

Lend an ear to the voice of conscience

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Every person is gifted by birth with a special faculty called conscience, which functions freely within him.

The conscience is referred to in the Quran as *al-nafs al-lawwamah* (75:2). Uninfluenced by either impulse and reasoning, it tells man what is wrong, and what is right, what should be done and what should not be done.

This reality is expressed thus in the Quran: "By the self-self-reproaching soul! Does man think we cannot bring his bones together again? Indeed, we have the power to restore his very fingertips! Yet man wants to deny what is ahead of him: he asks, 'When is this Day of Resurrection to be?' But (on that Day), when mortal sight is confounded, and the moon is eclipsed, when the sun and the moon are brought together, on that Day man will ask, 'Where can I escape?'" (75:2-10).

This conscience functions as if it were God's court.

It warns man in advance of his errors. It tells him repeatedly what attitude or behaviour is proper and what is not.

Yet in spite of this, man becomes oblivious of God. He leads his life as if, on Doomsday, he were not going to be taken to task for his words and deeds.

One who adopts such an attitude denies his own nature. It is this very nature that will testify on the Day of Judgment. Man's inner self gives a warning within him, but he is not ready to listen to it.

The truth is that the human conscience proclaims in advance what the divine decree will be on Doomsday. If man were to lend an ear to the voice of conscience, he would learn, prior to death, what is going to confront him in the life after death.