

## Mr. Macron! Muslims are Ready to Take on Your Secular Cultural War Against Islam!

Mr. Macron! You say that that you want to wage an ideological war against Islam with your secular values and liberal way of life. Well, we as Muslims are more than ready to engage in this battle of ideas!

So, what intellectual weapons do you have to strike us with? Will you argue that secularism has created civilized states grounded upon decent values.....while it champions the hurling of insults and abuse at the sacred beliefs of people under the banner of liberal freedoms? This is alongside stigmatizing religious minorities and treating them like pariahs and second-class citizens with regards to their rights? Do you view it as civilized to terrorise Muslim children by raiding their homes with armed police, simply because they refused to accept derogatory cartoons against their beloved Prophet (saw) who they love dearly....OR to demonise religious minorities in order to curry favour with racist, xenophobic voters as part of your secular opportunistic political games? Is it the mark of a civilized state to colonise and plunder the resources of countries, and slaughter and impoverish nations in the process, OR to support the rule of dictators in the world, including selling them arms, as with Saudi Arabia, to be unleashed on civilian populations in Yemen and elsewhere? And how civilized is it to treat vulnerable and helpless migrants and asylum seekers who are fleeing war, persecution and oppression as vermin – refusing to grant them dignified sanctuary and protection?

In this cultural war, will you claim that secularism is the only ideology and system that can unify people of different races, ethnicities and faiths....while your system is riddled with racism due to your nationalistic and Eurocentric beliefs? This is in addition to building fear, hatred, anger and division between communities through the habitual peddling of Islamophobia by secular politicians and media who relentlessly vilify Islamic beliefs? How can you assert that secularism is a unifying force when secular states say the world order are infested with the ever-rising growth and influence of right-wing, racist, fascist organisations and movements? And how do you have the audacity to declare that Islamic beliefs fuel separatism, while it is you and your fellow secular politicians who are spreading divisive narratives of Muslims constituting a '5<sup>th</sup> column' in the country, 'the other' and the 'enemy within' due to their religious beliefs, and while your hijab and niqab bans marginalise Muslim women from full engagement in the society?

It was Islam, as you should know, that unified those of all races, ethnicities and backgrounds from China to Spain under one system, one state ruled by its laws, uprooting racism from the hearts of its people – for its very doctrine shuns and rejects this toxic idea and the concept which fuels it: nationalism. Indeed, the one you defame and attack - Prophet Muhammad (saw) said: «فَلَيْسَ لِعَرَبِيٍّ عَلَى عَجَمِيٍّ فَضْلٌ، وَلَا لِعَجَمِيٍّ عَلَى عَرَبِيٍّ فَضْلٌ، وَلَا لِأَسْوَدٍ عَلَى أَبْيَضٍ فَضْلٌ، وَلَا لِأَبْيَضٍ عَلَى أَسْوَدٍ فَضْلٌ، إِلَّا بِالتَّقْوَى» **“An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over a white – except by piety.”** Furthermore, it was our beloved Prophet (saw) who modelled the Islamic system of governance in Madinah under which all people were equal under the law and enjoyed the same rights and protection of citizenship without discrimination - black and white, Muslim and non-Muslim, male and female, rich and poor. This system – which you disparage with labels of extremist and radical – showed the world how to truly care for the needs and rights of those from different religious faiths. The Charter of Madinah for example, established that all non-Muslims of the state ruled by Islam had the right to practice their religious beliefs and practices without harassment, abuse, or demonisation. Indeed, our Prophet (saw) said: «أَلَا مَنْ ظَلَمَ مُعَاهِدًا، أَوْ كَفَّهَ فَوْقَ طَاقَتِهِ، أَوْ أَخَذَ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا بغيرِ طيبِ نَفْسٍ، فَأَنَا حَاجِبُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ» **“He who harms a person under covenant (a non-Muslim citizen of the state), or charged him more than he can, I will argue against him on the Day of Judgement.”**

This is why numerous non-Muslim writers and historians of the past praised the Islamic Khilafah system – the very system whose re-establishment you fight – like English writer, H. G. Wells, who wrote regarding the justice of the Khilafah: *“They established great traditions of just tolerance. They inspire people with a spirit of generosity and tolerance, and are humanitarian and practical. They created a humane community in which it was rare to see cruelty and social injustice, unlike any community that came before it”*, and Will Durant, American writer and historian, who stated in his book, ‘The Story of Civilization – The Age of Faith’: *“At the time of the Umayyad caliphate, the people of the covenant, Christians, Zoroastrians, Jews, and Sabians, all enjoyed a degree of tolerance that we do not find even today in Christian countries. They were free to practice the rituals of their religion and their churches and temples were preserved. They enjoyed autonomy in that they were subject to the religious laws of the scholars and judges.”* Indeed, the Khilafah not only protected its non-Muslim citizens, but rather, as the truly civilized humanitarian state it is, it rescued and gave sanctuary to those of other faiths who faced oppression, as seen in the actions of Khalifah Bayezid II, who in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, under the rule of the Uthmani Khilafah (Ottoman Caliphate), sent his entire naval fleet to rescue 150,000 European Jews who were being persecuted by the Christian rulers of Spain and settled them in Muslim lands.

Mr. Macron! What other intellectual arsenal do you have in your hands? Will you argue that secularism is an ideology born from enlightenment....while its very birth was based upon a compromise of the separation of God from state, which ignored the question of which belief system was rationally correct, and sidestepped the debate of who was more deserving to legislate laws for mankind – the Creator or His creation? And how can you possibly claim that secularism is based on enlightenment, while forcing Muslims to accept its beliefs through blind faith by employing repressive laws and bans and generating fear, rather than through reasoned argument? Our belief however, Islam, rejects blind faith and requires that individuals embrace it based upon rational conviction rather than dogmatism, for its truth is evidenced upon clear intellectual proofs. The Qur’an states: ﴿وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا إِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا﴾ **“But most of them follow nothing but conjecture (guesswork), truly conjecture can be of no avail.”** [Yunus: 36]. Additionally, unlike under secular rule, Islam prohibits any use of coercion in the acceptance of its beliefs, for the Qur’an is clear: ﴿لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي﴾ **“There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the right path has become distinct from the wrong path.”** [Al-Baqara: 256]

Perhaps Mr. Macron, you will advocate that the marginalization of religion within states is the path to creating healthy, wholesome societies. If so, then why, according to a 2011 World Health Organisation report, was France classified as the world’s most depressed nation, with 1 in 5 in the country suffering from clinical depression, and proclaimed as *“world champion of misery”* by its own press? Second place was awarded to America, another leading secular power in the world. And if the secular liberal way of life is the means to contentment and happiness, then why are there 220,000 suicide attempts in France every year (Eurostat)? The answer is simple. The increasing side-lining of religion and God from life and society under secularism has created a spiritual void in people’s lives, alongside generating a mountain of economic, social, moral and other problems that individuals are unable to deal with effectively. We see for example, how despite being one of the wealthiest countries in the world, and even before COVID, 1 in 7 people (9 million) lived below the poverty line in France (Statista), 1 out of 5 could not afford three meals a day (Secours Populaire (French Popular Relief)), and there was high and rising levels of unemployment, huge debt and significant levels of financial strain upon the people. The situation now is even more catastrophic, and it is mirrored in secular states the world-over. Furthermore, liberal freedoms and the capitalist secular system has nurtured individualistic, hedonistic and materialistic lifestyles which has caused epidemics in alcohol and drug abuse as well as crime. In France, 1 in 10 people have an alcohol problem (The Independent), while over 110 people die each day from an alcohol-related accident or condition (Santé Publique France).

In contrast, Islam provides a clear purpose in life as well as the spiritual basis by which to cope with difficulties and hardships, helping to prevent and alleviate anxiety and depression. This is in addition to shunning individualism, hedonism, materialism, alcohol and drug consumption and the destructive selfish pursuit of one's desires with no regard of the consequences. Instead Islam creates responsible mindsets which carry a sense of accountability in one's actions and in the treatment of others according to the high moral standards set by the Creator. Alongside this, the Islamic texts detail comprehensive and sound solutions to all human problems, creating harmonious and low-crime societies blessed with prosperity which benefits all, rather than an elite few. This was manifested under the centuries of Islamic rule of the Khilafah. So while French occupation of North Africa left a legacy of poverty and economic failure in the region, Islamic rule over those same lands under the Khilafah of Umar bin Abdul Aziz, lifted the people out of poverty through the implementation of the Islamic economic system, such that no-one was in need of the Islamic charity of Zakat. The governor over North Africa at the time, Yahya bin Said, said: *"I was sent by Umar bin Abdul Aziz to collect zakat from Africa. After collecting it, I intended to give it to the poor people. However, I did not find one."*

Mr. Macron! You allege that conservative Islamic beliefs may beget violence and the killing of civilians, while absurdly proclaiming that secularism has never killed anyone. However, Muslims do not need any lessons in preventing bloodshed, from a secular republic which was born from a revolution founded upon terror and slaughter. Nor do we need lectures on preventing violence from a colonial government whose hands are stained with the blood of millions of innocents, and whose foreign policy has created graveyards of nations, including in Algeria and Rwanda. In contrast, Islam abhors blind violence and the shedding of innocent blood, even during war. The 1<sup>st</sup> Khalifah of Islam, Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (ra) instructed his soldiers with the limits of bloodshed during battle, saying: *"Do not betray and do not exceed the limits, do not become treacherous, and do not mutilate dead bodies, do not kill a small child, nor an elderly, nor a woman, do not cut down or burn a palm trees, and do not cut a fruiting tree, do not slaughter a sheep, nor a cow, nor a camel, unless you need to eat, you will pass by people who dedicated themselves to monasteries, leave them to that which they dedicated themselves to."* So those who kill innocents in the name of achieving political goals, mirror in their actions the secular capitalist mindset and method of securing interests, and not the Islamic one!

Mr. Macron, maybe you feel that you can win this secular ideological war against Islam on the battleground of 'The Woman' and her rights. Perhaps you think that you can continue to peddle the outdated, colonial engineered, delusionary narrative that secularism honours women and Islam oppresses them, hoping that the world will ignore the protests by thousands of French women on your streets outraged by the epidemic of violence that they're subjected to under your secular liberal system? Do you think that you can just brush under the carpet, the fact that every year in France over 219,000 women face domestic violence (Euronews) and that one woman is killed every three days at the hands of a current or former partner (France24), or the fact that more than half of French women have been sexually harassed (Statista) and more than 1 in 10 have been raped (Fondation Jean Jaures thinktank), or the fact that the French parliament – the heart of secular rule - is riddled with sexism? And you very well know that these statistics are mirrored, if not worse, in other secular states the world over. Furthermore, how can you claim, with a straight face, that the secular system honours women, while their objectification and sexual exploitation in the beauty, advertising, pornography and prostitution industries is sanctioned within secular states under liberal sexual freedoms, allowing companies to profit from the degrading of women? And how liberating do you feel it is for women to be single mothers, struggling to raise and provide for their children alone, due to the decimation of marriage and family life caused by the merry-go-round of relationships resulting from liberal sexual freedoms?

Meanwhile, secularists ludicrously accuse the hijab or jilbab of oppressing women, while in reality they form part of the Islamic social system which embodies a comprehensive set of rules that effectively regulate the relationship between men and women in order to ensure cooperation between the genders in all aspects of life by directing the fulfilment of sexual desires to marriage alone. It is a system therefore, which outrightly prohibits the objectification and sexualisation of women, as well as the exploitation of their beauty for any purpose, as well as any other action which demeans their status in society. All this creates a respectful environment for women within a society in which they can pursue an active public life, free from the fear of harassment or abuse, while also protecting the sanctity of marriage, the integrity of the family unit, and the rights of children. And while secularism celebrates all that is lewd and indecent, and criminalises that which is modest and moral, Islam embraces that which is virtuous and honourable, even stipulating a single word that violates the honour of a woman as a grievous crime. Indeed, Prophet Muhammad (saw), who you defame and defile, stated that the calibre of a man should be measured upon the level of his good treatment of women. He (saw) said, «إِنَّمَا النِّسَاءُ شَقَائِقُ الرِّجَالِ، مَا أَكْرَمَهُنَّ إِلَّا كَرِيمٌ وَمَا أَهَانَهُنَّ إِلَّا لَنِيمٌ» **“Women are the twin halves of men. None but a noble man treats women in an honorable manner, and none but an ignorant treats women disgracefully.”** And he (saw) also said, «أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا وَخَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ» **“The most perfect believers are the best in conduct and the best of you are those who are best to their wives.”**

After all this Mr. Macron, how do you dare to claim that Islam is in crisis, when it is secularism which is in meltdown? The truth is, you have no intellectual weapons to strike Islam with, which is why you have desperately resorted to lies, insults, and draconian laws and bans to fight this ideological war, knowing that secularism has already lost the intellectual battle of ideas with Islam. Indeed, many in the West have become disillusioned with the ideals of democracy and secularism, having seen through the facade of its delusory promises and claims. This is why you refuse to even entertain a debate with Muslims on their Islamic values and system and what they offer to humanity and the world, choosing instead to censure and silence the expression of their beliefs.

But we will not give up on our Islamic beliefs as Muslims, no matter what lies and labels you throw at us....for not only are these beliefs based upon the truth, but because the world which is in crisis today due to secular and other man-made systems, is in need of the sublime values and laws of Islam more than ever! So Mr. Macron, you can continue to fight this battle if you wish.....but know this....it is a war that you can never win!

﴿أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ تَقْوَىٰ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٍ أَمْ مَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ شَفَا جُرُفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

***“Which then is best? - he that lays his foundation on piety to Allah and His good pleasure? - or he that lays his foundation on an undermined sand-cliff ready to crumble to pieces? and it does crumble to pieces with him, into the fire of Hell. And Allah guides not people that do wrong.”*** [At-Taubah: 109]

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