

Reformation of Islamic Thought

Reformation of Islamic Thought is the need of the hour. For too long, man-made traditions have been beclouding the Pristine Message of the Quran. The result is Human Rights violations and extremism at a global scale. Once Muslims return to the Quran as the primary source of Islamic beliefs, the Islamic Renaissance is inevitable. The following Reformation Plan is based on the recurrent themes of The Moderate Voice (TMV) and Quranaissance.com initiatives:

1) Stand for Human Rights: No two ways about it, the Muslim World is rife with Human Rights crises. Non-Muslims often criticize Muslims for being silent in face of Human Rights violations. At TMV and Quranaissance, we emphasize the Islamic teachings of Universal Brotherhood, Human Rights, and Human Potential, and we unequivocally denounce human rights violations at their source, not just superficially. Quite frankly, *non-Muslims don't care what you or I personally feel* about stoning, blasphemy laws, child marriage, etc. They want to know why "Islamic" scriptures (seem to) support human rights violations. If we do not correct the fabrications and misinterpretations (see 4 below) for ourselves, opponents of Islam will be more than happy to challenge us and our children with it.

2) Strongly denounce Terrorism and Extremism: There is absolutely no room in Islam for compulsion in religion, hate philosophy, or killing of innocents by individuals or governments.

3) Emphasize the DEEN of Islam over the religion: The essence of Islam is to establish the Ideal Society in which Justice and Opportunity are provided to nourish all citizens to their Potential. That is the message that should be kept at the forefront. Certainly, spirituality and rituals are integral parts of Islam, however they are in service of character and community building to support society. Hence, "religion" is a small part of the DEEN ("the way of life") of Islam.

4) Use the Quran as a Book of Guidance, not a Book of Magic: The Quran is meant for understanding and application, not for empty recitations, chanting, and repetition. Nowhere does the Quran state that simply repeating, blowing verses, or chanting will lead to tangible societal results. Otherwise, we would all be very well off in places like Pakistan and Egypt.

5) Challenge the Fabrications and Misinterpretations: The only infallible Book of God is the Quran. Narrations and histories that a) contradict the Quran, b) slander the character of the Messengers of God, c) promote violence or intolerance, d) violate Human Rights, or e) are immoral, are absolutely rejected at TMV and Quranaissance, no exceptions. Furthermore, reports that are contradictory to established science and common sense should be challenged with Reason.

6) Promote Ijtihad (creative thought) over Taqlid (tradition): Nowhere does the Quran state that imams/scholars will arise centuries after the Prophet (S) and become final authorities of interpretation and jurisprudence. Quite the opposite, the Quran warns against following forefathers without due investigation and draws a connection between blind following and oppression. Challenge prevailing notions and expect more from your imams and scholars.

7) Develop Tolerance, Acceptance, and Mutual Respect: These are all character traits of Prophet Muhammad (S). Encourage people to weigh the evidence offered by others and to not attack each other personally. If we cannot respect each others' views and freedom of expression, how will we

deal with those of other religions? At Quranaissance and TMV, we also highlight the rights of non-Muslims as mentioned in the Quran.

8) Recognize Individual Duty: This century is witnessing a battle for the Soul of Islam. It is my educated opinion that the Rebirth of Islam will not occur at the mosque, or even in Muslim-majority countries. Rather, intellectuals living in free societies who place the Quran above man-made traditions will be the vanguard of reform. We should all do our part to bring the Pristine Message of Islam to light, even in the smallest of gatherings:

34:46: Say, "I ask you to do just one thing: For God's sake! Stand up in pairs and singly, and then think!"

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