

Discrimination is alien to the Quran

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Discrimination of any kind is quite alien to the scheme of things in the Quran. In the chapter entitled Al-Hujurat (The Apartments), the Quran declares that all men and women are equal before God. The translation of the relevant verse is as follows: "Mankind! We have created you from a male and female, and made you into peoples and tribes, so that you might come to know each other. The noblest of you in God's sight is the one who fears God most. God is all-knowing and all-aware." (49:13)

There are obvious differences between people in terms of colour, race, economic status, etc., but according to the Quran, the difference is simply a difference: it cannot be used as a basis for discrimination. God Almighty created man with different attributes, difference being a part of creation.

Differences exist for practical rather than theoretical reasons. Their main purpose

is to enable people to recognise and distinguish one from another. It is a fact that difference is a part of nature. But if we were to take difference in the sense of discrimination, that would be an unhealthy sign and would disturb the normalcy of society.

So we have to learn the art of difference management, rather than look upon differences in any negative sense.

Then there are other benefits of difference, due to which people take up a variety of jobs, entering different fields of activity.

Difference provides the basis for the division of labour, a principle which is very important for the comprehensive development of any society. According to the divine scheme, honour is based on merit and not on any kind of external features. The Prophet of Islam once said that before God, red and white, black and brown, were all equal.

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