

Islam

Wish well, be honest

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

In the chapter entitled Al-A'raf (The Heights) of the Quran, it is mentioned that when the Prophet was assigned the duty of prophethood, he came to his community and said, "I am conveying my Lord's messages to you and I am your well-wisher and your honest adviser" (7:68).

The Prophet said this in the context of his divine mission. But this declaration also has a greater application in that it gives us two basic principles upon which to build a healthy society, that is, well-wishing and honesty.

If you want to have a better society, these two principles should be adhered to, for there is no better formula for social re-engineering than the inculcation of the spirit of well-wishing and honesty in all members of society. When the majority of individuals making up a society possess these qualities this can be the best guarantee of a better society. What is well-wishing? Well-wishing means that every member of society is free of hatred for others, and is able to remain detached from the bad experiences that are the fault of others. He is able to love other members of society in spite of grievances.

Grievance is an unavoidable part of social life, so a member of society can wish others well only when he is able to downplay his grievances sufficiently to be able to maintain good relations with other members of his society.

What is honesty? An honest person is one who is a trustworthy person. This quality is also vital for the betterment of social living. The best society is one whose members are entirely trustworthy and responsible. The criterion of well-wishing and honesty has a two-fold impact. On the one hand, it is the only source of individual development, on the other, these two qualities are the sole basis on which a better society may be built.