

Gerard Batten Suggests Muslim-Only Prisons (Part Three)

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Gerard Batten should now follow up on his own suggestion, go on the offensive, appear repeatedly before the public, ideally on television, and make the following points:

First, we know that there is a very grave safety problem in prisons where there are both Muslims and non-Muslims – as there now are everywhere in Great Britain. The problem goes only one way: Muslim threats against, and bullying of, and even attacks on, non-Muslim prisoners. We know that this causes great anxiety for non-Muslim prisoners, as they have reported, and as a result, some – quite a few – convert to Islam not out of conviction, but out of fear. And as the number of Muslims in a particular prison increases as a result of these conversions, the greater the perception by the remaining non-Muslims of the danger to them, and prison conversions increase even more. The problem only worsens.

Second, to those who scoff and think this is not a real problem, I draw your attention to the reports by prison officials on the reasons for these prison conversions to Islam. They do include such things as prisoners wanting the better food that, it is rumored, Muslims receive, particularly at Ramadan, and the time that Muslims enjoy outside their cells in order to participate in communal prayers. Islam also offers the welcome discipline of its many rules. But the main impetus for conversion is fear, if we are to believe those prison officials, including guards who observe the interactions of groups of prisoners. We also have the

testimony of prisoners who refused to convert, and who describe the pressures that are brought to bear on them. We should not allow such fear to pervade our prisons.

Third, we know that the Qur'an teaches Muslims to despise Unbelievers, Kuffar, non-Muslims. They are described in Qur'an 98:6 as 'the most vile of creatures.'" More than 100 verses in the Qur'an are about waging jihad, holy war, against the Unbelievers. Muslims are told to be loyal to one another, observing the principle of *Al-wala' wa-l-bara'*, but hating the Infidels. They are told never to take Christians or Jews as friends. Anyone who thinks I am making this all up should read the relevant Qur'anic verses, and some of Muhammad's more telling hadith. Are we really to ignore the texts and teachings of Islam, or shouldn't we take them seriously, and study them with the utmost care, for they explain the hostile behavior of Muslim prisoners toward the non-Muslims, unless, of course, they are in the midst of converting someone.

Fourth, are we going to allow ourselves the freedom to discuss what prison conversions mean, both inside prisons and in the larger society, when many of those prisoners who enter as non-Muslims are then, often out of palpable fear, converted to Islam, and in turn, help to swell the ranks of Muslims, both in and, when they are released, out of prison? The prisoners who do convert, and many have violent backgrounds, tend unsurprisingly to embrace, a more extreme and violent variety of Islam. Are we not to take note of that reality, to pretend that these prison-factories of converts should be of no worry to us? How much longer will we go on, whistling in the dark?

If it is not possible to create Muslim-only prisons, what might be acceptable? What about placing non-Muslim and Muslim prisoners in different wings, or on different floors, of the same prison? What about, as well, letting the non-Muslim and Muslim prisoners out for exercise in the prison yard at different, non-overlapping times, in order to lessen the possibility of conflict and threat? And if Muslim prisoners

are allowed out of their cells for communal prayer, should not other prisoners be allowed out of their cells for an equal time, either for prayer or simply for meditation, in the interests of equity? As for the rumors about halal food being superior to the regular fare, why not take steps to end that dangerous rumor, by improving perceptibly the food the non-Muslims are given? If this is objected to, the prison authorities can explain that it was the prisoners themselves, including the Muslim prisoners, who appeared to believe that the halal food was superior, and that there was more of it, and this latest step was taken not to favor non-Muslims, but only to even things out and end that perception.

These suggestions, I hope, will help to start a national discussion on our prisons, on the massive number of conversions to Islam taking place in them, and what, if anything, we can and should do about it. I look forward to reading your emails about this critical matter. Thank you.

First published in