

done away with on the pretext that it is based on the words and actions of a human being who is no different from us, and that the conditions that prevailed during the days of the Prophet and his Companions differed too greatly from our own time. It now remains for us to clarify the relevance of these developments for the process of shaping a sound Muslim mentality at a time when the fundamental role of reason has been called into question.

Chapter Five

The Goals Awareness Crisis and Its Impact on Social Action

The marginalization of the objectives of Islamic Law has led to excessive strictness in some situations and excessive lenience in others, and has also resulted in bringing about evils that far outweigh the benefits intended. The following discussion examines this issue and presents ways to awaken the consciousness and shows how a religious awakening can serve to counter religious excess, spread love and harmony, help us see the purposefulness of beauty and aesthetics, and help us appreciate the Muslim woman's role in society.

Ideological extremism constitutes a major threat to society. To counter religious excess, priority should be given to spreading a jurisprudence of revival and a civilizational evolution. Thus, in seeking to address extremism and the crisis it has generated in modern times, our educated elites should concern themselves with promoting a jurisprudence of revival while exploring a variety of developmental options rather than entrenching themselves in ivory towers from which they can theorize and market temporary solutions.

As example, an excessively cautious point of view dominates Muslim thought regarding leisure and sport. However, one of the goals of making sound laws that are relevant to people's lives is to provide permissible, inviting substitutes for prohibited actions. We need to urgently reexamine some actions which have been declared forbidden in the past for fear that they might lead to other actions that are explicitly prohibited by Islamic Law. Examples include sports activities in their various forms for men and women, as well as purposeful art, recreational hobbies, educational games, travel, tourism, and other things. The Sunnah of the Prophet actually encourages forms of

recreation and leisure. The Prophet permitted certain Abyssinians to practice their sport in his mosque; he allowed two young girls to sing for ʿĀ'ishah; he allowed play with dolls; and he allowed leisure, joking, racing and other kinds of recreation, all of which shows that just as our religion enjoins seriousness, exertion and struggle, it also permits various forms of recreation, enjoyment and relaxation.

To counter extremism, it is also vital that we revive and ingrain a sense of patriotism in citizens' minds. We need to implant in people's minds and hearts the greatest purpose of their existence, which is to worship God, so that this awareness can influence the way they live their lives, and we need to strengthen and deepen people's sense of belonging to their spiritual centre, which God honored by choosing it as the place where He would reveal His final message to humankind, and the place toward which all Muslims are to turn daily in prayer.

It is, furthermore, essential to formulate policies and laws that govern the lives of individual citizens and regulate society's affairs. Such policies and laws are a prerequisite for a society's progress and development, since they embody the society's principles in relation to citizens' rights and obligations. One of the basic requirements of a patriotic mindset is that educational and media institutions carry out their responsibility to raise consciousness on both the individual and collective levels. Our educational institutions have the obligation to formulate a purposeful, integrated plan to form each individual's character and instill the needed civilizational consciousness in him/her.

The spheres for feelings of love and affection have narrowed greatly. There are certain people who limit their shows of affection to themselves and those closest to them, while appearing unconcerned about other members of society. A classic example is that of tribalism. However, one finds that even people's love for those closest to them, including spouses, children, and siblings, is often left unexpressed in either words or actions. In fact, the most critical cause of some broken homes is a lack of love for wives and young girls or a failure to express adequate affection for them.

I marvel at the intense emotion that was evinced by the Prophet when, as he preached in the mosque, his two grandsons al-Hasan and al-Husayn entered, prompting him to come down from the pulpit, put his arms around them and plant kisses on their cheeks. More marvelous still is the way he showed affection to animals and even to inanimate

objects! When he ascended Mount Uhud he said, “Here is a mountain that loves us and that we love in return!”⁹

“Indeed, God is beautiful and loves beauty.”¹⁰ This Prophetic dictum urges Muslims to perceive the beauty with which God has imbued the cosmos, to nurture it within themselves, and, when its manifestations seem to be absent, to contemplate it in their mind’s eye. The greater the impact such perceptions of beauty have on the person who experiences them, the more clearly they will be reflected in his/her thoughts and behavior, and the more able he/she will be to live in harmony with reality and the laws of the cosmos.

The role of beauty in change and transformation has been neglected in reform efforts, and Muslims in particular, as evidenced by the move away from the arts and personal experience, and an absence of efforts to foster aesthetic awareness. Given that beauty and perfection are among the divine attributes, and that God loves to see the effects of His grace and beauty in His creation, then both Islamic Law and common sense dictate that God’s splendid design should be manifest in all our affairs.

The Shari‘ah also concerns itself with the importance of doing our work well and maintaining good hygiene and a neat appearance, all of which demonstrates the fact that outward beauty is one of the goals of the law. How could it be otherwise, when Muslims are commanded to observe and contemplate the beauty of God’s creation as manifested in the sky and the stars, mountains and streams, flora and fauna? Beauty contributes to mildness of manner and refinement of character while mitigating harshness of temper and intransigence. At the same time, it sparks a desire to look for the good in circumstances and the virtue in other individuals rather than being on the lookout for their failings and mistakes. The lover of beauty doesn’t allow himself/herself to live in a state of languor and ignominy, servility and cynicism. Indeed, we need to reclaim the Muslim aesthetic values that can revive feelings of love and kindness both in ourselves and in others, while healing the scars left by hatred and violence that have marred life’s beauty and disturbed relations among all living things.

It is important to address the issue that a jurisprudence has emerged that is focused around legal issues relating to women that focus on such matters as whether they should be required to wear a loose, flowing outer garment, whether they should be permitted to drive, or travel

without a *mahram* (a male relative with a degree of consanguinity that would preclude marriage to the woman in question), and other similar questions. Despite the importance of these issues, they should not be allowed to gain priority over more crucial matters to which insufficient attention is being devoted, such as women's various rights, their role in development, and their participation in the institutions of society. This phenomenon has curtailed women's role and undermined their potentials. We need to shift from a defensive position where women are marginalized to an offensive one, engaging ourselves in progressive developmental projects that open new vistas in areas of vital importance to the world.

Furthermore, limited opportunity to engage in critical thought and objective thinking on the part of many educated Muslim women may serve to hamper numerous developmental initiatives. Indeed, we hope to see an awakening that springs out of the pristine Shari'ah and its general objectives, and which yields practical ideas that can be applied to projects that advance women's roles in society. It is time for theorists to descend from their ivory towers and take part in the work of real construction in way of developing concepts of freedom, justice, equality, revival, and civilization.

CONCLUSION

At this point, certain questions present themselves: Why are Muslims so fearful of the proposal of new ideas, or objective treatments of our current crises based on social and philosophical analyses that enable us to verify new ideas' acceptability or unacceptability against the established values of our religion? Why do we always see a thinker as a rebel against the religion and a conspirator against Muslims, particularly at a time when some atheist thinkers are coming back to Islam and renouncing modern rationalism? Have negative historical images of certain thinkers made us averse to benefiting from theories of change or reform projects applied in other parts of the world based on shared human values that merit attention and application?

In order to help the general public better understand and apply *maqāsid al-sharī'ah* and to help jurists rule on newly emerging situations in light of this understanding, there is a need for further research and writing on this topic. *Maqāsid al-sharī'ah* encompass all branches of the Muslim faith, and they undergird all Muslim rulings. The Muslim who