

Deifying The “Prophet”

I was shocked to hear the news Sunday night after I returned home from our evening assembly. Two heavily armed men, who intended to storm a building where a “Draw the Prophet” Muhammad contest was taking place, killing both before they could make their way inside. The contest was hosted by the New York-based American Freedom Defense Initiative (AFDI) that would award \$10,000 for the best cartoon depicting Muhammad.

The two suspects are believed to have driven 1,100 miles from Phoenix to invade the contest at a venue in Garland, Texas. They shot assault rifles outside, wounding a security guard and hitting at least one police car. As of the writing of this article, the Islamic State terror group (ISIS) has claimed responsibility for the attack — the first of its kind in the United States.

According to Islamic tradition, any physical depiction of Muhammad, even a respectful one, is considered blasphemous. In 2005, when Kurt Westergaard published a cartoon of Muhammad wearing a bomb in his turban, he was subject to assassination attempts and was put on an Al-Qaeda hit list in 2010. When the French magazine *Charlie Hebdo* published satirical cartoons of Muhammad in January 2015, their office was attacked and 12 employees were killed. Another deadly shooting occurred the following month at a free speech event in Copenhagen featuring an artist who had caricatured the prophet.

When one understands how Muhammad is viewed in Islamic culture, it is easy to see why they violently react to such depictions. Ironically, Muhammad never wanted to be worshiped since he was only the messenger of Allah. He forbade anyone from painting his picture lest it become an object of worship. Yet, many Muslims revere him. Before they say his name they prefix it with “Peace be unto Him.” A Muslim baby falls asleep while listening to his mother sing Muhammad’s name in a lullaby. “Muhammad” is the name given to many Muslim boys in the Islamic world. Muslims inscribe his name on their doorposts.

Muhammad is considered the perfect role model for all of mankind. Kamalud Dinad Damiri wrote: “Muhammad is the most favored of mankind, the most honored of all apostles, the prophet of mercy, the head of Imam or the faithful, the bearer of the banner of praise, the intercessor, the holder of high position, the possessor of the River of Paradise, under whose banner the sons of Adam will be one in the Day of Judgment. He is the best of prophets, and his nation is the best of nations ... and his creed the noblest of creeds ... He was perfect in intellect, and was of noble origin. He had an absolutely graceful form, complete generosity, perfect bravery, excessive humility, useful knowledge ... perfect fear of God and sublime piety. He was the most eloquent and the most perfect of mankind in every variety of perfection” (Grudel 72).

This goes further, even to the point of effectively deifying him. Sir Muhammad Iqbal warned, “You can deny God, but you cannot deny the Prophet!” He is often given titles like “Savior of the World” and “Lord of the Universe” (Geisler 88). “In the popular

doctrine of Nuri Muhammadi, or the Light of Muhammad, God first created the light of Muhammad and from the light he later proceeded to make the rest of creation” (Abdul-Haqq 128, 129). Another saying goes even further: “If Muhammad had not been, God Himself would not have existed!”

When people misrepresented the Lord, if any correction was made, it was done with truth, not with force of arms or terror (1 Peter 2:23; cp. Acts 2:36). The same occurred with Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:25-26), and the angel and John (Revelation 19:10). Murder (and attempted murder) is wrong (Romans 13:8-10). Ungodly, violent reactions come from the unrighteous action of elevating one man above another (Matthew 23:8-12). Jesus was the Son of God, proving Himself by “miracles and wonders and signs” (Acts 2:22), and therefore He deserves to be revered. Muhammad did nothing to prove that he was a “messenger of God,” and his followers will be eternally condemned for promoting him as such.

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