

# Essays On Cultural Pluralism

## A Philosophical Framework For Authentic Interfaith Dialogue

### Explore The Oneness Of The Human Family

Ours are times when religion is systematically being used: unconsciously by some and deliberately by others, in the service of politics and personal gain, rather than spirituality. However, perceptive and honest minds among all religious communities view different religions as diverse “languages of the spirit”, each valid and nourishing in its own way. An impartial study of different religions shows the underlying unity in the diversity of religions. All religions are attempts to satisfy the human sense of wonder and awe at the inscrutable mystery of the universe. This common function produces the unity while the diverse conditions in which different religions arise and grow produce the diversity.

#### Acclaim for past books by Jamal Khwaja:

“Here is a book written with a notable lucidity, characterized by wisdom and tolerance, and remarkable for the range and comprehensiveness of its survey.”

— Prof. I.T. Ramsey, University of Oxford.

“I found, it most interesting and informative and very clearly expressed.”

— Prof. C.D. Broad, University of Cambridge.

“I congratulate you on its excellent content and clarity of exposition.”

— Prof. John Wisdom, University of Cambridge.

**This approach to religious pluralism is likely to spread among the masses and eventually displace the old tradition of religious exclusivity: the belief that there is only one road to salvation.**

Faith in the oneness of God does not necessarily imply ‘one God, one church’, that is, cultural monism. Faith in one God implies man’s unity in diversity and diversity in unity. This plural approach to religion and culture is common to Western Liberal Humanism, Vedanta, and contemporary liberal Christianity, among others. Pluralism also characterizes the pure Quranic Islam without the later gloss of Islamic theology and jurisprudence. Sufi poetry consistently and greatly extols cultural pluralism. History teaches us that despite the diversity of race, religion, and culture mankind is one indivisible family. There are no chosen peoples. History is not shaped by our hopes, pious wishes or prayers to an omnipotent God Who is partisan to His chosen people. Rather history is a movement governed by sociological laws that provide ample scope for human creativity freedom of choice and action. Each essay in this collection covers a separate theme, yet reflects the Author’s sincere efforts to appreciate and critically evaluate the knowledge, and wisdom of an enduring scripture, or some intellectual or cultural tradition of the greater human family.

In doing so, he shows how authentic and fruitful interfaith dialog can be and should be conducted.

### About the Author:

Born in 1928, Jamal Khwaja, has devoted a lifetime to the challenge of living the Quran with integrity. His forefathers worked closely with Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, and with Mahatma Gandhi. Khwaja studied philosophy in India, England, and Germany. In 1957 he was elected to the Indian Parliament. However, his engagement with power politics was short lived. In 1962 he returned to his beloved, scholarly & contemplative lifestyle at the Aligarh Muslim University. He retired as Professor and Chairman of the Department of Philosophy.

Jamal Khwaja has written seven major books. Anyone interested in the intersection of Islam and Modernity will find Khwaja to be a reliable guide. His work is magisterial in scope. It is full of passion but remains balanced in perspective. Readers of his work will be in turn, informed, inspired, and intellectually liberated.

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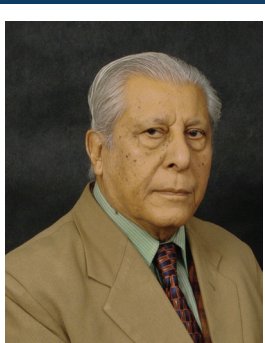
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