




Desecration of The Musaaqid & Muslim Reaction



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QUESTION

We intend urgently lodging a complaint to the SAPS, the Human Rights Commission, Speaker of Parliament and Luthuli House regarding the recent calls of the Langebaan man for a Musjid to be burnt, the pig's head and blood splatter at two Musjids in Cape Town. Please advise and comment.

ANSWER

The desecration of some Musjids and the utterance of hate-speech by the Langebaan are clearly the abominable antics of men whose minds are convoluted with hatred for Islam and Muslims, hence they disgorge their inner feelings of animosity irrationally and disgustingly in ways which people of all religious persuasions abhor and dissociate from.

It is palpably clear that the desecration is the work of some mentally disturbed individual or individuals. No community may be blamed for the abominations of some of its members who are mentally disturbed. In the same way, the anti-Islam outburst by the Langebaan chap was the flotsam of the heart of a misguided individual cherishing hatred for no rational reason.

As far as Muslims are concerned, our reaction should be dignified, rational and responsible. There is no need to react with vengeance. In the first instance, the perpetrators are unknown. Thus, there is no specific target for vengeance by

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even those who opt to react emotionally and irrationally. Irrationalism culminates in greater anarchy as has been repeatedly observed in India and Pakistan where the policy of the communities is tit-for-tat. This attitude culminates in mutual tension and violence in the communities. But, we have the example of the Sahaabah in front of us. Our exemplars are the Sahaabah who acquired their character of moral excellence from Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

Despite Islam's abhorrence of all forms of *shirk*, and despite our belief that all religions are false and their places of worship are abodes of idolatry, we as Muslims, bound by the Shariah, are under obligation to respect and never disrespect any place of worship. We are not permitted by Islam to scorn or despise any community or individual irrespective of their corrupt views and beliefs. In a true Islamic state – and there are none today – it is the incumbent obligation of the state to protect the places of worship of its non-Muslim citizens. Any Muslim who desecrates a temple or church will be punished severely by the Qaadhi. The punishment ranges from lashes to imprisonment according to the discretion of the Qaadhi.

There are examples in our history, i.e. the history of the Sahaabah, where the Ameer (the Ruler of the country) or the commander of the Muslim army had posted guards to protect even the idols of non-Muslims. This they did by virtue of the citizenship of the non-Muslims or by virtue of a treaty. They scrupulously and religiously observed the terms of treaties.

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Islam strongly proscribes indulgence in negativity and futility. We are not to do anything which is bereft of benefit. The Qur'aan commands: "*Ward off evil with what is better...*" We do not see any benefit in petitioning the police, Human Rigts Commission, Parliament and Luthuli House on this issue. Firstly, there is no specific person/troublemaker to target with the exception of the Langebaan man. Regarding the Cape Town episodes, these institutions will be helpless to institute any action. The culprits are unknown.

Regarding the Langebaan man, he has publicly expressed his apology which we believe should be accepted regardless of what he conceals within his heart, that is, even if the apology is not sincere. Since Muslims should build bridges, especially in countries where they are vulnerable minorities, they should at all times be amenable to friendly exchange and reaction provided that no principles and tenets of the Deen are compromised.

The community should put the Langebaan man to shame by engaging him in friendly discussion. He has expressed his apologies. Now he should be politely asked to explain his reasons for having expressed himself with abominable indiscretion. If we find that he has a justifiable reason for his annoyance, then we should be accommodating. For example, if indeed the loudspeakers are blaring the Athaan too loudly which disturbs the non-Muslims at Fajr time, then it is incumbent for Muslims to drastically tone down the volume, and if necessary to deliver the Athaan without a loudspeaker. The Shariah does not require the Athaan to

be incumbently proclaimed by means of a loud speaker. The Muath-thin should mount the Minaret and proclaim the Athaan from on top without a microphone.

If the Cape Town culprits are by chance discovered, the Muslim community should engage them in intelligent dialogue and endeavour to rationally convince them of their error of having desecrated a house of worship. If the Qur'aanic principle of "*Repaying evil with what is better*" is practically adopted, we are sure that in most cases incorrigible kuffaar will be put to shame for their misdeeds when they observe our intelligent reaction bereft of hatred and vengeance.

The following is an episode from the pages of our glorious history.

HADHRAT AMR'S OFFER OF SUPREME SACRIFICE

This touching episode is recorded by the Muslim historian, Imaam Waqidi. We have reproduced it from the English version extracted from the book, ANECDOTES OF ISLAM by E. Khan

“Defeated and dislodged from Syria, the Roman warriors took their last bold stand at Alexandria, the then capital of Egypt. They concentrated all their strength here to arrest the progress of the Muslims, but Amr Ibnul ‘As (radhiyallahu anhu), the invincible Muslim commander, crushed the united might of the Romans even at this place. The

victorious General thereafter took into his hand the rule of the conquered territory (by the appointment of Ameerul Mu'mineen, Hadhrat Umar Bin Khattaab—radhiyallahu anhu).

General Amr (radhiyallahu anhu) began his rule by granting the fullest liberty to the Christian subjects in all their religious affairs. *(In an Islamic state, the non-Muslim citizens are required to pay a special tax called Jizyah which obliges the Islamic state to protect their lives, honour and property. They are allowed freedom of worship in their areas. The term 'fullest liberty' is incorrect. The liberty of the Dhimmi population has Shar'i proscriptions.— Mujlisul Ulama)*

One morning intense commotion was witnessed in the Christian quarter of the city. Bands of the excited inhabitants streamed towards Chawk Bazaar and assembled in a large meeting. One after another, fiery speeches were delivered. Thereafter a number of their leaders with the local Archbishop as their head, arrived at the gate of the house of General Amr Ibnul 'As. Amr (radhiyallahu anhu) cordially received the deputation.

The Bishop explained to Hadhrat Amr (radhiyallahu anhu) the cause of the excitement of the Christian inhabitants. There was a marble statue of Jesus Christ in the Bazaar. The Christians used to worship the idol with great reverence. Someone had broken the nose of the image the previous night. The Christians naturally connected the sacrilege with a Muslim.

General Amr (radhiyallahu anhu) gave a patient hearing and came to share the same suspicion (i.e. that a Muslim damaged the idol). He turned to the Bishop and said in a voice of agony: “I am deeply ashamed and pained at what had occurred. It is true, Islam disapproves of idol-worship. But it equally disapproves of the profanation of the gods and goddesses of non-Muslim communities. Please have the statue repaired and I shall bear the entire cost.”

The Bishop replied: “But it is impossible to repair it, for a fresh nose cannot be fitted to it.” General Amr (radhiyallahu anhu) said: “Then build a new statue, and I shall meet the cost.”

(Lest there be a misunderstanding on the issue of idols, it should be understood that when the non-Muslim community in an Islamic state pays the Jizyah tax and becomes subservient to Islamic rule, the Shariah guarantees them freedom of worship in their own areas. It is not permissible in an Islamic state for either the authorities or the Muslim populace to interfere with the worship, churches and objects of veneration of the Zimmis—the non-Muslim inhabitants in Darul Islam. All of this is part of the pledge between the Islamic state and the Zimmis, hence Hadhrat Amr’s offer—Al-Haq)

The Bishop replied: “But even that is not acceptable. You know we believe Jesus to be the son of God; so vulgar money cannot compensate for the profanation of his image. There is one compensation: we shall build a statue of your Prophet (Muhammad—sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and break its nose.”

(The bishop had exceeded all bounds of propriety in making this profane and insolent demand—Mujlisul Ulama, hence):

The face of General Amr (radhiyallahu anhu) blazed up in anger. His eyes rolled fiercely; his lips tightened; his body began to quiver, and again and again his hand grasped at his sword and again and again he extricated his hand from the weapon. General Amr (radhiyallahu anhu) left his seat, walked restlessly to and fro for some time. Then he washed his face with cold water. ***(As commanded by Rasulallah – Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) – when overwhelmed with anger – Mujlisul Ulama)*** He then returned to his seat and said in a quiet sorrowful voice:

“You propose to erect a statue of the Great Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) who after years of strenuous struggle abolished idol-worship and then you want to break it with insult — and all this before our eyes! It is better that all our wealth, our children and lives perish! Bishop, make some other proposal. I am prepared to cut off and deliver the nose of anyone of us for the nose of your image.”

The Bishop accepted the last offer with gleeful alacrity. The following morning Christians and Muslims swarmed to the open square—the Christians would have their revenge in this open place.

General Amr (radhiyallahu anhu) addressed the gathering and narrated the circumstances of the unfortunate incident in their fullest details. He then called the Bishop to his presence and said:

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“You are the head of the Christians, and I am the head of the Muslims here. The responsibility of ruling this country is mine and I must accept the punishment for any insult that may have been offered to your religion or for the weakness of my administration. Take this sword and cut off my nose”.

Saying this, he handed the Bishop his sword. The Bishop took the sword in his hand and began to examine the sharpness of the edge. The huge concourse stood silent and breathless in the profoundest astonishment. Suddenly the silence was broken by a Muslim soldier who was running towards the spot and crying: “Stop! Stop Bishop! Here is the nose of your image and herewith the culprit of the day. It is I who broke your idol and this punishment is due to me. The General is entirely innocent.”

Then the man stepped before the Bishop and offered his nose. The Bishop threw away the sword and said: “Blessed is the soldier; blessed is the General and above all, blessed is the noble Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) whose ideal has built up men like these. It was no doubt a wrong to break the image, but it will be an immeasurably greater wrong to mangle a human face for that.” — *End of episode.*

THE LESSONS FROM THE EPISODE

No doubt, every Muslim's heart will be moved by this touching episode which vividly illustrates the boundless and profound love which the Sahaabi, Hadhrat Amr Ibnul Aa's (radhiyallahu anhu) cherished in his bosom for Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). It is only the transcendental concept of devotion for the Rasool (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) which can induce a powerful ruler in full control of the land under his jurisdiction to voluntarily offer his face to be mangled by one of his defenceless subjects.

Non-Muslims can never even grasp the very rudimentary elements of the type of devotion and love which the illustrious Sahaabi demonstrated by his actions. Every move which Hadhrat Amr made during his dialogue with the Bishop displays his love, the superiority of his intelligence and his lofty state of moral excellence.

From Hadhrat Amr's spontaneous reaction of blazing anger the moment the Bishop presented his suggestion of insulting Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), the West, while not being able to understand the spiritual rationale which underlies the surge of almost uncontrollable rage, should at least acknowledge the existence of an inexplicable spiritual force which impels Muslims to react spontaneously and violently when their beloved Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) is insulted. This is a reality which the West has to take into account when they formulate their policies and conspiracies in relation to Muslims.

Besides the aforementioned lesson which the West can learn from this wonderful episode, Muslims can learn several lessons.

(1) That there is no anarchy in Islam. The way in which Hadhrat Amr (radhiyallahu anhu) acquitted himself in the face of the severest provocation is exemplary. After all, the Sahaabah were beacons of guidance. *“All my Sahaabah are just (guiding stars). Whomever you follow, you will attain guidance,”* said Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

(2) That issues are resolved intellectually within the framework of the Shariah, not emotionally at the behest of the inordinate demands of the evil nafs whose counsellor-in-chief is Shaitaan. Hadhrat Amr’s first and spontaneous reaction on merely hearing of the suggestion of insult was the desire to smite the neck of the Bishop and despatch him into the bowels of Jahannam. But he arrested his anger and discharged his obligations as a just ruler representing the Rasool of Allah Azza Wa Jal. He did not permit his blazing anger and his revulsion for the vile suggestion of the Bishop to goad him into the commission of the slightest vestige of injustice. He did not react like a hooligan and a thug. His head was held high aloft in the clouds of morality and spirituality—there where the Angels dwell.

(3) That a powerful man is always in control of his anger and his nafs. He is not a slave of his bestial desires. When the fire of anger drove Hadhrat Amr (radhiyallahu anhu) to repeatedly clasp his sword to despatch the Bishop to Hell, most certainly, the words of his Beloved Master Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) for whom he was prepared to mangle his face and disfigure himself for life,

rang in his ears: *“A powerful man is not he who drops another person in physical combat. A powerful man is he who is the master of his nafs at the time of anger.”*

He then proceeded to wash his face with cold water to cool the flames of his anger because his Beloved Master said: *“Anger is from Shaitaan and Shaitaan was created from fire. Extinguish fire with water.”* Although enflamed with anger, Hadhrat Amr (radhiyallahu anhu) maintained his mental equilibrium and abstained from committing any excesses.

(4) That the rights of non-Muslims should be observed. Pledges made with non-Muslims have to be honoured. The insult which the Bishop proposed was not a valid ground for violating the pledge which existed between the Muslim ruler and his non-Muslim subjects.

(5) That notwithstanding Islam’s uncompromising concept of Tauhid (Monotheism) and implacable aversion for idolatry, the Sahaabah practised great tolerance of the kufr religions of the non-Muslim people in the conquered territories. Part of the pledge and treaty stipulated freedom of religion for the non-Muslims in their areas. It therefore devolved on the state to guarantee protection of the churches and relics of the non-Muslim subjects.

(6) That while Muslim anger is natural, valid and justified when Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) or Islam is insulted, we have to contend with the Shariah. Anger should not constrain Muslims to transgress the prescribed limits of the Shariah which prohibits injustice and anarchy. The action which is to be instituted should be calculated and

conform to the Shariah. Mob rampages and commission of destruction are not the Shariah's ways of resolving issues.

“These are the limits of Allah. Do not approach even near to them.” (Qur’aan)

That is, commit no transgression of the Shariah's laws.

Our Noble Predecessors – How They Reacted to Insults

Hadhrat Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarraah (radhiyallahu anhu), the Commander-in-Chief of the Muslim army despatched by Ameerul Mu'mineen Umar Bin Khattaab (radhiyallahu anhu) to conquer the Land of Shaam (Syria), had, on the plea of the governor of Qinnasreen principality, entered into a peace pact for one year.

The boundary of Qinnasreen was marked by a statue of Heracleus, the Roman emperor. By virtue of the peace treaty, the Muslim army was not to go beyond this limit.

One day a group of Sahaabah from the army ventured near to the border area. The statue was guarded by Roman soldiers. The Sahaabah were intrigued by the statue. With their horses they went around the statue. Hadhrat Abu Jandal (radhiyallahu anhu) was holding a large spear. As his horse neared the statue, the spear accidentally pierced its eye.

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The Roman guards reported the incident to the governor of Qinnasreen, who flew into a rage. He sent a thousand horsemen, all clad in gaudy silken apparel, with a golden cross to complain to the Muslim commander, and to demand compensation for the desecration of the statue of Heracleus.

The head of the Roman delegation of a 1,000 horsemen was instructed to protest to Hadhrat Abu Ubaidah, and say: *“You have acted treacherously with us. You have violated your pledge. You have shirked your responsibilities. Those who commit treachery will be humiliated.”*

Istakhar, the chief of the Roman delegation arrived with his men at the Muslim camp, holding aloft the golden cross. When the Muslims saw the cross aloft in their camp, they advanced towards the Romans and pulled down the cross. Hadhrat Abu Ubaidah (radhiyallahu anhu) appeared and said to the Christians: “Who are you? Why have you come?”

Istakhar: “I am the emissary of the governor of Qinnasreen. I am here to protest against the treachery you people have committed.”

Abu Ubaidah: “Who committed treachery and in which manner?”

Istakhar: “Your man who had damaged the eye of our emperor’s statue has violated the treaty.”

Abu Ubaidah: “I take oath and say, I am unaware of this. I shall immediately investigate the matter.”

Hadhrat Abu Ubaidah (radhiyallahu anhu) announced: “O people of Arabia! Whoever has damaged the eye of the statue should report to me.”

Hadhrat Abu Jandal (radhiyallahu anhu) stepped forward and said: “I had accidentally committed the deed.”

Hadhrat Abu Ubaidah (radhiyallahu anhu) said to Istakhar: “Undoubtedly, our man did it, but not deliberately. It was an accident. State your demand for compensation and it shall be fulfilled.”

The Roman said: “We shall be satisfied only when we pierce the eye of your king in the same way.”

Hadhrat Abu Ubaidah said: “Fine! I am at your service. Do with me whatever was done to your statue.”

Istakhar: “No, not you. We want to pierce the eye of your king who is the ruler of entire Arabia.”

Istakhar demanded the eye of Hadhrat Umar (radhiyallahu anhu). But Hadhrat Abu Ubaidah (radhiyallahu anhu) rebuffing him said: “It shall never be so.”

When the Muslim army heard the insult levelled against Ameerul Mu’mineen, Hadhrat Umar (radhiyallahu anhu), they became enraged and were about to settle the issue with their swords. However, Hadhrat Abu Ubaidah prevented them from any action.

The Muslims said: “We shall sacrifice our lives for the honour of our Ameer, Umar Bin Khattaab, the Khalifah of

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Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). As compensation for the eye of your statue we are prepared to offer our eyes.” The insult to Hadhrat Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) was intolerable to the Sahaabah who were prepared to offer any other sacrifice to compensate for the eye of the Christian’s statue.

When Istakhar observed the state of the Muslim army and the attitude of the Sahaabah, he said: “My intention was not the actual eye of your king. Our intention is to make a statue of your King and desecrate it in the same way as your man had desecrated the statue of our emperor.”

The Muslims retorted: “Our companion did not deliberately damage your statue. It was an accident whereas you contemplate doing so by deliberate design.”

Hadhrat Abu Ubaidah (radhiyallahu anhu) addressing the Muslim army said: “Let us conclude this dispute. If they are satisfied with making a statue of me and desecrating it, I shall grant their request. I am averse to any charge of treachery being levelled at us. I do not wish them to have the opportunity of claiming that we had committed treachery. These people are great ignoramuses.”

He then gave the Romans permission to make his statue and desecrate it. The Romans made a statue and one of their horsemen advanced towards the image and pierced its eye with his spear. In this manner they avenged the ‘desecration’ of their statue.

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After executing this task, Istakhar reported to the governor who commented: “It is on the basis of such attributes that these people are so victorious in their mission.”

There is more than adequate lesson in this episode for the Muslim protesters who went on rampage against the insulting cartoons. Our success and victory over the kuffaar are embedded in emulation of the life pattern of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and his noble Sahaabah. There is nothing but defeat, failure and humiliation in emulating the cultures of the aliens.