Muslims will be equipped with the tools required for constructive, Islamically sound human development.

Third, increase people's understanding of what it means to be a "witness" in the sense spoken of in God's declaration: "And thus have We willed you to be a community of the middle way, so that with your lives you might bear witness to the truth before all mankind, and that the Apostle might bear witness to it before you" (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:143). The witness must be well-acquainted with that to which he or she is bearing witness, and able to present others with persuasive evidence and arguments and should be able to convey his/her message clearly.

Chapter Three

Goals Awareness and the Crisis of Religious Extremism

Apart from faith, the greatest favors God can bestow on His servants are well-being and security. Preservation of security in a society is one of the most fundamental objectives of the Shariʿah. As such, it is one of the most important obligations of a Muslim ruler. Therefore, acts that destabilize society, violate its security, and terrorize Muslims and non-Muslims with whom Muslims have a non-aggression pact are crimes against humanity that clearly oppose the overall goal of the Shariʿah. Also of concern is that fanatics comb works on jurisprudence in search of statements by renowned scholars which they can use to justify their actions or legal rulings on specific situations which they claim as a pretext for their acts of hostility and aggression.

There are three types of juristic parochialism, which serve to destabilize countries and endanger people's security. These emerge through: 1) an atomistic view of religious legal texts that fail to take the Shariʿah's overall objectives into account and drawing faulty inferences from juristic textual evidence without factoring in the consequences and contingencies associated with such an inference and its practical application; 2) a failure to address important questions relating to the meaning and necessity of jihad; and 3) defective approaches to the issuance of legal rulings which lead, in turn, to defective application of such rulings.

The need to maintain security in society during times of tension or crisis may compel those in authority to take additional precautions, tighten their surveillance of what they see as sources of danger, and adopt strict measures of deterrence. Such steps might bear fruit if they were taken in response to a purely concrete, physical threat. However, on this battlefield of ideological convictions and influences, the only appropriate weapons are sound thinking, irrefutable proofs, and moderate, fair-minded religious concepts marked by neither extremism nor laxity.

The ideological crisis affecting some Muslim societies has given birth to extremist views on religious, political, and social issues alike. The causes of this extremism are numerous and complex, but the most salient causes are a lack of correct understanding of Muslim legal texts and ignorance of the objectives of the Shariʿah with respect to jihad and the process of commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong. In terms of the Shariʿah's position on "contemporary" jihad efforts, many of today's jihad endeavors lack legitimacy and fail to yield benefits in way of liberation. In fact, they cause great suffering.

Jihad is the religious juristic term for resistance to aggression. The meaning of the term jihad and its juristic uses are based on the trilateral root *j-h-d*, which conveys the sense of exertion and effort in propagating the faith's message and inviting people to embrace it. Thus, jihad was institutionalized as a means of preserving the religion, protecting those who convey its message, defending Muslim territories, and confronting aggressors.[8]

The concept and practice of peaceful jihad can become a vital means of building an ideal society where security and stability prevail. Understood and carried out as it was intended to be, jihad is an integral part of the reform project advocated by Islam in its battle against mindless caprice, oppression, and futile customs and ways of life. Hence, when Muslims lack this understanding, they will also lack the moral strength they need to fulfill their responsibility to bear witness to truths.

The principle of "enjoining righteousness and prohibiting evil" has a role to play in promoting security in society and righteousness, which is clearly of benefit on both the individual and communal levels. This practice should be treated as a communal obligation (*farḍ kifāyah*) although it may also become an individual obligation (*farḍ ʿayn*). In being mindful of this principle, matters of interpretation are not subject

to criticism. Change should be limited to what the situation demands. One should abhor evil in one's heart under all circumstances. The extent of effecting change through words and actions depends on one's ability and circumstance. One may be unable to promote virtue and prevent vice due to a fear of persecution or some other harm. If there are two competing views on enjoining the good and prohibiting evil and it is known that one is of no use, then that one should be dropped from consideration.

Lastly, the higher objectives of the Shariʿah necessitate the prohibition of armed revolts, given that those who, over the course of Muslim history, have revolted against their leaders have rarely achieved the aims for the sake of which they revolted. This in no way indicates that one should be content with an unjust situation. Rather, it means that one should choose the lesser of the two evils. It is better to offer gentle admonition while exercising patience and perseverance.

Chapter Four

Goals Awareness and Its Impact on the Muslim Mindset

It is vital to understand the Muslim mindset and explore reasons for its decline. There is also a dire need to explore a methodology employing tools suited to Muslim societies rather than trying to understand things through a postmodernist and secular humanist philosophy. Investigation should include an analysis of Muslim discourse and an assessment of how well it harmonizes with the changes taking place within contemporary society in order to serve as a vehicle of positive change. *Maqāṣid* should be referenced in regulating and guiding the formulation of Islamic legal rulings.

Scholars have attempted to identify and understand the dysfunction of the Muslim mindset that has negatively affected Muslim communities. Many have attributed the decline of the Muslim mindset to the negative interplay between divine revelation and human interpretation, between Islamic Law and human custom, and between rationality and subjective experience. Traditional tools for understanding the Qur'an and the Sunnah have been influenced by mystical interpretations and philosophical proofs. This, in addition to fruitless debates resulting from the claims of speculative theology, rigid biases in favor of specific juristic arguments and schools of thought, political tyranny, and vested