

FAITH AND RELIGION MANIPULATE PEOPLE TO BECOME MARTYRS

Fanaticism is usually a religious trait. Fanaticism in religion takes two forms. The first oppresses the mind and tries to make you feel guilty for disagreeing with the religious status quo. Christianity does this when it forbids doubt (Question 177, A Catechism of Christian Doctrine, CTS, London) which is the same as not allowing you to see clearly if the cult is true or not. The second is when the religion has you doing, thinking and enduring something harmful or hurtful that you wouldn't be doing if you were a decent irreligious person. For example, if it has you scared to eat meat on a Friday though you have no other food in the house.

Political fanaticism is terrible but can be excused a little for it will have some evidence for the stances it takes but there is no excuse at all for religious fanaticism which has no evidence. And it never has any. A political regime knows fine well that it has no right to kill citizens at whim even if it kills. But with religion it could be argued that God authorises and needs those killings for he kills anyway and is the master of life and death and if so he has the right to tell you to kill. Religion is a licence for fanaticism. Politics is not. Religious fanaticism cannot be refuted for you can never prove that God didn't speak to a raving religious fanatic. Political fanaticism can and always burns itself out. The evidence destroys it eventually. Religion is worse for it is immune to evidence.

Tolerance is a big virtue these days. It is insulting for it implies putting up with something undesirable. Religious tolerance means one religion merely stomaching the others that disagree with it. There should be no religion as there is enough around to test our tolerance without it adding to the problems. People get some comfort from religion but have they considered how in the bigger picture that this comfort is not worth it? Tolerance when practiced by a believer in religion is itself a form of fanaticism.

The seed of fanaticism is faith. The Christian teaching is: "Faith is trust in God and in his promises and in what he has revealed. It is the belief that God is honest and reliable and leads to you believing all he allegedly revealed. It is a supernatural gift from God for humanity is believed to prefer to be independent from God. Humanity will only trust God and become dependant on God if God helps them to do it, if God puts thoughts and realisations in their minds and changes their emotions to make faith attractive. So it is not natural." Faith is a miracle.

Christianity wants and expects, like its God, all believers to believe in the same stuff despite the problems of making this happen. So faith has to be caused by the direct influence of God to make it possible. The teaching that we just have to ask for faith and its God's gift and he will give it is just a subtle means of applying pressure and saying, "If you don't agree with us then you are a bad egg."

Christian Faith involves believing all the dogma that the source God speaks through states as true be it Church, prophet or Bible or any number of these. That means that if you really have supernatural faith in some Catholic doctrines and regard the Church as the source you will believe everything that source says. That is why Catholics who might scoff at the virgin birth of Jesus are not Catholics even if they believe everything else. They do not have the gift of faith but imagine they have it. A person with real faith who refuses to believe doctrines from the source of revelation and belief must be refusing to believe God on purpose and is trying to stamp out the light of God so not only does she know she is fighting God she is also giving up her trust in God. To deny or question one principle taught by the source is say that the whole source is unreliable. That is why the Church regards heresy or disagreeing with her teaching as the worst and most dangerous sin.

Christian Faith cannot mean that God makes you see the evidence that verifies the authenticity of the source of his doctrines for no two people agree on the evidences and reasons. Furthermore, they differ on the interpretation of the evidence and/or how helpful it is. For example, some accept some arguments for God's existence and others accept none of them. So God helps you towards the conclusion without any regard for the evidence. This really means that what you feel God is saying to you is what matters not the evidence for the evidence is not allowed to stand on its own for the whole process of getting to faith requires prayer and openness to God's guidance. So faith then is anti-evidence though it pays lip-service to it. It is a superstition. It takes quite a lot of arrogance to hold that what you want to be true is a communication from God and therefore true and that those who disagree with you are wrong. With that belief the more holier you seem to be the more black inside you would be because fanaticism (the desire to hurt others over faith) and egotism would be behind your holiness and it is not about God at all but only looks like it is.

The rock Christianity is built is on the doctrine of faith and it underlines how that faith is all lies and wishful thinking so that is what the miracles it boasts about are defending! It is feelings about doctrines that mean everything to Christians not the doctrines and they disguise this self-indulgence as selfless love for all.

It is common for Christians to mistake belief for faith. In fact, correct Christian doctrine sees faith as a form of knowledge. Sensible people know that the more outrageous a claim is the stronger the evidence is you need for it. You need absolute proof to accuse people of original sin, to accuse them of being responsible for breaking the law of God, to accuse them of needing a saviour, to accuse them of being able to commit serious sin, to say Jesus rose from the dead, to say priests forgive sins. Every religious doctrine needs absolute proof for the claims made are so huge and strange. And this proof must be understood by the person entering a religion before the person can be validly accepted. Christians can only say, "The more miraculous the doctrine the more miraculously perfect evidence you need that it is true. We agree. We have this evidence.

We know in our hearts that we are right." That attitude is arrogant and vicious and irresponsible. Fundamentalist religion will only go out to murder and maim if it thinks it knows that it should.

Martyrdom is testifying that your faith is true by dying for it.

Christianity thrived – and still does - on the lie that the twelve apostles of Jesus were killed for their testimony that Jesus did miracles and he managed to rise from the dead.

Clement of Rome writing either before 70AD or in 96AD is misinterpreted as saying Peter and Paul were martyrs in Rome but the word he used does not mean blood martyrs but just witnesses. He never says how they died but that they were pestered to death like Joseph of the Bible. But Joseph was not pestered to death for he lived a happy life after the pestering. So the expression is very loose and poetic and not literal. Clement doesn't even say where they died. Like Joseph, Peter and Paul were persecuted or martyred but ended their days in peace.

The early Church father Hippolytus was one of the best earliest sources that denied the martyrdom that Christians alleged visited most of the apostles. His account may contain some legendary material but there is no doubt that the sources that say that most of the apostles died natural deaths must be right for Christians wouldn't have wanted that to be true. And it is easier to remember martyrdoms than the more boring natural deaths. Martyrdoms make more impact and draw more interest in the martyr's cause. So let us not hope Hippolytus was mistaken. There were no martyrdoms – Hippolytus was telling the truth.

The alleged predictions of martyrdom from Jesus are ambiguous. They can be understood as predicting something other than death by martyrdom . But the texts may still have been enough to cause the legend through people misunderstanding - the gospel of John speaks of a case where Jesus was misunderstood. Evangelicals though claiming to support the Bible only, still believe the martyrdom stories though they come from legendary material that is full of wildly over the top stories which is dishonest. Their faith in the apostles' testimony does not come from the Bible but from outside it though the Bible claims to provide evidence. They say they believe what the apostles said about the resurrection because they died for their faith.

The apostle James was said to have been slain by Herod in Acts 12 but no indication is given that James chose this death to avoid denying Christ. It may have been an assassination so he can't be a martyr. For a person to be a true martyr he has to embrace death rather than denying his faith. He must have no other sufficient reason to choose death than to testify to it with his blood. He has to have this choice right up to when the sword is about to fall on his neck. He must not be blackmailed by the fear of divine retribution. The killers must not have made threats to him to hurt his family. It would be easy for somebody who was happier dead to be "martyred". He must be sane and not senile. We have no evidence that the apostles fulfilled these conditions – and the accounts of their deaths are legendary and full of stupendous and foolish miracles. No evidence is given by anybody in the early Church that claims any of the apostles was a true martyr in support of their contention. Accordingly, the apostles being martyrs is only hearsay not evidence and to deploy it to get converts for Christ is dishonest.

The apostles might have given their lives for political reasons for that was basically the reason they were slain if they were slain. If they died for religious freedom, to be able to declare the sectarian faith of their Jesus as true, that hardly makes them proper martyrs! It does not amount to being the same as testifying with their blood that Jesus rose.

To argue the apostles were telling the truth because they were martyred is to try and trick people. It is obvious that they might have been fooled themselves and we have no real evidence that they died for belief in a Jesus who physically not spiritually rose from the dead. If they died for belief that Jesus rose spiritually or then they are no good to the Christians. They would not be the first to die for something without sufficient evidence so if they did think Jesus rose physically we can wonder if or how they knew that.

Even if the apostles died for Christianity, we don't have any hard evidence for what kind of Christianity this was. The gospels only say the body was missing and that Jesus was raised but they never actually state that the body was resurrected for they don't know. There was a connection between the risen and the crucified body but it is not stated what it is. The

crucified body might just have provided the seed of the new body.

Apostles dying for visions would mean nothing for visions are easy to explain and are commonplace. Jesus himself said that the resurrection would be the only proof (Matthew 12:38-40) for even fakes could do real miracles (Mark 13:22) for presumably only God could have power over life and death.

Jesus stated that the Old Testament scriptures come first for they are more convincing than men coming back from the dead (Luke 16:31) so it is forbidden to believe in his resurrection unless the scriptures testify to it. He said that the resurrection must be believed in mostly because it was predicted in the Old Testament (Luke 24:25-27; Luke 24:44-47). He indicated that we must not believe in his resurrection unless we see that it is prophesied there. If the apostles died for Jesus then they did not die for Jesus or for visions or empty tombs or miracles but for what they said the Old Testament said. They died for an interpretation of the Old Testament that nobody honest or sane accepts as correct.

It is certain that the gospels say that Jesus after he rose lied to the apostles that his rising on the third day was predicted (Luke 24:46) so why listen to anybody who dies for a lying messiah?

Jesus' would have believed that as God is all-powerful, he alone has power to raise the dead as only he has power over life and death. So Christians argue that Jesus was from God for he rose. But they don't want to remember that Satan could make it look like his man rose from the dead. The evidence for a resurrection means nothing if Jesus' teaching was unimpressive or not unique or if it advocated evil. The resurrection is supposed to be important for it inspires us to love and gives our love eternal meaning. If Jesus and his teaching isn't special then all the evidence for the resurrection in the world means nothing. You can have a lot of evidence for something but then you could have a big piece of evidence that this something is not true. If Jesus ever sinned or taught wrong morals then this is big evidence against the resurrection. And he did both!

The evangelical habit of writing books to show that the resurrection is believable history is a tactic to scare and bully sceptics to believe. They want them to think, "There is something to this Jesus lark. I'm done for if he is the Son of God and my saviour so I had better turn to him." Jesus' own boast that the resurrection would prove his claims - if the gospels are to be believed - smacks of that vicious attitude. It is also intended to make their believers cockier. Weak believers are no help to priests and popes and evangelists who seek to use religion to enjoy power over lives.

The argument that the apostles told the truth about Jesus for people don't die for what they know is lies is untrue. People die for what they know is wrong – people who seem happy even commit suicide though they could get help like many do by opening up to their doctor. They die for the belief they know is untrue: that there is no hope.

The resurrection of Jesus is a legend and is not convincing enough to base a religion that makes huge and outrageous claims and equally crazy demands on.

People who understand the Christian message about faith and how it is a form of revelation from God are different from those who will not die for lies. It just is not the same thing.

Faith kills. Religion lures martyrs to their deaths and blames those who bear the actual sword!

