

Light in the shadow of jihad: the struggle for truth



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Introduction

The world needs to learn to understand each other's faith and belief and respect it in every way. Following the September eleventh tragedy, Christians face the dilemma of comprehending the truths of the tragedy and responding to it in a Christian way. That dilemma is answered through deep study and understanding Islam guided by the bible and prophecies contained in it. America and the world must realize that God fulfills his purpose frequently through disasters.

With the tragedy, a lot of essential questions arose: Is terrorism the true focus of Islam? Is God absent in such disasters?

As America mourned, some celebrated. It is true that some people may think that they are terrorists but some may think they are freedom fighters. The belief that actions can be justified politically has been going on for years. Politicization of morality has given an opportunity to justify actions politically and once it is done, it could be morally accepted as well (Lyon). Other democratic nations believe that the individual is the arbiter of right and wrong. But some like Bin Laden think differently.

Faith is the basis of morality but at the same time it is the root of relativism in every means to establish one religion. This makes their inconsistencies evident. If moral agnosticism is the absolute of relativism, how come relativism tells us that no one can discern right from wrong? On the other hand, the attackers have spent their last hours with prostitutes in night clubs. If their absolute is Islam, why spend their last night to satisfy their sexual needs instead of their spiritual needs?

Zacharias' Book

Ravi suggested in his book, *Light in the Shadow of Jihad: The Struggle for Truth*, five major questions that prevail in people's mind after the September 11 Bombing. These questions are: Did the terrorists' action portray a true Islam belief? What can state and church do in shaping the outlook of people on religion and how does it affect the culture of the nation?

Did the incident illustrate an Islamic tradition or such only undermine the religion of Islam? Were there any known predictions that such phenomenon would actually occur? What is the implication of such incident to the world and to the Future? Moreover, He implicitly asked how God views the incident (Zacharias). Was God in favor of what happened? Why did He allow such violence take place? These were few of the questions directed to question the inclination God towards the 9/11 Bombing.

Osama Bin Laden; A Protagonist or an Antagonist?

Discernment begins with intuition. But as everybody knows, may often be wrong. Like for instance, Osama Bin Laden's intuition has failed him (Zacharias). After 9/11, he deliberately complained about the bloodshed in Afghanistan. The bloodshed has suddenly become too reprehensible for Bin Laden. Intuition is simply not enough bases for discernment. Therefore, reasoning must come to place. But how do we move from intuition to reasoning? Relativist has said that reason could not move us to morality and that people are not capable of discerning right from wrong simply because right or wrong does not exist. Morality derived from intuition then become in conflict with morality derived from reasoning (Zacharias).

As these conflicts arise, a need to go back to the foundation of morality is in place. The society merely recognizes that need. It is urgent and must be taken into consideration.

Bin Laden, has his own way of looking at and discerning of the Islamic belief and tradition. Likewise, he has his own way of interpreting the codes of conduct or the morality included and written in the Quran. If his decision failed him, then logically, somehow his knowledge and interpretation of the Quran may be different from the original message of it.

Muslim, Islam, Allah and the 9/11 Bombing

September 11 terrorists thought or believed that their action is Allah's will (Zacharias). While other Muslims think it is corrupted Islam. If such difference of belief exists among Muslims, what does other people from other beliefs to believe?

Is terrorism a fruit of an Islamic worldview or a fruit of socio economic situation? People then must examine Islam to answer this urgent question. As discussed in the book, Islam is a religion which originated from Muhammed. It was through military invasion that Islam was spread out. After the death of Muhammed without a heir or successor, Islam movement was divided (Zacharias).

In this time of division, some readings of Quran were destroyed. Thus, this incident becomes a controversy among critics for they think that textual tampering took place. Four sources of Quran accounts and history after the incident emerged- the Hadith, the Sunna, the Sira, and the Tafsir (Zacharias). But different sects of Islam have different levels of importance to these

sources. This is an evidence why Muslims, most of the time, are not unanimated in terms of opinion, actions or methods within their religion today. In this situation, Muslims rely on abrogation. But in this method, another problem arises. Which Quran readings abrogate other Quran readings? Differences among Muslims arise even more. Some Muslims persecute Christians to the point of killing them. There have been several reports about it. Like 9/11 tragedy is persecution to Christians (Muhammad). It is extreme and unfair.

Educators has attempted to have an in-depth study of Islam but has met resistance with Muslim leaders. There is a chance that they are trying to manipulate the minds of other Muslims. What could be derived from Islamic history?

There exists a major confusion among Muslims about their religion. This confusion is primarily caused by the division that is still evident today. From this as well, we can safely say that not all Muslims agree to violence (Zacharias). Organizing and restudying of Islam is urgently needed by Muslims.

Christianity and the War of the Religious Faiths

What about in Christianity? Is it not in any way predicted or prophesied by the bible? Throughout history, the prophesies in the bible has come to pass. As for example, in the book of Daniel about Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar had a problem about a statue which has four different parts. It was a dream that Daniel had to interpret. Daniel explained to Nebuchadnezzar that it concerns kingdoms (Muhammad). The first kingdom would overcome the kingdom before them until it reach the fourth. These came to pass as prophesied.

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Jesus conquered human history without any political agenda. According to theologians, God is there but his presence is not obvious. This is called "the hiddenness of God" (Muhammad). An atheist, on the other hand, thinks that if God would manifest himself, they would believe he exists. Other Christians sometimes wish so too.

As Muslims persecute Christians, Christians persecute Muslims as well (Muhammad). After 9/11, Muslims faced everyday discrimination against them. Every Muslim is perceived to be a terrorist (Lyon). What does that say about Christianity? What is the difference between Muslims and Christians with this kind of discrimination?

This desire to see God tells more about us than about God. We turn to God when we have no one or nowhere to turn to and question him when our needs are not met. This happens because of our tendency to rely on our intellect and the continuous nurturing of our minds with knowledge. Deep inside each of us yearns for rational evidence. With Christians, faith varies but some beliefs are evident. A true relationship with God is when we begin to relate to him in both our ups and downs. God has a purpose. He intends to have us trust him and submit our lives to him in the midst of tragedy.

Religion and the Future

The world is suffering from lack of critical minds in relation to worldviews (Lyon). We are corrupted with so much information, too many voices. But it will never be enough for people to just listen to them and absorb everything. It is important for people to filter it before accepting it as true.

The world should put to use faith as a basis of morality. Intuition and Reasoning is not enough. We should put to use the basis of religion as the solid ground of morality in our society. Religion may vary but it is sure the most solid, even if it may be inconsistent, foundation for morality.

Respect for other culture and religion must be evident in every individual for the betterment of humanity. We may live in a democratic society but still discrimination is still evident. We must realize and accept that our religion or faith varies. Respect comes from understanding and learning each others cultures. Learning from the experience and moving on from it is in need. It is a challenge for everyone to understand each other. It is time for us to move on from the tragedy. It is time to move on from the corrupted and discriminating society that we are today. Let us move on and be better.

Works Cited:

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