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## **The Curious Progressive Love of Islam**

*David Carlin*

Friday, December 29, 2017

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Among present-day American leftists (who prefer calling themselves progressives), a curious characteristic is their sympathy for Islam. They deplore what they call Islamophobia, regarding it as a sin as bad as racism or sexism or homophobia or transphobia; and they are horrified that a man they consider to be an Islamophobe, Donald Trump, should be in the White House.

Why is this sympathy for Islamic "curious"? Because no religion could be more at odds with progressive ideas than Islam. For one thing, Islam believes in God, an all-powerful God who controls everything in the created world. Progressives, on the other hand, tend to be atheists or at least semi-atheists.

For another, Islam has always taught that women must be socially inferior to men; it is a strongly patriarchal religion, and progressives hate few things more than they hate patriarchy. Islam also puts a strong emphasis on chastity, condemning adultery and fornication and – especially – homosexuality. And it considers monstrous that progressive favorite, same-sex marriage.

Of course, many Muslims (Muslim men, that is, not Muslim women) have over the centuries violated these pro-chastity values, but the religion nonetheless affirms the values. By contrast, although they regard sexual prudence as a good thing (and sexual prudence often bears a resemblance to chastity), progressives laugh at the idea that chastity is a virtue.

Why, then, are progressives sympathetic to such an anti-progressive religion and its adherents? Ask this question of a progressive, and he or she will tell you, "Because we believe in freedom of religion and in diversity."

Maybe so, but I'm not convinced. For one thing, if they truly believed in freedom of religion, they would be at least as sympathetic to Christianity as they are to Islam. But they aren't. They would never dream of compelling Muslims, against their conscience, to eat pork. Yet they are quite willing to force a conservative Christian baker to participate in the celebration of a same-sex wedding (by baking a wedding cake specifically designed for that wedding) even though this goes against the baker's conscience.

And they are quite willing to compel a Catholic employer to pay for birth control for his female employees even when the employer's conscience tells him it is wrong to do so – even when the birth control in question is an abortifacient. If an employer says with regard to the abortifacient, "I believe this is homicide," the progressive replies, "Do it anyway."

Of course, the leftist will tell you that Christian morality, correctly understood, has no objection to same-sex marriage, to contraception, or to abortion. For Jesus commanded his followers to



love their neighbors and to judge not. Moreover, he never condemned homosexuality or abortion. Therefore, by compelling Christians to violate their erroneous consciences, we are doing nothing wrong, they say.

Now, leaving aside the exceedingly dubious qualifications of progressives to pronounce on what counts as true Christian morality, it is an ancient Christian teaching that a person is obliged to follow conscience, even an erroneous conscience provided that it has been arrived at carefully and sincerely.

As for the progressive contention that they are sympathetic to Islam because they are great believers in diversity; the more diversity the better – here again, I have my doubts.

Let's suppose a purely secular organization, reacting to the excesses of feminism, appears on the American scene advocating the social inferiority of women. Such an organization would certainly be a contribution to that glorious thing, diversity – that thing which, according to progressivism, has made America great. Will our progressives demand that this organization be given respect by all diversity-loving Americans? Of course not.

I suspect there is something else behind this curious progressive sympathy for Islam, namely hostility to Christianity. Not all Christianity, to be sure. For progressives are not hostile to liberal Christianity, which, being barely Christian, in large measure supports the progressive agenda of abortion rights, LGBT values, and so on. No, this progressive hostility is directed at conservative Christianity, e.g., Catholicism, old-fashioned Protestantism, Mormonism.

From the progressive point of view, one of the great merits of Islam is that it has been, ever since its inception in the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, an anti-Christianity religion. And since, as the old proverb has it, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," progressives are able to look on Islam as a friend (ally) in the great battle against Christianity.

Being pro-Islam is an indirect way of being anti-Christianity. When Christianity is sufficiently destroyed, the progressive alliance with Islam can be dissolved, just as the USA-Soviet alliance was dissolved after Nazism had been destroyed; and then progressivism can turn to the task of destroying Islam – if Islam does not destroy progressivism first, which is the more likely outcome.

But Islam is hostile not just to Christianity but to Judaism as well. This is another of its great merits in the eyes of progressivism. For progressivism is strongly anti-Israel. And being anti-Israel (or anti-Zionist) is the most modern and up-to-date form of Jew-hatred; it is today's fashionable form of anti-Semitism.

What's more, being anti-Israel is an indirect way of being anti-American. Much of the Israel-hatred that is so common among European and American leftists (including, weirdly, leftists who are themselves Jews) is motivated by a hatred for America. Israel and the United States having been so closely connected from 1948 to the present, he who hates Israel hates America.

This is not to say that American progressives hate America pure and simple. No, they hate America as it has been up until now. They wish to do away with the old and bad America, and replace it with a “new and improved” America, a progressivized America.

By being a pro-Islam progressive, then, you win a trifecta. You get to strike three blows at once: one against Christianity, another against Israel, and a third against the “old and bad” America. For a progressive, what could be better?

*David Carlin is professor of sociology and philosophy at the Community College of Rhode Island, and the author of The Decline and Fall of the Catholic Church in America.*

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