

Danes the Cartoon People

Muhammad Zafrullah at Pocatello

It appears that Danes the Cartoon People are at it again. Recently, October 6, 2006, the Danish TV aired, scenes of some youngsters drawing cartoons of Prophet Muhammad. Some time ago some objectionable cartoons of the Prophet were published in Danish press and some Muslims got angry. Things went out of hand and sadly some people died. The “freedom of speech” folks appear to be at a loss to understand why the Muslims get so angry. It seems fair to explain why. Of course I am not condoning the rash behavior of some hotheads; I am just explaining it and offering a few words of my own.

To be a Muslim one has to believe in all the true prophets of God. So, they believe in and respect Jesus, Moses, Jacob, Isaac, Ishmael, Abraham and all those prophets who were or were not mentioned in the Holy Scriptures (including the Quran). In other words, by the very nature of their beliefs Muslims would be offended by any insult hurled at any of the prophets mentioned in the Quran, not just the Holy Prophet. OK, you might say, this explains their being offended why get angry? Anger often comes from inability to do or get something. The thing is if you insult my prophet and I can insult back your prophet things would mostly stay calm. But if you insult my prophet and I cannot insult your prophet, because I respect your prophet as much as I do mine then the ugly head of anger shows.

Now, must a Muslim be angry at drawing caricatures of any of the holy prophets? It really depends upon a person and his/her knowledge of Islamic teachings. Some people have a short fuse; so, when they are offended they might get angry. Some people might be offended but they would look to the Quran for guidance. Being a complete book of instruction the holy Quran has something to say in this regard. The Quran states as a couple of characteristics of good Muslims: **And those who bear not false witness, and when they pass by anything vain, they pass by with dignity.** (The Quran, Ch. 25, Verse 73, starting with basmalah.) Now drawing cartoons is vain and frivolous and a true Muslim should pass by it with dignity i.e. ignore it. So, there we have it. This is the teaching that helped Muslims keep cool heads when in the days of the Prophet the Jews were hurling all sorts of insults at the Prophet and this is the teaching that will help Muslims keep their cool against all the evil activity in the name of freedom of speech.

Now does the freedom of speech apply here? Does saying hurtful things or printing hurtful caricatures come under freedom of speech? As far as I know the current Danish activity comes under criminal misconduct. But if the world opinion is manipulated by criminals and morally bankrupt folks who are bent upon doing Muslims harm, then they would try everything in their power to carry on this evil activity, so that they can show that the Muslims are violent people. What they are trying to achieve is turning the whole world against Muslims, so that when they unleash inhuman punishment on a Muslim population with some freedom fighters, there would be no world reaction at the killing of the innocents. Looks like an interesting strategy, but about such strategies God Almighty has this to say: **And thus have We made in every town the leaders of**

its wicked ones that their doings seem fair to them with the result that they plot therein against the Messengers of Allah and they plot not except against their own souls; but they perceive not. (Quran: Chapter 6, Verse 124 starting with basmalah.)

The Wicked ones were never able to see their plots succeed when the Messengers of Allah were alive and their plots against the followers of the Messengers would not succeed now, because God Almighty cares about the true followers of His Messengers.

Now, what should a Muslim do? Listen to your God, stay calm; seek God's help with patience and prayer, fight back if you are physically threatened or if someone tries to change your faith by force and in this case you would be victorious. If you are living in a Western country remember that their "civilization" is just a veneer. When they feel that their interests are threatened they are deadly even to their own kind. This has been written as their fate and only they can change it by truly turning to God, even in their own religion, shunning all the idols, of worldly power, that they worship.

It was very hard to conclude this note. There are so many things one can say. Then the following occurred to me. If live honorably and let live honorably were to become the motto of modern day humans there would be no Danish cartoons, no Muslim riots, no Palestinian suicide bombers and no Iraqi insurgent etc. ... and there would be no quibbles over threats to freedom of speech. How about giving that a try? I hope I am not asking for the end of the world!