The Crusade to Impose Secular Values Continues

On Tuesday the 26th of June, the Senate of the Dutch Parliament passed the law which places a ban on wearing face-covering Islamic veils in some public places, including schools, hospitals, government buildings and on public transport. Anyone found wearing the veil will be criminalized and fined a sum of 400 euro.

In order to hide the fact that these restrictions are solely aimed at Muslim women, the rule will also outlaw all face coverings including ski-masks and helmets. At least 8 European countries have by law placed restrictions on the wearing of the Islamic face veil. Most of them, like the Netherlands, have also attempted, one way or another, to conceal the fact that these laws are solely directed at the Muslim community something that would be a contradiction to their own liberal values. i.e. religious freedom.

The Netherlands is well known for its "Freedoms". It's the place where almost every "desire" has been legalized by law, where youngsters are allowed the use of drugs, woman pay income taxes for engaging in prostitution and euthanasia has become a common way to die amongst the elderly.

Yet freedom suddenly comes to a halt when it comes to the Muslims and Islam and a woman's choice to wear a face veil becomes a red line which cannot be crossed.

The wearing of the face veil isn't the first Islamic symbol to be attacked within liberal societies, yet they still pride themselves as being the only form of society which is able to embrace differences amongst people by supposedly giving the individual the freedom to believe and practice as they wish, except when it comes to the Islamic community.

Just like most liberal societies, the Netherlands has also become increasingly controlling and vetting of the Islamic community in the way they are allowed to practice their faith. There is a growing campaign within these societies to forcibly accept secular values by e.g. taking away religious freedom to the extent that women are criminalized for dressing according to their religious beliefs.

Alexander van Hattem, one of the Senators of the far right party (PVV) in the Netherlands, didn't attempt to hide the fact that he sees the wearing of the Islamic veil as "a middle finger towards Western society". Apparently the fragile nature of liberal societies, which contradict their own secular framework and have revealed their inability to achieve community cohesion, now feel the need to oppress anything that in their mind takes a stance towards the soundness of the secular lifestyle. They do so by creating oppressive laws through which they hope to supress Islamic sentiments within society.

But as Muslims we are well aware that Allah (swt) is the best of Planners. ﴿وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ﴾ **"But they plan, and Allah plans. And Allah is the best of planners."** (8:30)

For it seems that the opposite is being achieved. A recent report conducted by the government's social-cultural think-thank, SCP, revealed that religion has become more important over the past 10 years to the Muslim community residing in the Netherlands. The report which focussed on Dutch nationals with roots in Turkey and Morocco showed that the Muslims were more likely to pray than 10 years ago and more likely to attend a mosque and that the wearing of the Islamic hijab had risen significantly.

To uphold this positive growth, Muslim communities living within liberal societies need to stay strong in their belief and also invest their time in studying Islam comprehensively especially this exact subject of how Islam deals with religious differences in society and how it dealt with it in the past. Their belief will only strengthen when learning that the noble rulers of the past were well known for protecting the rights of both Christians and Jews by ensuring their rights to practise their own religion as this is what Islam commanded them to do. ﴿لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ﴾ **"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion".**

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