''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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