



## AL-QUDWAH

ISSN(P): 2959-2062 / ISSN(E): 2959-2054

<https://al-qudwah.com>



## *The Role of Islamic Scholar in Shaping Media Narratives*

### ABSTRACT

*In the era of advance technology, media plays a crucial role in society. The vast audience of media cannot be refuted without either consideration. so we can't forget media in this world of advancement where one statement of a person can change the prospective of a whole nation. Islamic scholars have played a significant role in shaping media narratives, particularly in the context of the Muslim world. Their influence extends beyond traditional religious teachings to include the interpretation of political, social and cultural issues through an Islamic lens. As media becomes an increasingly powerful tool in shaping public opinion scholars provide intellectual and moral guidance that helps frame discussions on key issues such as governance, ethics, social justice, and interfaith relations. In the digital age Islamic scholars engage with media through various platforms including social media, television, and podcasts where they address contemporary challenges facing Muslim communities and offer insights based on Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). Theology (aqeedah) and history. They often intervene in debates on topics such as extremism, gender roles, and the relationship between Islam and modernity. By offering nuanced interpretations of Islamic teachings they can challenge misrepresentations of Islam and promote a more balanced understanding in global media narratives. Moreover, Islamic scholars can act as mediators between Western media and the Muslim world helping to bridge cultural gaps and reduce stereotypes. They contribute to the creation of media content that is both faithful to Islamic values and responsive to the needs of a rapidly changing world. In this way, they not only shape how Islam is portrayed in the media but also influence the broader discourse on global issues, advocating for peace, tolerance, and social harmony from an Islamic perspective.*

**Keywords:** Media, Digital Media and Social Platforms, Tariq Ramadan, Sheikh Hamza Yusuf, Muslim Scholars.

### AUTHORS

**Ayesha Ramzan\***

Lecturer, The University of Faisalabad:

[ayesharamzan.IAS@tuf.edu.pk](mailto:ayesharamzan.IAS@tuf.edu.pk)

**Saima Ramzan\*\***

M.Phil Scholar, Government College Women University Faisalabad:

[saimaramzan24@gmail.com](mailto:saimaramzan24@gmail.com)

**Date of Submission:** 12-12-2024

**Acceptance:** 21-01-2025

**Publishing:** 04-02-2025

Web: <https://al-qudwah.com/>

OJS: [https://al-qudwah.com/](https://al-qudwah.com/index.php/aqrj/user/register)

[index.php/aqrj/user/register](https://al-qudwah.com/index.php/aqrj/user/register)

e-mail: [editor@al-qudwah.com](mailto:editor@al-qudwah.com)

**\*Correspondence Author:**

**Ayesha Ramzan\*** Lecturer, The University of FSD.

## **Introduction**

In this digital information era, media has become an influential force in shaping the perceptions and point of views of the world. The role played by media narrates how societies perceive the religious, political identity and conflicts issues. In case of Muslims, the biased and distorted representation of Islam to the world by media has led to the misunderstandings of Muslims around the world. However, many modern and traditional Muslim scholars have played a vital role in shaping media narratives and counteracting the misunderstandings about Muslims and Islam.<sup>1</sup>

Muslim scholars having deep knowledge of ethical principles and Islamic teachings, have utilized digital, social and traditional media to challenge the prevailing perspectives by offering the alternative perspectives. This paper will explore that how Muslim scholars have changed the perceptions and narratives given by western media.

### **1. Muslim scholars as media influencers:**

In past Muslim scholars was working only for the teachings of Islam or the religious teachings. But now as the media expands especially social and print media including radio, television and internet the scholars especially Muslim scholars find it necessary to address the prevailing challenges to Muslim impact around the world. Social and print media has cleared the path for Muslim scholars to influence the audience worldwide. With the help of online lectures, television programmes and many more ways of social media Muslim scholars has access to the worldwide audience particularly young Muslims to challenge the current narrative<sup>2</sup>.

### **2. Traditional Media and Religious Institutions**

In the 20th century, traditional Muslim scholars utilized television and radio broadcasts to connect with the masses. Prominent religious institutions, such as Al-Azhar University in Egypt and the Jamia Millia Islamia in India, have produced renowned scholars who have appeared on national and international media channels. These scholars, by articulating Islamic viewpoints on key social and political issues, have created media spaces that counterbalance the often negative portrayal of Muslims in the West. For instance, scholars like Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi have been influential in shaping the discourse on issues such as Islamic finance, women's rights in Islam, and interfaith dialogue<sup>3</sup>.

### **3. Digital Media and Social Platforms**

The proliferation of digital media, especially platforms like YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram, has further empowered Muslim scholars to shape narratives in real time. The ease with which information can be disseminated has allowed scholars to engage directly with global audiences, offering nuanced interpretations of Islamic teachings on various issues, from terrorism to human rights. Scholars like Dr. Tariq Ramadan and Sheikh Hamza Yusuf have gained large followings online by producing content that is accessible to Muslims around the world.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ahlin M and Carler N (2011) Media and the Muslims: A thesis on media framing and priming in Argentina. Available at:

<http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:422182> (accessed 21 April 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Saifuddin Ahmed. "Media representation of Muslims and Islam from 2000 to 2015: a meta-analysis." Sage journals, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> El Fadl, Khaled Abou. "The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists." HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.

## **The Role of Islamic Scholar in Shaping Media Narratives**

Muslim scholars have also used digital media to address the rise of Islamophobia and to advocate for a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of Islam. Online debates, public lectures, and webinars hosted by scholars have become crucial tools for shaping the global media narrative and providing a platform for alternative voices to be heard<sup>4</sup>.

### **Challenging Stereotypes and Misrepresentation**

A significant part of the role that Muslim scholars play in media is the effort to challenge stereotypes and correct misconceptions about Islam and Muslims. After the 9/11 attacks, the Western media often linked Islam with extremism, portraying Muslims as terrorists or as an existential threat to the Western world. Muslim scholars have sought to dismantle this false narrative by emphasizing the peaceful and ethical aspects of Islam.

Scholars have used media outlets to educate the public about the diversity within the Muslim world, highlighting the pluralism of beliefs, practices, and cultural expressions within Islam. They have also critiqued Western media for generalizing and misrepresenting the actions of extremists as reflective of Islam as a whole. By providing a scholarly counter-narrative, they have facilitated a more accurate representation of Islam that resists reductive portrayals.

### **The Ideological Debate within the Muslim World**

While Muslim scholars have worked to shape media narratives, they themselves have not been monolithic in their views. The ideological diversity within the Muslim scholarly tradition means that different scholars may approach media and public discourse from various theological and political perspectives. For example, some scholars advocate for a more conservative interpretation of Islam, while others promote progressive and reformist views on issues like gender equality, democracy, and social justice<sup>5</sup>.

This diversity has created a vibrant and sometimes contentious debate within the Muslim world, which is often reflected in the media. The rise of Islamist movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood or the more recent rise of groups like ISIS, has complicated the narrative. Some scholars argue for the need to engage with political power and seek an Islamic state, while others prioritize the intellectual and ethical revival of Islam without political involvement. These differing approaches shape the media narratives surrounding the role of Islam in the modern world.

## **Case Studies: Muslim Scholars in Action**

### **1. Tariq Ramadan and the Debate on Islamic Modernity**

Tariq Ramadan, a prominent scholar, has played a significant role in addressing the challenges Muslims face in the West. His writings and lectures promote the idea of "Islamic modernity," advocating for a rethinking of Islamic tradition in a contemporary context. Ramadan's contributions to media narratives have been instrumental in articulating a vision of Islam that can coexist with democratic values and human rights<sup>6</sup>.

### **2. Sheikh Hamza Yusuf and the Defense of Islamic Tradition**

Sheikh Hamza Yusuf, another influential scholar, has used media platforms to emphasize the importance of preserving the traditional teachings of Islam while engaging with the modern

---

<sup>4</sup>Esposito, John L. "Islam in the West." Oxford University Press, 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Abu-Rabi, Ibrahim M. "The Influence of Islamic Thought in the Modern Media." Islamic Studies Journal, 2011

<sup>6</sup> Ramadan, Tariq. "Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity." Oxford University Press, 2004.

world. His defense of Islamic values in the face of modernity and his critique of the negative portrayal of Muslims in Western media have made him a key figure in shaping public understanding of Islam<sup>7</sup>.

### **3. Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966)**

Sayyid qutab who was an Egyptian scholar and Islamic thinker, he is famous for his western materialism critique, social justice ideas and he also worked on analysing the role of media on promoting the contrary ideas of the ideologies of the Islamic value. His milestone work have influenced many Islamic movements that captivate modern day Islamic narratives<sup>8</sup>.

### **4. Abdulhamid II (1842–1918)**

As an ottoman sultan, he recognize that social and political media has power to change the perspective of the society regarding Islam. He encourage the use of print media particularly pamphlets and newspaper to reinforce counter western jingoism and Islamic identity of Ottoman Empire.

### **5. Khaled Abou El Fadl (1963–present)**

A renowned Islamic scholar and professor of law at UCLA, Abou El Fadl has addressed how media often misrepresents Islamic beliefs and practices. He advocates for a more nuanced, authentic representation of Islam in media, countering stereotypes<sup>9</sup>.

### **6. Amina Wadud (1952–present)**

An Islamic scholar and feminist, Wadud has contributed significantly to the way Muslim women and their roles are portrayed in media. Her works highlight gender, religion, and media, offering critical perspectives on representation and inclusion in media narratives.

### **7. Ziauddin Sardar (1951–present)**

A British-Pakistani scholar, Sardar is a prominent intellectual who critiques the way Muslims are portrayed in Western media and the influence of media on Muslim identity. His works engage with issues of media, technology, and the Islamic perspective on modernity<sup>10</sup>.

### **8. Nawal El Saadawi (1931–2021)**

An Egyptian feminist writer and activist, Saadawi's work challenged gender norms and societal structures in the Arab world. Her critical take on media, particularly regarding the portrayal of women and Islam, has shaped debates about how Muslim women are represented in both traditional and modern media.

### **9. Ali Shariati (1933–1977)**

An Iranian sociologist and revolutionary thinker, Shariati emphasized the importance of media in shaping social consciousness. His analysis of Western media and its influence on Muslim societies helped form an understanding of how media narratives can shape Islamic identity.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Yusuf, Hamza. "Purification of the Heart: Signs, Symptoms, and Cures of the Spiritual Diseases of the Heart." International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Qutb, S. (1964). Milestones.

<sup>9</sup> An-Na'im, A. A. (1990). Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law. Syracuse University Press.

<sup>10</sup> Sardar, Z. (2004). Islam, Postmodernism and Other Futures: A Ziauddin Sardar Reader. Pluto Press.

<sup>11</sup> Rauf, F. A. (2004). What's Right with Islam: A New Vision for Muslims and the West. HarperOne

**10. Rashid Khalidi (1948–present)**

A Palestinian-American historian and scholar, Khalidi has critiqued the Western media's treatment of Palestine and its people, advocating for a more nuanced understanding of the geopolitical issues facing the region and its portrayal in global media.

**11. Asma Barlas (1948–present)**

A Pakistani-American scholar and feminist, Barlas has written extensively on the intersection of Islam, gender, and media, critiquing how Muslim women and Islamic culture are often misrepresented in both Western and Islamic media.

**12. Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf (1948–present)**

A prominent Islamic leader and scholar, Rauf has worked to create a positive narrative of Islam in the media, particularly in the United States. He is known for his interfaith work and media outreach to counter negative portrayals of Muslims post-9/11.<sup>12</sup>

**13. Social Media Campaigns and Grassroots Activism**

Muslim scholars, especially in the context of issues like Palestine, the Rohingya crisis, and the Uighur situation in China, have played an instrumental role in mobilizing media campaigns to bring international attention to human rights abuses. Using social media, they have called for solidarity among Muslim communities worldwide and lobbied for political change, demonstrating the power of media in advancing socio-political causes.

**Conclusion**

Muslim scholars have increasingly become key players in shaping media narratives, particularly in the global context. By engaging with mainstream and alternative media outlets, utilizing digital platforms, and challenging misrepresentations of Islam, they have made significant contributions to both local and global discourses. Their efforts to counteract stereotypes, promote nuanced understandings of Islam, and engage with contemporary issues highlight the vital role of scholars in shaping public perception and fostering a more accurate, inclusive, and respectful portrayal of the Muslim world. As the media landscape continues to evolve, the influence of Muslim scholars in shaping these narratives will remain a central component of efforts toward greater global understanding and interfaith dialogue.

---

<sup>12</sup> El Fadl, K. A. (2001). *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists*. HarperOne.