

A world of competition

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Human society is marked by the inequality of the individuals who make up its basic fabric. Some people are born with silver spoons in their mouths, while others are born with problems and afflictions. This is not an evil. This state of affairs persists as a result of the wise planning of the Creator.

A Quranic verse in the chapter entitled Al-An'am (The Cattle) explains the rationale behind this situation: "It is He who has made you successors (of others) on the earth and has exalted some of you over the others in degrees of rank, so that He may test you by that which He has given you. Your Lord is swift in punishment; yet surely He is forgiving, and merciful" (6:165).

This means that inequality between people is not accidental. It has been intentionally planned. This demonstrates great wisdom: God wanted life to offer challenges and so He created competition

between individuals and groups. It is challenge and competition that are mainly responsible for development and not equality. And they certainly ensure that human existence will never be dull.

Psychological studies show that situations always being propitious kills the spirit of struggle and that incentives necessarily play the most important role in development. The history of progress tells us that no individual or nation has ever made progress in favorable conditions. The fact is that every man or woman is born with great potential. But this potential is in terms of innate capacity and not in terms of actuality. It is challenging circumstances that awaken people's minds and enable them to turn their potential into reality. This is the natural way of progress and development. In this world of competition, any success story is a story of struggle.

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