

# Paradise

The Final Phase of  
Human Civilization

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

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Human Civilization

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*Translated by:*  
Prof. Farida Khanam

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**Goodword Books**

1, Nizamuddin West Market

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email: [info@goodwordbooks.com](mailto:info@goodwordbooks.com)

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**Center for Peace and Spirituality**

1, Nizamuddin West, New Delhi—110013, India.

email: [info@cpsglobal.org](mailto:info@cpsglobal.org)

[www.cpsglobal.org](http://www.cpsglobal.org)

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# WHAT IS PARADISE?



There is no mystery about Paradise. It is an accepted scientific fact just like any other scientific fact. In reality, Paradise is a transformation of the earth. As we know, the earth was initially an inchoate, molten mass, then it cooled down to its present state, taking the form of our world as we know it today. In a similar way, another transformation will take place in the future, but to a far greater degree: at that time, our non-paradisiacal earth will turn into Paradise.

In this present world many things are brought into existence as a result of conversion. For example, water results from the conversion of two

gases. A tree represents the conversion of the soil's nutrients. Machines are a conversion of iron from its crude state into complex mechanisms. The industrial world ensures the conversion of inert materials into socially useful commodities.

In the same way, in future, conversion shall take place on a far grander scale. At that time, this far from ideal world will change into an ideal world. This in terms of religion would be known as Paradise. This instance of conversion is referred to in the Quran in the following verse: "When the earth shall be changed into another earth." (*The Quran* 14: 48)

This process of conversion has repeatedly taken place on earth. On our earth, conversion is a known and natural process. That is, it is a normal occurrence. This being so, believing in Paradise is just like believing in the continuance of a predictable series of events. It is just like saying of a factory that it has produced 999 items and now the thousandth item is about to be produced.

## WHAT IS PARADISE?

Paradise is not just a matter of religious belief or dogma. According to the eternal laws of nature, Paradise is a state which is bound to come into existence. A study of the law governing earthly systems shows that the present world is undergoing a continuous evolutionary process, of which Paradise, logically, is the ultimate phase. Paradise is the natural culmination of a creation which at a certain point in time had a definite beginning.



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which at a certain point of time had a definite  
beginning.*

Astronomical studies show that the Universe is so extremely vast, and expanding at such a rate that, even with the use of very powerful telescopes, its

total dimensions have yet to be estimated. In this immeasurably vast universe, the earth is an extremely tiny planet. In comparison to this universe our earth is even smaller than a grain of sand.

Throughout the entire universe our earth is a very rare exception, in that it is the only place where exceptional things like water, greenery, air and oxygen are present. If life can prevail on this earth, it is because side by side with it there are life support systems. On the earth, there exist all those valuable elements by utilizing which man can, if he wills, build a civilization. It is the task of human beings to convert this potential into reality.

It is quite evident that civilization, passing continuously from one stage of its history to another, is moving on from its initial stage of development to a higher plateau altogether. (For details of this journey of civilization, see the United Nations publication: "The History of Mankind").

## THE JOURNEY OF CIVILIZATION

This journey of human civilization has been mentioned in the Quran in terms of the changes that take place on earth from daytime to night time. In a similar way, a much bigger event shall take place on earth. As the Quran puts it: “You will surely move from one stage to another stage.” (84:19) The evolution of history makes it clear that human civilization is continuously advancing along the path of progress and development. The final model of this progress and development will be that which is called “spiritual civilization” or Paradise.



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The history of civilization shows that it has passed through three major phases and now all the indications are that it is in the fourth and final stage of its journey. The three major phases of civilization are as follows:

1. The Stone Age;
2. The Agricultural Age;
3. The Industrial Age

It is a matter of common knowledge that these three phases of civilization have already taken place. However, Alvin Toffler, author of the bestseller, “Future Shock” says that the fourth phase or probably the last period of civilization will take place in the not too distant future. This author calls this fourth phase the Super-Industrial Age, which, as compared to the previous phases will be less materialistic. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to equate this fourth phase with spiritual civilization.

Let us take the first period of civilization, the Stone Age. It was a time when man could only use whatever material was present on the earth in its original form. Of all the materials, stone was the most readily available and the most useful. Although many other things existed on the earth apart from stone, like wood and animals, and there was even a simple form of agriculture, but because stone took pride of place as the most widely used material, this phase came to be called the Stone Age. So far as early homo sapiens was concerned, he possessed the same natural qualities as the people of the present day. For example, the latest research has shown that during the Stone Age civilization, the human brain contained one hundred billions particles, no less than what is contained in the human brain today. It was only because of a lack of education and knowledge that man at that time could not utilize his hidden potential.



*So far as early homo sapiens was concerned, he possessed the same natural qualities as the people of the present day.*

Then came the dawn of the agricultural period, during which man discovered more and more ways of harnessing nature. This period saw the development of irrigation, ploughing, the rearing and breeding of animals, and the use of iron and carts with wheels. In this way it was possible to lead a better life as compared to that of the previous age.

The industrial period began at the point when man moved ahead from animal power and invented mechanical power. Now man converted water into steam power and made steam engines. There was a further leap forward when petrol was discovered and used for propulsion. Similarly, modern methods of communication were

developed which converted the whole world into a global village.

In the Industrial Age, by using mechanical power, man engaged in new enterprises such as the building of cities along modern lines, the production of fast-moving vehicles, the rapid communication of news, the setting up of paper mills, radio, television and eventually the coming of the Internet and social media.

In this way, there came into existence a whole new world, both beautiful and meaningful, with a fresh viewpoint on education and learning, which was called the industrial civilization.

The fourth phase of civilization is what Alvin Toffler has called the Super-industrial Age. In his view, the most exceptional aspect of this age will be complete automation, i.e. the use of electronics will be on such a large scale that most jobs will be performed with the absolute minimum of human

control or intervention. In a normal situation a man would, ideally, be able, single-handedly, to fulfill all of his own personal requirements.

The advent of automation is an advance intimation of the joys of Paradise. Indeed, of Paradise, the Quran says: “Therein you shall have all that your souls desire, and therein you shall have all that you ask for as a rich provision from One who is ever forgiving and most merciful.” (*The Quran* 41:31-32)

From the scientific and academic standpoint, the above-mentioned facts make the ideal age of the future—the “spiritual civilization”—understandable in terms of being a super-industrial age.



*This Super-Industrial Age is yet to reach completion, but it is in this fourth phase that the ideal world—in religious terms, Paradise—will probably take shape, in the world hereafter.*

Apparently this fourth phase of civilization is yet to reach completion, but it is in this phase that that ideal world—in religious terms, Paradise—will most probably take shape, in the world hereafter.

## **ON THE THRESHOLD OF PARADISE**

Today man stands on the threshold of Paradise. The present transitional period is a condition which may be called Paradise-in-the-making.

Paradise is the final period of the journey of civilization. Such a world, by the law of nature, will definitely come into existence in due course. Therein, all types of limitations and disadvantages will be brought to an end: there will be no fear or grief, nor will there be any noise or pain. All those potentialities which have been apparent to man from the very first day will be fulfilled in the world of Paradise.

Moreover, the human personality will also attain new heights of development. This for man will be the culmination point: he will become the perfect man. He will find an eternal life in which old age, accidents, disease and death are absent. This will be the ideal world where man will be in a position to utilize the full potential of his personality, thus experiencing complete fulfillment.



*Paradise is the final period of the journey of civilization. Today man stands on the threshold of Paradise. The present transitional period can be called, 'Paradise-in-the-making'.*

Paradise will be the culminating point of the evolutionary process in human civilization. Paradise will be the dawning of the perfect and ideal world of which man has always dreamt.

On reaching Paradise, man will be eternally free from all sorrows and hardships. Paradise will be the ideal realm of joy, peace and eternal happiness.

It should be borne in mind though that Paradise is not a place of stagnation. In Paradise, man will make new discoveries all the time and this series of discoveries will be unending. For this reason there will be no boredom in Paradise, because boredom prevails only where new discoveries do not take place. To man, fresh experience is the greatest source of happiness, and in Paradise, the doors of unlimited truth continue to open every single day. The pure bliss of Paradise will, therefore, not be fleeting in nature but truly eternal.

The making of Paradise is just as possible as the making of the earth and the development of different civilizations on earth. In the ancient Stone Age, there lay hidden a developed agricultural

period, which emerged in due course. Similarly, in the agricultural period, the far more developed industrial period was hidden, and it also emerged at the proper time. We can, by the same token, say that there lies hidden in this industrial period a far more developed and refined spiritual period, which will appear in time for all to see. The emergence of this spiritual, or heavenly period is in practical terms as much of a possibility as that of previous periods of history.

In the industrial period, the earth has once again been beautified. Its construction has been meticulously planned. Developments in science and technology have made the earth, a far better place to live in. Similarly, with the dawn of the final period, the spiritual age, the earth will be further improved and it will then become an ideal world. There are a number of verses in the Quran giving clear indications of this. For instance, verse three of the 84th Chapter speaks of the earth

expanding, while another verse says: “Praise be to God who has fulfilled His promise to us and made us the inheritors of this land, letting us settle in the Garden wherever we want.” (*The Quran*, 39:74) Verse 21 of the 57th chapter describes Paradise as being “as vast as heaven and earth, which has been made ready for those who believe in God and His messengers.”

According to the Islamic tradition, the earth in its beginning was in the charge of the Jinns. Then it was handed over to human beings. Later, a period will ensue when the earth will be completely under the domination of the Angels. At that time tremendous changes will be made to the earth which, in the fullest sense of the expression, will be an ideal and perfect world. This evolutionary period of earth has been referred to thus in the Quran:

*“The earth will shine with the light of its Lord.”*  
(*The Quran*, 39:69)

Today our world is potentially a paradise. Tomorrow this potential will become a reality and then the earth will become a place of eternal happiness and joy.



*Today our world is potentially a paradise. Tomorrow this potential will become a reality and the earth will become a place of eternal happiness and joy.*

Events have shown that the present state of the earth is not an ideal one, even although on the earth there exists nature's life support system in its perfect form. On the earth, this system may be at its best, but there is one thing in all this which is far from ideal. Here, good and bad people exist alongside each other. The presence everywhere of seriously flawed individuals is the source of all kinds of evil. But

when the final phase of civilization approaches, all the bad people will be separated from the good. They will be deprived of all the resources of the earth, and the earth will be entrusted solely to the good people. This is the truth which has been mentioned in the following verse: “And indeed We have written in Psalms (Az-Zabur) that My righteous slaves shall inherit the land.”(i.e. the land of Paradise) (*The Quran*, 21: 105). This statement made in the Quran is recorded in detail in the Book of Psalms in the Bible: “The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell in it forever.” (Psalms, 37:29).

Studies show that in this vast universe our earth is a rare exception. In the vastness of space, there are huge stars in such multitudes that they outnumber the grains of sand on the sea-shore. But many of these stars are only balls of fire. It is a known fact that these stars

have remained in the same condition for the last 13 billion years. In this apparently stagnant universe, only our earth is constantly changing and renewing itself. In an exceptional way, an evolutionary process is at work, for the earth continues to witness one stage after another. Ten billion years ago, the earth was just a fireball. But then it cooled down to become a temperate planet. Subsequently there was a phase of heavy rains which led to the growth of vegetation. Then came the animals. Lastly the humans appeared. After the appearance of human beings, the process of civilization set in on the earth. In the first phase man was only able to build a primitive world. But later, he became more and more successful at constructing a highly developed world. This human success goes hand in hand with a continuous evolutionary process. And it is but

natural to believe that one more stage is in the offing—that of a perfect world.



*Paradise is the final stage of this evolutionary process, the perfect world where all types of limitations will come to an end. It is the eternal world man has been searching for, for thousands of years, in response to his natural urges.*

Paradise is not something mysterious: it is the final stage of the known evolutionary process. So far as animals are concerned, organic evolution is a baseless assumption. But the periodic evolution of the non-living world is a generally accepted fact. According to this natural law, the advent of Paradise is entirely understandable. Studies show that, approximately 10 billion years ago, our earth was a ball of fire, before it became the cool planet on which we live today. Then when man first came

to inhabit the earth, there was a period of what we would now call under-development. After this came another evolutionary phase in the wake of the industrial revolution—a period of development.

Now according to the evolutionary law itself, the earth is heading towards a superior stage. This will be the last evolutionary stage of the earth which we can call the perfect world. In this ideal world, all types of limitations will come to an end. By Divine arrangement, justice will prevail in its most perfect form. The wicked will be removed from the earth and only the virtuous will gain entry into this ideal world, where there will be no pollution of any sort. Calamities will cease to occur and all disadvantages such as disease, accidents, old age and death will be eradicated forever.

In the present world, all tasks are performed by hard work: indeed, hardship and success are inseparable. Such a state of affairs will no longer prevail in paradise for such refined changes will

take place that each activity will be an enjoyable one. As it is said in the Quran: “Truly, the dwellers of Paradise that day (the Day of Resurrection) will be busy in joyful activities.” (*The Quran*, 36: 55)

In Paradise, there will be no need for special arrangements for human diversion, for, there all activities will be a source of entertainment and enjoyment.

The world man has been searching for thousands of years, in response to his natural urges, will find it in a state of perfection. He will find a life of joy, peace and happiness forever in this world. There will be no necessity for physical labour; pleasant intellectual activities will suffice for the achievement of all desired goals.

Man has been seeking a Paradise on earth for thousands of years, in response to his natural urges. With the coming of the industrial revolution and the age of consumerism, man actually thought that he could build a Paradise on

earth, that the industrial age would culminate into the perfect world—Paradise—that he longs for. The superficiality of the notion that man could make a Paradise on Earth was savagely dashed with the coming of pollution, acid rain and global warming. And now the Covid-19 pandemic has made man realize to the last extent that he cannot build a Paradise on earth.



*Today we have realized to the last extent that the Paradise on earth that man has been seeking for thousands of years in response to his urges, cannot be built on earth. It will be found in a state of perfection in the world hereafter.*

Paradise will only be found in a state of perfection in the world hereafter. There man will find a life of joy, peace and happiness forever in this world. There will be no necessity for physical

labour; pleasant intellectual activities will suffice for the achievement of all desired goals. Man must realize that he stands on the threshold of Paradise. The present earth is a Paradise-in-the-making, not Paradise. The question is how can man achieve the Paradise of his dreams? To find an answer to this question one must become aware of the Creation Plan of God.

## **CREATION PLAN OF GOD**

God—the Creator of man, has created man according to His Plan. To become acquainted with this Plan it is necessary for a man to have a thorough understanding of himself—just as the workings of a machine can only be understood when we study the drawings of the engineer who made it. Besides the mind of the engineer, there is no other thing that can clarify what the machine is meant for. The case of man is the same. The existence of man is such a unique phenomenon that

no other such example can be found throughout the vastness of the cosmos. Man is rightly called the ‘best of all creations,’ which means the best and most meaningful ‘being’ among all the things created. Such a ‘meaningful being’ cannot have been created without a purpose. The Creator of man has created him according to a special Plan. The Quran, the only preserved religious scripture, sheds light on this Plan.

Enthroned above the waters, it was He who created the heavens and the earth in six Days [periods], in order to test which of you is best in conduct. (*The Quran*, 11: 7)

We have adorned the earth with attractive things, so that We may test humankind as to which one is best in conduct. (*The Quran*, 18: 7)

He created death and life so that He might test you, and find out which of you is best in conduct. (*The Quran*, 67: 2)

The human being was created as an eternal being, and 'death and life' represent both the pre-death period of life and the post-death period of human life. So, death and life cover the entire eternal lifespan of human beings.

The Creator of man has created him according to a special Plan. His intention being that man must spend a period of trial in this present, imperfect world and subsequent to this, according to his deeds, he will earn the right to inhabit the perfect and eternal world, another name for which is Paradise.

God, according to His will, created a perfect world called Paradise: a world in accordance with all of our desires as human beings, in that it is free of all limitations and disadvantages, free of fear and pain; free of all imperfections. It would be an eternal world where there is neither death nor old age, an ideal world where we could achieve complete fulfilment.

A perfect Paradise cannot be inhabited by less-than-perfect beings. So, God created perfection-seeking beings—human being. He intended us to spend a period of trial here. After this, according to our deeds, we will earn the right to inhabit the perfect and eternal world. As part of this test, Paradise is kept hidden from us.



*God created a perfect world called Paradise. As a perfect Paradise cannot be inhabited by less-than-perfect beings, so, God created perfection-seeking beings—us and placed us in this limited world to test us. Our deeds will determine if we are eligible to inhabit Paradise.*

The essence of God's Creation Plan is to give a person complete freedom—not simply as a gift, but as a test. The result of this test would enable God to know who misused his freedom and who put his freedom to the best use. This was, and still

is, the divine scheme of things for man. In the pre-death period of life, an individual has the chance to qualify himself for Paradise, so that in the post-death period of life he may be settled as a deserving candidate in this perfect world.

This world, therefore, has all the components necessary for a test. It has perfection-seeking beings in a less-than perfect world, beings who have been given complete freedom to choose their actions. We thus have a choice—we can misuse our freedom to do evil, or we can use our freedom wisely, submit to God and qualify for Paradise. Those who misuse their God-given freedom are chastised thus in the Quran:

*“This is the truth from your Lord. Let him who will, believe in it, and him who will, deny it.’ For the wrongdoers We have prepared a Fire which will cover them like a canopy, and if they beg for water, they will be given water as hot as molten lead, which will scald their faces: how dreadful a drink, and how evil a resting place!” (The Quran 18: 29)*

The Creator of the world has created this world, as one half of a pair—the present world, in which we pass our lives after birth, is the first half; and the next eternal world where we live after death is the other half.

The Creator of man has thus created him as an eternal creature and has divided his life into two periods—the pre-death period or the life in this world and the post death period or the life after death. The limited period before death is meant to be a test for man, while the eternal period after his death will be the period for his reward or punishment, based on his performance in the test in this life.



*The Creator of man has created him as an eternal creature and has divided his life into two periods—the limited pre-death period to serve as a test and the eternal post-death period for his reward or punishment, based on his performance in the test.*

## WHAT IS PARADISE?

According to this Creation Plan of God, human beings are placed in situations where they have to face hardships from time to time throughout their lives as part of their test. Difficulty and sadness are integral part of the creation plan of the Creator. No man has the power to extricate himself from this life of trial and tribulation. This arrangement is to remind man of the fact that the present world has not been made as a place of luxury and comfort, but rather as a period of trial and such as will help determine whether he is eligible or not for the eternal life in Paradise. This is the scheme of existence for this world as devised by its Creator. The aim of creation is to select those who are fit to inhabit the world of Paradise.

## **WHAT IS PARADISE?**

Paradise is the name of the ideal world; the desire for which is lodged in the hearts of all human beings. It is Paradise where the

personality of man shall achieve fulfilment in the fullest sense. Man desires this Paradise with every fibre of his being and Paradise in all its entirety awaits him.



*Paradise is the name of the ideal world; the desire for which is lodged in the hearts of all human beings.*

*It is the world where man attains his complete fulfillment.*

Paradise is a world where man attains his complete fulfilment, where he thinks the way he wants to think; where he sees what he desires to see; where he listens to the sounds that give pleasure to his ears in the real sense; where he touches those things which gives him the highest degree of pleasure; where he has the company of those people who make his life highly meaningful, where the winds are life-giving zephyrs for him,

where he eats such food as he eternally craved for and he sips such drinks as are only beautiful figments of his imagination today.

Those pure souls will qualify for Paradise who, in their life in this world, come up to the standard of citizenship of Paradise—a perfect world of eternal comfort and pleasure, a world which holds far greater meaning than this one. Perhaps it is this Divine Plan which Jesus Christ was referring to:

*“This is how you should pray: Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven.” (Matthew 6:9)*



*Those pure souls will qualify for Paradise who, in their life in this world come up to the standard of citizenship of Paradise in the hereafter.*

Which are the pure souls who will qualify for the citizenship of Paradise in the hereafter? Giving an answer to this the Quran states:

*“The hearts of the people of Paradise will be filled with the glory of God.” (The Quran, 39:75)*

For one to be deserving of Paradise one must discover the glory of God in the present world and acknowledge it from deep within his heart. Glorifying God means discovering God through thinking and reflection, as the Lord of the Universe, while He is unseen. This discovery must be intellectually so deep that it should bring about a revolutionary change in his personality. In this way he becomes a *rabbani* (divine) person. (*The Quran, 3:79*)

The society of Paradise will be a collection of the best individuals from the whole of human history. Every member of this society will possess the fine qualities of positive thinking, peaceful behaviour,

sublime character, truthfulness, sincerity and amiable personality, idealist in thought and perfectionist in behaviour.

Those who have developed this kind of personality in the present world are competent members of such a society. Only those persons will find entry into Paradise who have qualified themselves in the present world, as mentioned in the Quran, thus:

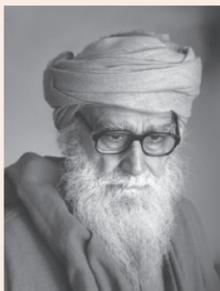
*“[In the Hereafter] man shall have only that for which he strives.”(The Quran 53:39)*

Paradise is not anyone's birth right, nor will one receive entry into it through recommendation or wishful thinking. Only such a person will find entry into Paradise who qualifies for it. Entry into Paradise is totally a matter of selection, and this selection will be done by none other than God Almighty in the world Hereafter.

## **ELIGIBILITY FOR CITIZENSHIP OF PARADISE**

To be held eligible for entry into the perfect world of Paradise in the hereafter, we must discover God's Creation Plan. According to this Plan, we must spend a period of trial in this imperfect world, and according to our deeds, we will earn the right to inhabit the perfect and eternal world, Paradise. We are, therefore, placed in situations where we face hardships from time to time throughout our lives as part of our test. Our desire for Paradise should make this world seem insignificant for us. We should discover and submit to our Creator while He is unseen and willingly adopt divine ethics. We should develop ourselves intellectually and spiritually so we will be found eligible for the citizenship of the refined world of Paradise by God Almighty.

Man has been seeking a Paradise on earth for thousands of years, in response to his natural urges. With the coming of the industrial revolution and the age of consumerism, man actually thought that he could build a Paradise on earth. Pollution, global warming, and now the Covid-19 pandemic has made man realize to the last extent that a Paradise on earth cannot become a reality. Then how can man actually attain the Paradise of his dreams? Standing on the threshold of life, man must rethink and re-plan for Paradise. According to the Creation Plan, God created an eternal, perfect world called Paradise. Then God created man as an eternal creature and divided his life into two periods. During the temporary phase of man's life he has been placed in this imperfect world for the purpose of testing him. Those who, in their life before death, realize their Creator while He is the unseen, submit to Him and live a God-oriented life will be granted eternal peace and happiness in the perfect world of Paradise.



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan is an Islamic scholar, spiritual leader and peace activist. He is the founder of *Centre for Peace and Spirituality* and has been internationally recognized for his contributions to world peace. The Maulana has authored over 200 books dealing with Islam's spiritual wisdom, the Prophet's nonviolent approach, religion's relation with modernity and other contemporary issues. His English translation of the Quran is popular because its language is simple, contemporary and easily understandable.

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