

ISLAM

Man is God's servant

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

The Prophet was once asked what it was that would count more than anything in taking people to Paradise. He replied: "Fear of God and good moral character."

Man is God's servant. But besides this, he has to live in this world with other human beings. As such, man must give himself at one and the same time, to two kinds of relationship: one, with God, and the other with humans. From this standpoint, the trial of man has two sides to it. And man has to pass the test on both of these sides.

What is required of man in his relation to God is that he accepts God as his Creator and Master. He thus becomes immersed in God's greatness. It is this type of faith, which produces the particular emotions and feelings, both of love and fear of God, which taken together, are called piety.

God is great; man is small; God is omnipotent, man is humble. God is the Giver, man the receiver. The keen awareness of these facts induces in man a sense of gratefulness, humility, and accountability. The arrogance within him disappears. He starts leading a life governed by a feeling of intense love for God, as well as an extreme dread of Him.

When such a God-oriented person has contacts with other human beings, he becomes the epitome of good behaviour in his dealings with them. His words are the words of a humble person. His actions are governed by a sense of justice. He starts leading his life as if he were seeing God before him; he starts thinking of God as the One to whom he will be accountable for all his deeds. The behaviour of such a man would be described as virtuous.

It is the man who passes both these tests who will finally inhabit the eternal Gardens of Paradise.