



Andalusia was on the verge of collapse, Portuguese crusaders were attacking and occupying coastal cities of North Africa, and campaigns to distort the image of the Prophet ﷺ were rampant.

In this climate, the Muslim response was not merely military; it was cultural and spiritual. As others had done through poetry (like Imām al-Būsīrī's *Burda*), Imām al-Jazūlī chose prose. His method was powerful in its simplicity: They slander him, we praise him. The *Dalā'il* was a weapon of love deployed to strengthen the Muslim community's attachment to its source of guidance and grace, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. It was understood that a community that honours its Prophet ﷺ is a community endowed with honour ('izzah), resilience and ultimate victory.

The Miracle of a Woman and the Rise of a Legacy

The inspiration for the book is itself a glimpse into the unseen world that Imām al-Jazūlī frequented. The famous account tells of him, a renowned scholar, unable to draw water from a well for ablution. A young woman, a hidden saint, looked down and remarked, "You are a man of praiseworthy qualities but still you cannot find a way to draw water from a well!" She then spat into the well, causing water to rise to the top.

Astonished, Imām al-Jazūlī asked her by what means she achieved this level of spiritual power. She replied, "By invoking blessings for the Prophet ﷺ, the one who was obeyed by animals when he travelled in the wilderness." When he asked for the specific prayer she used, she instructed him instead to compile a book of such prayers. He did so, and upon presenting it to her, she confirmed that her invocation was within it. This miraculous encounter underscores a central theme; true spiritual power is accessed through love for the Prophet ﷺ.

From that moment, the *Dalā'il* became a spiritual treasure. Imām al-Jazūlī himself recited it three times daily during his fourteen-year retreat. His 13,000 disciples in the *Shādhilī* order adopted it as a daily practice. Soon after his death, it transcended its Moroccan borders, with dedicated masters (*Shaykh al-Dalā'il*) appointed in the holy mosques of Mecca, Medina, Cairo, and Istanbul. Wealthy patrons endowed funds in their wills to ensure its perpetual recitation. Master calligraphers from Türkiye to Indonesia vied to produce the most beautiful manuscripts, transforming the book into a supreme art form.

A Living Testament for a Modern Ummah

Today, the *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* remains as relevant as ever. In an age where the Prophet ﷺ is again subject to slander, with Muslims facing myriad challenges, it offers a timeless blueprint for response. It teaches us that defence is not only manifested in protest but in profound, consistent and beautiful devotion.

It calls the *Ummah* back to its heart; to love what Allah and His Messenger ﷺ love. It is a means of cultivating that love personally and collectively, promising spiritual prosperity, relief from difficulties, and, most importantly, a strengthened connection to the Source of all Goodness ﷺ.

The *Dalā'il* is more than a book; it is a journey and a guide for every Muslim seeking to navigate the wilderness of the modern world, with the light of the Chosen One ﷺ illuminating their path.

SHEIKH MUHAMMAD AL-YAQOUBI is one of the most influential Muslim scholars of the modern age, known for his intellectual depth, spiritual authority, and global reach. A descendant of the Prophet Muhammad through Moulay Idriss II, he carries a prestigious Damascene scholarly lineage.

Islamophobia: A Global Issue

DR ABDULAZIZ ALTWAIJRI

Islamophobia is indeed a significant and growing global issue. It is defined as irrational fear, hatred, or prejudice against Islam and Muslims. Rooted in stereotypes, misinformation, or political manipulation, it manifests in rhetoric, policy, and acts of violence and discrimination.

Many Western countries, including the U.S., Canada, France, Germany, and the UK, have experienced a rise in Islamophobic rhetoric, policies, and violence. Indeed, these have entered mainstream politics and media. The rise of the far right parties in Europe with their racial and anti-Muslim narratives have played a large role in creating an atmosphere of hostility and fear from, and hatred towards, Islam and Muslims. This has led to policies that institutionalize prejudice and discrimination; like the “Muslim Ban” in the United States and the anti-burka laws in parts of Europe.

In Asia, Muslim minorities such as the Rohingya in Myanmar, the Uighurs in China, and Muslims in India face systematic discrimination, violence, and even state-sanctioned oppression. These injustices range from restriction on religious practice to mass displacement and internment.

While many African countries have large Muslim populations, some have witnessed anti-Muslim sentiment fueled by ethnic conflicts, terrorism, and extremist violence. In such contexts, entire communities may be stigmatized and made to pay for the actions of a few.

Islamophobia creates hostile environments for Muslims, as they are often subjected to verbal abuse, discrimination, and physical violence. Muslims are in many instances denied basic rights, such as education, freedom of religion, and even denial of citizenship. Deepening division and hate, some politicians deliberately exploit Islamophobic narratives to gain votes or distract from weak platforms, or economic or governance issues.

Islamophobic ideas run deeply and persistently through media and political discourse in many parts of the West, though the degree and form vary by country, political party, and media outlet. Here’s

a breakdown of how and where these ideas are embedded:

In Western Media, framing Muslims as a “threat”

News coverage often associates Muslims with terrorism, extremism, or violence, especially after attacks involving individuals of Muslim background. Terms like “Islamic terrorism” are used freely, whereas comparable acts by Christians or Jews are rarely referred to as “Christian terrorism” or “Jewish terrorism,” reinforcing bias. Indeed, violent acts by non-Muslims are framed in non-religious terms and usually referred to as lone-wolf attacks, or acts committed by mentally unstable people.

Underrepresentation and Stereotyping

Muslims are underrepresented in entertainment media. When portrayed, they are often depicted through negative and harmful tropes: the terrorist, the oppressed woman, or the religious fanatic.

In Western film and television, Muslims are seldom depicted as ordinary, normal members of society—neighbours, colleagues, or professionals—whose lives reflect the diversity of their real communities.

Sensationalism and Double Standards

Media coverage often applies unequal scrutiny to acts of violence depending on the perpetrator’s background. Offences involving Muslims are swiftly framed through the lens of terrorism, while comparable acts by non-Muslims are more likely attributed to personal struggles or portrayed as isolated tragedies. In such reporting, the religious identity of Muslim suspects is frequently emphasised, whereas the faith of non-Muslim perpetrators is seldom highlighted.

In Western Politics, mainstreaming of Islamophobia

In election campaigns in several Western countries, some politicians use overtly anti-Muslim rhetoric to appeal to right-wing and populist Movements and gain their votes. Policies targeting Muslims—such as the “Muslim Ban” in the U.S. or anti-burka laws in

parts of Europe—reflect institutional Islamophobia and normalize discrimination against Muslims.

Right-Wing and Populist Movements

Far-right parties in Europe such as France's National Rally or Germany's AfD regularly portray Islam as fundamentally incompatible with Western values. This rhetoric fuels conspiracy theories like the so-called "Great Replacement Theory," presenting Islam and Muslims as cultural and demographic threats.

Surveillance and Security Policies

Muslim communities are disproportionately targeted by counter-terrorism laws, surveillance, and policing.

Programs like the UK's Prevent have been criticized for profiling Muslims and discouraging free speech and suppressing legitimate political and religious expression.

Evidence and Studies

Media studies (e.g., University of Birmingham, 2019) found that over 60% of British media coverage of Muslims is negative. Pew Research consistently finds that Muslims face more discrimination than most other religious groups in the West. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have documented how laws and policies disproportionately target and harm Muslim communities, particularly post-9/11.

Nuance and Pushback

Not all media or political actors are Islamophobic. There are many journalists, outlets, and politicians actively working to combat bias and promote inclusion. Social media and alternative platforms have allowed Muslim voices to challenge stereotypes and advocate for fairer representation. Anti-Islamophobia legislation and educational campaigns are gaining traction in places like Canada and some U.S. states.

Islamophobic ideas in Western media and politics are deep-rooted but not absolute. They often reflect historical biases, post-9/11 security fears, and populist politics—but they are also being actively challenged by civil society, scholars, and some political leaders. The struggle is ongoing, and awareness is rising.

Islamophobia in Western textbooks: In Western countries, Islamophobia in textbooks operates as a subtle yet powerful form of bias, shaping how generations of students perceive Islam and Muslims. Although overt hostility is rare in modern curricula, many textbooks still contain skewed narratives, selective omissions, and frame things in a way that quietly

reinforces Islamophobic ideas.

Here's a detailed look at how this appears in practice:

How Islamophobia Appears in Western Textbooks

1. **Selective Historical Narratives** Islamic history is often reduced to military conquests or the "rise and fall" of empires. Contributions of Muslim civilizations in science, medicine, architecture, philosophy, and art are minimized or ignored. The Crusades are often presented from a Eurocentric lens, portraying Muslims mainly as enemies.
2. **Association with Violence and Extremism** Modern references to Muslims tend to emphasize terrorism, jihad, or radicalization. The concept of "jihad" is frequently misrepresented as synonymous with holy war, ignoring the stringent rules that govern it, and its broader spiritual meanings in Islam. Discussions about the Middle East or conflicts involving Muslims often lack context and nuance regarding colonialism, Western interventionism, or political and economic motivations.
3. **Stereotyping and Cultural Reductionism** Islam is sometimes presented as a monolithic religion, and its rich and dynamic diversity is ignored. Cultural practices (like dress codes or gender roles) are framed as oppressive without offering Muslim perspectives or comparative contexts. Muslim women are frequently portrayed as passive or oppressed, without highlighting agency, diversity, or the voices of actual Muslim women from within Muslim communities.
4. **Omissions and Silencing** Muslim communities in the West are often absent from social studies or citizenship education, reinforcing the idea of Muslims as "outsiders" or "foreigners." Positive Muslim role models in history, politics, or civil rights are rarely included or celebrated in public discourse.

Evidence from Studies and Reports

"Islamophobia in the Curriculum" (Canada, 2017): Found that Canadian school curricula and textbooks often portray Islam through the lens of violence, oppression, and backwardness, lacking a balanced perspective. Runnymede Trust (UK): Reported that religious education books in the UK often misrepresent Islam as rigid and outdated, failing to capture its modern or diverse expressions. Studies by the Council on Islamic Education and the Institute for



Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) found distorted representations of Islamic teachings and history. Some textbooks used in U.S. schools have been challenged for including biased or factually incorrect material on Islam.

Consequences of Islamophobia in Textbooks

The portrayal of Islam in biased textbooks carries far-reaching consequences. By embedding prejudice into learning materials, such narratives normalise discriminatory attitudes from an early age and foster fear and misunderstanding among non-Muslim students. For Muslim students, these depictions can be alienating, making them feel “othered” or misrepresented within their own classrooms. Over time, such patterns undermine the goals of multicultural education and hinder genuine efforts towards inclusion and mutual respect.

Reform and Pushback Community and academic advocacy has led to some curriculum changes in Canada, the U.S., and Europe. Teacher training programmes are increasingly incorporating anti-Islamophobia modules, equipping educators to address bias in the classroom. And some publishers, have begun revising textbook content—often prompted by public pressure or legal challenges, as seen in the actions of school boards in Texas and California.

What an Inclusive Textbook Should Do: An inclusive curriculum should present Islamic civilisation as an integral part of global history and culture, situating it alongside other great traditions in the human story. It must offer multiple perspectives, amplifying

the voices of Muslim scholars, artists, and activists, and address current issues—such as Islamophobia, immigration, and identity—with both sensitivity and depth. Equally important is the recognition of the diverse contributions of Muslims within Western societies, ensuring that their presence is portrayed as woven into the social, cultural, and intellectual fabric of the modern world.

To combat Islamophobia, it is essential to promote religious literacy and cultural awareness as a means of countering harmful stereotypes. The media carry a significant responsibility to avoid sensationalist or biased reporting that too often links Islam with terrorism. Equally urgent are legal measures that enforce anti-discrimination laws and protect religious freedoms. Interfaith dialogue remains a powerful and effective tool for fostering cooperation and understanding between different faith communities. Ultimately, Islamophobia is more than a matter of personal prejudice—it is a global human rights issue. Confronting it demands the combined efforts of governments, civil society, educators, and the media to build a world grounded in respect, understanding, and peace.

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