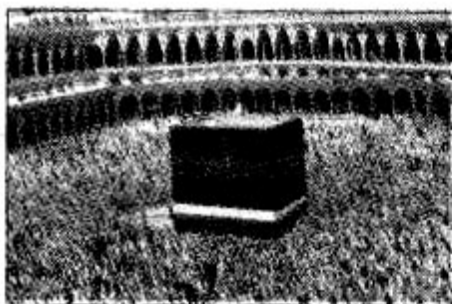# The first murder

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Chapter five of the Quran relates the story of two brothers, Cain and Abel. They were the sons of Adam, the first man to settle on earth. For some reason a controversy arose between the two brothers. After a heated exchange, Cain killed Abel. This was the first murder that occurred in human history.

Narrating this story the Quran says: "That was why We laid it down for the Children of Israel that whoever killed a human being — except as a punishment for murder or for spreading corruption in the land — shall be regarded as having killed all mankind, and that whoever saved a human life shall be regarded as having saved all mankind." (5:32)

This verse not only makes a legal provision in the case of a murder, but it also gives an ideology of life which can be summarised as follows:

Differences are very much a part of human life and you cannot eliminate them. So, if you happen to have issues with other fellow human beings, do not become disturbed, but take them casually. Try to live with these differences. Try to learn the art of difference management, either by completely ignoring the problem or by making some kind of adjustment.

In all situations whatsoever, you will have to accept in advance that confrontation or violence is just not an option for you. It is completely out of the question. Be determined that you will opt for some kind of peaceful settlement. That you will never enter upon a course of action which could lead to violence.

The killing of a human being is not simply the elimination of an individual; it is the setting of an undesirable precedent, the effect of which will continue, directly or indirectly, to have a baneful influence upon all mankind. In this sense, every individual crime is a universal crime.