

Tolerance makes society harmonious

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

If an engine driver is to set his locomotive in motion, he has to stand before the fire and endure its fierce heat. Thus, a huge and complex machine built up of so many parts will remain immobile unless he is prepared to do so.

The same goes for society. It will not function unless the individuals, who have to make all its parts work, are prepared to sacrifice something of their own and are ready to endure difficulties. And just as all the moving parts of a locomotive have to be kept regularly oiled if they are not to be worn out with friction, thus bringing the machinery to a standstill, so tolerance must be a feature of society if it is to function as a harmonious whole.

When people work together in groups, it is inevitable that there should be disagreements and that complaints should be voiced. How is it possible then to work together in harmony?

There is only one way, and that is to make a considered decision to remain united in the face of disagreement. This is not asking for the impossible. Who does not do exactly this in his family life as a matter of good sense and practicality? When family members are living in close proximity, grievances do arise and tempers often flare up. But family cohesion is not destroyed because of this, for blood relationships prevent such feelings from getting out of hand. Grievances are swept away by mutual love, and tempers are cooled by words of regard and affection.

The home, indeed, is a microcosm of social existence. The feelings of love which cement family life can be brought into being in social life through conscious deliberation.

Unity can spring from a human awakening to its ultimate necessity.