

Defeat unleashes our potential

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

The atom is the final unit of matter, just as the individual is the final unit of society. If one succeeds in breaking an atom one does not destroy it; rather one converts it into a greater force, known as atomic energy. Matter is energy in a solid form and energy is matter in a dispersed form.

When the atoms of matter are broken and converted into atomic energy, they are transformed into a force much more potent than in their material form. That's how great the difference is between ordinary material energy and atomic energy.

So it is with that unit of society known as man. When man is "broken", his horizons expand vastly. Just as breakage does not destroy matter, so defeat does not ruin man. Matter increases in strength when broken up. So man, when defeated, gains new, increased strength. This law of nature has been described in the Quran in these words: "Surely, with every hardship there is ease" (94:6).

When man is beset by defeat, his inner forces are released. His senses are aroused. His concealed strength comes to the fore and he sets about redressing his setback. Spurred on with new resolve and determination, he devotes himself to the task of regaining what has been lost. An irresistible spirit arises within him. Nothing can arrest his advance. Like a river flowing to the sea, he surmounts every obstacle in relentless pursuit of his goal.

The occurrence of an atomic explosion in matter turns it into a vastly more powerful substance. The human personality, too, contains huge, latent potential. This potential bursts out into the open when there is an eruption within one's soul. It breaks free when some shattering disaster afflicts one. The strings that have held one down are torn apart and begin to vibrate to the tune of life.