishing, and open-heartedness. A person with good character is someone in whose life there are qualities like the light of the sun and the fragrance of flowers.

The thing that is most needed to build a good society is people with good character. A society whose people have good character, who live with one another while fulfilling the demands of morality and humanity—that society will surely be a better society.

A better moral society is another name for a better human society. If you want to uplift society, then uplift the morals and character of the people living in it. If you want to improve society, then morally improve the character of its people. This is the only sure way to build a better society. There is no other way apart from this.

All India Radio, New Delhi, on 4 February 1993.

THE HUMAN ASPECT OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS

Islam is the religion of humanity. All the things that have been mentioned in Islam have one purpose behind them—and that is to bring true humanity into a person. To teach unity to human generations. To make human society a peaceful, happy, and progressive society.

Islam means peace. This signifies that the core of Islam is peace. Islam seeks to foster a person whose heart holds peace for all—someone who wishes well for everyone, treats others with kindness and goodwill, and welcomes every person with a spirit of blessing, safety, and respect.

In the same way, the root of iman is amn. The word iman comes from amn. In this sense, a momin is one who loves peace. Who prefers peaceful things over things that break peace. Who moves in the direction where peace is found. Who does not get involved in activities that cause disturbance to peace.

In Islam, the most important act of worship is salah (prayer, namaz), which is performed five times daily.

Upon finishing the prayer, the individual turns their face to the right and left and recites:

“Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullah, Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullah”

Explaining its meaning, a great scholar said that the person who prays is saying to all the people around: “You are safe from me, you are safe from me.” (*Birr-ul-Walidayn* by *Al-Bukhari*, Narration No. 45) That is, “You should not feel any danger from me. Your life, wealth, and honour—all are safe from me.” From the worship of namaz, I am coming out of the mosque with this lesson: that I have nothing but peace for you.”

The Prophet of Islam said: All people are brothers to one another. (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 19293) Islam places in a person’s mind this thought: that all humans are children of one father and mother (Adam and Hawwa). That’s why the same blood runs through everyone’s body, and all are like brothers and sisters to each other.

The highest and dearest relationship between two people is the relationship of brotherhood (and sisterhood). The strongest thing that can connect people to each other is that this thought is developed in them: that you are brothers (and sisters) to each other. Islam builds exactly this thought and feeling among people. And without doubt, from the perspective of humanity, there is no greater thought than this.

When many people live together in a society, how should they live? What is the basic rule of a good human society? Regarding this, a Hadith mentions such a complete principle which covers all aspects of this topic. That Hadith is: A person should like for others what he likes for himself. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 13) This is a principle in which all human dealings are included. Every person knows which thing he likes and which he doesn't. Which kind of treatment he prefers and which kind he doesn't. Which behaviour he finds good for himself and which behaviour he doesn't consider good for himself.

In this way, every person already has a great scale by which he can know at any time how to live with others, what to do with others and what not to do. According to this scale, every person should live in society in such a way that he behaves with others in the same way he wants others to behave with him, and avoids any behaviour that he does not like for himself. When he speaks, he should speak in this way, and when he acts, he should act in this way.

The details of this principle are present in the Quran and Hadith from every angle. It is said: do not kill any person. Do not think badly of anyone. Deal justly with both friends and enemies. If someone does something bad, still respond with something good. When someone says something to provoke you, don't lose your temper. In matters of conflict, choose the way of peace. Take out the share of others from your earnings. Do not cause

any harm to your neighbour. If you make a promise to someone, definitely fulfill it. If there is any obstacle in the way, remove it.

Islam is the religion of peace. Whatever promotes peace is the teaching of Islam, and whatever doesn't have peace in it is not the teaching of Islam.

All India Radio, National Channel,
New Delhi, 21 May 1994.

CHAPTER

FOUR

ISLAM'S CONTRIBUTION IN THE BUILDING OF HUMANITY

Fourteen hundred years ago, when Islam came, humanity was divided into different groups based on colour and race. Islam introduced the idea that the Creator of all human beings is one, and He created all people from the same substance. The visible differences in colour and race among people are only for identification—not for superiority. As Maulana Altaf Hussain Hali (1837 – 1914), an Urdu poet and writer, expressed:

“Yeh pehla sabaq tha kitaab-e-huda ka

Ke hai saari makhlooq kunba Khuda ka”

Meaning: This was the first lesson in the Book of Guidance, that every creation is the family of God.

This message of Islam was the voice of human nature. That is why it deeply entered people's hearts. Those who were ruling others by dividing people into high and low classes strongly opposed Islam, because they saw that if this idea spread, their superiority—maintained for thousands of years—would come to an end.

But the message of Islam was the voice of nature, and it quickly spread among people. Gradually, the upper class became an ineffective minority. On the basis of human equality, Islam succeeded in bringing about a social revolution. This revolution began in Arabia and eventually spread across most of the known ancient world.

Before Islam, no person from a lower class could speak against someone from a higher class. Islam brought such a transformation that even a common person had the right to criticise the khalifah of the time. An ordinary person could bring the ruler to court. In the mosque, a poor person could stand shoulder to shoulder with rich people and kings during prayer.

In the same way, Islam instilled in people a sense of muhasaba (self-accountability). That is, human beings are not free to do whatever they wish without consequences. Instead, everyone is under God's control and will be presented in His court after death. There, those who did good deeds will be rewarded, and those who did wrong will face severe punishment.

When this idea took root in people's minds, it transformed them completely. People began to fear even thinking badly of others, because they knew that God is aware of what's in their hearts. So how could one escape His questioning? Those who had wrongfully taken land returned it to its rightful owners, because the Prophet of Islam said that land not rightfully yours, if you make it your property

today, will become a burning coal for you tomorrow. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2680)

Under the influence of this belief, people began to live with great care. They stopped speaking ill of others, gave up lying, and started speaking the truth. They abandoned dishonesty and became trustworthy. They gave up mischief and became peace-loving. They stopped injustice and adopted the path of justice. They gave up snatching others' rights and started giving people their due. Those who once saw themselves as superior and others as low began to see all people as equals.

All these moral changes came because Islam made people understand that they are always under God's watch. God's angels are recording every action. In the life after death, this record will be presented, and Judgement will be based on it. This belief transformed people from living irresponsibly to living responsibly.

What's more, Islam did not just preach high principles, it succeeded in practically establishing a society based on those teachings.

The society Islam built in Arabia and beyond was one where all people lived as equals. Every person had confidence that whoever he dealt with would not lie, break promises, act dishonestly, or exploit him. There was trust that others would not act selfishly or with ill intent. No one would try to cheat or harm others.

Islam created a society that was morally consistent and reliable. Every person was known for a predictable character. You could trust that someone would not harm you even if you criticised them. If a poor person became rich, or a subordinate became a ruler, he would not become arrogant. If there was any financial or property matter, people trusted each other to act justly.

A good human society is one in which people consistently behave with good morals—where character is predictable. And that is exactly the kind of society the Prophet of Islam built. It was a mercy for humanity and a blessing for the people of the earth.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 24 May 1996.

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN SHAPING SOCIETY

Those who saw India before 1947 and see it today will clearly notice a major difference between the two periods. In earlier times, moral values were respected, humanity was honoured, and people fulfilled their responsibilities toward each other. Today, these values have largely disappeared. Now, selfishness has replaced humanity. Instead of responsibilities, we only hear noise about rights. Instead of unity, clashes are seen everywhere.

Why did this change occur? The real reason is that earlier, religion had an influence over society; now, politics has taken its place. In the past, religious figures were the leaders of the people. But in the current situation, non-religious figures have taken that role. This experience shows us how important religion is in building and shaping society.

What is the work of religion? Basically, it lifts a person from the level of materialism and helps them live on the level of spirituality. When spirituality enters a person, they automatically become free from selfishness and

pride. Love replaces hatred in their heart. They begin to see all human beings as their own. They develop the attitude of giving more than taking. And any society where such feelings arise will surely become a society of peace and brotherhood.

Today, political movements dominate across the world. Every newspaper and public gathering echoes with political slogans. In the past, religious and spiritual movements were stronger. Religious figures were the centres of communities and teachers of people. Because of the influence of religion, positive human traditions were established. These traditions shaped the way the world operated—until a new age arrived and broke those traditions.

Politics always works through conflict. Religion is based on love. That's why today, when politics dominates society, the natural result is tension and mutual hostility. In contrast, when religion dominated, society nurtured love and humanity.

Take, for example, some major religions.

Hinduism is an ancient religion. Its central idea is Advaitvad (non-dualism). Setting aside its philosophical side, this idea created in people the belief that the difference between “me” and “you” is temporary—in reality, we are one.

This religious idea taught people that if I am right, someone else can also be right in their own way. In this

way, Hinduism encouraged a mindset that we now call secularism. And from a practical point of view, there is no better idea for a shared society than secularism.

Secularism promotes the idea of co-existence, and living together peacefully is essential for building and shaping society. The influence of this mindset was so strong in Indian society that people of every religion were welcomed here. No one was opposed simply for their faith. That's why India today has large populations from every religion living together in harmony.

Buddhism arose largely in protest against ritualism and idol worship. It emphasised inner values over outer appearances. It taught that the greatest virtue is to treat other human beings well.

The spread of Buddhism developed a culture of humility, simplicity, modesty, and love for peace. It brought about a strong moral revolution. The effects of this are clearly visible in countries where Buddhism spread—such as Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore. In these places, the people are known for their peaceful nature, humility, and obedience—largely because of Buddhist influence.

Christianity has deeply rooted values of love for humanity and service to others. This, too, comes from its religious teachings. Prophet Jesus never spoke about politics or clashed with the ruling government. He said: “Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.”

This attitude helped Christianity nurture traditions of human love and service. As a result, Christian communities developed a mindset that avoided conflict with rulers and focused on serving people. These qualities are visible in India and elsewhere. In fact, Christian nations have contributed the most to social service in the modern world.

Islam puts the greatest emphasis on Tawheed—the oneness of God. In Islam, all greatness belongs to God alone. He is the only one who is great. All human beings are equal. As one Hadith says: “All human beings are God’s family.” (*Musnad al-Bazzar*, Hadith No. 6947)

From this belief came the idea of human equality. Not just Muslims, but other people too were influenced by this movement of equality. Around the world, the idea of equality became widely accepted. History shows that before Islam, the concept of superior and inferior races was dominant. Society was divided into upper and lower classes. The intellectual revolution brought by Islam ended this era of inequality and brought the concept of equality into the flow of history.

It is a historical fact that the role of religion in building and shaping society has always been positive. Denying the constructive role of religion is not possible.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 12 January 1996.

RELIGION AND POLITICS

What is religion? Religion is the way of living based on spiritual values and human principles that God has conveyed through His prophets.

The first principle of religion is Tawheed—the belief in the oneness of God. It means that in the entire universe, there is only one supreme reality, and that is God. This belief instills humility in a person. It removes pride, which is the root of all evils.

The second principle of religion is equality. It means that all human beings have been created by the same God and are children of the same Adam. This principle removes all feelings of superiority or inferiority—whether based on wealth, status, race, colour, or any other factor. According to this belief, all human beings are brothers (and sisters) and should live together like one family.

The third basic principle of religion is justice. It means that in all social relations and interactions, every person must deal with others with fairness and equality. Just as a scale measures accurately, humans must also act with

precision and correctness. Every matter in a person's life should be just and balanced.

This is the true essence of religion. In this sense, religion can be described as a set of values and standards. It transforms a person's thinking and character. A religious person lives with humility, submits to truth, considers all people his own, sees no one as a stranger, treats others as he wishes to be treated, and holds himself to the same standard by which he judges others.

In this way, religion distinguishes human life from animal life. Animals know only their own benefit. They are unaware of anything beyond self-interest. But a religious person lives by values and discipline. He does not act on impulse, but follows thoughtful decisions. He does only what is right and refrains from what is wrong.

With this understanding, we can now see what relationship religion has with politics. The kind of politics that exists today has no direct connection with religion. However, indirectly, religion relates to politics just as it relates to all other human activities.

If a person has truly embraced religion in its spirit, then whatever field of life he enters, his religious character accompanies him. His attitude in every matter will reflect religious values. For example, while walking on the road, he will follow traffic rules. In his job, he will fulfill his responsibilities with integrity. If he is a trader, he will

conduct his business with honesty. A religious person is guided by his inner conscience to act on principles in every situation. He never adopts a selfish or opportunistic path.

The same applies to politics. A religious person can enter politics—directly or indirectly—but even there, his approach will be shaped by his religious mindset. His politics will be principled, not opportunistic. He will use political opportunities to serve the country and society—not to exploit them. He will not lie to cover up his mistakes. He will openly admit his errors, even if it costs him his political position or power.

Simply taking the name of religion in politics does not prove someone is religious. It is quite possible that a selfish politician is using the name of religion only to deceive the public. He may pretend to practice religious politics while in reality, he runs a selfish agenda.

There is a famous saying: A tree is known by its fruit. In the same way, politics done in the name of religion should be judged by its outcome. If it promotes ethics and humanity, then it is truly the politics of a religious person. But if it spreads hatred and conflict, then it is exploitative politics—it has nothing to do with religion.

If someone says, “religious trade” or “religious doctor,” those words may sound odd. But if we say, “the trade of a religious person” or “the medical practice of a religious person,” the meaning becomes clear. That’s because there

is no such thing as “religious trade” on its own. But the trade of a religious person is something real. It means that a person with a religious mindset will carry those values into his business—he won’t cheat customers, he’ll be honest in his dealings. That’s what makes it the trade of a religious person.

Similarly, if a truly religious person becomes a doctor, he won’t see patients merely as a source of income. He will treat them with sincerity, give them the right medicine, and care for them with compassion. Such noble conduct is what makes his practice the work of a religious person.

So, in a practical sense, religion means a religious human being. If such people exist in society, then through their actions, a religious atmosphere will be created. But if truly religious individuals are absent, then no amount of religious slogans or emotional displays in the name of religion can turn a society into a religious one.

“Religious trade,” if it exists, is simply the trade of a religious person. Without such a person, this phrase has no real meaning. Likewise, “religious politics” is nothing more than the politics of a religious person. Without truly religious individuals, real religious politics does not exist.

It is the conduct of religious people that gives politics a religious character. If such individuals are not present, then even centuries of shouting religious slogans cannot create genuine religious politics.

There are two kinds of relationships between religion and politics. One is when politics is used in the service of religion—this is in line with religion and is a mercy for humanity. The other is when religion is used for the sake of politics—this is against religion and is a disaster for humanity.

In Eastern countries, people are especially sensitive about religion. If any issue is raised in the name of religion, they are easily provoked. Because of this, selfish politicians find it easy to highlight their leadership by shouting “religion is in danger!” and spreading chaos. In the light of this fire, the leader’s face becomes visible—but the common people are burned in its flames.

The standard for judging politics is clear: politics based on love is true, while politics based on hatred is false.

Since religion teaches love and goodwill toward all human beings, a truly religious person in politics will base his political work on love and human values. He will bring into politics the spirit of religion—such as selflessness, justice, principle-based action, non-exploitation, and placing responsibility above rights.

On the other hand, if someone uses the name of religion to run politics filled with hatred and violence, then he is not religious. He is using religion for selfish aims. Because religion and hatred, or religion and violence, can never go together.

The phrase “religion and politics” is like the phrase “love and politics.” A heart filled with love—whether on a political stage or elsewhere—cannot promote hatred and hostility. Similarly, a heart filled with the spirit of religion will never speak the language of hatred and violence, whether in politics or any other field.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 17 October 1988.

TRADITION OF MUTUAL EXCHANGE

Life is the name of give and take—of taking and giving, of influencing others and being influenced by others. This is a general social law which has continued throughout history and will continue in the future. Wherever there are human relationships, this mutual exchange will also continue.

An example of mutual exchange is trade. In business dealings, people learn from each other. Similarly, when building houses, individuals benefit from each other's construction experiences. Likewise, in furniture, transportation, agricultural tools, and many other areas, the process of exchange between different groups continues. It is entirely natural for this two-way process to keep happening among human beings.

However, if we study the events of give-and-take in depth, an important reality comes to light. And that is: this entire exchange is limited, not unlimited. In this mutual process, a particular boundary is always present. That

is, some things on both sides keep changing under each other's influence. But at the same time, there are other things that always remain the same. They stay unchanged and unaffected.

In this matter, life is like the water of the ocean. On the upper surface of the sea, waves rise. Water from one side keeps moving into the other side. But the water deep under the sea remains completely still. It always stays in the same state. On the surface of the ocean, the process of change continues, and in the depths of the ocean, the process of stillness and consistency continues.

This difference is completely natural, and it must necessarily remain. Trying to eliminate this difference is going against nature. To go against it is to clash with nature. And whoever clashes with nature ends up destroying himself. He cannot change the eternal processes of nature. In this world, insisting on stillness in things that are changeable is wrong—and trying to change things that are unchanging is equally wrong and useless.

Now in this light, think about the tradition of '*Ijaab-o-Qubool*' (acceptance and agreement) in religion. Religion too comes under this general law. Religion also has some eternal principles, and some additional aspects. The eternal principles of religion always remain in the same state. But in its additional aspects, the process of exchange continues. In this second part, one religion takes from

another, and also gives something in return. In one sense, religion is like the depth of the ocean, and in another sense, it is like the surface of the ocean.

To make this understanding easier, these two things can be called religious reality and religious culture. We can briefly call them religion and culture. Religion is basically the name of certain principles and values. These principles and values hold eternal importance. They are based on truth. No change or compromise is possible in them.

But culture is mostly related to collective ways of living. It takes shape according to geographical needs, national circumstances, and historical factors. These do reflect the basic principles of religion. But at the same time, they are also influenced by temporary and local conditions.

Take the example of Islam. Islam began in the 7th century CE in Arabia. After that, it spread across the whole world. The eternal principles on which Islam was based—like *Tawheed* (Oneness of God), *Risalah* (Prophethood), and *Akhirah* (Hereafter)—Muslims did not accept influence from any other country in these matters. These principles have remained unchanged everywhere. But, for example, in the matter of clothing, Muslims accepted the influence of local customs in every country. Today, Muslims live in Arabia, Iran, India, Europe—everywhere. But in every place, their dress is different.

However, one principle will be seen at work everywhere. Regarding modesty in dress, Islam had set certain rules,

and Muslims everywhere have equally followed them. But in terms of clothing styles, they have accepted local customs everywhere. So, in the matter of clothing, they followed fifty per cent of Islamic teachings, and for the remaining fifty per cent, they followed local conditions.

If you travel to different countries, you will notice differences in the dining tables of Muslims in each place. Arab food, Iranian food, European food—Muslims everywhere eat differently. But even here, along with these differences, there is also a consistent aspect. In eating habits, Muslims everywhere accepted local influences. But regarding food, the limits of halal and haram set by Islam have been maintained everywhere.

The same applies to homes. If you look at the houses of Muslims in different countries, you will see clear differences in their design and structure. Everywhere, Muslims accepted the influence of local architecture and kept that in mind while building their homes. But along with that, one principle will be found unchanged everywhere—and that is the principle of *pardah* (privacy). Muslims kept a separation between the women's and men's areas in their homes. They designed their houses in a way that they could live with their families while maintaining the boundaries of *pardah*.

In summary, from a religious perspective, this tradition of give and take has two aspects. One relates to principles

and values, while the other concerns cultural expressions. When it comes to principles, religion adheres to complete consistency. However, in cultural matters, it employs a fifty-fifty approach. That is, religion aims to keep its beliefs and principles entirely unchanged, but in cultural aspects, it preserves its core values up to fifty per cent and adopts adaptation and harmony for the remaining fifty per cent.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 22 March 1991.

FESTIVALS AND NATIONAL UNITY

The word for festival in Arabic is Eid, in Hindi it is Tyohaar, and in English, it is Festival. The basic purpose of a festival is to keep collective traditions alive and to connect one individual to another. Throughout the entire history of human civilisation, festivals have always existed. Holding a common national event on special dates of the year, or collectively celebrating a memorable day under a shared belief—this is called a festival.

Festivals usually take place on fixed dates of the year. On these days, people gather together and express joy in a special way. They greet one another. In this way, festivals help develop a sense of community and unity among people. They bring one part of society closer to another. A festival becomes a means to provide a strong and lasting ground for connection and bonding.

One part of a festival is usually linked to a particular social group's beliefs and history. And another part is general, which is not just of interest to one group but relates to the entire society, and in a broader sense, to all humanity.

For example, the two-rak'ah prayer of Eid is related to Islamic belief. It is part of the Muslim religion. But sharing and eating sheer khurma during Eid is something that relates to all human beings. It promotes connection and interaction on a human level. It is something universal, not limited to one group. Similarly, worshipping Lakshmi on Diwali is related to Hindu belief. It is a religious act for them. But cleaning the house is something that interests everyone. Anyone can happily adopt it.

I was born in India before Independence (1947). I clearly remember from my childhood that when the festival of Diwali came, Muslims used to send sweets to Hindu homes. We would clean our homes in the same way Hindus cleaned their homes for Diwali. Similarly, when the festival of Eid came, Hindu children also wore new clothes like Muslim children. Sweets were prepared in Hindu homes, and they felt happy hosting their Muslim neighbours.

In this way, Muslims found points of interest in Hindu festivals, just as Hindus found reasons to engage with Muslim celebrations. From one perspective, these festivals were specific to their respective religious communities; yet from another, they took on the character of shared cultural events. In this sense, both communities participated in each other's festivals collectively. Such mutual participation fostered a spirit of tolerance and repeatedly drew the two groups closer together.

This situation had created perfect harmony and unity between Hindus and Muslims in those times. There was no sense of otherness between them. While seeing themselves as Muslims and Hindus, both considered themselves as living members of the wider Indian nation. Both equally loved this great land whose name is now written in history as the Indian Subcontinent.

This was the same time about which Sir Syed said in one of his speeches (27 January 1883):

“Being a Hindu or a Muslim is a personal inner belief, which has nothing to do with external matters and mutual dealings. India is the homeland of both of us. It is India’s air that keeps us both alive. We both drink the sacred waters of the Ganga and Yamuna. We both eat the produce of India’s soil. In life and in death, we are together. In fact, in India, both of us, by virtue of being residents, are one nation. Through our mutual agreement, sympathy, and love, the development and prosperity of this country and of ourselves is possible. And with mutual conflict, hatred, and ill-will, both of us are doomed.”

That was the same India whose anthem was sung in the poetry of Iqbal. This verse beautifully reflects that shared

feeling which almost every Indian has heard, and countless people have sung:

Sare jahan se accha hindostan hamara

Hum bulbulain hai iss ki yeh gulsitan hamara

Better than the entire world is our Hindustan;
we are its nightingales, and it is our garden abode.

Such shared environments and the spirit of unity are greatly supported by festivals. In reality, festivals are killers of hatred and mutual distance. If festivals are celebrated in the right spirit and in a collective way, then all kinds of conflicts and discord in our society can be permanently removed.

Someone from Madhya Pradesh told me a story. In one town, there was a tense atmosphere of communal tension. The festival of Holi was approaching, and there was a serious fear that a riot might break out. The colours of Holi might turn into the colour of human blood.

At that time, an elderly Hindu man went to the Muslim area. He told the Muslims, "I am your well-wisher and I have come to offer a suggestion for the good of all of us. If you accept my suggestion, there is hope that our town can be saved from a great disaster."

He said, "You all know what the situation in our town is. I can clearly see that if this situation remains, then on Holi, a communal riot is certain to happen, and our streets will

be stained not with colours, but with blood. There is a very simple solution to this problem, and that is what I have come to tell you.” He continued, “On the day of Holi, when the Hindu boys come playing Holi and reach near your neighbourhood, you Muslims should not stay away. Instead, Muslim boys should also come out and join their group and start playing Holi with them.” He added, “If, by chance, your clothes get stained with Holi colour and that bothers you, then I ask God to put that burden on me, and may the reward for avoiding the riot be written in your names.” The Muslims understood this suggestion, and on the day of Holi, they did exactly that.

On the day of Holi, as usual, a group of enthusiastic Hindu youth came along the road near the Muslim area. At that moment, according to the pre-decided plan, some cheerful Muslim youth came out of their homes and joined the Hindu group with full excitement. They began playing Holi with them like one of them.

After doing this, suddenly the entire atmosphere changed. The day that could have turned into one of violence between two enemies, turned into one of love and affection, with people spraying each other with rosewater.

There is also a story from a city in Maharashtra. There, every year on a particular date, a Ganapati procession is taken out, which is like an annual festival. Hindus participate in large numbers. For many years, whenever

the procession reached the road passing through the Muslim locality, some incident would trigger anger between the two communities, and a riot would nearly break out.

Last year, the Muslims of that place held a meeting and decided that they would not resist the procession, nor insist on changing its route. So when the procession came, they, unlike previous years, welcomed it and tried to support it. For example, since it was summer, they arranged cold drinking water at various places along the way.

The result was very pleasant. The two communities, who earlier saw each other as rivals, began seeing each other as friends. The procession, which usually became a source of tension, became a means of friendship and unity between the two groups.

If festivals are celebrated in the right way, they undoubtedly become a source of tolerance and true unity. They connect the whole society in a shared human bond and help build a good and moral community. And the result of a good society is what we call unity.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 24 April 1989.

TASAWWUF AND SELF-DISCIPLINE

Tasawwuf (Sufism) has a deep connection with self-discipline. In fact, it is correct to say that the real purpose of Tasawwuf is to turn a person into a well-mannered human being from a psychological point of view.

Politics always targets external systems. Politicians, in order to establish their reform plans, give the most importance to breaking down the external social structure. Tasawwuf, on the other hand, is the opposite. The target of Tasawwuf is always the individual—that is, to bring about spiritual transformation and moral correction within a person. In this sense, Tasawwuf is like another name for spiritual or moral science.

The effort of the people of Tasawwuf is to raise the individual above material desires. They develop within a person the ability to give more importance to spiritual goals rather than material things. They help suppress the animal instincts of a person and uplift the human aspect of his being. They help build such moral strength that even in

the face of wrongdoing, the person does not lose control; he responds to hatred with love; and he stays away from reactionary behaviour in all circumstances and maintains a positive attitude equally toward both friends and enemies.

Tasawwuf creates feelings of kindness and compassion within a person. It nurtures an attitude of love and modesty. The goal of Tasawwuf is to lift a person from superficial things and make him capable of living with higher realities. A person who achieves this elevated way of life begins to live like a flower in this world. Everyone experiences good character from him. In society, he becomes a harmless human being—someone from whom no one feels any threat.

True Sufis are givers, not takers. They are like trees that provide people with shade, wood, greenery, fruits, and flowers—but the tree itself asks for nothing. After adopting the way of Tasawwuf, a person receives so much spiritually that he no longer looks at others with jealousy. He doesn't desire other people's wealth. He doesn't try to take a share in others' possessions. He lives within himself. His principle is: benefit others—and if you can't benefit them, then at least don't harm them.

An illustrative story beautifully explains this truth of Tasawwuf. It shows what the character of a Sufi is and what difference exists between a Sufi and a non-Sufi.

The story goes like this: There was a Sufi elder who was traveling with a group of his disciples. The caravan

stopped at a place to rest. There were many trees there. The next morning, a flock of doves came flying in and started circling around the tree under which the elder was resting. These doves were making sounds as if they were protesting against something.

When the elder saw the doves in this condition, he turned toward them and asked the reason for their protest. The leader of the doves replied that one of your disciples has done something deceitful to us, and we are protesting against that.

He said: One of our pigeons was resting in the shade of the tree when one of your disciples targeted it with a slingshot, shot it down, and then slaughtered it. The elder called that disciple and asked him about the complaint from the doves. The disciple replied: "Hazrat, I have done nothing wrong. These animals were made lawful for our food by God. It is allowed for us to hunt them. So, if I killed a dove and slaughtered it, then what wrong have I done?"

The elder conveyed this reply to the leader of the doves. He said: "Our complaint is not what you and your disciple think. Our protest is that you people came here in the appearance of Sufis. We felt secure because we thought we were in the presence of Sufis, from whom we had nothing to fear. If you had come in the appearance of hunters, we would have made arrangements to protect ourselves, just as we do with others."

This illustrative story explains the reality of Tasawwuf and a Sufi very well. A Sufi is a harmless human being. A Sufi doesn't focus on others—he focuses on himself. A Sufi never wants to hurt others. A Sufi respects the existence of others to the highest degree. That is why all the great Sufis of India were vegetarians. And the langar (community kitchen) of their shrines is vegetarian even today.

Tasawwuf gives importance to spiritual realities over material things. The purpose of Tasawwuf is to purify a person's soul. Tasawwuf turns a person into a spiritual and moral human being. Tasawwuf develops the mindset that makes a person consider even his enemy as a friend. Tasawwuf suppresses negative emotions within a person and brings out the positive ones. Tasawwuf enables a person to embrace everyone without discriminating between “us” and “them.”

All India Radio, New Delhi, 27 October 1994.

THE PROBLEM OF SECTARIANISM

The solution to the sectarian problem is just as simple as the solution to family problems. We see that every family lives together in unity. Similarly, different sects can also live together peacefully. What is needed is that the same principle under which family members live together should be adopted by different sects in the country. The principle that ensures harmony within a family can also ensure unity in society. This is the only path to success—both inside and outside the home.

On a larger scale, the sectarian problem is essentially the same as what we call a family problem on a smaller scale. Family problems arise between relatives, while sectarian problems arise between different sects. A home is a small family; a country is a large family. The difference is only in degree—not in nature.

Everyone knows that problems occur within families. Disagreements arise, and people sometimes hurt each other through words or actions. Yet, something holds the

family together and prevents it from breaking apart. That secret of unity within a family is the same secret needed for national unity. If individuals apply the lessons they learn within their families to national life, then social conflict will not occur.

Every wise person knows that the key to resolving family problems is mutual respect. When a disagreement occurs, one should remain calm, reflect, and try to resolve the matter rather than make it worse. Problems should not be treated as the end of a relationship but as temporary issues that can be overcome.

This mindset creates a habit of tolerance among family members. And tolerance is the only reliable solution to all kinds of disagreements. A wise father, as the head of the family, always teaches that family members must respect each other, offer mutual support, and think not just about their rights but also about their responsibilities. When someone makes a mistake, others should respond with patience and forgiveness.

This is the secret of family unity—and this is also the secret of national unity. All sectarian conflicts arise because people fail to apply the principles of family life to society at large.

The root cause of sectarian conflict is that people take problems inside the home seriously and try to resolve them, but they do not do the same for problems outside

the home. At home, unpleasant events happen daily, but people tolerate them because they know that intolerance would break the family. However, when a similar unpleasant incident occurs outside the home, people respond with anger. The only way to resolve sectarian issues is to eliminate this double standard in people's thinking.

I recall a gentleman from my childhood who often recited a couplet to his relatives. He used to say, "Just remember this one couplet, and all your family problems will vanish." The couplet was:

Kabhi bhool kar kisi se na karo sulook aisa

Ke jo tum se koi karta tumhe nagawaar hota

Never treat anyone in such a way

That if someone treated you the same, you would
dislike it

This couplet beautifully expresses the meaning of a Hadith in poetic form. Without a doubt, it is one of the greatest principles for successful social living. If people follow this one teaching, all problems—whether within the home or outside—will be resolved.

Consider this example: Mr. A and Mr. B lived in the same neighborhood. One day, Mr. A's son misbehaved with Mr. B's son and provoked his anger. In retaliation, Mr. B's son struck Mr. A's son. At this point, Mr. A came out and began lecturing Mr. B's family about the importance of living

peacefully and practicing humanity. He said nothing to his own son, placed all the blame on Mr. B's son, and kept giving one-sided advice on morality and good conduct.

On the surface, Mr. A's advice may seem right. But in context, it was unjust. By saying nothing to his own son, he encouraged misbehaviour. His message to the other boy became a message of mischief to his own son.

This example highlights how most people view issues through the lens of "ours" and "theirs." When someone from their own group errs, they downplay it. When someone from another group does the same, they magnify it. This double standard is the root of all conflict. If people adopt a fair-minded approach, and treat outsiders with the same compassion they show their own, conflict will disappear. Violence and bitterness will naturally fade away.

Recently, I met a businessman in Jeddah who has worked in many countries and is very successful. I asked him, "What is the secret to living peacefully with others?" He replied, "The same principle that the Quran calls *i'raaz*—to overlook unpleasant things instead of confronting them. Whenever conflict arises, I am ready to step back. That's why I never face obstacles."

He shared an experience: once a man got angry with him and came the next day, shouting and threatening him. "I remained silent," he said. "When he finished, I told him, 'Do whatever you like. But I too have a weapon.' He

asked, ‘What weapon?’ I said, ‘The more you curse me, the more I will pray for you. The more you try to crush me, the more I will bow before you.’ Hearing this, the man walked away silently—and never troubled me again.”

He added, “This approach doesn’t just save me from harm—it gives me tremendous courage. Hatred makes a person cowardly. Love makes a person brave.” This is a profound truth.

In India, the biggest psychological cause of sectarian conflict is doubt and suspicion. Historical events have created a climate of distrust. But if we rise above these doubts, sectarian problems will disappear.

Once, I was flying to Europe. At the airport, there was dense fog, and sunlight wasn’t visible. Our plane took off in that darkness. But once it reached cruising altitude, I saw sunlight shining brightly above the clouds. The same is true for doubts. We often get trapped in them and forget that they are just a limited, artificial circle. A small effort can lift us beyond it—where we find clarity, peace, and light.

I know of a city where every year, a procession from one community would pass by the place of worship of another. Each year, tension would rise—the worshippers would protest, leading to hours of confrontation. But last year, they decided not to oppose. As a result, the procession passed in half an hour without any trouble. Opposition always leads to more opposition. If you don’t oppose, conflict dissolves by itself.

In another city, there were two old mosques under the Department of Archaeology. One was small, and the other ten times larger. Muslims eventually reclaimed the larger mosque peacefully, while the issue with the smaller one became a source of agitation. Why? Because political leaders turned it into a public campaign, raising tensions. But the larger mosque was reclaimed through quiet, local efforts—even gaining support from members of the other community. Today, a mosque and madrasa function there peacefully.

This shows that turning sensitive issues into mass movements only complicates them. But if wise, quiet efforts are made, the path to resolution becomes clear.

I also know of a town where Muslims were building a mosque and a madrasa. While digging the foundation, people from another community objected and said, “Move your wall back by two yards.” The officials agreed immediately and halted construction. The next day, elders from that community arrived and said, “Some of our youngsters acted ignorantly. We’ve explained things to them. Please go ahead with the construction as planned.” This shows how wisdom can dissolve conflict, even before it begins.

In truth, every problem arises from ignorance, and it can be resolved with wisdom. The same applies to

sectarianism. Most conflicts are sparked by a few reckless individuals. If others respond with wisdom, every conflict can be resolved right from the beginning.

All India Radio, Bombay, 12 April 1987.

ALAMDAR-E-KASHMIR (FLAG-BEARER OF KASHMIR)

Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani was a great Sufi saint of Kashmir. Among the people of Kashmir, he was commonly known as “Alamdar-e-Kashmir” (Flag-Bearer of Kashmir). Hindus lovingly called him Nand Rishi. Both Hindus and Muslims equally revered him. His shrine was located in the town of Charar Sharif (Kashmir), about 20 kilometers from Srinagar. Tragically, this shrine was reduced to ashes in a devastating fire in May 1995.

Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani was a contemporary of Feroz Shah Tughlaq. He was born in 1377 in a village in Kashmir and passed away in 1439 in Charar. In the early 15th century, the then ruler of Kashmir, Zain-ul-Abideen, built a grand mausoleum over his grave. Later, during the 19th century under Pathan rule, the shrine was further expanded, and a mosque was built alongside it.

The shrine at Charar Sharif also contained the graves of eleven other Sufis. In addition, it housed many sacred historical relics—including some attributed to Fatima—all of which were destroyed in the fire.

The Afghan governor Ata Muhammad Khan was profoundly influenced by Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani. As a mark of his respect, he issued a coin in the saint's honour between 1808-1810. He also helped expand the shrine and built a mosque next to it.

Thanks to the efforts of the renowned Kashmiri spiritual figure, Amir Kabir Ali Hamadani, and his companions, a powerful wave of spiritual revival swept through the region. During that time, many local Sufis and saints emerged, commonly known as Baba Yari Rishis.

These Muslim sages led remarkably simple lives. They were held in high regard by both Hindus and Muslims. Among them, Sheikh Nuruddin Noorani gained the greatest fame. He was as beloved and respected among Hindus as he was among Muslims. (*Ab-e-Kausar* by Sheikh Muhammad Ikram, p. 381)

The Sufi poet Baba Daud Khaki wrote a Persian poem in praise of Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani. Here are three couplets from that poem:

Sheikh Nooruddin Peshi, Peer-e-Jama'a Rishiyan
Zaahid-e-Khush Bood, Ba Haq Dasht Besyar Ishtighaal
Bood Ba Tajreed-o-Tafreed Ahl-e-Sawm-o-Har
Niz Tarik-e-Kam-o-Basr, Sheer-o-Asl, Besyar Saal
Saahib-e-Kashf-o-Karaamat Bood-o-Na q-e-Khoob Dasht
Ham Owaisi Bood, Guft In Daudi Saahib-e-Maqaal

Translation: Sheikh Nooruddin Rishi was the leader of all Rishis. He was a noble ascetic, deeply engaged in acts of devotion. He lived a life of seclusion and detachment, constantly fasting. He gave up meat, onion, garlic, and even honey for many years. He possessed spiritual insight and performed miracles. His words were full of wisdom. Daud Khaki says he was a Sufi of the Owaisi order.

Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani's early life was filled with hardship. He often felt sorrow upon seeing the condition of worldly people. Eventually, he withdrew to the mountains and lived alone in a cave. It is said he remained in meditation there for two years, even surviving by eating grass. That cave still exists today and is ten feet deep. In his later life, he lived on just one bowl of milk a day. As a result, he became physically weak and passed away at the age of 63, during the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abideen.

A book named 'Noor Nama' preserves many of the saint's sayings. Compiled in Persian by Baba Naseebuddin Ghazi, this work was completed two centuries after Sheikh Noorani's death.

The architecture of the shrine at Charar Sharif resembled Buddhist pagodas. This unique style reflected Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani's open-mindedness. He embraced a vision of universal peace.

Even Emperor Jahangir admired him. Jahangir once remarked that the Rishis, followers of Sheikh Noorani, neither spoke harshly to anyone nor begged from anyone. These two characteristics perfectly reflect the nature of Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani and his disciples.

Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani was a symbol of true Kashmiriyat. He used to say: “If you are wise, then do not consider Hindus and Muslims as separate people—this is the only path to reach God.”

He was also a poet. One of his followers, a Kashmiri poet, compiled his verses in a book titled ‘Rishi Nama.’ From this work, it becomes clear that Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani believed that the only identity of a human being is to love fellow human beings. According to him, loving others is the true way to know God.

Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani was a Sufi saint who valued spirituality, humanity, and love above all. To him, hurting another person or causing harm was the greatest sin. He wanted people to live in harmony with the beauty of nature.

One of his most powerful sayings is:

“I broke the sword and turned it into a sickle.”

This statement encapsulates his worldview. God created iron with strength—not to be used for violence, but to build a better world. The sword is a symbol of destruction; the sickle is a symbol of cultivation and progress.

He also said:

“If there are forests, there will be grain.”

On one level, this highlights the ecological truth—forests bring rain, and rain helps crops grow. On a deeper level, it conveys a moral message: in this world, cooperation is essential. Without mutual support, no constructive result can be achieved.

His sayings, originally in the Kashmiri language, are filled with spiritual wisdom and human values. Here are a few translations:

- Kaam (desire), krodh (anger), lobh (greed), moh (attachment), and ahankaar (ego)—These are enough to send a person to Hell.
- Decorating the body does not remove the dirt of the heart.
- Children of the same parents should hold on to the rope of God—whether Muslim or Hindu. God’s mercy is equal for both.

All India Radio, New Delhi, on 25 May 1995.

CHAPTER

FIVE

THE PRINCIPLE OF PATIENCE

There is an old Indian saying: “If a dog bites you, will you bite the dog back?”

This simple sentence holds a deep truth about life. We live in a world where, along with human beings, there are also those who act like “dogs”—in the sense that they may behave rudely, harmfully, or thoughtlessly. It’s inevitable that sometimes such a “dog” may metaphorically “bite” a person. But the right response is not to bite back—because doing so only worsens the situation and brings a person down to the same level.

So, if someone has the misfortune of being “bitten” by a dog, the best course is to treat the wound and move on—continue the journey of life without looking back. That’s why wise people across cultures and centuries have consistently said that anger, revenge, and enmity are negative forces, while forgiveness, forbearance, and love are the signs of true strength and growth.

Here are some timeless sayings that echo this wisdom:

- Taking revenge makes a person like his enemy, but not taking revenge makes him far better.—Bacon
- Don't heat your anger for the enemy so much that it burns you instead.—Shakespeare
- Forgiving an enemy is the best way to take revenge.—Manis Hans
- We cannot harm others without harming ourselves.—An old saying
- Patience is a principle of life, not a weakness.—Mahatma Gandhi
- When two people fight, understand that both are at fault.—Dutch saying
- Having enmity with someone blocks your own growth.—Vinoba Bhave
- Even if your enemy is hot like iron, you need to stay cool to shape it.—Sardar Patel
- The madness of desire stays only for a short time, but the regret lasts long.—Schiller
- The one who never forgave an enemy missed one of life's greatest joys.—Le Maitre
- Where there is anger, be sure that destruction will also follow.—Goswami Tulsidas
- A good temperament is best shown by tolerating a bad one.—Emerson

Each of these sayings reflects a deep understanding of human life. The act of forgiving someone who has wronged you is not a sign of weakness—it is a sign of great strength. It is a positive action. A person who can remain composed in emotional situations and choose forgiveness shows that they have mastery over themselves. And there is no bravery greater than self-control.

Furthermore, not taking revenge is, in itself, a powerful form of revenge. When someone wrongs you and you do not respond with wrong in return, you gain many benefits. You enjoy the satisfaction of being morally superior. You close the matter instead of allowing it to drag on. You protect your time, energy, and mental peace, and redirect them toward your own growth and stability.

At the same time, your silence becomes a mirror to your opponent's conscience. Without saying anything, you shame their hostile mindset, and you give the goodness inside them a chance to emerge. Hidden within your enemy is also a potential friend. Forgiving that person is like knocking on the door of that hidden friend.

On the other hand, if someone does wrong to you and you respond by doing wrong as well, then it means both of you are equally at fault. You would have been better only if you had responded to evil with goodness. If your actions mirror the bad behaviour of another, then what is the difference between you and them?

Control Over Speech

Thomas Fuller (1608–1661), an English writer, once said: “Birds are caught by their feet, and men by their tongues.” This reflects a deep truth—many of life’s problems arise from the careless use of speech. Reckless words can create endless difficulties, both within the home and outside it. If a person learns to control their tongue—or at the very least, remain silent in delicate situations—they can avoid many unpleasant outcomes.

All reformers and thinkers have emphasised the importance of speaking with care. Consider the following reflections:

- “You can more easily conquer harsh words with gentle ones.”—Gautama Buddha
- “The wound of a sword is not as deep as the wound of the tongue.”—Hindi Proverb
- “The one who fears God finds their tongue subdued.”—Fudayl ibn ‘Iyad
- “We are given speech to exchange pleasant words—not to hurt one another.”—Gautama Buddha
- “A fool’s heart is in his mouth, while a wise man’s tongue is in his heart.”— Shakespeare
- “An idle mind and a restless tongue are close companions.”—Ovid
- “A slip of the foot can be recovered from—but a slip of the tongue may not be.”— Benjamin Franklin

- “A fool is ruled by his tongue; a wise man rules his tongue.”—Arabic Proverb
- “Even if your enemy says something good, do not hesitate to accept it.”—Swami Shabdanand
- “One who speaks unpleasantly should be prepared to hear unpleasant things.”—Arabic Saying
- “Think deeply before you speak—and you will never regret your words.”—Plato

A person who speaks kindly will be liked—even without an attractive appearance. The power of sweet and gentle speech is a rare gift. No amount of knowledge or wealth can substitute for it. Imagine two mute individuals meeting—how empty that interaction seems. But when two speaking people meet, their words can create a rich and meaningful connection. In such moments, speech becomes the bridge between hearts.

There is no sight more beautiful than two people conversing sincerely and sweetly. On the other hand, when two people begin speaking harshly, the scene becomes so unpleasant that even the speakers themselves would feel ashamed if they saw a recording of it.

The foolish think that staying quiet in the face of insult makes one appear weak. But in truth, when someone controls themselves after hearing a harsh word and responds with calmness, they demonstrate immense strength. This act of self-restraint often humbles the aggressor. Kind and

measured speech is a powerful weapon—one we carry with us at all times, though few know how to use it.

One who is not disturbed by an opponent's harsh words gains a great treasure—the ability to listen with a calm and open mind. And if there is any truth in what is said, they are able to recognise it. Many great mistakes in history happened simply because people refused to listen to their opponents with an open heart. In this light, not reacting to offensive words becomes a form of wisdom. A truly intelligent person will never deprive themselves of this free treasure.

The Importance of Time

Napoleon (1769–1821) was one of the most famous conquerors in world history. He achieved countless victories in battle. Except for natural disasters, nothing else could defeat him. Napoleon once revealed the secret of his success in these words:

“I overcome my rivals because I recognise the value of those moments which others think mean nothing—and I immediately make use of them.”

This is an extremely important piece of wisdom. In fact, great opportunities often appear in the form of very small moments. Recognising such moments and acting without delay is one of the biggest secrets of success. At such critical times, a small effort can achieve what even large efforts may not accomplish later.

Here are a few timeless sayings that reflect this idea:

- I wasted time, and now time is wasting me.— Shakespeare
- Opportunity knocks on your door only once.— Proverb
- The secret of success in life is being ready for every opportunity that comes.— Disraeli
- The train of time runs fast for the one who stands on the side watching it. But it stops for the one who runs alongside on the parallel track at the same speed.— Einstein
- Time is a blessing that has no substitute.—Baba Farid
- Don't delay doing something today, because tomorrow may never come.—Chesterfield
- You can buy everything with a price, but time is the one thing that has no price.—Khan Khanan
- If you love life, don't waste time, because life is just made up of moments of time. — Franklin
- There is no better time to begin something than right now.— English Proverb
- Using a small opportunity correctly makes it big, and using a big opportunity wrongly makes it small.— Sweet Marden
- Not every mistake can be undone, and not every opportunity comes again.— Arabic Saying

The greatest wealth a person has is time and opportunity—not the time that may come tomorrow, but the time that is available right now. A person who keeps waiting for the “right time” is like someone running behind a fast-moving train. Naturally, he will not catch it. What we call success is actually the ability to use time properly. And failure is simply the inability to use time well.

Time comes equally to everyone. But only those succeed who know how to take advantage of it.

Time is like ice. Suppose two people bring home equal blocks of ice. On the surface, both seem to be in the same position. But in reality, the true owner of the ice is the one who uses it right away. The person who delays—even if he holds the ice—is not its true owner. Very soon, the ice will melt and disappear, leaving nothing behind.

Time will never run after us. We have to run after time. Whatever we need to do, we must do it within the time we have. Once time is gone, we won’t get another chance to do what we had planned. The perfect moment to act for your goal is the moment you have now. If you don’t catch hold of time now, it will go so far that you will never be able to catch it again.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 2-4 December 1980

WHEN YOU CHANGE YOURSELF, YOU CHANGE EVERYTHING

“I don’t want to see your face,” said the person.

“Close your eyes, and you won’t see my face,”
came the reply.

“I don’t want to hear your voice,” the person
added.

“Close your ears, and you won’t hear my voice,”
was the answer.

This simple exchange between two characters in the Ramayana holds a deep truth about life: The problem a person tries to solve by chasing others can often be solved more effectively by correcting oneself.

It often happens that when someone has a complaint, they immediately act against the person they blame. But instead of solving the issue, this creates even more problems. The wiser, more effective solution is to shift your focus. Rather than wasting time in conflict, use that time to engage in meaningful work.

A wise person once said: “Instead of chasing others, chase yourself—because by catching yourself, you can deal with others better.”

Many people fail to understand this key to life. They waste precious time and energy trying to “teach a lesson” to their so-called enemies. If that same energy were used to build themselves, they would not only become stronger and more successful—they would also deal with their opponents more effectively.

It’s a fact: ignoring the faults of others is more successful than fighting them.

When you grow in strength, your opponent naturally becomes quiet and hesitant. On the other hand, getting involved in a conflict means taking a major loss just to avoid a minor one. You waste your energy and give the other person more reason to harm you further.

In a mixed social environment, it’s common to feel hurt by someone’s words or actions. This is natural. But responding with patience is the key to success. If you fight back, the situation escalates. When anger meets anger, both sides lose. In trying to destroy the other, you end up harming yourself.

Here’s an example:

A man lived on the upper floor of a building. Children would often play and make noise on the ground floor. The man found the noise disturbing.

He told the boys to stop, but they didn't listen. One day, out of frustration, he poured dirty water from the roof onto the children. The boys got drenched—and angry. In retaliation, they started throwing broken pieces of bricks up at the roof. One piece hit a porcelain wash basin fixed outside the man's house. It broke instantly. The boys ran off, but the damage remained.

If the man had simply ignored the noise—closed his ears instead of reacting—he would have saved himself from stress and from the loss of the basin.

Losing Can Also Be Gaining

“Accidents make a person a hero.”

This saying perfectly fits the life of Louis Braille (1809–1852).

Louis was the son of a carpenter. At the age of just three, he met with an accident in his father's workshop and lost sight in both of his eyes. He became permanently blind. But this very man went on to invent the world's first reading and writing system for the blind—now known worldwide as the Braille System.

For Louis Braille, the world was filled with darkness. But through passion and determination, he discovered a new light—not just for himself, but for millions of others.

A similar story is that of Helen Keller (1880–1968), an American woman. At the age of just one and a half, she

suffered from a severe fever that left her blind and deaf. As a result, she couldn't learn to speak either. Her condition seemed hopeless—her future appeared limited to living and dying in a home for the disabled.

But Helen Keller did not lose her courage. She decided that even without eyes, she would “see,” and even without ears, she would “hear.” She aspired to become like those who were naturally gifted with sight and sound.

When someone makes a firm decision, new paths begin to open. Helen found a brilliant teacher—Miss Sullivan. Helen began to learn the alphabet through touch. Even though she was deaf, she learned to speak. She would place her fingers on her teacher's throat and lips to feel how words were formed, then attempt to repeat them with her own tongue. This unique form of learning took many years, but she finally succeeded. She used her fingers to “see” and “hear,” and she made them her tools to read and speak.

After early education with Miss Sullivan, Helen joined the Perkins School for the Blind and graduated in 1904. She also learned to write. Despite her disabilities, she mastered three languages: English, French, and Spanish. She authored several books and gave lectures across the world to promote education for the blind. She received honorary degrees from universities such as Harvard, Glasgow, Berlin, and Delhi, along with many other international honours.

History proves that some of the greatest achievements have been made by those who faced the hardest challenges. When someone suffers a great loss, it creates a deep sense of urgency and drive. That hunger awakens hidden abilities that even the person themselves did not know existed.

Where others may desire something half-heartedly, this person seeks it with complete dedication. Their inner fire gives birth to a new self. A person who loses their eyes learns to read with their hands. A person who loses their legs begins their journey with their mind.

In one sense, they have lost something—but in another, they have gained something even greater.

Accidents often appear to be the end of the road. But in many cases, they become the beginning of a new path. They ignite new determination and bring out strengths that were lying dormant. History shows that those who lose something often end up achieving more than those who had everything from the beginning.

Accountability Begins with You

A thinker once said something very wise: “A person is constantly radiating himself.”

It means that through their actions, a person is constantly introducing themselves to their surroundings. Just as a piece of radium emits light, a person, through every word and gesture, continuously tells the world who they are—and who they are not.

There's a story about a shopkeeper who hired a clerk to handle accounts. On the clerk's first day, after finishing his work, he took a bath at the shop and forgot to turn off the water tap before leaving. The next day, the shopkeeper gave him a full month's salary in advance and said, "From tomorrow, you don't need to come back."

"Why?" asked the clerk, surprised.

"You left the tap open," the shopkeeper replied. "Today it was a water tap—but what if tomorrow, you leave open one of my cash drawers? I could lose everything."

Maybe the clerk walked away, thinking the shopkeeper was unfair to dismiss him over such a small mistake. But in truth, the real fault was his.

No employer judges a worker only by the ledger. They observe every small action and form an opinion based on that.

So if your environment seems unfriendly or unfair, don't blame the environment. The environment only reflects back what you've shown it. If you present a positive image, it's impossible for the environment to respond with negativity.

If things around you are not going as you expected, look at yourself first. Because what the environment gives back is shaped by what you gave it. What you sow into the world is what you will harvest. Nothing more, nothing less.

Just like thousands of tiny lines and dots form a full image, your everyday behaviour shapes how others perceive you. It is impossible for no image to be formed. And it is just as impossible for the world to respond to you in a way other than what your image suggests.

Every person is constantly writing their own history. Some write a history worth remembering, some don't. Some leave their names in books, others only in local stories. But everyone is known in their circle exactly as they have shaped themselves through their actions and behaviour.

“A person is constantly radiating himself.”

If you remember this truth, you'll rarely have complaints about others—because you'll never give others a reason to complain about you. And if you do give them a reason, be prepared for what may come in return.

A mirror reflects exactly what it sees. If you see a stain on your face in the mirror, you don't fight the mirror—you clean your face. Because you know the stain is not in the mirror, but on you.

In the same way, if you feel that your surroundings are reflecting something unpleasant, don't get angry at the environment. It's only showing you what you've already shown to it. In such moments, take time to reflect on yourself. You'll see that the moment you correct yourself, your image in the “mirror” of society will begin to change too.

One common weakness of human beings is that they think of themselves as more than they actually are. This is the root of most conflicts. People around you see the real version of you—but you may have a higher image of yourself in your mind. This mismatch between perception and reality causes clashes.

This issue exists not just in individuals but in communities, too. And the only way to resolve it is through a mindset of realism. Apart from realism, there is no solution.

All India Radio, Delhi, 21 and 23 April 1981.

FROM GRAIN TO MOUNTAIN

There is an old saying: “If you want to move a mountain, first learn to move small grains.”

A person who attempts to move a mountain all at once will not succeed. But if he understands the secret—that a mountain is composed of countless small particles—and starts by working with those grains, then one day he will certainly reach the mountain. By handling one grain after another, anyone can eventually move the mountain. However, someone who tries to grasp the mountain on the very first day will never succeed in achieving their goal.

In life, nothing is truly impossible—unless you try to achieve it through an impossible method.

You can build a house by placing one brick at a time. But if you expect the house to appear all at once, you’ll be disappointed. The Creator of the world has designed life to grow from small to whole. Success lies in following this natural law. There is no other way.

Many people fail because they refuse to start small. They think: “Why bother with the grains? Let me conquer

the whole mountain today.” But this thinking is a serious mistake.

The one who moves forward step by step will eventually reach the mountain. But the one who insists on catching the whole mountain at once will never get anywhere, even if they spend their whole life trying.

There’s a story about two brothers. One wanted to become rich overnight. He would pray, “Oh God, give me a quarter of 56 crores!” He spent years doing spiritual exercises and magic, trying to capture jinns or discover treasure. But nothing ever happened.

Then he turned to gambling and lotteries. He spent years filling out prize forms and buying tickets. But fortune never smiled. In the end, he died with his dreams unfulfilled.

The other brother took a different path. He learned calligraphy, worked for newspapers and magazines, and later joined a printing press. He worked hard, bought a small hand press, and gradually expanded his business. Today, he runs a successful printing press. His entire family works with him, and they live a respectable and stable life.

One brother tried to grab the mountain all at once—and failed. The other moved grain by grain—and succeeded.

The Urdu poet Ismail Merathi (1844–1917) beautifully expressed this truth:

Yoon hi phoonk phoonk kar bharta hai jheel taal

Yoon hi kodi kodi hua jama maal

A lake is filled slowly, drop by drop.

Wealth is collected, little by little.

This couplet speaks a universal truth that applies to every aspect of life.

Consider the Ganga River. In the plains, it looks like a wide and mighty stream. But at its source in the mountains, it begins with tiny trickles—small drops flowing from snow-covered rocks. These streams merge to form a larger flow and eventually become the powerful river we see.

If someone expects the Ganga to gush forth as a river from the very first step, it won't happen.

Because even the Ganga begins not with a flood, but with many tiny sources of water.

Balanced Life

There is a man in Japan named Shigechiyo Izumi (d. 1986) who is considered the oldest living person in the world. He was born on 29 June 1865, and even at such an extraordinary age, his physical condition remains remarkably good. He lives a simple life on Tokunoshima Island, located in southern Japan. Due to his exceptional

health and longevity, he has gained fame. In fact, he has become a must-see attraction for tourists visiting Japan. Almost 200 tourists visit this island each day just to meet him. Most visitors ask him the same question:

“In your view, what is the best way to live?”

And in the words of Izumi, his answer is always:

“Live an ordinary life and don’t go to extremes.”

(*Hindustan Times*, 8 July 1981)

This brief sentence conveys a profound truth. It is true that if a person simplifies their food, clothing, housing, and other basic needs, they will stay healthier and avoid many unnecessary stresses and complications.

In reality, most of our problems arise from unnecessary complications—and the easiest way to avoid them is not to bring such complications into life at all.

You can see examples of both extremes all around you. On one side, there is a type of person who lives in constant fear of losing status or reputation. Driven by this fear, they host guests with excessive formality, spend more than they can afford on decorating their home, and spend too much time grooming themselves before going out. When they travel, they carry so many unnecessary items that the journey becomes a burden. Such a person can never be truly happy, nor can their health stay stable.

In contrast, there is the person who values necessity over appearance. When guests arrive, they share whatever

is naturally available in the home. For their house, they consider cleanliness enough rather than lavish decoration. When going out, they step outside as they are, without pretense. Their journeys are light and effortless, so much so that no one even notices when they leave or when they return. Such a person remains content, healthy, and free from tension. They work with energy during the day and sleep peacefully at night.

The same principle applies to human relations: extremism often causes problems rather than solving them. Conflicts inevitably happen between people, yet many respond with harshness instead of moderation—answering brick with stone. But this does not fix anything; one extreme prompts another, multiplying problems instead of ending them.

This pattern also appears in those who take every criticism too personally or judge others in extremes—forming friendships that are overly intense and enmities that are just as severe. Such individuals can never find peace. In contrast, those who overlook minor issues, make balanced judgments, and keep both friendships and hostilities within reasonable limits lead calm and stable lives. Their days pass smoothly, and their nights are peaceful. As Whittington observed: To dwell in paradise after death, one must first learn to dwell in paradise before death.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 21 August 1981.

YOUR ACTIONS ARE YOUR DESTINY

There is a Danish proverb: “Good fortune knocks at the door and asks, ‘Is wisdom at home?’”

This means that good fortune belongs to the wise, not the foolish. It is, in essence, the result that arises from acting with wisdom.

In every person’s life, there come moments when they can act wisely and shape a better future. These moments are a test of one’s wisdom and readiness to act. But such moments come suddenly—and you must recognise them within seconds.

The one who responds with clarity and good judgement at such moments succeeds.

The one who doesn’t—fails. Loss or failure is not fate—it is often the cost of one’s own mistake.

If you fail to recognise an opportunity, you will have to pay for it. Blaming others for your carelessness won’t help—because the price still has to be paid.

Bhartrihari, a renowned Sanskrit Scholar, rightly said: “Loss is simply missing the right time.”

And once that moment passes, no amount of blame or regret can bring it back.

You will find many people complaining about their time or fate. They say: “I had bad luck.” Or “If destiny had supported me, I would have surely succeeded.” Such statements may sound correct grammatically, but they carry no truth. Time is not a friend or enemy to anyone—it treats everyone equally.

Paul Scherer said something beautiful: “Today’s effort is tomorrow’s destiny.”

In truth, what we call destiny is nothing more than the result of our own effort.

In the scale of fate, everyone’s outcome is being weighed—but a person only receives as much as they have put into the scale of effort. In the marketplace of life, effort is the price of every success. The more someone works, the more reward they will receive.

There’s an old saying: “Opportunity only knocks once at your door.”

So if you miss your chance, don’t blame others—and don’t expect another knock if you’ve already ignored the first one.

A person who is constantly complaining is often too busy with their own noise to hear opportunity knocking again. As someone wisely said in the Atharva Veda: “In my right hand is action, and in my left is victory.”

Action and success are inseparable—like a seed and a tree. Only the one who plants the seed will see the tree grow. Just as a seed needs proper conditions to grow into a tree, success also needs the right actions to become reality.

Where right effort is made, the desired outcome is guaranteed.

Remember: Every broken hope is the result of some laziness in effort. If you remain alert and active, nothing can truly harm you.

There’s a Czech saying that expresses this perfectly: “Misfortune always enters through the door that we ourselves have left open.”

Avoid Anger

Aristotle once said, “Anger always starts with foolishness and ends in regret.”

Anger is a state of emotional imbalance. In such a condition, no action remains moderate or wise. People often act impulsively when angry—and later regret their decisions, saying: “I wish I hadn’t done that.”

In countries like the United States, laws are enforced strictly. Even minor offences—such as littering or speeding—can result in immediate fines.

There's a joke that illustrates this: Once, a driver was caught speeding on an American motorway where the speed limit was 55 mph. He had exceeded the limit, so the police stopped him and told him he would need to pay a \$30 fine. Frustrated, the man—holding a lit cigarette—angrily flicked it onto the road. Without missing a beat, the officer said, "That's \$50 more for littering."

If the man had simply paid the first fine quietly, it would have cost him \$30. But his anger added another \$50, turning the situation into an \$80 lesson.

The best thing after making a mistake is to accept it quickly. As someone said:

"If you admit your mistake immediately, you get away cheaply. But if you delay or respond with anger, the price only increases."

When a mistake is clear, refusing to admit it becomes stubbornness—and stubbornness is a greater mistake than the original one.

If a person even starts fighting the one pointing out the mistake, they lose their last chance of being forgiven. Their denial escalates the situation, and the other party may become even harsher.

Someone wisely said, “Soap removes stains from clothes, and confession removes stains from character.” Owning up to a mistake is the easiest way to defuse conflict.

When one side humbly admits its error, the other side softens immediately.

A sincere confession acts like cold water on a fire—cooling down even the strongest emotions.

There’s a story about a young man who was falsely accused of theft by a local shopkeeper. The young man got very angry, grabbed the shopkeeper’s collar, and started beating him. A crowd gathered. The argument escalated. People told the young man to apologise, but he refused.

The next day, both parties met again. Still, the young man wouldn’t say sorry.

Finally, the shopkeeper, who was much older, stepped forward, hugged the young man, and said, “If you’re not ready to apologise, then let me apologise to you. Let’s end this matter.”

The young man was stunned. The shopkeeper’s humility broke him.

He fell at the shopkeeper’s feet and said, “Please don’t apologise. You’re like a father to me. The mistake was mine. Please forgive me.”

Very few people are able to escape the damage caused by anger. But the truth is—it is both possible and easy to save yourself from it.

Anger is not permanent. It's a temporary state triggered by external causes.

And anything temporary and external can be controlled—like stains that can be washed from clothing.

To avoid the negative effects of anger, all you need is this: Hold yourself back—just for a little while.

If you can pause for a moment when anger arises, you can save yourself from all the trouble that follows.

Thomas Jefferson gave a timeless piece of advice: “If you are angry, count to ten before speaking. If you are very angry, count to a hundred.”

This is a simple and practical method. It gives your mind the time it needs to shift gears.

And once your attention moves away from the anger, it will begin to cool naturally.

No Complaints

Thomas Carlyle once said, “Have you heard of the man who cursed the sun because it didn't light his cigarette?”

This symbolic statement applies fully to many of us today.

You'll find countless people complaining about the government, about neighbours, relatives, friends, and more. But the truth is, most complaints are baseless. They're often just ways of blaming others for our own mistakes.

It's like someone trying to light a cigarette with sunlight. When it doesn't work, he starts blaming the sun. In reality, he should blame his own foolishness—not the sun in the sky.

Someone rightly said:

“The higher the expectation, the greater the disappointment.”

Whenever you feel hurt by someone, reflect for a moment. You likely expected more from that person than was realistic. If you expect a wooden stick to behave like iron, what will you get except disappointment?

A person who only spoke kindly to you—you expected deep emotional support.

Someone whose only link with you was offering tea during visits—you expected them to spend money on you or fight your battles. A casual acquaintance—you believed they would become your lifelong friend. Someone who could be present in good times—you expected them to stand by you in your worst times. A person who acted nobly when things were smooth—you expected them to remain noble during crises as well.

All of these expectations go against reality. And in this world, anything that goes against reality simply cannot exist.

So it's no surprise that such expectations were not fulfilled—and never will be. The secret to living well is

this: Only expect what someone is actually capable of giving—nothing more. If you live by this principle, you'll never be disappointed with anyone.

As someone once said, "The greatest secret to a peaceful life is being realistic."

Hold on to this one simple rule, and you'll never have a complaint against anyone: "Judge yourself by the same standard with which you judge others."

Often, we get upset with someone's actions. But if we pause and ask ourselves:

"If I were in their place, in that same situation, what would I have done?"

We'll most likely realise that we would've done the same.

You often fall short of what others expect from you. Then, when others don't meet your expectations, what right do you have to complain?

A person with a complaining nature suffers an added loss—they become resentful towards everyone and find it difficult to trust anyone. If you simply expect the sun to light your path, it will seem like a great blessing. But if you expect it to light your cigarette, and you point it towards the sun, it will start to seem useless to you. The truth is, every person has something to offer, but people give what they choose to give—not what you want to take.

When someone builds expectations that are too high, they find fault in everyone. They lose the ability to see the good in people. They end up feeling like they have no one. This thought is beautifully summed up in a Turkish proverb: “The one looking for a perfect friend will never find any friend.”

All India Radio, New Delhi, 15-17 December 1981.

SAFE HARBOUR ON BOTH SIDES

A man was boarding a boat to begin a sea journey. As he was departing, his Western friend said to him:

Today, you are beginning your journey on a calm sea. However, remember that the weather will not always be smooth. Sometimes storms will come your way. You will have to face them and carry on. Never lose hope: A safe harbour awaits you, both at the start and the end of your voyage.

These few words express a deep truth about life.

A person moves forward toward a goal. If he fails to reach it, he often loses courage. He considers one failure to be a total failure. He thinks his journey has ended forever. But he forgets—even if he returns to his earlier position, he is not a failure.

It was his earlier success that gave him the opportunity to board the boat and set out on the journey. So, if he returns to that same earlier position, where is the defeat in that?

Just like a river has banks on both sides, life too offers two options:

If you cannot reach the bank ahead, you can always return to the bank behind—and you will still find a shore. This is how life works. In this journey, there are two safe harbours: one ahead, which you aim to reach, and one behind, from where you started.

If you fail to reach the destination, go back—because even there, a safe harbour awaits you.

The truth is that a person always exists between two possibilities. But most people make the mistake of thinking that if one possibility is lost, everything is lost.

Someone once said, “The same sun that rose yesterday will rise again tomorrow.”

Rather than mourning what is lost, it is far better to use the time that is coming. Unfortunately, very few people follow this wisdom.

There was a student who had passed the tenth grade. Later, he appeared for the eleventh-grade exam—and failed. That single failure hit him so hard that he committed suicide.

He forgot that even if he couldn’t climb the eleventh step, he still had his feet firmly on the tenth step. If he had simply turned back, he could have found work or built a career as a tenth-pass student. Or, he could

have tried again and passed the exam the next time with more preparation.

But disappointment blinded him. He focused only on the next shore—and forgot that there was also a shore behind him.

If he had just looked back, he would have seen that a safe harbour was still waiting. But he looked only ahead—not behind. And standing at the edge of life, he deprived himself of life itself.

Failures come in every person's life. And it is natural to feel shocked or regretful when failure strikes. In fact, realising one's mistakes can be a good sign—if it leads to a fresh and better effort.

But if that feeling of failure turns only into sorrow and self-destruction, then it becomes a greater failure than the first one.

Remember:

The one who hasn't yet failed hasn't truly entered life.

And the one who, after failing, only collects pain and regret—even if life gives him another chance, he loses it again.

Palmer once said something very true:

“To be sorry without taking steps for correction is like removing water from a boat without plugging the hole.”

Why Time Matters

A man once joined the army as an ordinary soldier. Later, he was promoted and became a high-ranking officer. While sharing his life experience, he said:

“The reason for my fast progress in the army was just this habit of mine—if I had to report for duty at 10 o’clock, I would be ready by 9.”

At first glance, this might seem like a small thing. But in truth, it is a very important principle. This is one of the secrets behind success: valuing time.

Time holds great importance in life. The more punctual a person is, the more they progress.

In fact, the only way to avoid many failures and problems is to stop wasting time.

Someone rightly said, “Try to reach the station before time, and your train will never leave without you.”

Imagine you have to catch a train that departs at 10:03. The journey from your home to the station takes 30 minutes. If you leave just five minutes before the train time, thinking, “There’s no need to go early,” then any unexpected delay—traffic, weather, or some other obstacle—could make your 30-minute journey take 40 or 50 minutes. And you miss your train.

But the one who sets out early never misses the train. The person who aims to arrive exactly on time often ends up hearing: “The train has already left.”

Punctuality isn’t just about being on time—it reflects preparedness, discipline, and quick thinking.

Only those who are sensitive about time can prove themselves efficient. Those who prepare early are the ones who arrive on time. Those who start getting ready at the last minute are always late—and such people are often left behind.

In this world, no person has full control over everything. There will always be unpredictable situations—often caused by others. You may plan something, but something entirely different happens.

That's why the only reliable way to be on time is to start preparing a little early.

When making a plan, always include extra time for potential delays.

This little piece of wisdom can help you avoid many unnecessary interruptions.

Otherwise, Edward R. Murrow's words may become true for you: "Difficulty is an excuse which history never accepts."

Many people fail to complete important work—and then say, "What could I do? I didn't have time."

But that lack of time was caused by earlier misuse of time.

A shortage of time is always the cost of wasted time.

Dr. Brewer put it perfectly: "Those who misuse time the most are the ones who complain the most about not having enough of it."

All India Radio, New Delhi, 11-12 March 1982.

A FLOOR FOR THE ROOF

Someone once said: “To have a roof over your head, you need a floor under your feet.”

The roof is above, but it always rests on a floor below.

If there is no floor, you cannot build a roof.

This is true for life as well. Before reaching the heights of success, you must first build a strong foundation.

Benjamin Franklin said: “A broken boat should stay near the shore.”

If a person forgets that their boat is damaged, and in excitement takes it deep into the sea, it can only lead to disaster. The boat will sink—and the person with it.

If your boat is damaged, stay near the shore, where the water is shallow and help is easily available in times of danger. And if you wish to venture far, first fix your boat. In such cases, your first step must be repair—not adventure.

This principle applies to every matter in life.

If you want to build a house, first gather the necessary materials. If you want to publish a newspaper in a certain

language, ensure there's a readership for it. If you want to contest an election, make sure there are voters ready to support you.

Without a basic foundation, no task can succeed—whether it's personal, professional, or social.

An old saying goes: “Change yourself, and your fate will change automatically.”

This means the real cause of our problems is usually within ourselves, not outside. If a person reflects carefully on where their difficulties began, they will often find the root cause within their own shortcomings.

If failure is due to a personal fault, how can blaming others lead to success?

There's a story of a man who opened a shop. Business didn't do well, and he was close to bankruptcy. One day, a friend said, “Your shop isn't running because the neighbouring shopkeeper takes away your customers.”

The man replied wisely, “If he can attract my customers, why can't I attract his?”

He began to reflect. Soon, he realised the issue wasn't his competition—it was his own behaviour. He hadn't been speaking politely to his customers. He decided to fix that.

He started making a conscious effort to speak sweetly to everyone who entered. Gradually, his tone improved—and so did his business. When he corrected the weakness

within himself, the outside problems started disappearing on their own.

Don't Lose Your Senses

“Confidence is life, and lack of confidence is death.”

This powerful saying by Paramhansa is beautifully illustrated by a real-life incident involving the Queen of Britain.

In London, Buckingham Palace is the royal residence of Queen Elizabeth. On 13 July 1982, an unexpected and dangerous incident occurred: A stranger managed to enter the Queen's private bedroom. In his hand was a broken ashtray—an object that could be used as a sharp weapon.

When the Queen suddenly saw this unknown man inside her room, she naturally felt a sense of danger. Her hand immediately went to the alarm button—a special bell installed in the palace to summon security in emergencies. She pressed the button several times, but for some unknown reason, it didn't work. It was a critical moment. The Queen was alone, unarmed, and facing a strong man with a potential weapon.

If she had panicked, shouted, or angrily asked the man to leave, he might have reacted violently—and the result could have been tragic.

But instead, the Queen chose to stay calm. She kept her nerves under control and started speaking gently with the intruder. She even offered him a cigarette and, through casual conversation, diverted his attention.

She didn't scold or threaten him for entering the palace. She simply kept him engaged in light talk for ten whole minutes—enough time for the security guards to arrive and arrest the man.

If the Queen had lost her confidence in that moment, it is possible that the next day, the British people would have been mourning the loss of their monarch.

In moments of crisis, maintaining your confidence and clarity of mind is crucial. Often, it's fear and panic that cause people to worsen their own situation.

But if a person remains calm, doesn't lose courage, and keeps their senses alert, they'll usually find a way to escape the danger. Their mind will come up with some solution—a plan that may save them even at the edge of disaster.

The French poet Victor Hugo once said: "Caution is the most promising child of wisdom."

It's true—many of life's successes are not the result of emotional reaction, but of careful and deliberate action. There are many aspects to wisdom—and caution is often its greatest sign.

But only those who retain their inner confidence can act cautiously even when the situation is difficult—those who don't allow themselves to be overwhelmed by emotion.

Often, when people face something unexpected or fall into danger, they act on impulse—and such reactions usually make things worse.

But if you stay steady and calmly think through a plan, it becomes possible to overcome even the most dangerous situation. As inspired by Shakespearean (1564–1616) wisdom: “Many times, a person can get with a smile what they couldn’t get with a sword.”

All India Radio, New Delhi, 16-17 August 1982.

THE POWER OF CONSTRUCTION

The Chinese thinker Confucius once said: “Lighting a small lamp is better than cursing the darkness.”

This simple sentence carries a deep truth. Cursing the darkness doesn’t remove it. But if you light even a small lamp, the darkness begins to disappear on its own.

If the night has spread darkness around you, raising a storm of complaints won’t help. But if you quietly light a candle, you’ll see that even in the night, your surroundings begin to glow.

If you want to end evil—then start doing good.

If people treat you badly—treat them kindly.

If people are unjust—be just.

If people treat you unfairly—be patient and focus on correcting your own shortcomings.

If people criticize you—ignore them and stay focused on your real work.

This is the only real way to solve problems. All other approaches only add to the complexity.

There's a real-life story about a young Muslim man who was appointed as the imam of a mosque. This mosque had a bad reputation. No imam ever stayed long. The people paid poorly and didn't treat the imams with respect.

But this young imam had a constructive mindset. He thought: "What my predecessors couldn't achieve through complaints, I will try to achieve through actions."

He quietly made up his mind. He would not only fulfill his duties—but would go beyond expectations. He began improving the cleanliness of the mosque. Next to the mosque was an empty plot of land. He cleaned it, planted flowers and vegetables, and turned it into a beautiful green space.

He also began teaching the neighbourhood boys who used to loiter around.

He responded to harsh words with kindness and continued his work despite the people's attitude.

The result? He won their hearts. They increased his salary on their own. He began receiving gifts. People treated him with honour.

Eventually, they built him a small residence next to the mosque, so he could bring his family and live there in peace.

This is the secret of life, captured in the spirit of Shakespeare's message: Whatever you want, try to get it with the power of a smile, not the power of a sword.

Most people act impulsively, driven by emotions. But if they stop and act with thought, they'll realize that what they hoped to get through confrontation could have been achieved far more easily through a positive and gentle approach.

In life, a person needs two things:

- Money, to fulfill their material needs.
- Good character, to live peacefully with others.

Most people focus only on earning money, and neglect to develop good character.

A Chinese saying beautifully explains this balance: "If you have two coins, use one to buy bread and the other to buy a flower."

Bread gives you life—and the flower teaches you how to live.

Life's Battle

"Even after losing everything, the future still remains."

This quote by the American author and Scholar Christian Nestell Bovee expresses a vital truth of life. It means that if someone has lost something, they've only lost their past opportunities—not their future.

No matter how bad the loss, it's always a thing of the past.

The future is still untouched—still full of potential.

If someone, after facing hardship or disaster, can say, "I have lost the past, but I haven't lost the future," then they have already gained something far greater than what they lost.

Because this realisation is the beginning of a new life. And in this world, a true beginning is another name for success. Robert Collier once said, “A man’s best friends are his ten fingers.”

By this, he meant that our two hands are so valuable that even all the gold in the world cannot match them. Even if someone loses all their possessions, they still have their two hands—the very hands with which they built everything in the first place.

And with these same hands, they can rebuild again.

Mr. J. C. Malik, a military pilot, once shared his experiences in an article published in the Hindustan Times (5 May 1982). He wrote that when a pilot flies a fighter jet, he flies faster than sound, at such heights where nothing is visible except emptiness. It’s as if he’s on a journey toward death.

In such moments, there is only the machine—and the man. Either he returns after completing the mission, or he gets shot down.

Mr. Malik wrote a powerful line: “The man in him knows fear. But the professional pilot in him has taught and trained himself to master it.”

What he wrote about a pilot is equally true about life. Life is a battlefield. Everyone must face it.

People's weaknesses scare them, and difficult circumstances make them lose courage.

But to win in life, one must remain strong—and instead of fearing difficulties, try to overcome them.

“Memory looks backwards and courage looks forward.” This quote by Ram Chandra Tandon conveys the same idea.

Hopelessness is often rooted in memory.

We remember past failures—our own or someone else's—and begin to believe they'll repeat.

But if we stop looking back and start looking forward, we'll often find that what we saw as danger was actually a hidden opportunity.

As someone rightly said, “Every ending is the beginning of a new opportunity.”

But very few people understand this secret.

There is an Arabic proverb: ‘Winds often blow in the opposite direction from where the ships want to go.’

This is how life works. Rarely do external circumstances fully align with our plans. Most of the time, we must make our way against the wind.

Life is like a cogwheel: One cog is of man, and the other is of nature.

Until the wheel of nature turns, the wheel of man cannot move.

What we want in life is not achieved through personal effort alone. Along with hard work, we need favourable external conditions.

And while a person has control over himself, he has no control over the world around him.

So, the only way to succeed is this: While planning your life, always factor in the conditions of the world around you. If you are strong enough to walk on land, don't jump into the ocean.

True success lies not in fighting against circumstances—but in finding harmony with them. Although many believe that fighting against the odds is the path to greatness, wisdom lies in adapting and moving forward with insight.

The Importance of Perseverance

A big businessman once said, “Changing your business again and again is like setting fire to your own business with your own hands.”

When a person keeps switching from one business to another, they cut themselves off from their own history. And when someone disconnects from their own history, what will remain as their real asset?

Business is not like a job where you work for a month and receive your salary at the beginning of the next. Business is like a tree—it gives fruit only after years of care and growth.

Now, imagine someone plants a tree, and after a year, cuts it down to plant another. Then does the same again the next year, and continues like this for twenty-five years.

Even after all that time, he won't have a single fruit-bearing tree. Such a person can never have a lush green garden in this world.

There's only one way to have a fruitful tree: Plant one, and keep nurturing it. Give your full attention to that one tree—and in time, it will surely grow and bear fruit.

In the same way, in business (and in life), a person should think wisely, choose one path, and commit to it completely. He should not abandon or switch his goal under any condition. If he does this, he will definitely succeed—sooner or later.

Goethe rightly said: “A person who has a firm and strong intention can shape the world according to his will.”

Look around—many people work hard, but very few succeed. Most often, the reason is the lack of perseverance. Those who stay consistent succeed. Those who don't, fail. Lack of perseverance pulls a person down. Perseverance takes a person to the heights of life.

A thinker once said: “People don't lack strength—they lack consistent willpower.”

Most people have the ability. Most people use it, too. But only a few achieve big success.

Why? Because big success requires consistent willpower and effort. And that's where most people fall short.

Anyone can start something. But very few can keep going. That is why most people fail.

Progress is another name for constant movement. Life is a race in which even stopping is equal to falling behind. And once you fall behind, you'll have to work much harder to catch up.

Moving forward is like walking. Not moving forward is like sitting down tired.

The Rig Veda says: "Only the one who does not step back can achieve prosperity."

In this world, success comes to those who keep working, without obsessing over results.

Those who always focus on results get disappointed easily. They lose motivation and give up. But the one who finds joy in the work itself, who stays honest and consistent—that person stays steadfast. And only such a person is truly successful.

This is the same lesson a character in the Mahabharata gave: "Do your work without desiring the result."

Be Patient

Schiller once said: "The madness of desires lasts for a short while, but its regret lasts for a long time."

This is a profound truth. Most big mistakes in life happen under the influence of temporary emotions.

When that moment passes, a person spends the rest of their life in regret, wondering why they acted that way.

In a calm state, a person himself admits: “What I did in anger was wrong.”

I once met a lawyer who worked on criminal cases. He told me that throughout his career, every murderer he came across later felt ashamed of what he had done.

He said murder is almost always the result of a passing emotion. In a moment of rage, one person kills another. But once that moment ends, lifelong regret begins.

Their conscience whispers, “I wish I hadn’t done that.”

The rest of their life becomes a form of punishment—not given by the court, but by their own soul.

So, whenever strong emotions rise, don’t act immediately. Just stop yourself—that is the first step toward improvement.

If you’re overwhelmed in the evening and somehow manage to sleep without reacting, by the next morning, that emotion will have cooled down. You’ll look back and wonder how you were ever in that state.

There’s an English saying: “Revenge is a dish best served cold.”

If someone places hot food in front of you and you eat it right away, you’ll burn your mouth. That’s why wise people let it cool before eating.

The same approach should be applied in life. If you're angry, let it cool. Only then decide how to respond.

In a negative state, no one can think clearly. In anger, a person can't make the right decision.

Shakespeare expressed this beautifully: "Do not heat your furnace so hot for your enemy that it burns you instead."

Indeed—hatred burns first inside you. The effect on others comes later. But you suffer first and most.

So why do something that might hurt others, but will surely hurt you?

If you truly love yourself, that is enough; all you need to do is stop hating others.

In this world, the secret to loving yourself is also to love others. A person filled with hatred spreads thorns all around him—and makes life difficult for himself as well as others.

A life built on hatred shows that a person is not balanced inside.

Byron rightly said: "Hatred is madness of the heart."

Just as mental madness is a loss of sense, madness of the heart is the loss of balance and seriousness.

No one respects mental madness—and in the same way, we should avoid madness of the heart too.

All India Radio, New Delhi, on 13-14 December 1984.

SUCCESS IS IN YOUR HANDS

Thomas Fuller once said, “Birds get caught in traps because of their feet, and humans get caught because of their tongues.”

Though the tongue is a small and seemingly weak part of the body, in reality, it plays a powerful role in a person’s life. A few words can either bring trouble or protect a person from it.

There was once a man who worked in a factory. The owner deeply valued his work and had great appreciation for his abilities. Then came a time when the factory faced a financial crisis. With great difficulty, the owner managed to pay the wages of the workers, but withheld this particular man’s salary.

This went on for several months. Feeling that he was being treated unfairly, the man grew upset. One day, he confronted the owner and spoke harshly.

That one moment of anger turned out to be very costly.

The owner had actually seen the man as one of his own. He had every intention of paying him back—and even giving

him a raise when money became available. But those few harsh words changed everything.

Love turned into bitterness, and friendship turned into enmity. As a result, the owner withheld the salary further and eventually dismissed the man from the factory.

What followed was thirty years of tension and bitterness between the two.

Had the man simply remained silent, he would have gained much. Instead, by speaking in anger, he invited loss.

All of this happened because he couldn't control his tongue.

There's a Western proverb that says: "Choose the lesser of two evils." In life, it's rare to face a choice between something completely good and something completely bad. Most of the time, we must choose between two difficult options.

This man had two choices:

- A temporary delay in salary.
- Or a long-term loss of career and goodwill.

He couldn't bear the temporary hardship and ended up choosing the permanent damage.

A Hindi poet once said: "A wound from a word hurts more than a wound from a whip."

The wounds of words don't bleed and don't break bones—but they can hurt far more deeply than sticks or swords.

And many people, unable to bear this invisible wound, end up making destructive choices.

But if a person learns to tolerate the wounds inflicted by words, they remain calm. They do not lose their presence of mind and are, as a result, in a much better position to solve their problems wisely.

In fact, this patience often becomes the very key to achieving what they wanted—something they would never have gained through reaction or anger.

Here's a powerful example from history:

Booker T. Washington, a respected African-American leader in the United States, once needed to catch a train. He left home in a hurry and rushed onto the street to find a carriage.

He spotted a horse cart and said to the driver, "I'm running late. Please take me to the station as quickly as possible."

The driver looked at him and replied coldly: "I've never driven my cart for a black man—and I'm not going to start now."

Without a trace of anger, Booker Washington calmly said, "That's fine. You can sit in the back—I'll drive the cart."

Hearing this, the driver was shocked. Silently, he got into the back seat.

Booker took the reins, drove the cart to the station, and caught his train.

Now imagine—what if he had responded with anger?

He would have made the situation worse. The driver would have dug in his heels and refused even more stubbornly.

But by replying to the insult with calmness, he softened the other man's heart—and turned the situation in his favour.

The Zarathustra once said: "Doing good is not a duty, it is a benefit—because doing good adds to your own happiness."

That is the truth: By responding to bad behaviour with goodness, you benefit yourself first.

And this is the secret of success. Whether in speech, in action, or in attitude, your success often depends not on what others do, but on how you respond.

After the Leg Was Broken

"The one who can make a firm resolve—nothing is impossible for him."

This saying of Emerson reveals a profound truth of life: In this world, the possibilities for a human being are endless. If a person possesses true determination, they can turn every difficulty into ease. Every obstacle becomes a stepping stone on the path to success.

Possibility never ends. This is not just an idea—it is a reality. Human history is replete with examples that prove this truth. Here, we present a real and inspiring example from recent times.

Sudha Chandran, a dancer from South India, is that example.

At the age of sixteen, on 2 May 1981, she met with an accident in which her right leg was broken. She was immediately admitted to a local hospital. Unfortunately, the doctors made a serious mistake—they applied a plaster without giving an anti-tetanus injection or taking the necessary precautions.

As the pain worsened, her parents took her to a major hospital in Madras.

There, doctors diagnosed tetanus, and despite all efforts, her condition didn't improve. In the end, her leg had to be amputated below the knee.

Someone once said, "Love removes all obstacles."

This came true in Sudha's life—her deep love for dance overcame everything.

After the amputation, she would often cry and ask, "I want to dance. Will I ever dance again?"

She was treated like any other patient—and eventually fitted with an artificial limb called the Jaipur Foot. Its inventor, Dr. P. K. Sethi, came to know about Sudha's dream through her teacher.

Dr. Sethi said, "If Sudha truly has the desire, she will be able to dance like a person with normal limbs. She just

needs to be strong enough to put in extra effort and bear the initial pain.”

Another saying came true for Sudha: “Pain is the price of happiness. Whoever can bear pain will surely attain happiness.”

Sudha agreed without hesitation. She began practising—patiently, tirelessly—on her artificial leg. And with time, she returned to being a complete dancer.

On 1 April 1984, Sudha Chandran gave a public performance in Bombay. Experts were in attendance. They said she danced so gracefully that it was impossible to tell which of her legs was artificial. (*Northern India Patrika*, 22 April 1984)

For the goal of dance, a young woman made such an extraordinary effort. Then what about those who set their sights on even higher goals—like truth, justice, and righteousness?

The principle is simple: greater challenges demand greater effort. This is not merely a quote—it is a law of life.

A person who faces obstacles can still achieve a successful life, just like anyone else. The only condition is: they must be ready to work harder than others, and patiently bear the pain of the early steps.

Adjusting with Circumstances

Herbert L. Nicholas once wrote about a story he had read in a book.

It was about an old man who had spent his entire life facing continuous hardships. Despite this, he always remained happy and content.

Someone once asked him the secret behind his peace. He replied: “I learned to cooperate with the inevitable.”

In other words, he learned to adjust to what cannot be avoided. This is a timeless lesson. Many things in life are beyond our control. Fighting them doesn’t help—it only creates unnecessary confusion and mental stress.

Instead, the wise approach is to accept such situations calmly. This allows us to preserve our energy—and use it in areas where our efforts can truly make a difference.

This is a basic rule of life—not just for individuals, but also for entire communities and nations.

When we learn to work with reality rather than fight against it, we unlock greater strength, peace, and progress.

All India Radio, New Delhi, on 15-16 May 1983.

DON'T MISS THE OPPORTUNITY

The secret to success in life is that a person should always be ready for the next opportunity. This idea was beautifully captured by Disraeli, who once said:

“The secret of success in life is for a man to be ready for his opportunity when it comes.”

Real success lies in being able to recognise the moment—and immediately act on it. The one who fails to act at the right time is the one who falls behind in the race of life.

Once, in a city street, I noticed that an electric bulb was glowing during the day. But in daylight, its glow was barely visible—you could hardly tell it was on. However, when night fell, the same bulb lit up its surroundings, as if a small sun had appeared.

At that moment, a thought came to my mind: The glow of the bulb is simply a result of taking advantage of the opportunity provided by darkness.

A lamp is only useful in the dark. When the sun is shining, the lamp's light becomes invisible. So, darkness, often

seen as a negative, actually presents an opportunity—but only for those who are ready to shine.

People usually complain when they face dark times. But the truth is: darkness can be the best chance for someone to glow—provided they have light inside them.

Because if someone is darkness themselves, they can never use darkness as an opportunity—they'll only make it worse.

French writer Chamfort once said: "To lose an opportunity is to lose success."

Imagine you're a traveller at a railway station. If you're not alert, the train may come, pause, whistle, and leave without you—while you stand on the platform, unaware.

This is how life works.

The world constantly sends you opportunities. If your mind is not awake, you may not even recognise them. And later, you'll complain that "life didn't give you a chance"—when in reality, you just weren't ready.

In this world, opportunities come and go. But there is one opportunity that never leaves—the opportunity to strive for excellence.

The truth is: Distinction in anything is the greatest opportunity.

Many other chances may come and go—but the opportunity to do your best, to stand out—is always present.

That's why Daniel Webster once said: "There is always room at the top."

No matter how crowded the world is, there's always space for excellence.

This is the one chance that never ends—for anyone.

Don't Get Angry

Someone once said, "Anger spoils a person's face."

To see the truth of this, just look at a dog barking in rage at another dog—It appears wild, even terrifying. On the other hand, look at a flower—Even if you say harsh words to it, its beauty remains unchanged.

Why? Because the flower doesn't react. It doesn't let your bitterness enter it.

That's why a wise person said, "A person looks most beautiful when they don't get angry at a provoking statement. And most ugly when they do."

Another saying goes: "Anger always begins in foolishness and ends in regret."

This is seen in real life again and again.

Anger often arises when someone doesn't know a better way to respond.

Once, a boy made a mistake at home. His father, lacking understanding, got furious. He pushed the boy. The boy's head hit the wall, and a vein was seriously damaged. He lost his memory forever. Though he looked the same, he could no longer retain any information.

He became completely dependent.

The father acted in a moment of rage. And for the rest of his life, he regretted that moment.

If only he had controlled himself, he could have saved his child—and himself—from a lifelong tragedy.

Data Ganj Bakhsh said, “Anger eats up action.”

Tulsidas said, “Where there is anger, there is destruction.”

Both statements express the same truth: Anger ruins the mind, the body, and the spirit.

According to medical and psychological experts, anger causes the muscles to tighten, depletes the body’s energy, and leads to fatigue. These physical and emotional effects reduce a person’s ability to think clearly and act effectively.

Another doctor, J. S. Chandler, added that anger causes the intestines to tighten, the heartbeat to rise, and blood pressure to increase.

In extreme cases, it can even burst a blood vessel in the brain, leading to sudden death.

Chesterfield gave a profound warning: “If a person cannot control their anger, they can’t achieve anything in the world. Because success requires controlling the world—and if you cannot control yourself, how can you control the world?”

All India Radio, New Delhi, on 8-9 July 1984.

SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

There's a saying: "Change yourself, and your destiny will automatically change."

And Thomas Stearns Eliot (T. S. Eliot, 1888–1965), a poet, essayist, and playwright, once said: "If you are put into a round hole, then you should become a ball."

Both these statements express the same deep truth from different angles: The secret of success lies not in clashing with circumstances, but in adjusting to them.

While living in this world, a person constantly faces different kinds of challenges—sometimes from nature, sometimes from the environment, and sometimes from unexpected situations. In such times, a wise person does not resist blindly but rather adapts, bends, and finds a way forward.

Take the example of Japan. Japan is a country where earthquakes occur frequently. These disasters cause enormous human and financial losses. It was a serious problem—but the Japanese found a practical solution.

Instead of building houses with heavy concrete, they began using wood and bamboo. Even if such a house collapses, the damage is less, and much of the material can be reused.

Here, they were facing the force of nature, against which no one has any control. So, the Japanese bowed before it—and by doing so, discovered a smart, one-sided solution.

Let's look at another example—the world-famous Toyota Company.

Fifteen years ago, Toyota was a name associated not with cars, but with textiles. The company originally worked in Japan's textile industry. But the country's conditions were not suitable for this sector, and the company couldn't succeed. So, Toyota changed direction and entered the automobile industry—a field that better matched the country's resources and demands. Soon, Toyota became a global name, and Japanese cars began to run on roads around the world.

In this case, the Japanese faced local economic obstacles. Rather than fighting them, they shifted their area of action. And as surely as walking through a door is easier than banging into a wall, success followed.

There's also the story of a leading Japanese newspaper that once suffered heavy financial losses.

Usually, when a major newspaper begins to collapse, it's extremely difficult to save, just like how an elephant with a broken leg cannot survive easily.

However, the Japanese regard it as their sacred duty to support their national press. Shortly afterward, a bank provided the newspaper with a substantial loan on favorable terms.

Government and semi-government institutions began to give it large advertisements. The newspaper's employees even voluntarily paused their salary raises until the situation improved.

As a result, the paper recovered and began publishing strongly again.

There's a saying: "Sometimes, helping others is actually helping yourself."

That's exactly what happened here. By supporting the newspaper, the people protected both the press and their own values.

This is another powerful truth: "If you are less than others, don't fight it. Even weakness offers something—and that is the motivation to overcome it."

If you take this approach, your weakness itself becomes a ladder that lifts you higher.

Take the story of Muhammad Ali Clay.

As a twelve-year-old Black boy in America, he once asked his father, "Dad, why don't we have shiny cars like others?"

His father replied sadly, "Son, we're Black. Only white people can afford cars like that."

Pointing to his son's skin, he said, "This is the reason."

The boy asked, "Is being Black a crime?"

His father explained, "No, but we aren't given the same job opportunities. When someone earns only enough to feed himself, how can he dream of luxury?"

To ease his son's sadness, the father bought him a bicycle—even though they barely had enough money for it.

The boy was overjoyed and rode it happily.

But soon after, a white boy stole the bicycle. When he ran to the police, the officer looked at his Black face with contempt and turned away.

This could have ignited hatred in the boy's heart. But instead, it lit a fire of determination.

He decided to challenge the idea that being Black meant being inferior.

To the policeman, he said: "If I find that white boy, I'll break his nose."

The officer laughed and replied, "Then go learn how to break noses first."

That mocking sentence shook the boy deeply—and from that day, he began training as a boxer.

Years later, that same boy—Muhammad Ali Clay—became the world boxing champion.

He had everything now—from Cadillacs parked outside his home to hotels reserved for world leaders.

In an interview, he once said, “If my father hadn’t felt inferior and given me a bicycle instead of a car, I would never have become a world champion. It was the feeling of being behind that gave me the spirit to move ahead.”

All India Radio, New Delhi, on 13-14 October 1984.

VICTORY IN DEFEAT

Laozi was a famous philosopher of ancient China who lived in the 6th century BCE. He wrote a book called ‘The Way of Truth,’ in which he shared deep insights about life. One of his sayings is: “The one who accepts defeat—no one can defeat him.”

At first glance, this may sound strange. Most people think success lies in not accepting defeat. Even when they lose, they blame others, saying the competition was unfair or the opponent cheated. But Laozi’s words reveal a powerful truth: the person who has the courage to accept defeat actually lays the foundation for future success.

When someone is defeated, they are paying the price for some shortcoming—maybe a lack of strength, poor planning, or flawed strategy. If a tyrant succeeds, it’s because he had an advantage at that moment. In such cases, the wisest step is to accept the result, reflect, and work to remove your own weaknesses. By doing this, you’re much more likely to succeed next time.

There was a man who bought land and started building a house. While digging the foundation, his neighbour objected, saying, “You’ve built one foot beyond your boundary. Move it back, or we won’t let you continue.” The owner tried reasoning, but the neighbour refused to listen and grew aggressive. The man thought, “If I argue, this could turn violent. It may lead to a court case, work stoppage, financial loss, and stress. Let me avoid this.” He followed Laozi’s advice. Quietly, he told his workers to move the foundation one foot back. He gave up a little land but saved his peace of mind.

This peaceful decision paid off. A few months later, he earned enough to build a second floor. His children, observing his calm approach, also grew up with a constructive mindset. They focused on working hard. Years later, the family was doing so well that they bought the neighbouring property, tore it down, and built a much larger home.

He had lost one foot of land—but gained thousands of feet in return.

When Nothing Becomes Something

Swami Rama Tirtha (1873–1906) was a great Indian thinker. He was fluent in Urdu, Persian, English, Hindi,

Sanskrit, Punjabi, German, and French. He held a Master's degree in Mathematics. One of his powerful quotes is:

“Zero increases the value of any digit ten times if it's placed to the right of it.”

This means that even when someone appears to have “nothing,” if they understand their potential and use it wisely, they can turn that zero into great value.

At the end of the 19th century, Swami Ram Tirath traveled to America with no money and no contacts. When someone asked him, “Do you have any friends here?” he smiled and said, “Yes, I have one,” and putting his arms around the man, added, “You are that friend.” His warmth and positivity touched people's hearts. Although he arrived alone, within just 18 months, he had made many genuine friends. He placed his “zero” in the right place—and it became something great.

A young man in India was deeply worried due to unemployment. He had no money to start a business and no reference to get a job. He felt completely helpless—like he was at zero. One day, he read a newspaper article that changed his thinking. It said: The world doesn't lack work—it lacks workers. Most employers struggle to find people who are both honest and hardworking.

The young man thought, “If I can prove that I'm both, I will definitely find my place.”

He went to a busy shop and said to the owner, “Please let me work for you. I don’t want any salary for one month. Just watch my work. If you’re satisfied, keep me. If not, I’ll leave.” After trying this at several places, one shopkeeper accepted his offer.

The young man worked with such dedication and sincerity that within two weeks, the owner fixed a salary for him. Within months, his income grew. After a few years, the shopkeeper was so impressed with his performance that he made him a partner in the business.

The young man had nothing—just a zero. But he placed that zero wisely. And that zero became his greatest asset.

Delay in Hurry

Winston Churchill (1874–1965) was a famous British leader. During World War II, he served as the Prime Minister of Britain, at a time when the British Empire was much larger than it is today. He led his country with great dedication. One of Churchill’s famous sayings is: “The more you hurry, the more you delay.”

This statement reveals a deep truth about life. Suppose you are on the third floor of a building and need to go downstairs quickly for some urgent reason. No matter how important it is, you will still have to take the stairs. If, in your hurry, you decide to jump directly from the third floor to the ground, surely you will reach faster—but that

speed will lead to a long delay. Your arms and legs will break, and instead of reaching your destination, you'll be taken to the hospital and spend months in recovery.

A man wanted to grow a mango tree in his courtyard. He thought, "If I plant a small mango sapling, it will take at least ten years to grow." There was already a five-year-old mango tree in his garden. He made a plan to dig it up and replant it in the courtyard. He was happy that this way, he would save five years of waiting, and in just a few years, the tree would bear fruit. He hired workers to dig up the tree. After hours of careful effort, they removed it and replanted it in the courtyard. But the very next day, its leaves started to wither. Within a few weeks, instead of a lush tree, there was only a dry stump in the yard.

Another man wanted to earn money. He opened a grocery shop and ran it for a year. When he saw that the business wasn't picking up quickly, he decided to start a clothing store. After a year, he again felt dissatisfied and switched to selling stationery. Then, within another year, he changed to a shoe shop. In this way, he kept changing his line of work again and again—and eventually ended up discouraged and unsuccessful.

The reason for his failure was that he didn't understand a simple truth: success in any work takes time. It's not possible to open a shop one day and see it succeed the very next day. The time he spent trying different things could

have made him successful if he had dedicated it to just one business. Because he was in a hurry, he kept getting delayed. If he had not rushed, he might have succeeded sooner than he expected.

In any field, steadfastness is essential for success. A person should think carefully, consider all aspects, consult others, and then make a thoughtful decision. Such decisions should be made once, not repeatedly.

Once a decision is made, a person should stick to it. If doubts arise later, they should be overcome with determination. One must remain firm on the path that was chosen with wisdom and understanding.

Only such people succeed in this world. In contrast, those who keep changing their paths repeatedly never achieve any significant success in life.

All India Radio, New Delhi, on 26-28 December 1999.

NO REVENGE

Someone has said, “Before taking revenge, think that revenge will also be taken against revenge.”

This is a deep truth of life. Only after understanding this truth can a person build a successful life in this world.

If someone causes you harm, a feeling of revenge may rise in your heart. You start thinking of taking revenge to cool the fire burning inside you. But think about it—if someone’s action caused you to feel revenge, then won’t your revenge make that person feel the same way again? Surely, it will. And thus, a cycle of wrongdoing begins. After one trouble, you’ll face another. That’s why wisdom is to ignore the matter and end it right from the beginning.

Once, I met a man from UP. He had bought a bus in partnership with a political leader. The man invested the money, and the leader got the license. Legally, the license was in the leader’s name, but both were equal partners in the profit.

After some time, the leader's intentions changed. He thought, "Legally, the bus is mine because the license is in my name. Then why should I share the profit with someone else?" So, he took over the bus entirely.

Naturally, the man became very angry. The fire of revenge flared inside him. He even planned to kill the leader. But during this time, he met an old and experienced man. After hearing the situation, the old man said, "If you kill the leader, do you think his people will let you live?"

This made the man think. He gave up the idea of revenge. Instead, with whatever money he had left, he started a small-scale business. A few years later, when I met him again, he said, "I'm very happy now. I'm earning more than I would have from that bus partnership. And my business keeps growing."

Whenever a burning desire for revenge arises within you, take a moment to calm your mind and ask yourself: Is it truly in my best interest to retaliate—or would rising above it be wiser?

Clearly, harming someone else is not a goal in itself. The real goal every person should have is to benefit themselves. If harming others leads to greater harm for yourself, then what's the wise choice?

If you think calmly, you'll realise that such an act, which ultimately turns against you, is not wisdom—it's foolishness.

The fights in our society and the flood of court cases are all results of this spirit of revenge. When someone suffers a complaint or harm, they cannot forget it. They immediately react and retaliate. This leads to more fighting, more lawsuits. And in the end, both sides suffer. The one taking revenge also harms themselves.

Every person wants a peaceful life. Every society longs for harmony. This can only be achieved when people develop a non-revengeful mindset. That is the only way to personal peace and social harmony.

Whenever you take revenge, you spend your energy. Time, money, and peace are all used up—only for some momentary psychological relief. Nothing more.

But if the same energy is invested in something constructive, the return is real—just like in the story above. Spending energy on revenge is a loss. Using that energy in something positive is a gain.

In such a case, it's not hard to decide what a wise person should choose.

Realism

Someone has said, “Wanting more than your right is to deprive yourself of even your real right.”

When a person desires only what he truly deserves, everything supports his demand. But when he starts desiring more than what he rightfully deserves, everything begins to oppose him. That’s why the first kind of person is successful, and the second is not.

There was a large institution. It needed a manager. One man had the right skills, and so he was appointed. The director of the institution treated him with great respect. He received a good salary, a house, a jeep, and many other benefits.

But soon, greed entered the man’s heart. The position of “manager” started to feel small. He wanted to replace the director. He began secretly working against him. But before his plan could succeed, the director came to know. He immediately removed the man from the post. The house and jeep were also taken back. He was dismissed in disgrace.

In moral terms, this is the difference between contentment and greed. Being satisfied with your

rightful position is contentment. Wanting more than your rightful place is greed.

Had the man remained content, he would not only have kept his position but would likely have grown further. But by choosing the path of greed, he lost what he had—and what he could have gained.

When you want only what is yours, you are asking for something that naturally belongs to you. But when you want more than what is yours, you are demanding something that belongs to someone else. Why would anyone give up what's rightfully theirs?

This is where conflict begins. The moment someone overreaches, others resist. Struggle and rivalry begin. And often, in trying to get more, a person ends up losing even what they already had.

Wanting more than your due also leads to contradictions. You use one argument to claim your own share, and another argument to take what belongs to someone else. In doing so, you weaken your own case. You refute yourself. You confuse your own position.

Such a person fits the saying: "The one who chases two rabbits catches none."

Likewise, the one who wants more than what is rightfully theirs ends up losing both.

Every person is born with unique potential. Everyone has the opportunity to live a successful life—within their own limits. When you stay within those limits, the world supports you. But when you go beyond, everything turns against you.

For such a person, nothing but failure is written in destiny.

All India Radio, New Delhi,
19 April and 26 April 1990.

THE SECRET OF PROGRESS

The rose plant is a sign of nature. At the same time, it serves as a powerful symbol that teaches us how to live in this world.

You know that a rose plant has both flowers and thorns. Every wise person picks the flowers and avoids the thorns. In the same way, life offers both pleasant and unpleasant experiences. Wisdom lies in embracing the pleasant and overlooking the unpleasant.

On 15 August 1992, the Prime Minister said in his address that we need a kind of moratorium—a mutual agreement to temporarily set aside our differences and work together based on common ground. Given the current climate, such a moratorium is deeply necessary for the progress of our country.

But in reality, this idea is not just for a few years—it reflects a complete way of life. Whether it is an individual or a nation, true progress is only possible when we adopt

the principle of avoiding unnecessary conflict and making use of available opportunities.

Think of it this way: when you drive your vehicle on a road, you see many others driving as well. You don't crash into them—you navigate carefully, making room for others while continuing your own journey.

This is exactly how life works. None of us lives in isolation. The world is filled with people, each moving forward on their own path. The secret of a successful life lies in respecting others, giving them space, and simultaneously continuing on your own path. Giving space to others is the surest way to ensure your own safe and successful journey.

India is a land of many religions and cultures. It is not possible to convert everyone to a single religion or cultural identity. Any attempt to do so will only damage the social fabric of the nation. Unity does not mean uniformity. Rather, unity in diversity is the principle that is both realistic and fruitful.

Today, the greatest need in our country is tolerance. Tolerance means that while firmly following your own path, you respect the path chosen by others. This principle has guided our nation for centuries, and it will continue to do so

in the future. Whether it is within one community or across communities, tolerance is the key to peaceful coexistence.

Even in a family, if ten people are to live together peacefully, they must learn to show tolerance toward each other.

Two years ago, I visited Solapur. There, I heard a speech from a Hindu brother at a public event. He shared a beautiful story: his father was non-vegetarian, while his mother was vegetarian. But despite their dietary differences, they lived in complete harmony. Each morning, the mother would first prepare food for the father, serve it, then bathe and prepare her own vegetarian meal. This continued for years, and they lived a happy life.

This is the spirit on which a nation must be built. In public life, we must accept and respect each other. Just as we believe we have the right to live by our religion and culture, we must also grant that right to others. Differences should be treated as a reason for tolerance, not conflict. This is the only way to build a truly united nation.

Take, for example, a community that organises a public procession. Sometimes, people in such processions raise emotional slogans that others may find offensive. But the right response is not to resist or confront them. That only leads to escalation. If you choose to ignore it, the entire

procession will end peacefully in a few minutes. But if you try to resist or block it, a simple event can turn into a destructive riot.

We must understand: in such a case, our real choice is not between procession and no procession, but between procession and riot. Trying to stop the procession doesn't bring peace—it often brings greater violence and loss.

In today's world, every person stands between two realities: on the one side, there are problems, and on the other, opportunities. This is the law of life, and no one can change it. The wise person is the one who ignores the problems and makes full use of the opportunities.

To ignore problems is to gain time for action. But getting caught in problems is like wasting the time you already have.

Akashvani Nagpur, 20 November 1992.

CONSTRUCTION OF LIFE

Someone has said, “Every problem can be solved, except the one that is assumed to be unsolvable.”

This is a deeply meaningful statement. It applies to all aspects of life—whether personal or collective, small or large.

When a problem arises, most people focus only on its difficult side. The easier side remains hidden from their view. But the reality is, no problem in the world is entirely difficult. Every problem has a side that is manageable—if one chooses to see it.

Often, when a challenge appears, a person becomes overwhelmed. But if they take a moment to think calmly, they will realise that every difficulty also brings with it a hidden opportunity, just waiting to be discovered and used.

Let me share a real example.

A man once started a business in partnership. The business grew and began earning well. But over time, the partner

became dishonest. Using underhanded means, he pushed the man out and took full control of the business.

I met this man during that time. He was deeply distressed—so much so that he even considered ending his life. I told him, “You had two assets: one was the business, and the other is your own self. You lost the business—but you still have yourself. Why grieve so much over what’s lost? Focus on what remains. Use your strength, wisdom, and effort. With the help of God, you will succeed again.”

The man understood. He let go of the past and started afresh. With hard work and determination, he built a new business. A few years later, he surpassed the partner who had once wronged him. That man remained where he was, while this gentleman moved far ahead.

This is the secret of life and progress:

Where there is hardship, there is also opportunity.

Where there is loss, there are also means to gain.

Where there are enemies, there are also friends.

Where there are shadows, there is also light.

Where there is rejection, there is also acceptance.

A wise person never loses hope. He never gives up. He forgets the past and looks toward the future. He rises again after every fall. He never sees failure as final.

Courage is a person's greatest asset. And it is a kind of wealth that can never be taken away.

Someone once said, "The one who runs after everything gains nothing. The one who focuses on one thing gains everything." This is the most important principle of life. Those who understand and apply it will surely succeed.

Suppose you want to grow a garden filled with fruit-bearing trees. If you think you can plant full-grown trees and instantly have a garden, you are mistaken. Those trees will not survive. Even after years of effort, you will not see success.

The only way to build a real garden is to plant small saplings, water them, give them care and time, and allow them to grow. With patience and consistency, you will one day see a lush, thriving garden.

This applies to every field of life—whether it's education, business, or industry. You must start from the beginning, accept the early struggles, and build from there. In this world, success only comes through this step-by-step method. There is no shortcut.

Often, when people deal with others, they find the offer or opportunity from the other person too small or unsatisfying. They try to take more—but that only leads

to tension and conflict. In the process, even the little that was available is lost.

That is not wisdom

A wise person accepts what is available, uses it as a base, and then strives for what is still out of reach. When a person does this, he finds that over time, even what was once denied to him becomes his—through his own effort and growth.

The mistake is in trying to grasp what you don't have while neglecting what you do have. In chasing what is not in your hand, you risk losing your most precious asset—your time.

To give up what's certain for something uncertain is not the way of an intelligent person.

Time is the most valuable resource a human being possesses. A wise person is one who knows how to preserve time—and never allows it to go to waste.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 10 December 1992.

GOOD CHARACTER

What is it that makes a society truly good? The answer is simple: the good character of its individuals. A society where people display noble character will naturally become a good society. And where individuals lack good character, that society will inevitably deteriorate.

But what defines good character? And what defines bad character? The distinction is clear: a person of good character treats others in the way they would like to be treated themselves. A person of bad character, however, wants to be treated well, but acts differently towards others.

Imagine a man who leaves his house and goes to the market. There, someone speaks to him rudely. He gets angry and begins to fight. But when he returns home, he himself speaks rudely to his family and neighbours. What he should have learned from his market experience is this: just as he disliked being spoken to harshly, others, too, won't appreciate bitter words. If he wants people to speak

to him kindly, he must first become someone who speaks kindly to others.

A human being cannot live alone. By nature, people must live among others. One person's success is linked to the well-being of the whole society. And one person's downfall adds to collective ruin. When someone treats others well, they're not just helping others—they're creating an environment where kindness becomes a social norm, and eventually, kindness will return to them.

On the other hand, if someone lies, they contribute to the spread of dishonesty. If they grab someone's property unjustly, they set a precedent for others to do the same. If they break promises, they make it easier for society to become comfortable with dishonesty.

The direction of social life is largely influenced by tradition. If good traditions are upheld, society moves toward harmony. If bad traditions spread, a toxic environment follows.

In truth, every personal action contributes to shaping society—and in time, those consequences circle back to the individual. From good character emerge good social values, which ultimately benefit the very person who practices them. From bad character arise destructive trends, which eventually bring harm to their source.

The first benefit of good character is peace of mind. The second is the creation of a healthy social environment. In contrast, the first consequence of bad character is the loss of inner peace, and the second is a society full of tension and mistrust.

In one case, society becomes a garden of flowers. In the other, a field of thorns.

Someone once asked me: “Tell me briefly—how should one live in this world?”

I replied, “Live as the rest of the universe lives.” Universal ethics are the best human ethics. The universe is a silent teacher of morality—we only need to observe it and apply its lessons to our lives.

Look at the sun. It shines its light on everyone—without discrimination. It gives warmth to all, regardless of who they are or what they believe. Even if someone curses the sun, it still offers them its light.

We must adopt the morality of the sun. Be beneficial to all. Be a giver, even if you receive nothing in return. Raise your moral standards so high that even those who oppose you feel your goodness.

Look at the tree. It takes in the carbon dioxide we exhale and gives back oxygen—essential for life. The tree transforms what is harmful into what is helpful.

We too must become like this. Let bitter words that reach our ears turn into sweet speech. If someone curses us, let our response be a prayer. If someone harms us, let our effort be to benefit them. If someone insults us, let us respond with honour.

This is the moral system of nature—even poisonous animals follow it. In Gujarat, a doctor keeps various snakes and plays with them. Someone once asked, “Doctor Sahib, aren’t you afraid?” He replied, “Not at all. These creatures only react when they’re harmed. If left alone, they don’t harm anyone.”

Humans, too, should have such predictable behaviour. People should be certain that you will never lie, never betray trust, never abuse authority, never take unfair advantage of someone’s weakness. People should know that because you are a human, you will always uphold human values. You will never act inhumanely, no matter the situation.

All India Radio, New Delhi,
on 2nd and 9th September 1992.

ETIQUETTES OF PROGRESS

In this world, everyone desires progress—but only a few people truly achieve it. Most people live and die with an average or ordinary life.

What is the reason for this? Is it that some people are born lucky while others are destined to be deprived? Certainly not! To say so would be an unfair accusation against God—and God never treats anyone unjustly.

The truth is that every person is born with great potential. Everyone carries within themselves the seeds of high achievement. Those who use their God-given abilities wisely reach success, while those who either neglect these abilities or misuse them through harmful choices remain behind in the journey of life.

Take for example, those who are obsessed with shortcuts. Sometimes, in trying to leap forward quickly, they end up breaking their own hands and feet. But true progress

always comes through long-term effort and consistent work—not sudden leaps.

Others try to succeed by snatching what belongs to others. This too is a grave mistake. What is not rightfully yours can never truly become yours. Even if you manage to seize something unjustly, it will never bring lasting success. Such actions go against the law of nature—and sooner or later, nature will respond, often not only punishing the person, but even affecting their future generations.

Some people hinder their own progress by being excessively greedy and selfish. They want everything for themselves and nothing for others. But the world has been created in such a way that those who give are the ones who receive. Those who share in others' success become partners in others' growth.

Then there are those who are consumed by jealousy and envy. When they see others moving forward, they burn inside and try to pull them down. But the right response to others' success is to become motivated—to work harder and also rise, rather than being trapped in envy.

To achieve any significant success in life, one must be able to move forward with others. No one can reach great heights alone. To rise in life, you must win people's

trust, earn their respect, and build relationships. You must become the kind of person who wants for others what you want for yourself—and who dislikes for others what you would not want for yourself.

In this world, progress is everyone's right. It is destined for all. But it will only come to those who understand the rules and etiquettes of progress—and apply them correctly.

Let us take an example from the physical world. Earthquakes are a natural phenomenon. They occur in many parts of the world. In earlier times, these earthquakes led to heavy loss of life. But now, in developed countries like California (USA), even when earthquakes occur, very few people die.

Why is that? Because people there understood the root cause of the damage—it wasn't the earthquake itself that killed people, but the collapse of buildings. Instead of trying to protest against earthquakes or build impossibly strong structures, they took a more intelligent path: they began to build lightweight structures that would sway, not collapse. As a result, when earthquakes happen, buildings shake but stay standing—and lives are saved.

In a similar way, every person carries within them another kind of earthquake—the earthquake of anger and revenge.

When someone is hurt, the fire of revenge begins to burn in the heart. That is when a person may lash out, attack others, or destroy relationships.

This is a social earthquake, and like natural earthquakes, it cannot be eliminated. The only solution is to develop the wisdom to protect ourselves from its damage.

The wise strategy here is one word: avoidance.

If someone says something harsh to you, don't let it affect you.

If someone provokes you, walk away.

If someone throws mud at you, wash it off—don't argue.

If someone spits at you in passing, ignore it and move on.

In short: don't allow others' negativity to derail your own journey.

Just as natural earthquakes will never stop, human and social earthquakes will also continue. What we can do is practice avoidance, patience, and self-control, so that we are not caught in their trap or damaged by their force.

This world is a world of constant trials and challenges. Everyone has freedom—and some misuse it, causing harm to others. But the solution is not to try and remove

this freedom. That freedom has been given by the Creator, and no one can take away what the Creator has granted.

So what should we do? We must act wisely, protect ourselves from harm, and focus on creating and seizing constructive opportunities.

This means:

- Avoiding unnecessary confrontations.
- Bearing minor losses with patience.
- Not getting provoked by provocations.
- Relying on your own strength rather than blaming others.
- Focusing on opportunities instead of being stuck in problems.

This is the only real method for success in this world of trial.

There is no other path to progress. Wise strategy is the solution to every problem. Wise strategy protects us from every loss. Let wise strategy become your guiding principle—and you will live a life free of complaints and filled with progress.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 17 December 1993.

THE RIGHT USE OF TIME

The Prophet of Islam once said: “Waiting for relief is the best form of worship” (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 3571).

This profound saying of the Prophet reflects deep wisdom. In a broader sense, it teaches us that in many complex situations, the most effective solution is to place the matter in the “waiting box.”

God has created the universe in such a way that all natural processes constantly work toward correction and improvement. For example, when garbage is thrown on the road, millions of bacteria begin to break it down and convert it into useful gases. This is how the system of nature operates—always active, always moving forward. In this context, waiting is not inactivity; it is actually a powerful strategy. To wait means to give nature the opportunity to work on your behalf and bring about a better outcome.

A poet once described this in beautiful words:

“Raat din gardish mein hain saat aasman,

Ho rahega kuch na kuch, ghabraayein kya.”

Day and night, the seven heavens remain in motion—surely something will happen, so why worry?

I once visited a big city where I met a businessman who was extremely worried. His blood pressure had become dangerously high. He told me that he had prepared some merchandise, but after bringing it to the market, he couldn’t find buyers in time. His goods began to pile up in his warehouse, and his capital got stuck. He asked me for a prayer or spiritual solution to escape the crisis.

I didn’t give him any direct advice. Instead, I wrote something on a piece of paper, sealed it in an envelope, and told him to open it after ten days. Inside, I had written a single sentence inspired by the Hadith: “Place your matter in the box of waiting.”

About a year and a half later, I received a letter from him. He shared, with great happiness, that he followed the advice and adopted the policy of waiting. By God’s grace, all his goods were eventually sold at a profit. His blocked

capital was released, and now he was planning to start a new business.

A Western thinker once said: “The great rule of moral conduct is, next to God, to respect time.”

Indeed, the highest duty of a human being is to worship God. He is our Creator and Sustainer. He provides everything we need, and therefore, He alone deserves our greatest respect—which is called worship.

Along with worship, another sacred responsibility is to respect time. Time is the most valuable asset a person has in this world. Every action we take happens within the boundary of time. Once time runs out, the opportunity to act disappears with it.

This is why we must never waste time. To waste time is to lose the most precious thing we possess. Time will not wait for us. It moves forward—and once gone, it never returns. As the poet simply put it:

“Gaya waqt phir haath aata nahi.”

Time once lost never returns.

Shakespeare, the famous English writer and poet, said: “I wasted time, and now doth time waste me.”

What he meant was that the time he had was his opportunity to progress. But because he did not use it wisely, he fell behind. Now, he was paying the price of that wasted time in the form of lifelong loss.

Goulburn, another thinker, gave us a timeless reminder: “There is not a single moment in life that we can afford to lose.”

Every moment is an opportunity for action and achievement. If it slips away, nothing remains to strive for.

To use time properly, discipline is essential. Here are three simple yet powerful methods:

1. *Wake up early in the morning*: The night is for rest, and the day is for work. The earlier you rise, the more productive your day will be. If you want to make the most of your time, develop the habit of waking up early.
2. *Self-Introspection*: Before sleeping each night, reflect on how you spent your day. What did you gain? What did you lose? Which of your actions were right and which were wrong? What could you have done better? This habit of daily self-assessment will guide your future.

3. *Keep a diary*: Always keep a small diary with you. Briefly record your daily experiences and lessons. Over time, this diary will become more than a memory aid—it will become your guide and teacher.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 29 June 1995.

SUCCESS IN CONSISTENCY

“Success lies in consistency” is a meaningful saying that reflects a profound truth—and history affirms it time and again. Life always unfolds through uneven paths. Every individual must face difficult and unfavourable conditions. That is why it is necessary to emphasise that, despite hardships, a person must continue their journey. This spirit of steady, unwavering movement is called consistency. And the one who remains consistent is the one who ultimately reaches the destination of success in this world. The more consistent the effort, the greater the success.

This is a law of nature. Anyone who observes life with attention will find signs of this reality everywhere—reminders that consistency is the secret to lasting achievement.

Once, a man stood by a river, gazing at a rock. As he looked closely, he noticed how the continuous flow of

water had gradually worn away the stone. He remarked, “Look, rock is a hard thing, and water is a soft thing. But if even something soft keeps at it with consistency, it can break something as hard as rock into particles.”

Indeed, the countless grains of sand found along seashores across the world are the result of waves repeatedly striking rocky coasts over time.

Maulana Ismail Meerathi, a reformist writer and poet, expressed this idea beautifully in one of his verses:

“Jo pathar par paani pare mutasil,

To ghis jaaye be shuba pathar ki sil.”

If water keeps falling steadily on a rock, it will surely wear it down.

A modern and inspiring example of this is the story of Dr. Subrahmanyam Chandrasekhar (1910–1995). Since childhood, he was deeply interested in mathematics and astronomy. He began researching the formation and end of stars. In January 1935, he presented the results of his research at a meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society in London. Many prominent scientists were present.

After his presentation, the well-known British scientist Sir Arthur Eddington stood up and openly ridiculed him, tearing apart his theory in front of the audience.

Chandrasekhar later attempted to publish his paper in the *Astrophysical Journal*, but it was rejected. Deeply disappointed, he returned to India, hoping to find an academic position. But even in his own country, he was unable to secure employment.

Despite rejection both abroad and at home, Chandrasekhar did not give up. He went to Chicago, USA, where he found a more favourable environment. There, he resumed his research. Gradually, his theory began gaining recognition. His work was eventually published in major scientific journals. In time, his theory became well-known and was named the “Chandrasekhar Limit.” In 1983, at the age of 73, Dr. Chandrasekhar was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics.

History is full of such powerful stories. Every person who has achieved lasting success in this world has done so through consistency and continuous effort. There is no shortcut to success.

A wise thinker once said, “If you want to achieve success, develop the power to wait.”

Success always arrives after a long period of patience. The need to wait arises because every journey involves obstacles—barriers that seem to delay the goal. In such moments, one must not give up. With patience and resilience, one must continue the effort, never letting the waiting period come to an end through despair.

This is a final truth—we have no alternative. We must accept the laws of nature. Human beings cannot change them. We can only succeed by aligning ourselves with the natural order.

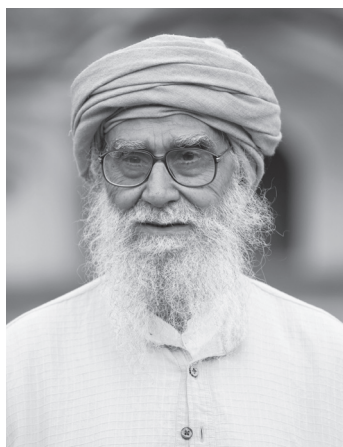
In such a situation, wisdom lies in neither complaining nor becoming hopeless. A person should not waste time in protest or discouragement. Instead, by adopting a realistic approach, they should continue their work with consistency. After that, success is as certain as the sun rising again after every sunset. Continuous effort will surely lead a person to their desired goal.

It takes nature only a few months to grow an ordinary tree. But to grow a chinar tree takes a hundred years,

even for nature. So why should it be any different when it comes to human beings?

If you do not accept the principle of long-term effort, then you must also accept that you will never achieve any great success in life. Because consistent effort over time is the essential price of greatness. A person who is not willing to pay this price should not expect to achieve anything significant in life.

All India Radio, New Delhi, 28 September 1995.



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925-2021), an Islamic scholar, spiritual leader, and peace activist, was internationally recognized for his seminal contributions to world peace. The Government of India posthumously honored 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 convey the spiritual message of Islam at a global level. CPS International Network is taking the legacy forward.

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*I*n this collection, several of the author's spoken speeches have been included. These speeches cover various topics. Among them are many speeches delivered at major gatherings. All of these speeches were recorded and later transcribed from audio or video studios. With the permission of the author, they are now being published again in this collection.

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