

The Education of Donald Trump

The new golden boy of multicultural politics and Moderate Islam, Mayor Sadiq Khan of London, fresh from his electoral triumph, [told an interviewer on May 13](#) that he would like to “educate” Donald Trump about Islam. Certainly Trump, like many of those who oppose him, could stand to be educated about Islam, but what he needs to know is not what Sadiq Khan surely has in mind. Sadiq Khan plans for his tutorial a few innocuous verses from the Qur’an that are always trotted out by the “moderates”: 2:256 and 5:32 without 5:33 (we’ll be getting to them later on). He also no doubt plans to offer Trump a potted history of Islam’s conquests, and a sanitized version of Muhammad’s biography, that will leave out as much of the gory bits as he, Sadiq Khan, thinks he can get away with omitting. And a good time will be had by all, if by all we mean Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton and Bill de Blasio. It won’t do.

It is not that Trump has been misinformed, but that he has not been sufficiently informed to do more than speak in dismissive generalities about Islam. He knows there is something worrisome about Islam, and thinks – sensibly – that it might be a good idea to put a stop to Muslim immigration “until we figure out what is going on.” Who could disagree? Well, apparently a great many of those people who, knowing so little about Islam, assume they know all they need to know, and believe there is nothing more to “figure out” – they could and do disagree with the “islamophobic” Donald J. Trump.

Now instead of softening his previous statements by re-labelling them as “suggestions,” Trump might have held off and done what Muslims fear most, which is to educate himself, and without their “help,” about Islam. He’s a combative sort, and were he to put in hours of study of the canonical texts (and Robert Spencer has published a verse-by-verse exegesis, [Blogging the Qur’an](#), that Trump would find most useful) – and not allow himself to be scared off by the usual claims, e.g.,

that non-Muslims simply can't understand the Qur'an because they don't know Arabic, or can't interpret a verse or a Tradition (Hadith) correctly unless they know the "context," the results could be salutary and bracing. Imagine that Trump, fortified with his new knowledge, came out from his corner quoting, able to clarify for his rapt audience what the Qur'an contains, and what the Hadith are, and why both matter to Muslims as sources of authority. Imagine a Trump able to explain how, through the interpretative doctrine of *naskh*, or abrogation, Muslims are able to reconcile contradictory passages in the Qur'an by abrogating the earlier, "softer" verses in favor of the later, more uncompromising verses. Imagine a Trump who could focus attention (and he now garners far more attention than any other candidate) on a few dozen or so of the most disturbing "Jihad verses" that are cited by ISIS and other terrorists as the textual justification for their behavior. When ISIS smites the necks of the Infidels, its killers are not silent; they tell us they are simply following 8:12 and 47:4 (or other relevant verses for other atrocities). In lieu of uttering general and sometimes vague remarks, Trump can locate his worries in specific verses. "Until we figure out what is going on," while reasonable, is not as forceful as "so, we need to take a look at those verses Muslim killers keep quoting, such as 8:12 and 47:4 and 9:5 and 9:29 – lemme just read out some of these to you...(here Trump quotes Qur'anically *ad libitum*)." Trump could force the issue, and brusquely deal with the expected excuses: "Yeah, somebody told me because I don't know Arabic I can't really understand these verses, but 80% of the world's Muslims don't know any Arabic – and no one says that they can't possibly understand Islam" or "Don't go telling me these verses can only be understood in a particular historical context – Muhammad is the 'perfect man' (*al-insan al-kamil*) for all time." I cannot imagine any candidate except Trump daring to hold up for inspection Muhammad's marriage to little Aisha, or Muhammad's expression of pleasure at hearing of the assassinations of Asma bint Marwan and Abu 'Afak. But he needs to learn, and be

ready to deploy in his forthright fashion, these facts and more. This would enrage Muslims, and other defenders of the faith, precisely because Trump would be adducing those biographical episodes (about little Aisha, the Khaybar Oasis, the Battle of the Trench, the poetess Asma bint Marwan, the sex slave Safiyya bint Huyayy) that Muslims, however much for granted they take these things, also know that among the Unbelievers such “details” could be a source of deep embarrassment.

Sadiq Khan, now sensing that Trump is on the defensive (having re-characterized his blunt remarks as “suggestions”), will likely have the chutzpah to continue to insist that “Islam” means “peace.” He will certainly quote 5:32, possibly even as it appeared in Obama’s 2009 remark: “Mr. Trump, perhaps you’ve forgotten – even though your own president Barack Obama quoted verbatim – what the Koran says about killing at 5:32. He said, and I quote, ‘The Holy Koran teaches that whoever kills an innocent, it is as if he has killed all mankind; and whoever saves a person, it is as if he has saved all mankind.’” But then Trump, properly prepared, could come back immediately with: “Hey, you forgot 5.33. Remember? Here it is: ‘The only reward of those who make war upon Allah and His messenger and strive after corruption in the land will be that they will be killed or crucified, or have their hands and feet on alternate sides cut off, or will be expelled out of the land.’ That doesn’t sound so peaceful to me.”

And there is still that other Qur’anic verse always trotted out in defense of a kinder, gentler Islam: “There is no compulsion in religion” (2.256). Imagine Sadiq Khan quoting that staple of Muslim propaganda with smug assurance, convinced that Trump will not have ready a Retort Plausible. And imagine what Trump’s reply could be if he has been properly prepped about the Jizyah: “Oh no, Sadiq? You think the Jizyah-tax is nothing? What if everyone in Europe had to pay 50,000 euros a year in order to stay alive and avoid

having to convert to Islam? Just how many people do you think would pay the 50,000 euros? Come on! If that isn't 'compulsion,' I don't know what is." What could Sadiq suavely respond?

Sadiq Khan, his smooth front now furrowed, may want to wait a while for a rematch. He's got a lot on his plate, determined as he is to show those doubting Infidels how moderate he is, and Islam, too, if rightly understood. He's planning a trade mission to Tel Aviv, which presumably is meant, in its obvious "some of my best friends" way, to signify that all those charges of Muslim antisemitism are baseless. And he's certainly got to make time to reply to his many well-wishers, including Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, Angela Merkel, and Bill de Blasio, and so many others whose congratulations are also self-congratulations.

As for Donald J. Trump, hope that he burns the midnight oil, with Qur'an and Hadith and the right guides to both, in order that he might put his combativeness, and even his studied outrageousness, as imagined here, to their best and highest use.