

THE ROSE AT DUSK

A Manifesto for Muslim Reform



FIVE PILLAR PUBLICATIONS

1428 AH

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the
Merciful

Background & Context

The era of classical Islam is over. It effectively ended with the dismantling of the Caliphate in the 1920s. Islam has entered the modern or post-Caliphate era.

Contrary to the views of the modernists and progressivists the ending of the era of classical Islam was a falling away from a former sanctity, a descent into modernity which is characterized by confusion, profanity, decadence, forgetfulness and spiritual decline.

At the same time, contrary to the views of reactionaries and restorationists, the ending of the classical era and the fall into modernity was inevitable and cannot be reversed. Movements to restore the Caliphate and reinstate other features of the classical era are futile and destructive. Movements that cling to classical forms are in denial as to the realities of modern circumstances.

We have no choice but to find a legitimate response to the modern impasse. The modern era is - perforce - a new era of ijtihad, a quest for a new settlement of Islamic expression that is appropriate to modern circumstances and modern challenges.

One of the features of the end of classical Islam is the stagnation and decay of the traditional schools of law (madhabs). Most Muslims no longer subscribe to a single madhab anymore and are

searching for new forms of guidance. There are no prospects that the madhabs will be restored.

Another feature of modern Islam is the globalization of the Ummah and the dissolution of any meaningful notion of Dar al-Islam as a geographical bloc. There are no prospects that the Dar al-Islam will be restored. The old certainties have gone. As geo-political entities both Dar al-Islam and Christendom have been swept away.

The realization of these facts and the transition to an effective and legitimate modern Islam has been and continues to be hampered by the ideology of Wahabism and the Wahabi control of the Muslim Holy Places along with neo-Arabism, nationalism and other profane ideologies which have infected the faith.

The most encouraging development in modern Islam has been the establishment of large Muslim communities in the West. It is the mission of these communities - those who have crossed the historical threshold - to address the realities of modernity and to shape a viable Islam for today. It is in these communities that an Islam relevant to the challenges of modern times is most likely to take shape.



Objectives

Therefore, in submission to Allah, the One, the Everlasting Refuge:

- We seek to reinterpret the traditional categories of 'Abode of Peace' and 'Abode of War' so that the 'Abode of Peace' is understood not as a distinct geographical bloc but as any jurisdiction in which Muslims are free and safe to practise all the essentials of their religion and to understand the 'Abode of War' as any jurisdiction in which this freedom is thwarted. We reject the idea that Muslims are some exotic species that can only live in a special habitat.

- We seek to promote a recognition of Islam, not as an "exotic", "alien" or "eastern" religion, but as an occidental religion in the same family as Christianity and Judaism and understood, where appropriate, through its consonances in and contributions to the Western tradition. We reject the idea that Islam and the West are locked into an inevitable "clash of civilizations".

- We seek to foster an Islam with a broad and sympathetic view of the Abrahamic family of religions and in which there is engagement with all four scriptures, Torah, Psalms, Gospel, Koran with the Koran understood as the final scripture, the Criterion and the inviolable, uncreated Word of God.

- We seek to remove cultural, linguistic and other obstacles to a legitimate and viable Western expression of Islam while remaining true to the essence of the religion and keeping its fundamental forms and tenets intact and elucidated in new but appropriate ways.

- We seek to avoid all fundamentalist, regressive, restorationist and extremist viewpoints and to develop expressions of Islam outside of the ideological and financial influence of Wahabi Saudi Arabia which are not, at the same time, so liberal that they violate the core values of Islam.

- We seek to find within Islam a universal perspective in which Islam, as both first and last revelation, is regarded as encompassing the primordial and perennial spiritual heritage of all mankind and is therefore understood to be intrinsically ecumenical.

- We seek to reassert an Islam in which the remembrance of God is understood as the essence of Islamic spirituality, in which all Muslims are free to remember God in their own way, true to their own conscience, and in which the Koranic promise "Remember Me and I will remember you" is taken as the essential Islamic covenant.

- We seek to nourish an Islam with a sympathetic view of Sufism, the Sufi heritage, the Sufi saints and the continuing work of Sufi brotherhoods in contrast to political Islam and other forms of externalism.

- We seek to cultivate an Islam that promotes unity among Muslims and understanding between Sunnis and Shias, a tolerant Islam that regards the Shia as brothers in the faith, that respects and values the Shia tradition and that avoids divisive sectarian viewpoints.

- We seek to develop an Islam that employs the Koran as the test for the authenticity of hadith and that brings the criterion of the Koran to the full wealth of the wisdom traditions preserved in centuries of Hadith Literature.

- We seek to encourage an Islam that offers an intelligent and penetrating critique of modernity, science, technology and the industrial world order and that responds to the modern crisis by reference to primordial truths unswayed by the presumptions of progress and profane ideologies.

- We seek to articulate an Islam that asserts the divine character of Law and that understands the Sharia not as an ossified medieval code of jurisprudence but as a bedrock of universal principles in conformity to which Muslims are to strive to live wherever they may be.

- We seek to advance an Islam that is true to the revolution initiated by the Prophet - peace be to him - in the status of women and that promotes a truly equal polarity between man and woman, respecting their contrasts and their complements, without conceding to decadent genderlessness, "gender wars" and destructive and hateful forms of feminism.

- We seek to formulate an Islam in which all pious Muslims - respectful of the learned, subject to the parameters of orthodoxy and in deference to the collective wisdom of the Ummah - are deemed capable of forming valid opinions based on Scripture, the Sunnah, and the intelligent application of God-given reason to the many tools of ijtiḥad.

- We seek to uphold an Islam in which there is no priesthood, that is wary of entrenched clerical structures, and in which every man and woman is spiritually responsible for their own souls as both servant and deputy of God.

- We seek to further an Islam that rejects the idea of the Islamic State and that sees the task of the modern era as transcending territorial limitations - and the institution of the nation state - to make Islam into a truly global brotherhood.

- We seek to nurture an Islam that offers an appropriate response to the modern ecological crisis with an emphasis on ecological stewardship as a duty of mankind as God's deputy (caliph) on earth.

- We seek to champion an Islam with an unflinching commitment to economic and social justice and in which the exercise of generosity, fairness, charity and mercy are paramount values.

- We seek to stimulate a revival of the Islamic humanities and Islamic arts to counter-balance the

influence of science and technology upon contemporary Islamic thought.



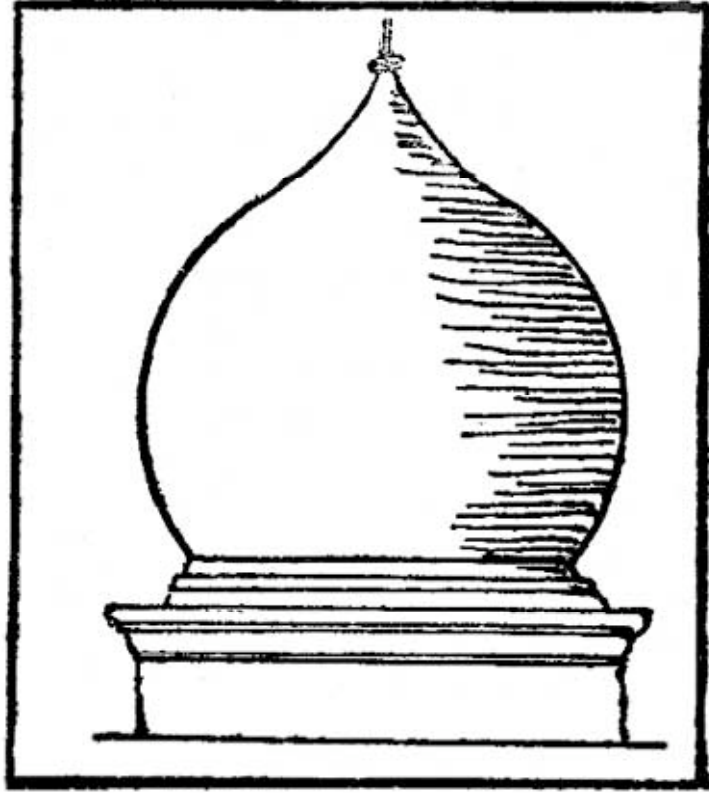
Above all we seek to reiterate the metaphysical heart of the Islamic faith and to place the inner within and the outer without.

We strive to create a community of Muslims who are centred in God, who live in submission to His Will, who are devoted to remembrance of Him, who are sincere in faith, who embody the God-created dignity of humanity in themselves and in their actions, men and women who are intelligent, discerning and spiritually and culturally literate, who are responsible and useful beings, and who offer mature and relevant perspectives on the many crises of modernity as leadership to Islam in these troubled times.

Eid al-Fitr, 1428 AH

Unto Him is the real prayer!

Koran 13:14



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