

People Can and Do Give their Lives for Lies

The New Testament tale that the Jews engineered the murder of Jesus and he had the last laugh by coming back from the dead is suspect. The Christians were suffering sectarian abuse from the Jews so the resurrection would be told in such a way as to vindicate the claims of the Christians to religious authority and even that their authority superseded the Jewish authority. The argument was that Jesus was the prophet who came to update and reform Judaism and it rejected him so its authority from God was taken from them. There was a political reason or a social one if you like to lie.

Bizarre amateur psychology from the Christians say that Jesus must have really risen from the dead for those who saw him die for it and nobody dies for lies or even for their beliefs. They die for their faith. Suicide bombers have died for their faith though it was a very weak faith that they struggled with. If you believe your faith is that important that you will die for it then you can die for belief.

Festinger as quoted in *Doubting Jesus' Resurrection* by Kris Komarnitsky: Suppose an individual believes something with his whole heart; suppose further that he has a commitment to this belief, that he has taken irrevocable actions because of it; finally, suppose that he is presented with evidence, unequivocal and undeniable evidence, that his belief is wrong: what will happen? The individual will frequently emerge, not only unshaken, but even more convinced of the truth of his beliefs than ever before....The dissonance [conflict between belief and reality] would be largely eliminated if they discarded the belief that had been disconfirmed....Indeed this pattern sometimes occurs....But frequently the behavioral commitment to the belief system is so strong that almost any other course of action is preferable....Believers may try to find reasonable explanations and very often they find ingenious ones....For rationalization to be fully effective, support from others is needed to make the explanation or the revision seem correct. Fortunately, the disappointed believer can usually turn to others in the same movement, who have the same dissonance and the same pressures to reduce it. Support for the new explanation is, hence, forthcoming."

Strictly speaking people risk their lives for lies rather than die for them. It has to happen that even if they don't want to die some will die. We risk our lives and happiness for all kinds of nonsense.

Joseph Smith the Mormon founder was a major fraudster all his life. He produced revelations and altered them afterward to suit himself. He cheated on his wife Emma with his "spiritual" wives. Before his death he even decided that God was just a man like many Gods - a doctrine contradicting his previous statements that God was an almighty spirit who was present everywhere and that there was only one God.

Yet he risked his life for his religion and his "faith". He wrote in his diary dated Saturday, June 22, 1844, "I told Stephen Markham that if I and Hyrum were ever taken again we should be massacred, or I was not a prophet of God." Soon after he ended up in Carthage Jail, Illinois, and shot dead by a gang. Even and then murdered by a mob. Others who were with them survived the attack, but Joseph and his brother were killed, as predicted." While Smith may have felt he would not be murdered and was simply playing on how the Bible predicts murder as the likely fate of a true prophet (1 Kings 19, Matthew 23:31-34, Acts 7:52, Revelation 18:24). Joseph Smith stands forever as a refutation of those who say that human nature cannot believe its own religious lies well enough to risk its life over them.

Christianity's favourite lie is that the apostles experienced the risen Jesus and bore witness to it by giving their lives. They supposedly proved they believed he rose from the dead by dying as martyrs. They won't stop telling this lie, "People do not die for what they know to be untrue." It's a lie for psychologists have refuted it for years but the Church deafens its own ears.

The apostles died years after Jesus. They had preached him for decades. If you are lying to yourself and or others over a period of time you will forget that you are lying.

Self-deception is when we ignore and switch off the part of our mind that is aware that we are lying. Self-deception does me little good. The only real reason I engage in it is so that I can be a good liar to other people. I know or suspect that if I am aware that I am lying, I can give myself away and even contradict myself and be caught out. The really good liar is a really good liar for he or she uses self-deception. The self-deceiver then can easily die for what he or she has invented. For example, Jesus could have claimed to be God though he knew he wasn't. In time, he came to believe his own lies and chose to die for his claim to divinity. Don't women stay with violent husbands because they lie to themselves that its not the husband's fault or that they are really good men after all?

In popular opinion, the martyr always testifies to his or her own honesty when he or she loses his life for the cause. But mythomanics come in all shapes and sizes. They are self-deceivers who tell huge lies very well. But one day the web of deception unravels. They know that will happen and still they lie. They will suffer then. They prove that people do take stupid risks or futile risks over lies.

Psychiatry recognises the existence of a delusional personality disorder called pseudologia fantastica or pathological lying. Suppose there is a group of martyrs. One of them suffering from this disorder could have been very convincing and been able to talk the others into believing and into sealing their devotion to the cause with their blood. They could reason, "I will testify with my blood to what this man says. Its evidence enough for me that he says it." Or perhaps all he had to do was support them in their faith and help them strengthen it. Maybe that happened with the apostles.

You find martyrs for all kinds of causes. People sometimes throw their lives away for the silliest and most hopeless of causes.

People give all their savings away to cults that promise that spaceships or Jesus will rescue them from this world. They simply don't want to be here and would make any sacrifice for a religion that tells them there is hope of escape. The disciples of Jesus thought the world was ending - they did not want to be here. No wonder if they got martyred!

Had the apostles been sincere they would have done their utmost to provide character references and affidavits to support their claims and would have written as much as they could and ensured that their material would be preserved. They did not. They suffered irrationally by any standard.

God could not tell them how to guarantee that their papers would be with us forever so they were not in touch with the Holy Spirit at all. Jesus said that anybody who cannot be trusted in little things cannot be trusted in greater. And yet his apostles did not prove themselves worthy of trust.

The apostles could have died for their lies. It is even easier to die for somebody else's lies - such as Jesus'. Is that what happened?

One thing we do know, there is no record of any apostle refusing to debunk the resurrection and dying for that refusal. None. There is more to the religion they founded than the resurrection. Mother Teresa confessed to being unable to believe but that would not have stopped her dying for the Catholic Church. To argue, "The apostles died for the faith therefore they showed they were not lying about the resurrection," over-simplifies.

Do you Christians want your religion based on Jesus or on the notion, "People don't get martyred for their lies"? The notion is a bigger foundation to the faith than the resurrection! What a strange religion! What an unstable foundation!!

The apostles believed. So we are told. If they did, how strong was their belief? We cannot assume that their faith or belief was that strong if they were killed for their belief. Religion is full of tales of saints who struggled with faith and barely believed but who still died for the religion. People do die for religion who have weak beliefs. So people can die for lies. All they need to do is tell themselves that the lies are the truth.