



## Europe and The Desecration of the Quran

Khaleej Times reported on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 that “Holy Quran was set alight again at protest outside Sweden parliament. ...Two men set the holy Quran alight outside parliament in Stockholm on Monday, at a protest similar to previous ones that have sparked tensions between Sweden and Middle Eastern countries... Swedish police granted a permit for the protest by campaigners, hoping to see holy Quran banned in the country, according to local media.”

These sacrilegious and blasphemous events are not the first of their kind. Their frequency and severity has increased exponentially as Islamophobia spreads across the West. Who can forget the vile caricatures published on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2005 by Jyllands-Posten, a Danish newspaper depicting the Noble Prophet Muhammad (saw). Similarly, Charlie Hebdo published blasphemous repulsive caricatures of the Prophet (saw) in 2011. These acts riled up the emotions of Muslims around the world. The reaction on the street was that of anger against the West and devotion and love for the Prophet Muhammad (saw). Now incidents involving the burning and desecration of the Quran have started occurring more frequently and vociferously by the West.

The West argues that the freedom of speech and expression is sacred for them, and no compromise can be made to curtail this fundamental right. They believe that nothing is above the right of free speech, neither religious beliefs nor the sentiments of more than 1.5 billion Muslims and any cost can be borne to protect this right. The same belief has been reiterated a number of times by key Western leaders including French President Macron and support to this view was also offered by other heads of European states including Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Greece and Denmark to name a few. However, this argument doesn't pass the test of scrutiny as sixteen European countries, along with Canada and the Jewish State, have laws against Holocaust denial and similar laws exist in these countries which prohibit hate speech based on ethnicity, race, nationality, gender, and sexual orientation.

The real reason for this hatred and islamophobia is deeper and rooted in a clash that goes back centuries to the dark ages of Europe. This was an era of intellectual darkness in the West where the clergy ruled in cahoots with the monarchs, denying the European population access to knowledge and ideas. Ideas that contradicted with the views of the Catholic Church were rejected. Those carrying them were brutally persecuted. This fermented deep-seated hatred and anger in European populations against the religious authority of the Church, which still lingers within them to this day. After a bitter and brutal struggle, the West finally broke the shackles of the church and entered an era of so-called enlightenment and renaissance. It is that terrible experience and interaction with religion in those dark ages that lies at the heart of the Islamophobia that we see in action in today's Europe.

The Islamic ideology, on the other hand is not a tyrannical or oppressive ideology that seeks to curb the intellectual curiosity of man, nor put shackles on the quest for

knowledge and wisdom. Rather it enlightens and guides and steers the human intellect in a direction where this quest and curiosity is used to form a meaningful deeper relationship with the Creator of this universe and the humankind, thus utilizing the intellectual faculties of human beings to seek answers to the problems faced by mankind in the light of divine guidance. Had the Western thought leaders and philosophers bothered to look Eastwards at the vibrant and thriving Islamic civilization, they would have seen that it is not religion that is the enemy, rather the corrupt and power-hungry nexus of clergy and the monarchy.

The West sees itself at war with Islam as an ideology and the Muslim world at large. It continues to fight this war at all fronts and the current escalation against Islam and these vile attacks on the sanctities of Islam is a desperate attempt of an ideology that has lost the intellectual battle and the moral high ground it claimed to have. The West realizes that it has lost the battle of the hearts and minds in the Muslim streets a long time back and is now trying to rally its masses against the rise of an Islamic caliphate that it knows is on the horizon. These attempts are not too different from the methods used by the crusaders as they went about instigating the common Christian population against Islam in the hopes of raising armies for their crusades against the Islamic world.

It is high time that the people of influence and power in the Muslim world realize that the struggle of Islam and the Western ideology is not merely a struggle for political and economic influence, rather a clash of ideologies, a struggle between truth and falsehood. It is a struggle that is being carried out by the Western powers on the state level and only an Islamic state which revives the Islamic civilization, can give a befitting response to the West. Allah (swt) has promised in his Holy Book, Al –Quran, that this struggle shall come to its natural conclusion. Allah (swt) says in Surah As-Saf, Ayaah No 8, ﴿يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾ **“They wish to extinguish Allah’s light with their mouths, but Allah will ‘certainly’ perfect His light, even to the dismay of the disbelievers.”**

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by  
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