

Twenty-four:Fifty-one

by [Anjuli Pandavar](#) (July 2020)



Landscape with Lanterns, Paul Delvaux, 1958

We hear, and we obey, that is the problem:
Whether it is nobler in Islam to suffer
The doubts and questions of critical thinking,
Or to double down against the pangs of conscience,
And by denying, end them: obey, to think
No more; and by no thought, to say we end
The heartache and the thousand ijmaa' shocks
We are exposed to? It's a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To hear to obey,
Obey, and not to think; yes, that is it,

For in obedient thought, what bliss may come,
When we have rid our minds of wilful thoughts,
Restored our faith? There's obeisance
That makes slavery of our lives:
What Muslim wants the jokes and jibes of all,
The infidel's scorn, the kafir's ridicule,
The shame of depraved laws, like "beat your wife,"
The claim the Qur'an has never been changed,
Yet no sheikh can write down what Allah had said?
When the doubter cuts his jugular vein
With a kitchen knife? Who would bear such abuse
To cry and suffer under a modern life,

The supposed joy of something after death,
That is promised to us all, if we but
Obey the learned ones, with strong iman,
And makes us rather kill those doubts we have,
Than follow thoughts we're not supposed to have.
Fear of doubt does make cowards of us all.
And yet the certainty of our Muslim faith
Is undermined by things we know are wrong
And conundrums of very great importance,
Such as our scholars and sheikhs lying to us,
And taking us for donkeys—stop! Don't think;
You bear no knowledge on this. You are the masses
Who hear and obey. Remember!

(In humble acknowledgement of William Shakespeare, Muhammad Hijab and Yasir Qadhi)

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