

## Religious Arguments

Religious arguments are difficult because only few people have a true religious knowledge while those who are invited to achieve knowledge are many. A person that doesn't know a lot might find a conflict where there isn't any. Before arguing, you must read to support your faith with reason or else stay silent as this protects you and protects others. However, if you were asked about your faith, answer as much as you know or ask someone who knows and then come back with an answer.

The fact that discussions always come along with emotions and nervousness makes them more difficult. If you were unable to repress your anger, don't say anything because emotions creates crisis in the relationship between you and the person that you are negotiating. Controversy requires a lot of tranquility and a heart that is healthy and away from all hatred and ignorance. If you weren't able to have internal peace and a chaste tongue, don't go into this adventure. Chastity spares you from the big challenges that carry a trespass over the other's belief and harm towards your negotiator.

If you were among Christians, defend the Orthodox faith and clarify what we believe in through our common sources such as the Holy Scripture and that mutual ancient heritage. The first millennium is the same for us and Western Christians. For example, if a Catholic asked you: How can your Church be united without having one head? You answer: "Unity could come in the individualistic form such as the Papal form or in a communal form. For us, the head of the local Church is the bishop and the community with its bishop, form a catholic (universal) Church. Bishops together form the Holy Synod and all bishops in the world are together in their synods and Patriarchs. On the global level, we have unity through coordination and the decisions of synods; Churches also communicate with each other." You must clarify our form without offending the Pope of Rome because this is the method of the weak. A Catholic Christian might not know that there is a different system in the Church than his; and that this system might be the most ancient and consequently that his Church must make steps towards an undivided Church by doing a renewing or reformative move. By such a behavior, you be remaining a brother for the Catholic believer and you would be preserving the solidity of your opinion and the hope for unity.

As for Muslims, don't argue with them about their religion. If they knew their religion, they would recognize that it invites them to argue with us in a gentle way. They might ask you: Do you believe in Muhammad's mission? Don't say: "No, I don't believe". He might find this answer very awful. You could answer for example by saying that God gave us his final words through Jesus Christ; and these words are enough for our salvation and were written in the New Testament which

was ended with the Book of Revelation. As for what the Quran says about the “Nazarenes” and blaspheming them, don’t get into this argument because we are not the “Nazarenes” that the Quran is talking about. We are Christians and this is our only name, and therefore we are not concerned in blaspheming the “Nazarenes”. Confirm your faith in Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection because this is written in the Bible and most of those who have written it were eyewitnesses to the incident or knew people who were eyewitnesses. There are precise things that are known by Christians who are specialized in Islam. You could ask such people about things that you were asked to clarify.

The most difficult argument is with Jehovah’s Witnesses and the different sects of the Baptists. We have enough books against Jehovah’s Witnesses and we are preparing a team to examine their teachings and refute them. We are also preparing a study for the various Evangelical heresies that don’t come from the traditional known Protestant Churches. Those don’t look for the truth, and they rarely surrender to invulnerable arguments. They have a narrow and literal interpretation to the Holy Scripture and have closed and tough personalities. Apostle Paul ordered us to be careful and avoid such people. However, you must be fortified against them through knowledge.

Regardless of the side that is arguing with you, you must be humble and strict at the same time. However, you must get a lot of knowledge through study sessions and Orthodox books that have become numerous.

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