

Miroslav Volf of Yale, or Eli Eli Lama Sabachthani

Miroslav Volf has for two decades been a leader in the interfaith healing industry; he founded and directs the Yale Center For Faith and Culture. His specialty is proclaiming that Christians and Muslims “worship the same god,” even though, apparently, this conclusion is based on a distinctly one-sided investigation, for he blandly announces that he arrived at his conclusions by “studying Christian theological sources...also the great thinkers of the Christian faith,” but gives no indication that he has subjected to similar study the “Muslim theological sources” – Qur’an, Hadith, and Sira – or the “great thinkers of the Islamic faith.” Could it be that he hasn’t felt the need?

Miroslav Volf appears to believe that “when enmity between two groups of people arises, we want that other, our enemy, to be different than we are. We don’t want to have commonalities with that other.” It is a willed enmity, that must be kept at full strength. According to Volf, the reason that Christians resist his conclusion that “we (Christians and Muslims) worship the same God” is not based on their own study of the texts but rather, having chosen to be enemies (or in Volf’s awkward phrase, at a “point of enmity”), they would not wish anything positive, some “point of unity” or “commonality,” with Islam, to get in the way. To which one is entitled to ask: Why not?

In the hope of someone understanding something of what he is attempting to express, let me give you another quote from Volf, remarkably like the first: “I think what happens is that when enmity between two groups of people arises, we don’t want to have commonalities with that other.” Still not clear? How about if we try yet another version from Volf: “if you say you worship the same God, that Muslims and Christians worship the

same God, somehow, that is a point of unity, and at a time when we are at a point of enmity, we want to push the other person (away). I think that, in part, is what has been going on.” Again, ask away, on redirect, about are we different or just the same, or just repeat after me: *Mumbo-jumbo, beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom, boomlay boomlay boomlay boom.*

So, to sum up, Christians relish their “points of enmity” with Muslims and don’t want to have anyone bringing up some pesky “commonality” that would force those Christians to lessen their enmity, because god knows they are having so much fun – aren’t we all? – with Muslims for enemies.

By now you are as confused as I am, but perhaps neither of us is as confused as Miroslav Volf.

Let’s take a station break right here and ask him a few questions.

Why would Christians in the first place feel any “enmity” toward Muslims? He’s neglected to tell us. Perhaps he can’t imagine why. Might it have been something that Muslims have done to Christians, over the past 1350 years, acting in accordance with, rather than in opposition to, certain texts – Qur’an, Hadith, Sira? Could this “enmity” have had anything to do with the way Muslims attempted during those same 1350 years to emulate the behavior of Muhammad? And why does Volf not mention that the “enmity” for Muslims is felt not only by Christians, but by Jews, Zoroastrians, Hindus, Buddhists? Have they all been trying to deny those “points of commonality” and to keep the number of “points of enmity” sky-high? Could it be that there are no “points of commonality” that needed to be denied in the first place?

And is it really true that the Christian theologians who have accepted at face value assorted Muslim exercises in taqiyya and kitman, including “A Common Word,” have been out to deny

“points of commonality”? Haven’t they, with a very few admirable exceptions, in recent years bent over backwards on every conceivable occasion to find and celebrate any so-called “points of commonality” between Islam and Christianity they can? Isn’t that what Miroslav Volf has been doing since 2001?

Miroslav Volf tells us that Christians and Muslims are taught to “love” their “neighbor.” Not quite in the same way, however. Christians are taught to love their “neighbor,” that is their fellow man, whether Christian or not. Muslims are taught to love their fellow Muslims and to despise non-Muslims. The Qur’an teaches them that they, the Muslims, are the “best of people” and that non-Muslims “are the vilest of creatures.” The Qur’an tells them when to make war on non-Muslims, how to treat them when they are conquered, what fiendish ways may be used to remind the non-Muslim of his state of permanent humiliation. The Qur’an tells Muslims “*not to make friends with Jews and Christians*” ([5:51](#)), to fight them “*until they pay the Jizya (a penalty tax for the non-Muslims living under Islamic rules) with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued*” ([9:29](#)), to “*kill the disbelievers wherever they find them*” ([2:191](#)), “*murder them and treat them harshly*” ([9:123](#)), “*fight and slay the Pagans, seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem*” ([9:5](#)).

The Quran says that all those who disbelieve in Islam go to hell ([5:10](#)), they are najis (filthy, untouchable, impure) ([9:28](#)), and orders Muslims to fight the unbelievers until no other religion except Islam is left ([2:193](#)). It prohibits a Muslim from befriending a non-believer even if that non-believer is the father or the brother of that Muslim ([9:23](#)), ([3:28](#)).

The Quran asks the Muslims to “*slay or crucify or cut the hands and feet of the unbelievers, that they be expelled from the land with disgrace and that they shall have great*

punishment in the world hereafter” (5:33). And tells us that “for them (the unbelievers) garments of fire shall be cut and there shall be poured over their heads boiling water whereby whatever is in their bowels and skin shall be dissolved and they will be punished with hooked iron rods” (22:19-22) and that they not only will have “disgrace in this life, on the Day of Judgment He shall make them taste the Penalty of burning (Fire)” (22:9).

The Quran says that “those who invoke a god other than Allah not only should meet punishment in this world but the Penalty on the Day of Judgment will be doubled to them, and they will dwell therein in ignominy” (25:68). For those who “believe not in Allah and His Messenger, He has prepared, for those who reject Allah, a Blazing Fire!” (48:13).

Then Allah advises Muslims to “strike off the heads of the disbelievers”