

Contemporary Issues in

ISLAMIC COMMUNICATION

Editor

Mohd Yusof Hussain



IIUM Press

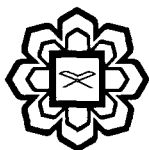
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The Danish Cartoons

MOHD YUSOF HUSSAIN

No action could have evoked more anger and condemnation by Muslims than actions taken to demean and tarnish the personality and character of Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. who Muslims believe to be the last and seal of the prophets (Qur'an) and who Muslims love more than their own selves.

This fact is well known among Muslims but not so well known among Christians particularly in the West who have been taught to believe from very early childhood that belief in the divinity of Jesus (Isa p.b.u.h.) is the only way to salvation and that Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. is a false prophet. Besides being influenced by Christian evangelists who are misinformed about Islam, the Christians in the West have also been influenced by the writings of Christian writers including the great Dante who downgraded and scandalised the Prophet p b.u.h.

It is unfortunate that Christian writers and media practitioners in the West are portraying the Prophet of Islam in a bad light based on stereotypes, prejudice and false information. These irresponsible actions will certainly not lead to inter-religious understanding between Muslims and Christians.

In spite of this negative consequence on Muslim-Christian relations, some writers and media practitioners in the West continue to produce works depicting negative traits on the personality of Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. In very recent times the latest Western media to do so was the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* which published cartoons depicting Prophet Muhammad p b u.h. in a derogatory form. These cartoons sparked protests from all over the Islamic World.

This chapter discusses the cartoons of Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. published by *Jyllands-Posten* as well as the reactions by Muslims and non-Muslims towards these cartoons. The reasons for the contrasting responses will be discussed.