

Proving the Point

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. (*Psalms 119:165*)

Nothing proves the truth about someone like their reaction to something that is stated about them. When someone is peaceful, declaring that they are violent will not provoke them to violence. Moreover, when someone has absolute confidence in what they believe, making statements which are contrary to what they believe does not provoke them either. After all, they know that what they hold to be true is true and cannot be proven (at least to them) otherwise. It is only when one feels threatened that they perceive the need to become hostile to those who hold a contrary view.

Baptists, historically, have held the view that the Scripture speaks for itself and has no problem proving itself, despite any and all claims of man. Moreover, it is only the Baptists that have historically, emphatically declared that every individual has liberty of the conscience to choose what they believe, and cannot be coerced into believing something they do not agree with. It is very much like the child whose mother makes him sit down when he doesn't want to. As the story goes, he tells her that he is "still standing up on the inside."

This strikes at the heart of all false and coercive systems. Those who are not secure in what they believe, must have others to agree with them, otherwise they feel quite vulnerable. This unease has consequences for everyone around them. It should be well understood that someone who is experiencing insecurity or internal conflict, is far more apt to lash out at everyone around them in an effort (however misguided) to relieve the stress they have. Since we all know the truth and can differentiate between the truth and a lie, when we choose to believe a lie, it creates internal stress that cannot be relieved unless we relinquish our hold on the

lie we have chosen to believe.

In this the Scripture is clear:

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: . . .(*Genesis 3:22*)

And again:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (*Romans 1:18-21*)

Hence, there can be internal stress and angst over what one knows to be true at the very core of their being, and what they have chosen to actually accept and live by. When the two differ, something has to give, else one is perpetually angry and tends to lash out whenever challenged. After all, if what they believed was indeed true, there would be internal peace and a confidence that cannot be challenged. Why lash out when you know that the challenge to what you believe is demonstrably false and a lie? Hence:

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. (*Psalms 119:165*)

Which brings us to the point of defending "God," and those who believe violence is necessary to defend their "God" from all challenges to his "deity" and position of authority.

This is not to say that one ought not argue for their "God," rather, it is to differentiate between simply arguing for who and what you perceive to be "God" and deciding that those disagreeing with you must be killed. There is, after all, a world of difference between those two positions. Scripturally, there is precedent to answer those who believe they must kill to defend their "God:"

And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar *that was* built. And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it. And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst *it is yet* morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar. (*Judges 6:28-31*)

The truth is, Baal was not and is not God. Neither could it be proved that he is God as the failure at Mount Carmel demonstrates so very well:

And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, *even* I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under*: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under*: And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire,

let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress *it* first; for ye *are* many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire *under*. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed *it*, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But *there was* no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he *is* a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the *time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.* (I Kings 18:21-29)

However, the LORD God did indeed prove that He is the God:

And it came to pass at *the time of* the offering of the *evening sacrifice*, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that I am* thy servant, and *that I have done* all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou *art* the LORD God, and *that thou hast turned their heart back again.* Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. (I Kings 18:36-38)

Thus, if your "God" is indeed God, then he doesn't really need your (or another man's) help in dealing with those who oppose him. Indeed, if he is truly God, then he is the Author of reason, and reason should prevail, as He hath declared:

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though

your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;
though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.
(*Isaiah 1:18*)

For those who sought to kill Gideon, and others like them, the reason they did so was to avoid having the lie about their god exposed. Their god cannot defend himself and reason with you, because he is not. Not only is he not god, but he really does not exist except in the deceived hearts of those who claim him (or her, as the case may be). To allow questioning of their god risks exposure as a fraud. This they cannot allow. Hence, they kill in defense of their god.

Which now brings us to the point of the recent upheavals in the Islamic world over perceived slights to Muhammad and Allah.

Back in 2008, a Dutch politician by the name of Geert Wilders produced a short film documenting verses in the Quran and the result of individuals following the instruction in those verses. The film is called "Fitna" which generally means "causing problems between people," which the followers of Islam tend to do – and all in the defense of their god and his prophet. The reaction to the film was, and is, telling. Just like the common excuse given over this most recent upheaval (the actual reasons are two: The continuing imprisonment of the Blind Sheik, and a drone strike which killed the No. 2 man in Al Qaeda), which is at best, a B-rated movie about Muhammad's excesses, the Muslims are offended that Muhammad is insulted and are demanding that everyone who does not believe in Allah and Muhammad be killed.

Now, to be fair, not everyone who carries the label of Muslim, is this way. In actuality, a great many "followers of Islam" are just like the followers of many other religions worldwide, it is a nominal thing that has very little to do with what they actually believe. They are Muslim because their parents were, it is the predominate religion in their area of the

world, etc, etc... and they really do not actually agree with everything stated in the Quran. As much as that fact may anger the purists of Islam, it is a cold, hard fact that most of the people in this world "go along to get along."

However, those individuals are not the definers and drivers of Islam. Rather, it is the "true believers," the ideologues, the diehards, the fundamentalists that drive the religion, that define it (as it is with any religion). They take the words of their book and put them into action. In them is the internal conflict the greatest and the offenses the most deeply felt. And herein lies the most telling evidence of what Islam actually is.

If Islam is truly a religion of peace, then in its most dedicated followers there will be no desire for reprisal when someone ignorantly portrays it as violent and Muhammad as a deceitful thug. Rather, there should be a shaking of the head and a desire to patiently instruct where that individual has gone wrong. After all, the "Founder" of Christianity taught those who opposed Him, and other than cleansing the Temple (twice), He never raised a hand against anyone. Instead, He looked to God to justify Him, knowing that everything He did was right:

For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up. (Isaiah 50:7-9)

For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also

suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: . . . (*I Peter 2:20-23*)

Thus bringing out the truth of the statement in the 119th Psalm:

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In contrast to that, Geert Wilders has documented in *Fitna* the decided tendency of fundamentalist Muslims (being led of the Quran) to resort to threats and violence to demand respect and accomplish their ends.

It does make one wonder about the crowd that gathered outside Joash's house, demanding Gideon be handed over to be killed for insulting Baal. To paraphrase Joash, perhaps the Muslims ought to let Allah and Muhammad plead for themselves. It would certainly go a long way towards disproving the contention of both *Fitna* and *Innocence of Muslims*.