# Toward Tomorrow

For centuries now the Islamic world has squirmed in the vicious grasp of error and has remained unable to turn for succor in any way to its own spirit and essence. Whenever it has broken free and succeeded in taking two steps forward, it has immediately taken several steps back and lost itself in the byways. Such whimsical wandering or deliberate deviation, in which there is more harm than good and in which the harmful sweeps away the beneficial, hinders society's efforts to seek and find itself within itself and deeply disturbs the work done and the people who do it. We have seen everything in this wide world deteriorate beyond recovery and the wheels of the states and nations turn against their own selves.

Therefore we believe in the necessity to investigate the Islamic world with its understanding of faith, its own acceptance and interpretation of Islam, its consciousness of the Divine, its zeal and yearning, its reason, logic, mode and system of thinking, its style of expressing and communicating itself, and its own institutions, which will make humanity acquire these attributes and skills. In this way we may direct our world to a thorough renewal in all its aspects and elements.

The fundamentals of our spiritual life are religious thought and imagination. Not only have we sustained our life with these, but we have also taken action by relying on them. If we were to be parted from them, we would find ourselves a thousand years back. Religion is not only an assemblage of rituals and worship, its goals include giving meaning to humanity and the universe, becoming open to human nature in its essence and spirit, realizing the desires which go beyond this world, and responding to the intimations of eternity in human conscience. Religion embraces the whole of individual and collective life; it intervenes in everything we have of mind, heart, and soul; it gives its tincture to all our acts according to our intentions, and imbues everything with its color.

The axis of every act of a believer is worship, every striving has a dimension of the struggle against one's carnal desires— greater jihad—and every effort is directed at the Hereafter and seeking God's pleasure. There is no separation of this world and the next in the believer's life: there are no obstructions between the mind and the heart; the believer's emotions are always united with their reason, and their inspirations are not ignored by their judgment. So, in their mental world, experience is a ladder made of light, stretching up to the mind; knowledge is a high bastion, reinforced with understanding, wisdom, and intuition. The believer is an eagle, continuously soaring to infinity on the giant wings of love; they are the embosser who embosses all existence with their stamp and mallet of intelligence on that bastion. There can be found no gap in any place in such an understanding, nor is there any neglect of humanity, either individually or collectively.

Those who perceive religion as being contradictory to science and reason are the afflicted; they are unaware of the spirit of both religion and reason. Moreover, it is absolutely fraudulent to hold religion responsible for clashes between different sections of society. Conflicts between peoples and groups of people arise from ignorance, from ambition for personal advantage and profit, or from the vested interests of particular groups, parties, or classes. Religion neither approves nor condones such qualities and ambitions. In fact, there are conflicts and clashes between some religious individuals, but this is because, even though they have the same spirit, they do not hold the same degree of belief, they cannot preserve sincerity; sometimes they cannot overcome their feelings and are defeated by them. Otherwise, virtue with faith cannot approve of nor lead to such calamities. Indeed, the only way to avoid falling into such misfortunes is to establish religion with all its institutions within our daily life so that it becomes the life-blood of society as a whole.

The Islamic community needs a resurrection; it needs a serious reform in its mental, spiritual, and intellectual faculties. To use a more positive expression, it needs to be revived, combining serious efforts to preserve the original principles of the religion with extensiveness and universality as far as permitted by the flexibility of the divine decrees, so that it meets the needs of people from all walks of life, in all places and times, and so that it embraces the whole of life.

Since the advent of Islam—and may God never cause us to be deprived of its shelter—this blessed system has opened its doors to renewals many times, and experienced many revivals. Schools of doctrine (madhhab) in general, certainly the great majority of them, represent new developments in the fields of jurisprudence and law; the religious Sufi orders worked on the paths to heart and soul and turned them into broad highways; schools and colleges, during the times when they functioned properly, were mostly occupied with making sense of the universe and the beings in it. As to the renewal and revival hoped for in the present time, it must be the combination of all these; it will be possible only by bringing all these together, by leaving off the outward molds for the inner core, leaving off the outward forms for the soul—that is, by turning to certainty in faith, sincerity in deeds, and God-consciousness in thought and feeling.

Quantity in acts of worship should be complete and quality should be the goal: words should be the means of the prayer and the soul and sincerity are essential; the Sunna should be the guide, and consciousness is a necessity. In all of these God should be the goal. The prescribed daily prayers are not a set of physical exercises of sitting up and bending down; giving alms is not giving up a small tax on one's income or goods to allay the misfortunes of some unknown people in unknown places for unknown purposes; fasting is not dieting or merely abstaining from eating or drinking; and pilgrimage, the hajj, is not traveling from one town to another to spend one's savings in a foreign currency in a different country. If all these acts are not performed within their own axis and courses and spirit, how are they different from comparable mundane activities? Concentrating on quantity in acts of worship can only be a childish game; crying out and yelling without spirit in one's petitions is for those who are looking only to exercise their vocal cords; going on pilgrimage while unaware of its essence is only an effort to comfort oneself with the title of pilgrim and some anecdotes of the journey. How can one make sense of acts of worship performed in that way?

The way not to waste away in the web of such negatives is by mobilizing to raise the *“physicians of the soul and essential reality”* which can fill the vacuum in us, eradicate our weaknesses, rescue us from being slaves to our body and carnal desires, and direct us to the level of the life of the heart and soul. We need physicians of the soul and reality whose hearts are open to all fields of all knowledge: perspicacity, culture, spiritual knowledge, inspirations and divine blessings, abundance and prosperity, enlightenment; from physics to metaphysics, from mathematics to ethics, from chemistry to spirituality, from astronomy to subjectivism, from fine arts to Sufism, from law to jurisprudence, from politics to special training of religious Sufi orders: journeying and initiation in Sufi terms.

We are not in need of this or that particular quality or ability, but rather the whole comprehensive mind. Just as the brain has connections and interactions with all the parts and cells of a body, from the nearest to the farthest, from the smallest to the biggest, by means of nerve fibers, so too will such a cadre of minds be connected, communicating and interacting with the atoms, molecules and particles of the nation-body. So will it reach all the units and organs that constitute society. So will its hand be in and over the vital institutions. So will it convey gently, to everyone in all walks of life, certain things from the soul and reality, which come from the past and gain more depth with the present and stretch into the future.

Such a cadre of physicians of the soul will embrace all, from the attentive and well-behaved children in school to those idling on the streets, and by conveying the messages of their soul to all of them, and by elevating them to the level of people who have knowledge, skills, and genius for the future, they will present them for the common good and benefit of society. In all student houses, hostels, schools, institutions of higher education, and places of repose, worship, and spiritual enlightenment, they will purify everyone, from all sections and levels of society, of the foulness of the age, and channel them to human perfection.

Moreover, this cadre will tame the powerful weapons of the media, such as newspapers, journals, the radio and television, and will make them the voice and breathe of national and religious life, and through these media, they will teach the owners of the darkest feelings, thoughts, and voices ways to become human.

Moreover, this cadre will save our institutions of education and training, which now change their forms and directions according to internal deviations and foreign pressures, which sway with the wind from the command and control of others, and will make them instead open and responsive to the requirements of the present, re-ordering and organizing them according to historical perspectives, and raising them by use of styles, methodologies, and a high standard of planning, to be places of great quality and purpose.

Thus, in sum, we will rise from the misery of rigid and empty formalism to true scientific understanding; from dignifying diverse vile and disgraceful works with the title of *“art”* to true art and aesthetics; from customs, addictions, and obsessions of unknown origin to the consciousness of a morality based on history and religion; from the snares of various gnawing thoughts in our hearts to the oneness of service, submission, consciousness, as well as resignation and reliance on God.

The world experiences this rush of reformations. However, we do not believe that anything new will emerge from the tatters of capitalism, or the fantasy of communism, or the debris of socialism, or the hybrids of social democracy, or old-fashioned liberalism. The truth of the matter is that if there is a world open to a new world order, it is our world. Coming generations, looking back, will probably consider it our *“Renaissance.”*

This revival will make our feelings and horizons of thought, and also of understanding of art and aesthetics, gain depth and variety greater than it has had until now. In this way we will find our own aesthetic pleasures, reach our own music, and discover our own romanticism. By establishing our own people on a strong foundation in every field, from science to art, from thought to morality, we will secure their future.

In this matter, effort and dynamism will be our banner, and consciousness of faith and truth will be our source of strength. Those who have made us wander from door to door and who have expected remedies or solutions from faithlessness and immorality have always been wrong. We have always acquired honor and remained honorable as long as we have held fast to and surrendered to God whole-heartedly, and as long as we have preferred our nation, people and land, in whose bosom we have thrived, to anything in the world. I assume it is not necessary to explain the alternative…