The philosophy of peace

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Peace is a bilateral issue, but peace can be established only by a unilateral initiative, otherwise there can be no peace. This Quranic concept of peace is set forth in the chapter entitled Al-Anfal (The Spoils of War) of the Quran. The translation of the relevant verse is as follows: "Then if they should be inclined to make peace, make peace with them, and put your trust in God. Surely, it is He who is All Hearing and All Knowing. Should they seek to deceive you, God is enough for you: it was He who strengthened you with His help, and rallied the faithful around you, and bound their hearts together" (8:61-62).

Where there has been a controversy between two parties, and finally an agreement has been reached, each party fears that the other party may not strictly follow the agreement or in other ways will try to act deceitfully. This kind of suspicion is a great obstacle to establishing peace. But the Quran advises believers to place their trust in God. They ought not to think about the behaviour of the other party, but simply believe that God will be on their side and that the peace settlement will be successful. Trust in God means, in effect, trust in the laws of nature. Following the laws of nature designed by the Creator is the only practicable course to adopt in this world. If you insist on raising controversial points, you will arouse the ego of the other party and the desired settlement will become more difficult to achieve than ever before. Insistence on your own point only causes a reaction, i.e., the other party becomes more cautious, and then reaching a settlement becomes almost impossible. Avoid controversy at any cost, as this will enable you to discover the common ground between the two parties.

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