

Keep your mind alive forever

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Old age is generally believed to be a burden, an unwanted situation. This view is put in perspective in the following verse of the Quran: *"God created you; then He shall cause you to die: and some shall have their lives prolonged to abject old age, ceasing to know anything after once having had knowledge. God is all knowing and powerful"* (16:70).

This Quranic statement gives the general picture of old age. Yet there can be an exception to this. One can overcome old age, provided one is serious about doing so. The Prophet of Islam once said that one who reads the Quran will never experience the problem of old age. He can prolong the period of his youth.

In this saying of the Prophet, reading the Quran means studying it, reflecting upon its verses, finding out its hidden meanings and plumbing the depths of its wisdom.

The Quran is a book of God, enshrining the wisdom of nature. A source of divine secrets, it has to be rediscovered every day.

It is a fact that intellectual discovery is the most thrilling experience. A discovery made by the Greek philosopher Archimedes while he was bathing (about the pressure of water on immersed solids) gave him such a thrill that he leapt out of his bath, shouting: Eureka! Eureka! (meaning "I have found it!"). And such a thrill is great food for the intellect. This process staves off intellectual starvation, thus making the discoverer permanently alive and young.

Why does old age turn into "abject" old age for the common man? The reason is that he makes no thrilling discoveries. Research has established that man's body is subject to degeneration, but the mind is not. The mind is free of decrepitude. If saved in time, the mind can be alive forever.