

"Paris January 2015"

by

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I don't commend those who mock

Another man's belief;

Especially when, above all else,

He holds his faith as chief.

I respect his right

To demonstrate,

If threatened,

And protest

If his religious freedom

Is challenged

In the West.

But others also have rights,

You know:

The right to embrace

The culture and the way-of-life

Of the British race.

I know I'm not the outgrowth

Of its Christian roots,

But my forebears,
With national pride,
Put on their army boots
To defend that precious liberty -
Since Runnymede,
Secured –
For which so many
British lads,
Martyrdom,
Endured.

Our land is a garden,
With plants of every hue;
Each nourished, nurtured
And admired;
Accorded great value.

But, if one spurns the freedom
That one's host country pursues,
And actively undermines
Democratic values:
The idea that religion
Must remain a personal choice;
That free speech permits,
Even heretics,
A voice,
Then why make your home

In such a God-forsaken place,
One that, by your standards,
Has forfeited His grace?

There are countries that are ruled
By Sharia law,
So why live under a system
That you patently abhor?

Now, who would think
To enter
Another man's abode;
To impose on it
His way-of-life
And strict moral code;
To insist that his little girls
Don't show an inch of skin,
And assess his British culture
As a veritable sin?

And what sort of monsters
Gun down,
In Allah's name,
A group of harmless journalists,
Who did, indeed, defame
The Prophet's reputation,
Though with satire and with pen;
So, to the mighty Islam,

Were hardly bogeymen?

We understand the fear
That the Islamists instill
Into their co-religionists
Whom they also strike
At will.

But if the world can ever
Defeat this deadly scourge,
It will need to be supported
By a concerted surge
Of Muslim indignation
And vocal condemnation
Of global violence
And radicalization;
And that message of peace,
That apologists insist
Lies at the heart of Islam,
And which the West has missed,
They need to publicise
And loudly promote -
To jihad and violence,
As an antidote.

Until that day,
Why should we

Be so surprised
If what occurred in Paris,
And elsewhere,
Is reprised;
If civil war stalks
Our homes and our streets;
If anti-Jewish hate
Fills our twitters
And our tweets?

Four million French people
Rallied and vowed
That, by the jihadists,
They wouldn't
Be cowed.
But did you notice
Their banners
On display -
The 'Je Suis Charlie' respect
They yearned to pay?
But amid the high-profile,
Jewish grief,
How many banners did you see
With 'Je suis juif'?

What message does that send
To those that hate Jews? -

Providing future terrorists

With another excuse.

Our hearts go out in sympathy;

Our prayers we express,

For the families of the journalists,

In grief and distress.

But special thoughts

We reserve

For our own Jewish slain;

Guiltless of any crime –

Caught in the hurricane

Of loathing for our faith

And of the Jewish state;

The scapegoat of

The gentile world;

Its pariah,

Incarnate.

O Lord,

Send Your salvation

To your deeply-fractured world;

Forgive us for the banner

Of hatred,

We've unfurled.

Implant a new heart,

An eye that looks

With grace;
A hand outstretched,
In peace,
To man;
And steps
That we'll retrace.

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