

People Are The Same The Whole World Over

Nine years ago I wrote about President Bush's dreams of creating a Light Unto the Muslim Nations in Iraq (you may remember that \$2 trillion dollar, decade-long campaign in Iraq, and how wonderfully it all turned out):

"The sentimentalist in the White House contents himself with bromides about how people everywhere 'love freedom' and that all we have to do is bring 'freedom' to Iraq. And with that 'freedom' (demonstrated by those purple-thumbed elections that drew tears from sentimentalists everywhere) all manner of things will be well. Islam's resurgence – not return, because it never left – in Iraq is nothing to worry about, because Islam is not the problem, only those 'extremists' who 'pervert' a 'noble religion' are the problem. Nonsense on stilts."

After the Iraq adventure, the next incarnation of that curious and entirely fantastic notion that "people everywhere love freedom" turned out to be the celebrated "Arab Spring." Now the freedom-loving impulse extended far beyond Iraq. Freedom would naturally flower, so it was believed, in any Muslim land where despots could be deposed – just get rid of a Mubarak in Egypt, a Ben Ali in Tunisia, a Qaddafi in Libya and, if we just hold on, an Assad in Syria, and freedom, democracy, the whole works, would forever flourish.

Behind this deep belief that "all people love freedom" is the equally baseless proposition that "all people are the same the whole world over." And if "people are the same the whole world over," then surely the God they worship must be the very same God. And that statement is usually put in a narrower form, allowing the dismissal of Buddhists and atheists and at least a billion Hindus, to wit: "Muslims and Christians worship the

same God.”

Those who utter this phrase never bother to adduce any evidence for this extraordinary remark. They do not tell us about the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, and thus spare themselves the effort of explaining how that conception of a triune God is like *tauhid*, the anti-trinitarian monotheism of Islam. They try to overlook the fact that in Christianity, God has a Son, while in Islam Allah it is an insult to Allah's transcendent majesty to say he has a son. They do not discuss the Muslim Allah who rants and raves about Christians and Jews, and calls them all sorts of names (apparently the Muslim Allah does not himself believe either that “people are the same the whole world over” or that “we all worship the same God,” for if we did, what need for him to denounce Christians and Jews?), and compare him with the Goodness-and-Mercy Brotherhood-of-Man-Fatherhood-of-God – all that Bomfoggery – of Christianity.

And still another way in which the Muslim God can be distinguished from the Christian God is in the way Allah can do anything He wants – see Robert Spencer or Stanley Jaki. He can govern the universe as He pleases, is not bound by natural laws. The Christian God – see Robert Spencer or Stanley Jaki – operates according to natural laws. But, as Spencer has noted, Allah's “hand is unfettered – he can do anything. The Qur'an explicitly refutes the Judeo-Christian view of God as a God of reason when it says: ‘The Jews say: Allah's hand is fettered. Their hands are fettered and they are accursed for saying so’ (5:64). In other words, it is heresy to say that God operates by certain natural laws that we can understand through reason....Allah was not bound to govern the universe according to consistent and observable laws. ‘He cannot be questioned concerning what He does’ (Qur'an 21:23). Accordingly, observations of the physical world had no value; there was no reason to expect that any pattern to its workings would be consistent, or even discernible. If Allah could not be counted

on to be consistent, why waste time observing the order of things? It could change tomorrow.”

We could dilate upon all the differences between the Muslim God and the Christian God. But what good would adducing the evidence from the Qur'an, or Al-Ghazali, or the Hadith, do in convincing the kind of people who like to say, because they want so desperately to believe, that “Muslims and Christians worship the same God”? Just keep saying that. Just the way you kept saying that the Arab Spring would work miracles, and that Iraq would prove to be a Light Unto the Muslim Nations. Go ahead, believe two or three or four impossible things about Muslims and Islam before breakfast. And now would be an especially good time to do it, as I've just heard, on NPR, that a million Muslims have entered Europe as “refugees” this past year. What does it matter, if our God is the same, if we all want the same thing, if People Are The Same The Whole World Over? Why even bother, if we are all so very similar and worship and want the same things, to have such silly impediments as passports, and national boundaries? One World, for One People. What could be better?

First published in