

TEAR DOWN THE SPANISH WALL

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The Berlin Wall was a physical barrier separating West Berlin from the East Berlin to separate communism from capitalism. The wall came to symbolize the Iron Curtain between Western and Eastern Europe. The wall separated East Germany from West Germany for more than 25 years; from the day construction began in 1961 until it was opened in 1989. In the fifteenth century in Spain, after seven centuries of Muslim rule, after the marriage of Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile, the Catholic Monarchs; the remaining Muslims and Jews were forced to leave Spain, or converted to Roman Catholic Christianity or killed for not doing so. In 1480, Isabella and Ferdinand instituted the Inquisition in Spain. The Inquisition was aimed mostly at Jews and Muslims who had overtly converted to Christianity but were thought to be practicing their faiths secretly -- called respectively marranos and moriscos. The collective memory of these events has created a psychological partition, a 'Spanish Wall,' in the psyche of most Western people who are indoctrinated in Christianity. The wall is impervious to almost anything good in Islam or the Muslims but very porous to any foul propaganda against Islam. The 'Spanish Wall' has served a divisive purpose for more than five centuries, far longer than the Berlin Wall. It has created a psychological conflict that has given rise to the clash of the civilizations. Read on and in the words of Sir Francis Bacon, "Read not to contradict ... but to weigh and consider."

Karen Armstrong, a former Catholic nun, wrote in 1991, in *Muhammad: A biography of the Prophet*, "Now it seems that the Cold War against the Soviet Union is about to be replaced by a Cold War against Islam."¹ The events of the last 18 years have been a testimony to the fact that her words were prophetic. This newly found Cold War will have several fronts but the fiercest and the most decisive battles will be fought with pen. The first battle of this Cold War was initiated by the preemptive strike of Salman Rushdie, who acted as a pawn for the new age crusaders and wrote his infamous book *Satanic Verses*. Other writers including Sherry Jones with her novel *the Jewel of Medina* have followed suit. The battles have their knights and supporting armies. The pious, the self righteous and the atheists will join forces in this Holy Cold War against Islam in one form or the other. Professor Richard Dawkins claims in his book *the God Delusion* that he was one of the 37 authors who were chosen to defend Rushdie at the time of publication of his novel, *Satanic Verses*.

In the nineteenth century the armies of opposing sides generally assembled facing each other and started firing at each other until one side was overcome by its casualties. Such predictable warfare will not be seen in this Cold War fought with the pen. We will have sensible and rational Christians like Karen Armstrong speaking the voice of rationality, dialogue, mutual respect and understanding.

There would be opportunist writers who will change dresses from white to red depending on which way the wind is blowing at a particular time. There would be bought Muslim hands like Salman Rushdie and Irshad Manji who will strike from within.

To analyze and understand the modern crusade one has to understand the psychology of the original crusades. The psyche and the atmosphere of the crusades have been well described by writers like Karen Armstrong and Dr. Maurice Bucaille. Karen Armstrong writes in the first chapter of her book *Muhammad: A biography of the Prophet*, titled *Muhammad the enemy*.

"In 1242, for example, King Louis IX of France, a canonized saint of the Roman Catholic Church, condemned the Jewish Talmud as a vicious attack on the person of Christ. The book was banned and copies were publicly burned in the presence of the King. Louis had no interest in discussing his differences with the Jewish communities of France in a peaceful, rational way. He once claimed that the only way to debate with a Jew was to kill him 'with a good thrust in the belly as far as the sword will go. It was Louis who called the first Inquisition to bring Christian heretics to justice and burned not merely their books but hundreds of men and women. He was also a Muslim-hater and led two crusades against the Islamic world. In Louis' day it was not Islam but the Christian West which found it impossible to coexist with others. Indeed, the bitter history of Muslim-Western relations can be said to have begun with an attack on Muhammad in Muslim Spain."²

After Muslims had taken control of Jerusalem in 638 A.D., had built two splendid mosques on the Temple Mount, which was a desolate place after the destruction of the second Temple, and did indeed seem to rule the world. Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} had lived after Christ, when there was according to the Christian dogma no need for a further revelation, as a result of his prophethood many Christians had apostatized and joined the new religion. The Christian faith was shaken to its very core not only politically but spiritually and theologically. Something needed to be done to shore up the imploding religion. The recipe was a slanderous biography of the Prophet of Islam. This late eighth century Western biography of Muhammad^{saw} had been produced in the monastery of Leyre near Pamplona on the hinterland of the Christian world, which trembled before the mighty Islamic giant. Besides the political threat, the success of Islam raised a disturbing theological question: how had God allowed this impious faith to prosper? Could it be that He had deserted His own Christian people? What should the Christian masses believe? Where should they find refuge against the rationality and beauty of Islam? How would the Christian clergy defend their ill founded dogmas? Only possible strategy was to distort the picture of Islam and its founder. To explain Muhammad's success, the legends claimed that he had been a magician who had concocted false 'miracles' to take in the credulous Arabs and destroy the Church in Africa and the Middle East.³

Over the next 13 centuries the crusader writers like Salman Rushdie and Sherry Jones would reproduce this fantastic portrait of Muhammad with uncanny fidelity. But, of course they will mix some realities with their fictions and tailor their writings to suit the tastes of the time. Before 1100 there was practically no interest in Muhammad in Europe, but by 1120 everybody knew who he was. At about the same time as the myths of Charlemagne, King Arthur and Robin Hood were being evolved in the West, the myth of Mahound, the enemy and shadow-self of Christendom, was firmly established in the Western imagination. As Richard William Southern explains in his monograph *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages*:

"There can be little doubt that at the moment of their formation these legends and fantasies were taken to represent a more or less truthful account of what they purported to describe. But as soon as they were produced they took on a literary life of their own. At the level of popular poetry, the picture of Mahomet and his Saracens changed very little from generation to generation. Like well-loved characters of fiction, they were expected to display certain characteristics, and authors faithfully reproduced them for hundreds of years."⁴

According to Karen Armstrong, "Mahound's fictional status in the West has perhaps made it even more difficult for people to see him as an historical character who deserves the same serious treatment as Napoleon, or Alexander the Great. The fictional portrait of Mahound in *The Satanic Verses* resonates deeply with these established Western fantasies."⁵

"At the same time as Christians evolved the myths about Mahound and the Saracens, they also evolved terrifying fantasies about the Jews. Jews were said to murder little children and mix their blood in the Passover bread, to desecrate the Eucharist and to be engaged in a vast international conspiracy for the overthrow of Christendom. There was nothing like these anti-Jewish myths in the Islamic world; they reveal in the Western psyche an unhealthy disturbance and disease. But the conquests in Spain, southern Italy and Sicily meant that there were now tens of thousands of Muslims within the borders of Christendom. The only way that the establishment seemed able to cope with these aliens was by imposing an official policy of apartheid, forbidding Christians to have any contact with their Muslim and Jewish neighbors. Special Church legislation linked the two together as a common foe in the Lateran Councils of 1179 and 1215. Christians were forbidden on pain of excommunication and the consequent confiscation of their property to take service in the houses of Muslims and Jews, to look after their children, to trade with Muslims and Jews or even to eat with them. In 1227 Pope Gregory IX added the following decrees: Muslims and Jews must wear distinctive clothing; they must not appear on the streets during Christian festivals or hold public office in Christian countries; and the muezzin was forbidden to offend Christian ears by summoning the Muslims to prayer in the traditional way.

Pope Clement V (1305-14) declared that the Islamic presence on Christian soil was an insult to God. Christians had already begun to expunge this obscenity. In 1301 Charles of Anjou, King of France, exterminated the last Muslims of Sicily and southern Italy in the reservation of Lucera, which he had described as 'a nest of pestilence . . . lurid in pollution . . . the stubborn plague and filthy infection of Apulia.'⁶

In the last century the Western civilization has overcome its anti-Semitism. But the Islam-phobia persists, in its fullest glory, at least in some circles. Dr. Maurice Bucaille writes in the introduction section of his book *the Bible the Quran and Science*:

"In what contempt the Muslims are held by certain Christian circles! I experienced this when I tried to start an exchange of ideas arising from a comparative analysis of Biblical and Quranic stories on the same theme. I noted a systematic refusal, even for the purposes of simple reflection, to take any account of what the Quran had to say on the subject in hand. It is as if a quote from the Quran were a reference to the Devil!"

After the Pope made some irresponsible remarks about Islam, Karen Armstrong wrote an article for the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, on 18th September 2006 titled, *We cannot afford to maintain these ancient prejudices against Islam. The Pope's remarks were dangerous, and will convince many more Muslims that the west is incurably Islamophobic.* She wrote:

"In the 12th century, Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, initiated a dialogue with the Islamic world. 'I approach you not with arms, but with words,' he wrote to the Muslims whom he imagined reading his book, 'not with force, but with reason, not with hatred, but with love.' Yet his treatise was entitled *Summary of the Whole Heresy of the Diabolical Sect of the Saracens* and Segued repeatedly into spluttering intransigence. Words failed Peter when he contemplated the 'bestial cruelty' of Islam, which, he claimed, had established itself by the sword. Was Muhammad a true prophet? 'I shall be worse than a donkey if I agree,' he expostulated, 'worse than cattle if I assent!'"

She concludes this essay by stating that this prejudice is still all too pervasive, "Neither the Danish cartoonists, who published the offensive caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad last February, nor the Christian fundamentalists . . . , would ordinarily make common cause with the Pope; yet on the subject of Islam they are in full agreement."⁷

"Western writers have mostly been prone to believe the worst of Muhammad," according to Montgomery Watt. Here is a detailed confession in his words of what we are describing as the 'Spanish Wall':

"Since Carlyle's (1795 – 1881) lecture on Muhammad in *Heroes and Hero-worship*, the West has been aware that there was a good case to be made out

for believing in Muhammad's sincerity. His readiness to undergo persecution for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement -- all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems than it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad. Western writers have mostly been prone to believe the worst of Muhammad, and, wherever an objectionable interpretation of an act seemed plausible, have tended to accept it as fact. Thus, not merely must we credit Muhammad with essential honesty and integrity of purpose, if we are to understand him at all; if we are to correct the errors we have inherited from the past, we must in every particular case hold firmly to the belief in his sincerity until the opposite is conclusively proved; and we must not forget that conclusive proof is a much stricter requirement than a show of plausibility, and in a matter such as this only to be attained with difficulty."⁸

The Spanish Inquisition was motivated in part by the multi-religious nature of Spanish society following the reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula from the Muslims (Moors). Much of the Iberian Peninsula was dominated by Moors following their invasion of the peninsula in 711 until they were expelled by means of a long campaign of reconquest. However, the reconquest did not result in the full expulsion of Muslims from Spain, but instead yielded a multi-religious society made up of Catholics, Jews and Muslims. Granada to the south, in particular remained under Moorish control until 1492, and large cities, especially Seville, Valladolid, and Barcelona, had large mixed populations.

In 1212, a coalition of Christian kings under the leadership of Alfonso VIII of Castile drove the Muslims from Central Iberia. The Portuguese side of the reconquest ended in 1249 with the conquest of the Algarve (Arabic **الغرب** — Al-Gharb) under Afonso III, the first Portuguese monarch to claim the title King of Portugal and the Algarve.

However, the Moorish Kingdom of Granada continued for three more centuries in the southern Iberia. This kingdom is known in modern times for magnificent architectural works such as the Alhambra palace. On January 2, 1492, the leader of the last Muslim stronghold in Granada surrendered to the armies of a recently united Christian Spain (after the marriage of Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile, the Catholic Monarchs). The remaining Muslims and Jews were forced to leave Spain, or convert to Roman Catholic Christianity or be killed for not doing so. In 1480, Isabella and Ferdinand instituted the Inquisition in Spain, as one of many changes to the role of the church instituted by the monarchs. The Inquisition was aimed mostly at Jews and Muslims who had overtly converted to Christianity but were thought to be practicing their faiths secretly - called respectively marranos and moriscos. The Inquisition also attacked heretics who rejected Roman Catholic orthodoxy, including alumbros who practiced a personal mysticism or spiritualism.

Encyclopedia Britannica describes these events:

“With its large Muslim and Jewish populations, medieval Spain was the only multiracial and multireligious country in Western Europe, and much of the development of Spanish civilization in religion, literature, art, and architecture during the later Middle Ages stemmed from this fact. The Jews had served Spain and its monarchs well, providing an active commercial class and an educated elite for many administrative posts.”

The subsequent paragraphs in Encyclopedia Britannica focus on the Jews but the Muslims had the exactly same fate in Europe of the fifteenth century:

“The first inquisitor general, Tomás de Torquemada, himself from a converse (Jews converted to Christianity) family, at once started a propaganda campaign against the Jews. In 1492 he persuaded the Catholic Monarchs to expel all Jews who refused to be baptized. Isabella and most of her contemporaries looked upon this expulsion of more than 160,000 of her subjects as a pious duty.”⁹

The events of the Spanish Inquisitions led to formation of a ‘Spanish Wall’ that will separate the Muslims from the Christians for several centuries. The trend has continued not only in the eighteenth and the nineteenth century but also raised its ugly head in the Balkans in the twentieth century. In the words of Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthal, the first British Muslim:

“One remembers that not a Muslim is left alive in Spain or Sicily or Apulia. One remembers that not a Muslim was left alive and not a mosque left standing in Greece after the great rebellion in 1821. One remembers how the Muslims of the Balkan peninsula, once the majority, have been systematically reduced with the approval of the whole of Europe.”¹⁰

After the unfortunate publication of the Danish Cartoons, intending to slander the holy character of the Holy Prophet of Islam, Karen Armstrong wrote:

“But equally the cartoonists and their publishers, who seemed impervious to Muslim sensibilities, failed to live up to their own liberal values, since the principle of free speech implies respect for the opinions of others. Islamophobia should be as unacceptable as any other form of prejudice. When 255,000 members of the so-called “Christian community” signed a petition to prevent the building of a large mosque in Abbey Mills, east London, they sent a grim message to the Muslim world: western freedom of worship did not, apparently, apply to Islam. There were similar protests by some in the Jewish community, who, as Seth Freedman pointed out in his Commentisfree piece, should be the first to protest against discrimination.

Gallup found there was as yet no blind hatred of the west in Muslim countries; only 8% of respondents condoned the 9/11 atrocities. But this could change if the

extremists persuade the young that the west is bent on the destruction of their religion. When Gallup asked what the west could do to improve relations, most Muslims replied unhesitatingly that western countries must show greater respect for Islam, placing this ahead of economic aid and non-interference in their domestic affairs. Our inability to tolerate Islam not only contradicts our western values; it could also become a major security risk.”¹¹

REFUTING SHERRY JONES

Sherry Jones in her novel *the Jewel of Medina* has repeated the foul propaganda of the crusade writers of the last 1300 years. The propaganda has been exposed and invalidated adequately in the existing literature. Four sources are cited in this article:

Muhammad Zafrulla Khan (1893-1985), a distinguished scholar in world religions, was a member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, a missionary branch of Islam. He became Foreign Minister of Pakistan in 1947 and for many years led the Pakistan Delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations. He was President of the Seventeenth Session of the General Assembly. He also served as president of the International Court of Justice at The Hague. The biography by him *Muhammad: Seal of the Prophets* can be read at the following link:

http://www.alislam.org/library/books/muhammad_seal_of_the_prophets/

The second half of the last chapter of this book, titled *Excellent Exemplar*, has a robust defense of the marriages of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} and has several quotes from non-Muslim writers.

Frithjof Schuon has observed about the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} (*Understanding Islam*, pp. 89):

“There was in his life a superhuman grandeur of soul; ... Muhammad gave enough examples of long abstinences, particularly in his youth, when passion is considered to be most strong, to be exempt from superficial judgments on this account.”

Henry Bayman has written an excellent explanation about the permission of polygamy, in Judaism and Islam in his recent book *The Secret of Islam: Love and Law in the Religion of Ethics*. He writes, “It is important to recognize that during the Prophet's life, polygamy was not only socially accepted, it was mark of distinction in ancient society. According to the Bible, for example, David had a harem (2 Samuel 5.13), Abraham, Jacob (Genesis 32.22) and Elkanah (1 Samuel 1.2) each had two wives, and Esau had several (Genesis 28.9). Solomon had seven hundred wives as well as three hundred concubines (1 King 11.3). At this time, a man of high standing was expected to take many wives.”¹²

The rest of the section about polygamy can be reviewed in the ‘limited review’ on google.com at the following link:

<http://books.google.com/books?id=TIKlc5reSyAC&printsec=frontcover&dq=henry+bayman#PPA172,M1>

Thomas Carlyle (1795 – 1881) was a Scottish satirical writer, essayist, historian, teacher, and was given in 1865, the rectorship of Edinburgh University. His writings were highly influential during the Victorian era. At his demise according to Encyclopedia Britannica, "Westminster Abbey was offered for his burial." Defending the character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}, he writes: "How he was placed with Khadijah, a rich Widow, as her steward, and traveled in her business, again to the Fairs of Syria; how he managed all, as one can well understand, with fidelity and adroitness; how her gratitude, her regard for him grew: the story of their marriage is altogether a graceful intelligible one, as told us by the Arab authors. He was twenty-five; she forty, though still beautiful. He seems to have lived in a most affectionate, peaceable, wholesome way with this wedded benefactress; loving her truly, and her alone. It goes greatly against the impostor theory, the fact that he lived in this entirely unexceptionable, entirely quiet and commonplace way, till the heat of his years was done."¹³

EPILOGUE

At the end of the twentieth century the Cold War against the Soviet Union was replaced by a Cold War against Islam. It is hoped that during the current century cooler heads will prevail and the West will be able to overcome her Islam-phobia. The conceptual 'Spanish Wall' that had been erected during the Spanish Inquisitions will be torn down. The first Cold War ended with the fall of the Berlin wall. On June 12, 1987, President Ronald Reagan spoke to the people of West Berlin at the base of the Brandenburg Gate, near the Berlin wall. Due to the amplification system being used, the President's words could also be heard on the Eastern (Communist-controlled) side of the wall. The address Reagan delivered that day is considered by many to have affirmed the beginning of the end of the Cold War and the fall of communism. On Nov. 9-11, 1989, the people of a free Berlin tore down that wall. In this new Cold War, some day a preacher of rationality and harmony will passionately announce, "Oh the clergy of the Holy Christendom tear down this Spanish Wall! So, there can be one human family without any taboo subjects and learning can be free for all and from all." Coming together of the Muslim world and the West or the Christendom in harmony and peace is the destiny for our days. The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} had predicted after Divine guidance, "In the latter days, the sun shall rise from the West." So blessed are those who promote harmony and good will and work towards tearing down the 'Spanish Wall.'

Most of the Orientalists that are the Christian writers about Islam have their received ideas about Islam. The most important among them are that the Quran is word of Muhammad and that it is borrowed from the Bible. For example, W Montgomery Watt writes, "For the study of the life of Muhammad it is hardly necessary to decide the relative importance of Jewish and Christian influences, especially since many details are disputed. The main necessity is to realize that such things were 'in the air' before the Qur'an came to Muhammad and were part

of the preparation of himself and of his environment for his mission."¹⁴ Sir William Muir writes, "We may upon the strongest presumption affirm that every verse in the Quran is the genuine and unaltered composition of Muhammad himself, and conclude with at least a close approximation to the verdict of Von Hammer: That we hold the Quran to be as surely Muhammad's word as the Muslims hold it to be word of God."¹⁵ These preconceived ideas put them at odds with the data and the facts that suggest otherwise. This leads to their 'Freudian conflict,' from which they have no way out and their writings become self contradictory and their 'Freudian slips' begin to show on almost every page of their books.

The Orientalists look through their special glasses with the preconceived assumption that Muhammad cannot be a prophet like the prior Jewish prophets of God and analyze him through secular lenses. Moreover, in their zeal to uphold their assumption, according to Montgomery Watt whenever a negative or cynical interpretation of the historic information, about the Prophet, is plausible they immediately fall for it without examining the likelihood of such an interpretation.¹⁶ Such are the consequences of the 'Spanish wall' on their psyche. The results of the 'Spanish Wall' on the readers are that rather than reading and benefiting from the writings of great souls like Hadhrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad^{ra} and Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan they keep falling for the Orientalists. The Muslim biographers know by their rationality that the achievements of the Prophet Muhammad^{saw} would not have been possible without the constant help and succor from Allah. The Western readers fall for those writers who share their wrong assumptions. But false assumptions cannot satisfy human hearts. The inconsistencies of the Orientalists are very transparent in this age of information. We conclude here with a confession from the pen of Montgomery Watt, commenting on the reasons of the success of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}:

"The more one reflects on the history of Muhammad and of early Islam, the more one is amazed at the vastness of his achievement. Circumstances presented him with an opportunity such as few men have had, but the man was fully matched with the hour. Had it not been for his gifts as a seer, statesman, and administrator and, behind these, **his trust in God and firm belief that God had sent him**, a notable chapter in the history of mankind would have remained unwritten."^{17 18}

¹ Karen Armstrong. Muhammad: A biography of the prophet. Phoenix, 1081. Page 24.

² Karen Armstrong. Muhammad: A biography of the prophet. Phoenix, 1081. Page 21.

³ Karen Armstrong. Muhammad: A biography of the prophet. Phoenix, 1081. Page 26.

⁴ Richard William Southern. Western views of Islam in the Middle Ages. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1962. Page 29.

⁵ Karen Armstrong. Muhammad: A biography of the prophet. Phoenix, 1081. Page 26.

⁶ Karen Armstrong. Muhammad: A biography of the prophet. Phoenix, 1081. Page 28.

⁷ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,1874653,00.html>

⁸ W Montgomery Watt. Muhammad at Mecca. Oxford University Press, 1953. Pages 52.

⁹ "Spain." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2009. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 03 Jan. 2009
<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/557573/Spain>>.

¹⁰ This was taken from a group of lectures given by Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthal in 1925. These were published by The Committee of Madras Lectures on Islam in 1927, under the title *Cultural Side of Islam*. We have reproduced it from 1976 reprinting by the Publisher, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Kashmiri Bazar, Lahore, Pakistan. The lectures were also published under the title *Islamic Culture* by the University of Michigan in 1929.

¹¹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/jul/21/religion.comment>

¹² Henry Bayman *The Secret of Islam: Love and Law in the Religion of Ethics*. Published by North Atlantic Books, 2003. Pages 171-172.

¹³ Sir Thomas Carlyle; page 288.

¹⁴ Montgomery Watt. *Muhammad at Mecca*. Oxford University Press, 1953. Page 29.

¹⁵ <http://www.alislam.org/quran/Quran-and-non-Muslims-20080128MN.pdf>

¹⁶ W Montgomery Watt. *Muhammad at Mecca*. Oxford University Press, 1953. Pages 52.

¹⁷ W. Montgomery Watt. *Muhammad at Medina*. Oxford University Press. Pages 335.

¹⁸ <http://www.archive.org/details/muhammatmedina029655mbp>