

The Disasters of an Irreligious Social System

H A R U N Y A H Y A

In an environment without religion, the first concept to be eliminated is that of the family. Values such as loyalty, fidelity, allegiance, love, and respect, which sustain the family, are totally abandoned. It must be remembered that the family is the foundation of society and if the family collapses, so does society. Even the state and the nation have no reason to exist, since all moral values that underpin the state and the nation have been obliterated.

Furthermore, in irreligious societies, there is no reason left for anyone to feel respect, love or compassion for anyone else. This leads to social anarchy. The rich hate the poor, the poor hate the rich. Anger develops against those who are handicapped or needy. Or aggression towards different nations rises. The workers become aggressive towards their employers and the employers towards their workers, fathers turn against their sons and the sons against their fathers.

The reason for continuous bloodshed and the "third page news" in the newspapers is irreligion. On these pages, every day, we see news coverage about people who heedlessly kill each other for very insignificant causes.

However, a man who knows that he is going to be accountable in the hereafter cannot point a gun at somebody else's head and shoot him. He knows that God has forbidden men to commit crimes, and his fear of God ensures that he will avoid divine retribution.

Do not corrupt the earth after it has been purged of evil. Call on Him fearfully and eagerly. God's mercy is within reach of the righteous. (Surat al-A'raf: 56)

The cause for suicides being so common is also irreligion. One who commits suicide in fact commits murder. For instance, someone who attempts to commit suicide because his girl friend has left him should ask himself these questions: Would he think of committing suicide for that girl, if she became disabled, or became old, or if her face had been badly burned? Of course, he would not; he overvalues her in his mind when he sees her as elegant and healthy and he ascribes her as a partner to God, thinking her to be more important than God, the hereafter, and religion. He risks dying for her.

But someone who is guided by the Qur'an would never do such a thing. He would not even give it a moment of thought. A believer lives only for God's approval and exercises patience in the face of all the difficulties and problems God afflicts him within this world. And he does not forget that he is going to be rewarded for his patience both in this world and the hereafter many times over.

Stealing too is very common in irreligious societies. A man who steals does not think of how much trouble he causes to the person he steals from. He takes ten years of his victim's earnings in a single night and doesn't worry about how much he will suffer. As he inflicts pain on the other person, he may also feel pangs of conscience. But if he does not, this is an even worse state of affairs. It means that the thief has become hardened to committing all kinds of immoral acts.

In irreligious societies, values like hospitality, making sacrifices for each other, solidarity, and generosity totally disappear. First of all, people do not value each other as the human beings they are, because they see each other as beings that have evolved from monkeys. No one wants to welcome, serve, honour or offer nice things to anyone he thinks has evolved from an ape. People sharing this thought do not value each other. Nobody thinks about the health, welfare, or comfort of others. They do not worry about anybody getting hurt nor do they try to prevent such a thing. For instance, in hospitals people who are about to die are left lying on stretchers for indefinite periods; nobody cares about them. Or the owner of a restaurant operating under extremely dirty, unhealthy conditions does not worry about the harm he may inflict on the health of the people who eat there. He only cares about the money he is making. These are a few examples that show up in our daily lives. **Here, the main logic is that people are good to each other only if they can expect some profit in return. By the moral standards of the Qur'an, however, people value each other as servants of God.** They do not expect anything in return for a favour; on the contrary, they try to gain God's approval by continuously doing good deeds, and compete with each other in doing well.