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Life's Not About Fighting

MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN urges us to be patient to avoid strife

If you happen to be in an open field when it starts to rain, you hasten to find shelter. This is not cowardice, this is realism. Similarly, when there is an earthquake, you immediately leave your home for an open space. This too is not defeatism, but an acknowledgement of the reality of nature. When some difficulty arises between man and nature, the solution to the problem lies only in acknowledgment, not in confrontation.

The system of rains and earthquakes is part of the scheme of God. Man cannot change it. Man only has it in his power to devise strategies to save himself from harm. All that we can do is to adopt the principle of avoidance and save ourselves from extinction.

Patience and avoidance are not signs of cowardice or a defeatist mentality. They are simply realistic approaches. They are necessary because the Creator has given us freedom for the purpose of testing us. People sometimes make the right use and, sometimes, the wrong use of their freedom. You cannot take away their freedom, as this freedom is given to them by the Creator of the universe. Efforts to deprive others of their freedom are futile and will result only in your own suffering.

In such a state of affairs, there is only one possible attitude and that is patience. Even when faced with bitterness and unpleasantness from others, you must continue your life's journey by avoidance. Patience is given utmost importance in Islam. The *Quran* says: *Truly those who persevere patiently will be requited without measure.* (39:10)

You should never feel that only others are responsible for practising patience and avoiding friction. Patience and avoidance of strife are the social duties of everyone without exception. ■

