

# Know the niceties of co-existence

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

The world of nature is a world of order. How different is the world of man, where human affairs so often descend into chaos, because the members of society flout those very principles which should bring order into their lives. The Quran says: "Do they seek a religion other than the religion of God, when everything in the heavens and the earth has submitted to Him" (3:83). Social living, if it is to be successful, should be regulated by laws which are as inexorable as the laws of nature. These laws can be effective, however, only if man fully grasps the necessity to adhere to them. He must realise that society without order is like a factory without electricity. It simply will not work.

It should also be realised that the prevalence of certain virtues over their opposing vices is a great contributing factor in maintaining order. Generosity, broadmindedness, forgiveness and gentlemanly behaviour must respectively override miserliness, narrow-mindedness, vengefulness and meanness. Consideration for others must always be one's first response in any given situation, particularly when it concerns keeping confidences, because the disclosure of others' faults or secrets shows a mindless callousness which breeds nothing but ill-will. Above all, promises must always be kept. Certain traits of character are naturally supportive of social order. Knowing what a situation requires of one, whether it is a matter of conscience or discretion is always conducive to harmonious living. Just knowing what to say, and when to speak and when to remain silent is one of the greatest social virtues. Knowing whether to adopt a hard or a soft attitude, whether to be firm or whether to be pliant is equally important.

People who understand these niceties of social co-existence, and put them into practice, are vital to the solidarity of a community, without them, order would degenerate into anarchy.