

## Nonce Upon A Time

Kris King – October 31<sup>st</sup> 2012

<http://www.rantinaminor.co.uk/2012/10/nonce-upon-a-time/>

Before I get too caught up in the excitement at having finally reached my 50th rant, I should let you know that this could, in all probability, be my last ever blog post. Don't worry, I'm not doing that narcissistic, "Oh, woe is me! I can't take this harsh, abusive, blogging world any more, I'm leaving!" bullshit; such pitiful attention-whoring, the desperate expectation that my army of drooling, lead-paint drinking followers will validate my existence and wank my ego by imploring, "Come back, please! We can't hold a coherent thought without your constant wisdom!" No, the fact is that this trivial milestone rant says one or two things that might result in my getting killed to pieces, ironically by the religion of peace, for offending their not-at-all insecure faith, blaspheming against their religion, and insulting their prophet by referring to Muhammad, entirely *accurately* (at least, **according to their own holy texts**), as a kiddie-fiddling, molestation-happy, child-rapist.

Now, at this point it would not surprise me to learn that a fair number of you might be gibbering "he is so fucking dead!" to yourselves over and over as you frantically log in to Facebook with the express purpose of unliking the site, replacing your profile picture with one of you wearing a Chris De Burgh mask, and changing your current location to "Living with Salman Rushdie". It's okay, I'm not disappointed – I understand fully; Islam has cultivated a reputation over the years for being somewhat reactionary when it comes to criticism (bear with me, I'm going for an "Understatement of the Century" award), such that anyone seen to be "having a go" is often considered to be kicking a hornet's nest whilst wearing a pair of pesticide-coated, steel toe-cap boots that have the words "all hornets are gay" embossed into the soles. Incidentally, if you're one of the small minority of people who saw the title of this post and thought I might be talking about Jimmy Savile, I can only say that *no way* am I touching that subject with a fifty-foot pole; I'm not that fucking mental.

While I've always been happy to mock, criticise, or otherwise take the piss out of religion, the beliefs, and those who believe them, I don't actually set out to insult people or cause offence. I may be sarcastic and confrontational, and I may ridicule cherished ideas that people have considered an essential part of themselves since the day they were born, but I don't go out of my way to be a dick about it (well, not at first, anyway). When I label the Islamic prophet Muhammad a paedophile, I do so not because of some deliberate, spiteful, troll-like attempt to provoke outrage in the faithful (although that wouldn't be hard), but because that's **exactly** what holy Islamic texts say he is. According to the Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith 8.3310, 7.64, and 7.65, Aisha, wife of the prophet and narrator of these passages, was married to "Allah's Apostle" at six years of age, and consummated the marriage three years later when she was nine. No matter how you attempt to rationalise your way out of it, this makes Muhammad a bush-dodger. End of.

These passages, along with 7.88 which was narrated by Ursa and also documents Aisha's age of marriage and consummation at six and nine respectively, form part of a hadith that many muslim scholars dismiss as being one of the "weaker" hadiths, a claim that is no different from the one you frequently hear from christians when attempting to dismiss any particularly foul biblical dictat that, "You're supposed to interpret that passage, not take it literally" (numerous other variations exist, including, "That doesn't apply any more"). In any case, muslims will jump through a significant number of hoops in order to not actually outright condemn paedophilia, simply because to do so would mean dismissing not only those parts of the qu'ran that support it but also **every** moral teaching of the prophet – and given that he's the supposed emissary of the divine that would mean pretty much throwing out the whole of Islam. It's kind of like how christians cannot truly accept the fact of evolution because it renders the creation story impossible and eliminates original sin (taking the entire purpose of Jesus' existence with it).

Since arguing over the validity of claims that Muhammad was a bunty-man is an exercise only marginally less futile, and significantly less interesting, than debating the colour of a leprechaun's bollock fur, I would much prefer to leave the specific question itself and instead look at the broader issue it represents; blasphemy. To even *suggest* that Islam's favourite beard-wearer might have been

a shrub rocketeer will result in, if not an actual stern murdering to the body and/or neighbourhood, a set of perforated ear drums and a severe case of "whinging fucking bastard" fatigue when they start spazzing on about you have committed a blasphemy against them. "You have insulted our prophet!" they opine. "How dare you offend our religion! Our faith! All the things we hold sacred!" Oh do fuck off, seriously ... you miserable, self-pitying, little babies. I mean, really, how *old* are you? Do you have **any** idea how you sound to other people? "Mummy, mummy! The man said something bad about someone I've never met but I like and isn't me!"

Blasphemy is most often thought of as being some kind of offence against the sacred; cursing out a god, insulting faith, the profaning of deeply held ideological beliefs, all of which are wholly victimless crimes (much like smacking Piers Morgan repeatedly in the mouth with a hot anvil covered in bees). I mean, yes, okay, someone's feelings might be sent a little wobbly whenever their personal, spiritual convictions are having the holy piss ripped out of them by gobby heathens like myself but, ultimately, no one gets *hurt*. All things considered, blasphemy is nothing more than the screeching noise that deeply insecure people make when someone poses a challenge to their world-view; a lamentable and pathetic form of self-pitying outrage at having been compelled to hear something they don't like. In that respect, it's **exactly** like the Daily Mail (only with fewer attempts to blame plummeting house prices or the failure to cure cancer on illegal immigrants).

The annoying truth is that blasphemy, like the notions of ecclesiastic infallibility and the heavy-handed threat of receiving a severely burned and pitchfork-skewered bottom for doing bad things (one of which, ironically, involves putting things in people's bottoms), is a self-defence mechanism invented by religion to avoid ever having to be called to account for anything. Look at the first four of the ten commandments of the old testament; they're all about fending off scrutiny, criticism, or questioning. What purpose could this possibly serve other than that of maintaining power or exerting control? These are rules invented by those in charge, and for the express purpose of making damn sure it stays that way by suppressing your freedom of expression; telling you what you can and can't say, who you can and cannot criticise. It places them behind a wall of morality-resistant Popemobile plexiglass through which no responsibility for their actions can ever penetrate.

If history has taught us anything, other than that under **no** circumstances should anyone *ever* take Madonna seriously (it just encourages the self-deluding arse banjo), it's that when *anyone* is placed beyond scrutiny they will, without fail, sink inexorably into corruption. There can be no more horrifying a contemporary example of the human devastation that unaccountable power can wreak than the child rape scandal that's been engulfing the catholic church for the last few decades. They have moved accused priests to new locations, silenced victims through harassment and fear, bound everyone involved to secrecy, resisted all efforts to involve the civil authorities, denied culpability, pledged to investigate entirely behind closed doors, and even flat-out blamed the victim – all of which have been done to protect the church, and all have been achieved from the privileged position of having hell with which to threaten those who dare oppose, question, or condemn them.

The demonstrable truth is that the current pope, Benedict XVI (the child rape apologist formerly known as cardinal Joseph Ratzinger), was, in his pre-pontiff role as prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, aware of the many allegations catholic priests around the world were facing and, in fact, issued the dictat that they were to be dealt with in absolute secrecy, authorised the relocation of an unknown number of abusers, and placed great emphasis on the need to shield the church at all costs. Despite this, I will get my bollocks chewed all the way off by catholics, and even other christians, if I were to refer to his arseholiness as "that utter scum-fuck bastard", "Father Dick-Bag", "Cardinal Cunt-Box", or even the shockingly mild, "a reprehensible criminal who should be rotting in jail for being the head of an organisation that has perpetrated, and sought to conceal, disgusting crimes against humanity". I've actually seen people declare as blasphemous and disrespectful of religious faith the attempts of social justice groups to have senior members of the church, including Ratzinger, arrested and questioned by police.

In what variety of fucked up world are we expected, no, *compelled* to give a free pass to someone against whom there is substantial evidence detailing active attempts to cover up and facilitate the continuation of child rape? What kind of bleach-flavoured toothpaste sort of universe are we living in where a shitty, badly-made movie can, using only an even more shitty and badly-made trailer on YouTube, provoke violent riots and indiscriminate murder by those who feel disproportionately aggrieved at the petty slight against their beliefs, and *instead* of asking what the cocking hell we're going to do about religious zealotry we end up discussing the idea of introducing an international law against blasphemy? Seriously, planet earth, **what the shitting fuck?!** Did I miss a meeting? Did I forget about the referendum where everyone voted for the right to criticise kiddie-fucking, suicide-

bombing, and other, similar expressions of faith-scented outrage to be placed much *lower* down the list of priorities than the need to protect the delicate sensibilities of people who believe in fucking **fairies**? Can I demand a recount?

You already know the kind of world we're living in, I'm sure (if you don't then you should probably take an occasional trip through that magic portal in the side of your house that leads to a place where the scenery changes and the temperature drops – "outside" it's called). Our world is one where religion has demanded respect it doesn't deserve and, through centuries of threats (be they of violence or damnation), guilt, and coercion, they have forced it out of us against our will. It's a world where, even now in an enlightened 21st century filled with iPads, takeaway curry, and skydiving space-men, refusal to give respect to these organised crime syndicates posing as forces for good will, in some corners of the globe, result in the loss of your personal freedom or, in some extreme cases, the freedom of your brain to send messages to the rest of the body without being impeded by the giant, breezy gap where your neck used to be. If you have to kill people to defend an idea, it's a shit idea.

Thankfully, calls for international laws prohibiting blasphemy, or the insulting or causing of offence to a religion, were shot down faster than a scientific hypothesis proposed by Eric Hovind. Islamic nations, led by Pakistan and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), pushed the UN to debate the merits of laws criminalising religious defamation, and not for the first time; the OIC has been pushing for these laws every year since 1999 without success. This time they were opportunistically exploiting the feeling surrounding the infamous YouTube video in a move that felt like a cynical protection racket. "Look at what's happening here! Violence, destruction, riots, murder, and all because of some offensive video. You know, if you would only enact laws that stop people from saying nasty things about our faith then this kind of tragedy could be avoided!" Imagine if, when you unwittingly showed up the bully in class for being thicker than creationist cement, he beat you senseless and then defended himself before the headmaster by saying that, if *you* hadn't been smarter than him, this never would have happened.

In August, three members of the Russian punk band Pussy Riot were convicted of hooliganism and sentenced to two years imprisonment for staging a performance (which they released as a video entitled, "Punk Prayer – Mother of God, Chase Putin Away!") in a Moscow cathedral some months earlier. The group stated it was a protest against the Orthodox church's support for president Vladimir Putin; the church would later call on the government to criminalise blasphemy, and said, "We have no future if we allow mockery in front of great shrines, and if some see such mockery as a sort of bravery, an expression of political protest, an acceptable action or a harmless joke". Prosecutors at the trial said the band were trying to "incite religious hatred", and the judge commented that their protest showed a "complete lack of respect for believers". Although the judgement had a political dimension (in that Putin really doesn't like being criticised), it offers another worrying example of the immense danger posed by unquestionable authority.

There was widespread condemnation of Russia's handling of the case; having hit the band with sentences more commonly given to those who feel "conflict resolution" involves smashing a whiskey bottle right across some poor bastard's face, two years was seen by almost everyone to be grossly disproportionate (the worst they should have gotten was a £50 fine for disturbing the peace). Depressingly, lessons have yet to be learned; Adam Darski, front man for Polish heavy metal band Behemoth, is currently facing two years in jail for blasphemy after tearing up a bible on stage in 2007 and calling the catholic church "a criminal sect". While I find ripping up (or, in the case of redneck moron preacher Terry Jones, burning) someone's holy book to be a pretty childish act that seldom represents little more than a deliberate, and cheap attempt to provoke a negative reaction, I don't believe that it's something a person should go to jail for. It's just a fucking book, after all; you don't see furious teenage girls with appallingly bad taste in reading material threatening stabby retribution against those who destroy copies of "Twilight". Oh, wait, yes you do ... well, *that* is the kind of mentality we're talking about here.

These days, sadly, you don't even have to insult or criticise a religion to incur its wrath; you just have to disagree with them. In America, christians have vandalised billboards paid for by secular groups that serve simply to reach out to closet atheists and reassure them that they're not alone. How pathetically insecure do you have to be to feel the slightest bit threatened by the idea that there are people in the world who think differently than you? Sadly, Malala Yousafzai knows all too well the answer to that question; as an education and women's rights activist living in Pakistan, she was shot in the head on October 9th in an assassination attempt by the Taliban (who had earlier banned girls from attending school). Malala is *fifteen* years old. While many muslims have condemned the

Taliban's actions they have also, with no sense of irony whatsoever, called upon everyone to pray for her recovery to the same Allah her erstwhile murderers claim to be operating on behalf of. That and 50 Islamic clerics have issued a fatwa against her attackers ... these people really don't fucking get it, do they?

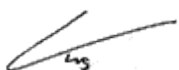
Malala Yousafzai meanwhile continues to recover in hospital, showing more courage and fortitude in promising to go right back out there and carry on with her efforts than that of all the EDL spunkwits who bemoaned her being airlifted to a hospital in the UK as yet another foreigner sponging off us will **ever** manage to muster in their pitiful lives combined. Support for Malala has come from all quarters, although I would urge Madonna to please pack it in; stripping down to a thong to reveal you've got "Malala" written above your arse is **really** not helping – you might as well put up posters in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province featuring Paris Hilton with a cock in her mouth alongside the caption, "Education For Girls Now!" Mixed, confusing messages, Madge – please go back to pretending every idea you've ever had is an original one that you *haven't* nicked from lesser known artists with more talent, you rancid culture thief.

I don't go out of my way to offend or insult people's beliefs ... but I absolutely claim the right to. It is my innate human right to criticise, to mock, and to ridicule; to question, to scrutinise, and to hold to responsible. In fact, it is not only my right, but my **duty**; as long as we allow ourselves to be dictated to by a minority of those in power as to what we can say, who we can criticise, then we can never truly call ourselves free. You do not have the right to live in a world where you are protected from criticism; you don't get to declare that you are immune from scrutiny, that your actions cannot ever be questioned, or that you will never be held responsible for anything by anyone. I don't care who you are, or what you believe – if you want to continue to share this world with the rest of us then you can either stand up and take a bollocking, or you can fuck off. If you were even remotely secure in your faith, you'd be more than happy to put your beliefs under the microscope.

So, to bring this, my 50th rant, to some kind of neat and tidy end, I shall say simply this: fuck your beliefs; fuck your faith, fuck your prophets, fuck your gods and your goddesses, fuck your holy books, fuck your rites and rituals, fuck your piety, fuck your church, and fuck all of your lying, ignorant, kiddie-fucking priests ... as long as your religion does nothing to deserve my respect, I will continue to disrespect it; as long as it thinks it has the right to silence me, I will continue to speak out; as long as it clings to ridiculous beliefs, I will continue to ridicule them; as long as it affords itself the courtesy of a privileged position beyond our scrutiny, I shall continue to afford it no courtesy; and as long as it continues to justify atrocities against men, women, and children, against thought, against reason, against logic, and against human dignity, I will continue to hold it in the utmost contempt ... you're not special, you're not protected, you're not immune ...

This milestone does not, in any sense, spell the end of my ranting ... merely the beginning ...

Thank you for being with me thus far ...

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. Angel', written in a cursive style.