

## ***Monthly Word 1 – The Jewel of Medina***

Here we go again.

We have been here before; Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses, Theo Van Gogh's Submission, the Jyllands-Posten caricatures are to the name the most infamous.

But, have we learnt from our experience so that we are better equipped to deal with these pieces of art and culture...I will let you contemplate over that question.

What should we be doing in order to make the wider public aware of the offence that is caused by these issues? Should we march the streets with slogans and placards? Should we vent our anger towards 'the West'? Should we gather in meetings after meetings and discuss until the cows come home without any proactive action? Or, should we do nothing and hope it goes away?

The main issue here is that we are a reactive community, we make little effort in practicing and propagating true Islam and when an issue arises we react to it in a manner which does not suit our title of 'being the best of nations'; instead we come across as a bunch of illiterate thugs who hate literature and art.

So what should we be doing; below are five simple steps which each one of us can do personally or become a part of.

1. **Response** – Any response should be measured, targeted and based on fact, it is not a wise tact say to boycott all Danish products due to the cartoons that were published by a Danish newspaper.
2. **Personal Knowledge** – How much do we know about the life of the Prophet Muhammad? What about the life of our Mother A'isha? Education is paramount in all aspects of life, especially when it involves the greatest man to have ever lived; therefore we should individually and collectively increase our knowledge and understanding of the luminaries and greats of Islam.
3. **Disseminating Knowledge** – Through the guidance of our scholars we should be distributing knowledge via all means of media in order to describe and explain the correct understanding of Islam and those that profess it.
4. **Legislation** – As a community we should be addressing the legal aspects of slander to Islam and its Prophets and other individuals. Legislation should be actively pursued in order to stop any piece of literature or art which depicts the main characters of Islam in a negative and derogatory manner.

5. **Acknowledgement** – There are many non-Muslims who also find material which ridicules a faith (or no faith) offensive and are more than happy to work with others in order to bring this to an end; this should be acknowledged, encouraged and praised. Likewise there are many organisations who do take material which causes offence to others seriously; for example Sony recently delayed the release of LittleBigPlanet as it had two verses of the Holy Qur'an mixed with music and apologised for the offence it may have caused their statement from the game's website is," We're sure that most of you have heard by now that one of the background music tracks that was licensed from a record label for use in the game contains two expressions that can be found in the Koran. We have taken immediate action to rectify this and we sincerely apologise for any offence this may have caused."

We must recall in June 2007 Sony apologised to the Church of England regarding a game which included violent scenes in the Manchester Cathedral, however the game was not withdrawn. (See for more details <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/7679151.stm>).

Therefore, this should be acknowledged, encouraged and praised. How many of us are writing to Sony for this positive step they have taken?

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