

## **SEEKING SOLUTION FOR ISLAMAPHOBIA**

**By Qasim Hersi Farah (Ph.D.)**

Islamophobia is one of the most unresolved threats to our contemporary world's security, stability, integration, interaction, and coexistence. The leading creators, organizers, causers, and triggers of Islamophobia include religious zombies, politicians, the corporate arms industry, petroleum economists, media, illicit lobbyists, pressure groups, warmongers, and individuals whose hearts were filled with hatred and agony. These groups' main motives originate from each or any of the social, political, economic, and religious aspects. Islamophobia affects all tribes and religious groups of humanity physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Thus, most Muslims and Non-Muslims live with fear and repugnance due to Islamophobia by being vulnerable to constant attacks and assaults waged against them in the name of Islam.

On the other hand, evidently, the individuals and groups who suffer from Islamophobia syndrome, while justifying their criminal acts as an act of revenge, target people for their race, geographical region of origin, dressing style, and faith. For instance, Balbir Singh Sodhi (1949 – September 15, 2001), a Sikh– American entrepreneur and franchisee in Mesa, Arizona, US, became the first person murdered in a hate crime in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. Similarly, the next several persons murdered in the same reason were chiefly non– Muslims. These innocent late individuals were targeted and murdered because of their dressing style, code of religious dress, beard, turban, place of birth, race, color, and physical appearance.

The unlawful acts of murder still target the wrong persons and can be executed anywhere at any time. This indicates that Islamophobia is not only an anti-Muslim mission but also a mission of anti-humanity. At this stage, almost everybody is scared of unknown and unexpected enemies that intend to violate their fundamental human rights, including the right to live. Yet, enemies are unseen, unidentified, and unrecognized, while the cause is also obscure. Add that the fear itself is unclear.

In retrospect, Islamophobia is just a continuation of the two historic prolonged religious wars, which are “the Conquest” and “the Crusaders.” The former is the most destructive war waged by Muslims against European Christians. In the year 711 A.D., well-armed foot-soldiers supported by strong navies of multi-ethnic Muslims started attacking and conquering some parts of the European countries. The vast majority of those soldiers were coming from the Maqhrīb – the West-North African region of today’s Mali, Morocco, Mauritania, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria. After those soldiers had already conquered Spain and its neighbors by dispersing the Visigothic Kingdom, the former Sham (currently Syria and Iraq) joined the conquest battle under the leadership of the Ummayyat caliphate/ leader. After that, Turkey joined the soldiers with huge forces, military experiences, war tactics, modern weapons, and high political and military ambitions. These qualities led Turkey’s Chief Commanders to lead a war of conquest. Many European states, including Armenia, Portugal, Spain, and many parts of the Balkan States, fell into the hands of Muslims. Initially, Muslims decided to wage this war against Europe for several worldly reasons, of which none was ordained or encouraged by Islam.

***Among those reasons were:***

1. To avoid internal conflicts in their home countries and communities
2. To evade the already ongoing civil war between the Ummayyat and Abbassiyat – the famous two rival Muslim military camps at the time
3. To gain revenge against Roman’s historical occupations and subjugations
4. To conquer those nations, as has been common in the human competitions at that time
5. To appropriate other’s properties and to occupy the arable lands of the defeated nations
6. To subjugate and domesticate other communities as a part of the ongoing social warfare tussles
7. To demonstrate pride, braveness, and proneness to show off, based on ignorance and jungle law systems
8. To increase the number of Muslims by force, and
9. To be proud of spreading Islam by force.

From historical perspectives to this date’s occurrences, only the last of this long list is always mentioned. Hiding all other reasons is sufficient to substantiate the actions’ illegibility, illicitness, immorality, and inhumanness (III). Yet, according to Islamic teaching, even the only argument left (the last of the list), which conquerors (*fatihin*) have agreed on its validity and uprightness, is the same as the rest in the list. In Islam, Allah prohibits disseminating Islamic monotheism by compulsion or even by pressure. As the nature of faith does not embark from a physical instrument but from one’s innermost conclusion, nobody can force somebody to believe in something. Allah says, “Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from

Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy hand—hold that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things” (Qur’an: The Cow: 255).

Instead, God recommends the otherwise. He orders any believer who may attempt to disseminate the Message of Islam to use the best and most suitable approach and methodology based on the best interest of both the concerned person and the public. This mission must be built with personal politeness and collective courteousness, embarking from deep knowledge. God says: “Invite all to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and kind advice, and only debate with them in the best manner. Surely your Lord ‘alone’ knows best who has strayed from His Way and who is ‘rightly’ guided” (Qur’an: The Bees: 125).

Specifically, Islam teaches that there is a strong connection and brotherhood—based relationship, which is a religious lineage between Muslims and Christians. Thus, it encourages Muslims to consider Christians as their faith brothers and closest allies. Allah says, “You will certainly find that the closest of the believers in friendship with them are those who say, “We are Christians.” That is because among them there are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant” (Qur’an: The Table Spread for Food: 82).

Furthermore, Islam insists on maintaining intermarriage and other forms of intermingling between Muslims and Christians, as it encourages eating together and sharing worldly materials. God says: “This day (all) the good things are allowed to you, and the food of those who have been given the Book is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them, and the chaste from among the believing women and the chaste from among those who have been given the Book before you (are

lawful for you); when you have given them their dowries, taking (them) in marriage, not fornicating nor taking them for paramours in secret; and

whoever denies faith, his work indeed is of no account, and in the hereafter, he shall be one of the losers” (Qur’an: The woman to be tested: 5).

Better than that, Islam encourages Muslims to learn from Christians and Jews and to have consistent dialogues about faith with them but to use only the best amicable manners and approaches. In this regard, God says: “And do not argue with the People of the Book unless gracefully, except with those who act wrongfully. And say (reply to them) “We believe in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to you. Our God and your God is ‘only’ One. And to Him we ‘fully’ submit” (Qur’an: The Spider: 46).

Regarding spreading Islam, Islamic teaching encourages focusing on conveying the Message of Islam to the Pagans, Polytheists, and Deniers. In Islam, deniers are called kufar (kaffir in singular), which means infidel. An infidel is a person whom Islam was exposed to with a clear and comprehensive explanation until he is deemed to understand it well and convinced that the Message of Islam is absolutely accurate. However, after fully understanding, such a person prefers to hide it out of ego, envy, enmity, and arrogance. Nevertheless, recently the term has been given to everyone who is not a member of the particular group of Muslims that is labeling it to others. This shifted the name to a tit-for-tat word of insult said to each other, which finally became among the inappropriate language used by the delinquents when swearing, such as the ‘F’ word. In some parts of the world, such as South Africa, the Caribbean, Jamaica, and the USA, the term Kaffir is a racist offense against the black race as an ethnic slur referring to black Africans in South Africa.

Pragmatically, it is true that many Muslims promote conflict between Christians and Jews, but Islam ordains the opposite. It commands Muslims to give unconditional love to all people, especially the People of the Book, who are Christians and Jewish. It also encourages Muslims to reference and learn from these two religions and their adherents, whatever may not contradict God’s monotheism. Similarly, Allah encourages Muslims to be somewhat amicable to their Abrahams brethren as well as any other humans by saying, “God does not forbid you from dealing kindly and fairly with those who have neither fought nor driven you out of your homes. Surely God loves those who are fair” (Qur’an: The woman to be tested: 8).

Generally, Islam is the Message of peace, security, justice, tolerance, mercy, unconditional love to all, and cooperation between Muslims and people of other religions, especially the People of the Book – Christian and Jewish. These three religions are from one source: their grandfather in faith, Abraham/Ibrahim. Therefore, they are known as “The three sister Abrahamic religions,” and some people combine them by faith in the name “Abrahamic or Judeo– Christs–Islam.”

#### References

1. Qur’an: The Cow: 255
2. Qur’an: The Bees: 125
3. Qur’an: The Table Spread for Food: 82
4. Qur’an: The woman to be tested: 5
5. Qur’an: The Spider: 46
6. Qur’an: The woman to be tested: 8