

It's quality that matters

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

In the chapter entitled *Al-Baqarah* (The Heifer), the Quran sets forth an important law of nature, which pertains to the most important factors in life's struggle.

The translation of the relevant verse is as follows: "But those of them who believed that they would meet God replied, 'Many a small group, by God's command, has prevailed against a large group. For God is with those who are patient in adversity'." (2:249)

According to this Quranic verse, in the quantification of virtues, there are two factors in life which are of prime importance— belief and patience.

These two factors are more telling than any number of other virtues. So we have to pay more attention to inculcating these two qualities, belief and patience, rather than simply trying to increase the number of other virtues that we possess.

What is a majority or a large group? It is a composite of

individuals. If the individual is strong, the group will be strong, and if the individual is weak, then the group will also be weak. The individual is like a brick. And it takes many bricks to put up a building. If each single brick is strong, the building will in consequence be strong, but if even a single brick is weak, the whole building will also prove to be weak and could come tumbling down.

It is a fact that strength lies in individuals and not in the group. A group itself is nothing. It is individuals or members of groups who determine the strength of the group and not the group itself.

The above Quranic verse makes special mention of two qualities in an individual — belief and patience. The former underpins the ideological strength of an individual, while the latter reinforces his strength in practical matters. These two features are indispensable.

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