

**Anwar tells Muslims ball is at their feet**  
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Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim, one of six thinkers invited to contribute to a Wall Street Journal op-ed symposium on 'What is moderate Islam?' said mainstream Muslims must do more to reject terrorism and intensify the fight against tyrannical regimes which were impeding their progress.

"The ball is in our court," wrote Anwar in an article that led off the symposium which appeared in yesterday's edition of the prestigious paper and which included opinions of five other intellectuals – Bernard Lewis, Ed Hussain, Reuel Marc Gerecht, Tawfik Hamid and Akbar Ahmed.

Anwar said Muslims must do more to reject the false image of their religion as friendly to terrorism and must voice "unanimous condemnation" against the tyrants and oppressive regimes that are the "real impediments to progress in the Muslim world."

The Wall Street Journal hosted the symposium in response to the raging controversy over a proposed mosque in lower Manhattan that has sparked intense debate in America.

In his piece, Anwar noted that hundreds of millions of Muslims fervently rejected fanaticism in all its guises.

He said these mainstream Muslims saw themselves as part of a civilisation that is "heir to a noble tradition of science, philosophy and spirituality that places paramount importance on the sanctity of life."

Novel theory

Because of a 500-word limitation on each writer's contribution, Anwar was unable to elaborate on this theme which runs like a leitmotif through his discourses at international forums in recent years.

By "sanctity of life" Anwar was clearly referring to the 'maqasid al-shariat' which Muslim thinker Al-Shatibi systematised in the 8th century as the higher objectives of syariah law which were the protection of religion, life, property, intellect and progeny.

Anwar has aired the novel theory that the 'maqasid' was an early precursor of intellectual currents that seeded the European Enlightenment of the 18th century.

In his op-ed, Anwar rejected the prescription of some western thinkers, joined by apostate former members of the faith, that for Muslims to succeed in altering the widespread perception of them as anti-democratic, inbred and violent, they should discard their beliefs and traditions.

Instead Anwar urged not just added projection by Muslims of their great intellectual and cultural heritage but also heightened opposition to terrorism and tyranny.

He said Muslims should recognise that their fate was in their hands.

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