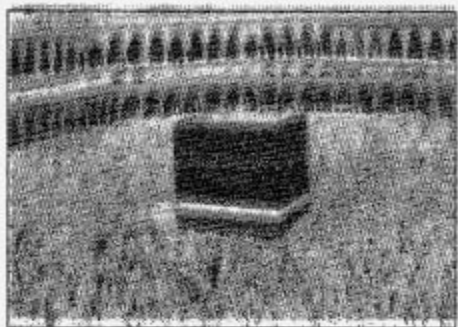


# The value of silence

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan



**O**ne of the values on which the Quran lays emphasis is silence. But it is not silence just for the sake of silence. Quranic silence is for contemplation, to understand more and more, to enhance your learning. It is a culture of silence in the complete sense of the word. There is a relevant verse in the chapter entitled Al-A'raf (The Heights), the translation of which is as follows: *When the Quran is read, listen to it with attention, and hold your peace, so that you may receive mercy (7:204).*

This means that when the Quran is recited, you should remain silent and listen to it with total attention. This verse gives us a general principle with a particular reference, i.e., when you read or listen to or observe something, keep complete silence and try to under-

stand it, focusing all your attention on it. This kind of habit is very important if the spirit of learning is to be inculcated. The Quran tries to develop one's thinking capacity, it tries to build a mind that can understand things in their deeper sense and analyse them with objectivity. The art of silence is necessary to be able to accomplish all these things.

There is a saying: "When I am speaking, I am not listening, and when I am not listening, I am not learning." This saying has the same meaning as is expressed in the aforementioned verse of the Quran.

When the human mind, with its unlimited capacity, stops speaking, it instantly starts thinking. The mind is a super computer, switched on at the time of birth and continuing to function eternally. It can never be switched off. Thinking is a continuous process of the mind. The word "rest" is not to be found in the human lexicon where the mind is concerned.

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