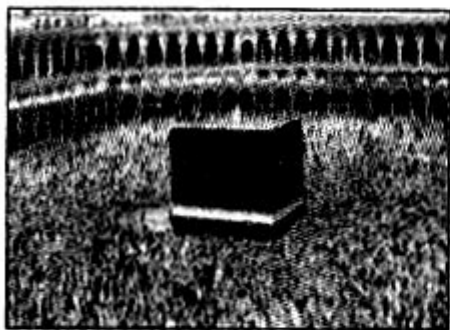


ISLAM

No discrimination

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan



As in other societies of the world, the Arab people were also obsessed with colour and other differences among people. This was not an Arab phenomenon, it was universal in that age. With this background, God Almighty revealed this verse:

Mankind! We have created you from a male and female, and made you into peoples and tribes, so that you might come to know each other. The noblest of you in God's sight is the one who fears God most. God is all-knowing and all-aware (49:13).

According to this verse, the Quran believes in global brotherhood and not just Muslim brotherhood. In fact, in all matters, the Quran adopts a universal rather than any kind of sectarian approach. There are many verses in the Quran that denote that the readers of the

Quran are *al-nas* (mankind) and not merely a community. It is a fact that there are differences between people in terms of colour, etc. But these differences have nothing to do with the superiority or inferiority of different individuals or groups. They are natural differences that exist for the sole purpose of people being able to recognise each other easily. According to the verse, the importance of a man or group will be judged solely on merit. Merit based classification cannot be termed discrimination. It is a sound method of categorising people. It is a source of motivation and creates an atmosphere of healthy competition. It is a guarantee of social development on a real basis. Discrimination on the basis of colour, etc., is a negative practice, while classification on the basis of merit promotes love and respect among people. It ensures that no member of society will be denied justice. It creates an atmosphere conducive to development that gives everyone the chance to contribute in a positive way to society.

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