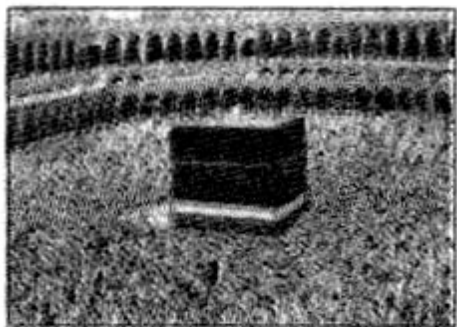


ISLAM

A world full of friends

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan



The world is full of friends. Someone is your actual friend; another is your potential friend. This is one of the universal concepts given in the Quran. I would like to quote a relevant verse from the Quran on this subject:

Good and evil deeds are not equal. Repel evil with what is better; then you will see that one who was once your enemy has become your dearest friend. (41:34)

These Quranic verses have a background. When the Prophet of Islam was in ancient Mecca, people became hostile to him and to his mission. Clearly, it was an undesirable situation for both the Prophet and his companions.

At this moment of crisis, the Prophet and his companions were given the above guidance. It meant: don't show negative reaction; don't try to adopt the policy of tit

for tat.

This formula worked very well. Very soon hostilities ceased altogether. The majority of those who had been hostile became the friends of the Prophet — first in Mecca and then gradually throughout the whole of the Arabian Peninsula.

Why did this formula prove to be so effective? The reason is very simple, good behaviour in return for bad behaviour has a far-reaching effect; it touches the conscience of others. And it is a fact that when you are able to touch the conscience of the other person, you will successfully change his heart. According to the law of nature, this behaviour is like a psychological compulsion; no one can afford to go against his conscience.

This Quranic teaching is based on a principle that may be called unilateral ethics. Bilateral ethics is not part of the social scheme of the Quran.

There is no doubt that in terms of result, unilateral ethics is far more effective than bilateral ethics.

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