

(Episode 41)

**Possibility of criticizing Islam, the quran and Muhammad
And attacking father Zakaria himself**

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-The broadcaster: we received in our program many questions speaking about the freedom of religion and worshipping and the freedom of criticism and meditation and the possibility of criticizing Islam, lot of authority people spoke about the program of "questions about the faith" broadcasted through Life T.V channel and spoke about yourself Father Zakaria accusing you of attacking the religion of Islam in all its creeds; the quran and the converses , you are even attacking the prophet of Islam Muhammad himself , How do you answer that?

- Father Zakaria: I am glade to answer that

I'd like to ask those challengers why do they consider that program as attacking Islam, while its name is" questions about the faith" , let them remind me one time I attacked Islam or the prophet, tell me when and how and in what episode

All what I had said were from the Islamic books, we are reading them for the viewers to listen to them, nothing more and nothing less than that

The facts may be concealed for the viewer, or he may have limited time to read

Actually those questions themselves are those present in the minds of many Muslim viewers and even Christians, specially the young promising youth, but for a reason or another the Muslim can't express himself , so we are expressing the free thinking and speaking about what already exist in the minds of our beloved Muslims, we are seeking the knowledge and we are motivated by our love to those who are seeking knowledge, that makes us adopting their roles and speaking in their tongues

It is really a good chance for the beloved eminent scholars to answer us and give people answers for their questions, I think instead of challenging us, they should thank us ,as we are opening subjects for them to speak about in order to convince people

Let them come here and discuss with us those things to reach the truth

But if there are no convincing answers, so our questions would have a lethal effect as there are certain unanswered areas

-The broadcaster: Actually I read articles with the same old accusations like; you are Zionists, you are CIA agents and other silly things, we are affirming that we have no connection with any political authority what so ever

- Father Zakaria: I don't know why the challengers are trying to magnify things, telling that there will be a sectarian turbulence, does argument become turbulence? Does inquiring become a crime? Are the free thinking and free expression and meditation considered anxious nowadays? Isn't that among the human rights?

-The broadcaster: We are not used to have free expression in our Arabic world

- Father Zakaria: we are now in the twenty first century; we have freedom granted by laws ensuring the free expression and opinion , I am telling those who are upset from that 30 minutes program, where have they been when Sheikh Muhammad metwaly Al-Sharawy was attacking Christianity and the Christ for long hours? and also others like

Dr; Omara, Dr; Zaghlol al-Najjar, Sheikh Omer Abdul Kafy and the author and producer of the film" I love cinema"

Why didn't they say sectarian turbulence? While they accused that enlightening program of causing sectarian turbulence

They are attacking the Christ by degrading him from his divinity, telling that he was just a man , and we are telling that he was the incarnated God , so by saying that he was just a man that's an aspersion in the Christian creed

**When they say that your book is falsified that's an aspersion in the Christianity
So when we rebut that, we became criminals.....really amazing!!**

What about destruction of churches and killing of Christians, isn't that a sectarian turbulence? What about Al-Koush'?

-The broadcaster: what do you mean by those things; destruction of churches and killing of Christians?

- Father Zakaria: I am speaking about what is happening in the Arab countries especially Egypt, murdering, burning and demolition

Al-Koush', that's a small village in upper Egypt, they stroke them, destroyed their homes, murdered them and court cases have been made, and all of the criminals were acquitted and the Christian victims were jailed? Why? Because the Muslim can't be blamed for a Christian

Why they didn't call that sectarian turbulence?

Why our speaking that's carrying no sword and killing nobody, they call it a sectarian turbulence?

-The broadcaster: what kind of true religion that permits killing and burning?

- Father Zakaria: we say that in the repentance chapter (Surat At-Taubah) 29:" Fight against those who believe not in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah and his Messenger, and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth (that's Islam) among the people of the Scripture, until they pay the *Jizyah* (tribute) with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued"

So killing of the Christians is an Islamic legislation, that's not punishable

-The broadcaster: How could you imagine that God is judging man who is not following Islam ordering to kill him?

- Father Zakaria: here in the program, I'd like to praise the Egyptian adjudication, as in Rose Al-yousef newspaper, edition number 3911 on 30/5/2003 there was an article saying: for the first time Al-Azhar confiscated a book and the adjudication abated the confiscation that court was under the headship of counselor Farouk Abdul Kader, the head of the court

the court verdict came opposing what was mentioned in Al-Azhar report considering it against what is present in the constitution about the freedom of opinion and its availability for everybody and the verdict affirmed that act 47 of the constitution of Arab republic of Egypt states that: freedom of opinion is granted for everyone for expression of his opinion by writing, speaking ,publishing , photographing or any other means of expression

So I am praising the Egyptian adjudication for that

-The broadcaster: Does that freedom really exist?

- Father Zakaria: As long as there is a judicial verdict it is binding for everybody to comply with

It is a nice article in Rose Al-yousef in two pages, so the sun of freedom is rising; we hope that it will fill the whole world

So after that verdict, is there a risk from our free dialogue and questions in that program in the life T.V?

I personally don't see in that program any attacking to any religion, but it is an invitation for logic thinking and searching for the truth

The truth is not restricted to someone, but it belongs to everybody, and it is the right of everybody to search for the truth and to embrace it without fear of authorities or the terrorism of bigots

-The broadcaster: Dear viewers, the number of viewers of the program is increasing day after day, we are receiving many questions from new viewers, and I'd like to offer them to you

- **A question:** can any one inspect the holy books especially quran?

- Father Zakaria: A nice question, I remember that I answered it before, but I will answer it again, as I know there are increasing number of millions of viewers watching the program in the Arab countries and Europe

There was an article in Al-Ahram newspaper on Saturday may 11, 2002, about the conference of the Islamic research congregation, held by Al-Azhar"under the title" This is Islam" held between 16-18 of April 2002

About it, the writer Mr. Ahmed Ragab the editor of Sandouk Al-Donia {the world box} wrote conveying a letter came to him from the counsellor; gamal Al-Din Mahmoud the ex-general secretary of the high counsel of Islamic affairs and ex deputy chief of countermand court he said: Sheikh Abdul Moe'z Abdul jabar, one of the proselytisers having experience moved and had a strong speech in front of the conference, he proposed to judge the texts of the holy books including the quran

So for answering the previous question I am saying that Sheikh Abdul Moe'z Abdul jabar had reached a further dimension, he reached to judge the texts of the holy books

We are neither judging books, nor inspecting books, nor condemning books but we are just reading and asking questions for the sane thinker human to ask

-The broadcaster: so we can ask and it is not unlawful?

- Father Zakaria: absolutely not, the Christ said:" You search the Scriptures carefully because you suppose that in them you have eternal life. Yet they testify about me".

A religion is saying to you ask and search, but I am wondering how does the quran is saying "don't ask about things which, if made plain to you, may cause you trouble"

One is saying search and they testify for me, and the other one is saying don't ask, that's a question

-The broadcaster: another question about the prophet of Islam Muhammad is it of everyone right to inspect the personal life of the prophet Muhammad, isn't that considered humiliation to him?

-Father Zakaria: Dr; Aisha Abdurrahman Bent Al-Shate', she is a professor of the high studies of the quran in Al-Qarawieen university in Morocco , she said in her book " "women of the prophet" page 7,8 : " hiding the news about the personal life of the messenger is not accepted by the honesty of research ,and it is commanded by the noble quran that was keen to mention that life to show the humanity of the messenger , so I couldn't avoid speaking about what was not avoided by God, about the prophet and his life, so any researcher is not allowed to ignore mentioning it"

She is saying that "in all what I have mentioned about the life of the messenger of God. I didn't see any embarrassing thing to direct the light of research on it, my references for that was the noble quran , the prophetic converses and other Islamic resources in life story and history , which are beyond any doubt concerning the faith"

So the researchers didn't have any embarrassment in exploring the life of the prophet , what we are doing is asking about that life , is that considered offending to Islam?

She mentioned the marriage of the messenger to the child Aisha, while she was 6 years old, and he married her while she was 9 years old, and his marriage to zainab, the wife of his adopted son and others

And not only Bent Al-Shate' but there are lot of books about the prophet life story and the true converses books as Al-Bokhary and Muslim, all of them mentioned those things very clearly , so why we are blamed for offering such questions ?

By the way, I am mentioning here what was said by the Holy Bible concerning asking the Christians: as it said:" always be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason concerning the hope that is in you"

-The broadcaster: another question: we heard a recorded tape for one of the church bishops , it is available on the internet on the Islamic sites, and they are playing it regularly in the pal talk chatting program in the Islamic rooms against you father Zakaria and your program, saying that you shouldn't attack the prophet of Islam Muhammad , is

that a confession that Muhammad is a prophet? And what do you say about that accusation

-Father Zakaria: I am glade to hear such attack, as the church has no connection what so ever with that program and it is not bearing any responsibility on it, I am bearing alone the full responsibility on it

Concerning his saying the prophet of Islam meaning a confession of being a prophet, that's a very far possibility

I am asking, is offering questions considered a crime?

-The broadcaster: one of the viewers said: I knew about that program and I watched it one time, then I got furious and was about to destroy my T.V, but I just decided not to watch it again, but I found myself on the time of the program opening it & I was watching it regularly thereafter, now after months I am writing to you, thanking you, as I knew the truth, and now I am enjoying my life with the Christ

-Father Zakaria: thanks God, the people are now asking and inspecting to reach the truth, I am congratulating this brother for knowing the truth

Actually the Muslim who listens to the program is shocked initially, but when he thinks he will reach the truth

I don't care about increasing the number of Christians and decreasing the number of Muslims, that's not the purpose and not the case

The case is love for the human soul which was created by God to know the truth for the eternal destiny