

Muslims urged to unite against hate-inspired film

I said yesterday that the new film [Lady of Heaven](#) seems to be approved of by Shia Muslims, but criticised and opposed as blasphemous by Sunni Muslims. I now know that official Shia sources also condemn it.

The Islamic Human Rights Commission, the Iranian government funded group who organise the Al Quds demonstration every year (in London if not elsewhere) issued a [statement on Sunday](#).



Muslims in Britain should unite in opposition to the controversial film *Lady of Heaven*, currently playing in cinemas up and down the country.

With its derogatory portrayal of eminent Muslim personages in early Islamic history including the Prophet Muhammad's wives, the film represents a blatant provocation and brazen attempt to sow discord and division in the House of Islam.

The film's writer, Yasir al-Habib, is a well-known hatermonger who was imprisoned in Kuwait for pushing hate-filled sectarian narratives.

His views and activities have been condemned by Sunnis and Shias alike who have also questioned the sources of his funding and support.

As early as last January, Shia scholars in the UK came out against the film saying anything that “causes friction and disunity between Muslims” is not representative of their beliefs.

IHRC condemns the motives of Cineworld Group in giving a notorious hate preacher a platform to sow discord. Given the strength of feeling against it in Muslim communities, the criminal background of the writer and the pernicious intent of the film, the company should never have agreed to screen it.

In addition to boycotting the film Muslims should seize this opportunity to come together and put up a united front to demonstrate our unity in the face of this effort to foment division.

Yassir Al-Habib's statements over the years have been used to cause disunity between Muslims and hatred of Shia Muslims.

According to the [Iranian news agency AhlulBayt News](#) the film's writer Yassir al-Habib is a controversial Shia scholar who currently resides in the UK. He is the head of the Khoddam Al-Mahdi Organization in London, an organization that stormed the Iranian Embassy in the UK a couple of years ago. Before seeking refuge in the UK, Al-Habib was arrested in the early 2000s in Kuwait for inciting Sunni-Shia division. After being pardoned by the Emir of Kuwait in 2004 Al-Habib fled Kuwait, eventually landing in the UK. In 2010 Kuwait revoked his citizenship after he publicly insulted the wife of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

A few years ago when reports emerged about the production of the film, several Iranian sources of emulation, including Ayatollahs Lotfollah Safi Golpayegani, Nasser Makarem Shirazi, and Hossein Ali Nouri Hamaedani, blacklisted it and called on Muslims to desist from watching or promoting it. “... all Muslims must know that the messages intended to be conveyed by this film are neither the messages of Islam nor those of the

Shia school of thought," Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi said then.

The Islamic scholars are at liberty in my country to discuss and debate a film. They can advise their congregations not to bother watching. That is their right in a free country. But in a free country they have no right to interfere with the business of a cinema to show a feature film (there is a film classification process to weed out pornography or sickening violence, and what constitutes that is a debate for another time) or the viewing public to watch it.