

Religious Activists' Positions on Truth to Power

-- Amanda Tedstone

One's position on truth determines how one will lead or simply subsist in life. By having confidence, strength, faith, and power, the determination to thrive will triumph over all other impediments. As in Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, all three individuals were faced with a tremendous amount of responsibility to carry out the word of God. Moses was one of the most responsible men in history, for it was he who led the Jewish people out of slavery and conveyed God's Ten Commandments to the people. Jesus, the foundation of Christianity and Catholicism, was believed to have died for deliverance and understanding of God and declared that he was the son of God and was sent to earth for salvation of the people. Muhammad was visited by the Arch Angel Gabriel, and upon this visit, Muhammad was announced to be the messenger of God. These three individuals were given specific responsibilities and duties to perform, and along with these duties came detestation and skepticism from others. If it were not for the substantial amount of will power exerted by these three important men in history, three fundamental religions would not be present in modern day. Because these men had the ability to stand in their truth and believe in themselves radically, important world views and religions came about and had many followers along with it.

Moses was born during the time when the Pharaoh of Egypt would order all Jewish males to be drowned or enslaved. As he grew up, Moses indefinitely spent a great amount of time and energy attempting to fight injustice in society in Egypt to his fellow Hebrews. He meddled in brawls when a non-Jew oppressed a Jew, when two Jews fought, and when he witnessed non-Jews oppress other non-Jews (Telushkin). Soon after killing an Egyptian slave master, Moses fled to Midian for survival from being killed by the Pharaoh. There, Moses found seven women

shepherdesses being harassed by seven shepherds. Little did Moses know, the shepherdesses' father was a priest of Midian. The priest was entirely grateful for Moses' great deed and concern with his daughters, thus he gave Moses one of his daughters to marry. Along with this marriage, the priest also gave Moses the position of overseer of his herds (Telushkin). As a shepherd, Moses led his flock to the top of Mount Sinai. There, Moses discovered a burning bush that was constantly aflame and would not shrivel to ashes. As he got closer to the burning bush, God revealed to Moses that it was He (Telushkin). At this visit, God revealed to Moses that it was his task to travel back to Egypt with his brother in an attempt to free the Hebrew slaves living in Egypt. The Pharaoh refused to follow Moses' demands, consequently resulting in a bad decision followed by the Ten Plagues being released on Egypt. Soon after, the Pharaoh freed the Hebrew slaves out of slavery and ordered them to follow Moses. In accordance to the Book of Exodus, to aid Moses and the Hebrew slaves fleeing from Egypt, God split an opening in the Red Sea to allow them to pass through. As soon as they passed through, he closed the passage, accordingly drowning the Pharaoh and his soldiers (Telushkin). Three months after fleeing from Egypt, Moses and his followers camped at the bottom of Mount Sinai, where Moses climbed once more. There, God conveyed his Ten Commandments and a small amount of other laws to Moses. Popularly known as the messenger of the rules and laws of the Ten Commandments and for leading the Hebrews out of slavery, Moses is considered an admirable, courageous, submissive prophet to this day. If it were not for his commendable bravery and belief in himself and his actions, the Ten Commandments would not be present. If for some reason, Moses did not follow the word of God and believe himself while fleeing the Hebrews from slavery, or while retrieving the Ten Commandments, religion would not have rules for believing in God. Without Moses, it is safe to say that Judaism would not be what it is today.

Jesus was born to a virgin given to her by God himself. The Biblical record of Jesus' life shows that many prophecies of Jesus' coming were predicted and of all of the prophecies, they all came true. Jesus claimed He had the power to forgive sins, to live a sinless life, to rid the world of demons, and to establish the belief in an everlasting life in heaven to all people (Telushkin). Jesus knew he was the son of God, and he stood in His belief. This confidence angered religious leaders, and they ordered Him to be crucified. He was hung with His hands and feet nailed into a cross-shaped crucifix, slowly suffocating Him after a tremendous amount of torturing (Telushkin). After He died, He was buried in a burrowed tomb-like grave where He was wrapped in heavy linen. Three days later, He rose from the dead, just as His prophecy stated. When the inside of His tomb was inspected, the guards discovered that His body was no longer present. His resurrection made Christianity so different from any other religion. If His resurrection never happened, Jesus' life would essentially be meaningless in his attempts of convincing his followers of forgiveness for their sins. This was the marking point to many of Jesus' followers that his claims of being the son of God were, in fact, true. After this event, many followers of Jesus Christ were increasing. In attempt to keep one religion, religious leaders would kill His followers. His followers stated they would rather die than have to deny their beliefs in Jesus Christ (Telushkin). Jesus died on the cross to forgive people for their sins. To this day, there are numerous amounts of Christian or Catholic believers who believe in the life and death of Jesus Christ. If it were not for Jesus believing he was the son of God, for dying on the cross, and for standing in his beliefs, he would not have died for his followers' sins. His life in human form was for a reason: to die a physical death so his followers' sins could be forgiven. Because of his truth and action, Jesus established the most popular monotheistic religion to this day.

Muhammad, the last messenger and prophet of God, was born in the city of Mecca in Arabia to the Quraysh tribe. Muhammad was unhappy with his life and of the suffering of people living around him, and therefore fled to a cave on a nearby mountain for meditation and reflection. It was here where he received his first exposure to God from the Arch Angel Gabriel. Soon after, Muhammad began to preach the importance of the message he received from God and how each follower must surrender himself or herself to God completely. The Arch Angel Gabriel revealed the word of God to Muhammad, who in turn recorded it in Arabic within the Qur'an (Bard). As with the other prophets of God, Muhammad was treated poorly as well as his followers. To escape the tormenting aggression and hostility, Muhammad and his followers fled to Medina for safety. In Medina, Muhammad became a mediator, settling disagreements between tribes (Bard). Muhammad recognized many Jewish descendants living in Medina, where he presumed came from Palestine after the Romans conquered it. Muhammad attempted to influence the Jewish people's opinions with his own; however, the Jews did not willingly accept him as another prophet of God. Once it was clear, the Jews would not accept him as another prophet and his beliefs, Muhammad began to diminish the amount of Jewish influence on his own beliefs (Bard). This small amount of disagreement between both beliefs may be the culprit of many religious dissimilarities between both the Palestinian Jews and Muslims of the same area nowadays. Just as Muhammad's beliefs and traditions were advancing in society and more people were adopting his beliefs and values, he died. It was left for his followers to advance his beliefs and traditions that Muhammad had started to eventually develop Islam. Over time, his followers developed Islam, just as Jesus' and Moses' followers developed Christianity and Judaism over time (Bard). Without Muhammad's belief in himself and his actions from his beliefs, he would have never traveled to areas and recruit followers for his beliefs. If he did not

believe in himself and his beliefs, Muhammad would not have started one the most influential religion today.

These three influential men in religious history all descended from one man—Abraham. Abraham's two sons essentially had a part in starting all three major religions because their distant relatives had the strength and power to stand in their beliefs for the advancement of these three major religions. Abraham's son Ishmael is believed to be the prophet of their religion, while Christians believe Isaac was the successor of Christianity. Jews believe that Jacob, the son of Isaac, is the heir of Judaism. Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, the division of these three descendents of Abraham, divided people by the beliefs they stood for and believed in. Because of their beliefs and actions, three fundamental religions came into action. If these three men were unable to perform their actions and beliefs the way they did them, and if they were unable to believe in themselves to spread their messages, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam would not be present today.

Just as these men stood in their truth and beliefs, many politicians nowadays are fighting vigorously for health care to be a fundamental right for all Americans. With more Americans unable to pay for such expensive medical costs and for health care benefits, these illnesses are going unnoticed and uncured. Having no health insurance means that the majority of Americans who do not have this privilege will be unable to pay for routine doctor's visits, or even for immediate, emergency visits. Not only are routine doctors visits expensive for Americans who do not have healthcare, but having to see a specialist for a certain disorder or emergency problem can cost two to three times more than a regular doctor. Many Americans do not have the time or money to pay for health care, or it is just not on their list of priorities until something bad actually happens. The cost of health care is unreasonable, and many politicians are striving to

make it a law for all Americans to have health insurance, so in the end, it will not be as expensive if something unfortunate does occur.

For many diseases and disorders, having to see specialists for them are likely. Many American people are faced with life threatening diseases that are expensive to treat. Not only is it expensive and tiring to treat, but without proper health insurance, the cost is incredibly unreasonable. For people with diseases and illnesses that a normal doctor cannot treat sufficiently, a specialist is regularly required. Specialists are usually two times more expensive than an average doctor is. “If you thought going to a normal doctor without health insurance was expensive, try going to a specialist without insurance” (Carolyn Billias). People should not be afraid to pay for health insurance because of the expensive payments every month, but the future should be considered as well. If anything unfortunate would happen to an individual without health insurance, the amount of money needed for treatment is significantly larger. If the possible likeliness of being ill in the future were considered on an individual’s list of priorities, then the likeliness of not having health care would be presumably lower.

Being able to pay for medicine to avoid and prevent being sick is costly as well. Being able to pay for health care helps prevent diseases and illnesses. Pharmaceutical companies charge a large amount of money to people of their own country for medicine to prevent getting sick. To buy these medicines, it is not required to pay for health care, but the amount of money people need to pay to prevent getting sick is almost as expensive as going to the doctors in the end. It was observed that one bottle of medication at an average pharmaceutical store in America costs almost twice as much as the same medication in Canada.

Politicians are fighting for the right of American people to have health insurance. Many politicians are extremely emotional on this topic and try to pass bills and sign legislatures to see

a law protecting many American people from getting sick or possibly dying because of the inability to pay for their health care insurance. Many individuals believe it is a God-given right to be treated for a medical condition no matter how much money they make or if they are unable to make health insurance payments. These politicians are just as serious in their position on health care, just as the three founders of the religions were with their beliefs. Their ability to stand in their actions and make laws concerning health care, just like how Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad were able to stand in their truth and beliefs and recruit followers to their beliefs, makes all of these individuals who are able to do so a hero in society.

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