I think we are experiencing a time of, in a sense, the search for a legitimacy in interpretation of Islam in relation to the modern world, in relation to modern society, in relation to non-Muslim societies and in that search there are all sorts of interpretations being put forward. I personally am very cautious about seeking a formalistic approach, because I think that one of the great risks ... is the fact that it tends to anchor a faith in one time and that is one aspect which, of my faith which I would never accept. I would never accept that the concept of Islam, the practice of Islam, cannot be fulfilled in the modern world or in the world of tomorrow. [1] I think [saying scientific and technological progress is incompatible with the practice of Islam is] one of the most offensive thing that can be said about Islam and I take issue with it in every way. [2]

If ignoring the past was a problem on one side, then the opposite danger was an exaggerated submission to the past, so that some creations and creators became prisoners of dogma or nostalgia. There is a danger, in every area of life, everywhere in the world, that people will respond to the hastening pace of change with an irrational fear of modernism, and will want to embrace uncritically that which has gone before. [3] The past cannot be repeated. By copying it, it proves that one cannot do better. By repeating the past, by designing the same thing is not the solution. Modernity cannot be denied. How do we merge the two? That is continuity. [6]

The Holy Prophet’s life gives us every fundamental guideline that we require to resolve the problem ... His example of integrity, loyalty, honesty, generosity both of means and of time, his solicitude for the poor, the weak and the sick, his steadfastness in friendship, his humility in success, his magnanimity in victory, his simplicity, his wisdom in conceiving new solutions for problems which could not be solved by traditional methods, without affecting the fundamental concepts of Islam, surely all these are foundations which, correctly understood and sincerely interpreted, must enable us to conceive what should be a truly modern and dynamic Islamic Society in the years ahead. [7]

[1] All India TV and Radio Interview, Rajiv Mehrotra (India) February 1989
[6] Times of India Interviews ‘Celebrating Beauty’ & ‘Education has not kept pace with globalisation’ (New Delhi, India) 27 November 2004