

The believer must also be a traveller

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

The believer, according to the Quran, must be a traveller (*al-saihoon*) (9:112). This is not just in the sense of one who goes on journeys: it actually means one who learns spiritual lessons through *tawassum* (15:75). *Tawassum* means to elicit spiritual lessons from material experiences.

A believer is one who is always in a state of contemplation. When a believer is on his travels, his mind is always in the contemplative mode. Whatever a believer sees around him turns into a spiritual experience. A true believer's mind is like a spiritual industry. He sees everything with a divine eye and learns spiritual lessons through *tawassum*. His travelling thus becomes an *ibadat* (worship).

This process is integral to the workings of the mind of a true believer — a spiritually hungry person, who is constantly trying to derive spiritual lessons from everything. Naturally, this process continues during his travels. There is a formula for this which can be summarised thus: *siabat* plus *tawassum* is equal to *marafat*.

Siabat means travelling, *tawassum* means to learn a lesson, and *marafat* means realisation of God. A believer's journeying is a kind of *ibadat* on the move, in the course of which his contemplation becomes more profound, and he is able to expand his spiritual experiences universally. When at home, he lives in a confined environment, which permits him to develop his personality at the rate of say one per cent, but when he travels, he can add many new dimensions to his personality.

For example, when you buy a return ticket from an airline, you travel with the assurance that you will return home. Then you remember death. Death is also a journey. But on this journey, you have no return ticket. This is *tawassum*. An air ticket is a worldly item, but as a matter of *tawassum*, through this ticket, you can be reminded of the world hereafter.