

# Learn to put up with initial hurt

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

“When one’s ego is touched,” an eminent psychologist once observed, “it turns into super-ego, and the result is breakdown.” Much the same thing was said some 1300 years back by Umair ibn Habib ibn Hamashah. During his last days this Companion of the Prophet Muhammad gave some advice to his grandson, Abu Jafar al-Khatmi, part of which was about patience. “One who does not bear with a small hurt from a foolish person will have to bear with great harm,” was what he said.

The gist of both these remarks is the same, namely that the only way to avoid being harmed by others is to keep out of their firing line as much as possible, to keep as far away as one can from those who show themselves to be potentially harmful. Every human being is born with an “ego”. More often than not, that ego is dormant. It is better to leave it sleeping, for the ego can be like a snake, which, when aroused, will harm all within its reach.

It is a commonplace in any society for one to be put out, and even aggrieved, as a result of someone else’s foolishness or wilful malice. According to the Quran, “The true servants of the Gracious One are those who walk upon the earth with humility and when they are addressed by the ignorant ones, their response is, ‘Peace’.” (25:63).

Usually the best way of avoiding great harm from mischief-makers is to put up with initial hurt, for, if one does not, one will set off a chain reaction in which things will go from bad to worse. Instead of having to bear a relatively small hurt, one will be subjected to much greater suffering. And if one has not been able to bear a pelting with stones, how will one fare when great rocks descend upon one’s head?