

Rev. Alexander Santora, Or, Islam Out of the Mouths of Babes

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Rev. Alexander Santora is a Christian clergyman in New Jersey who has taken a great interest in presenting Islam in the best possible light and, unsurprisingly, he gives no sign of being interested in finding out what is actually in the Qur'an and Hadith. He is content to report the clipped replies by young Muslims to the question 'What Does Islam Mean To Me?' His latest is from November, but because it is so representative of a certain kind of apologetics on behalf of Islam, discussion of it does not date.

[Here is Reverend Santora:](#)

On Sept. 7, my column featured "The Adventures of Imam Adam," a Muslim doll and children's story book by Danny Shakos, a U.S.-born Muslim.

Within hours of its online posting, there were scores of vicious and hateful comments.

I took the trouble to read all 164 comments to Rev. Santora's Sept. 7 column. Of those 164, only four were negative. One read: "Islam is a violent religion, bro." Is that "vicious and hateful"? A second comment used the word "muzzie." Let's concede, though it's a stretch, that the use of the word "muzzie" is "vicious and hateful." Exactly one such comment, out of 164, does not constitute, by my calculation, "scores of vicious and hateful comments."

There were two critical comments about another piece by Santora on this new Muslim doll. Here they are:

"I could not disagree more with the content written in this article. This backwards group does not need more exposure in the West and this product should be cancelled ASAP. There is no need or purpose for this product."

"This is a Aniconism! It's offensive to the so called Prophet, Blessing on his followers so they will turn away from the bad ideas."

Are these two comments "vicious and hateful"? Critical, yes. "Vicious and hateful" – no. But you can understand that Rev. Alexander Santora wishes to depict Muslims as victims, with a crowd of blogging know-nothings ready to descend when even something as innocuous as a Muslim doll is being discussed. It would not fit the script were the Rev. Alexander Santora to write, truthfully, that "I was pleased to see that only one of the 164 comments on my article about the Muslim doll and storybook could remotely be described as 'vicious and hateful.'"

Imam Mohammad Al-Hayak, the outreach coordinator at the North Hudson Islamic Center in Union City, gave his senior students at Al-Ghazaly High School in Wayne an assignment to read and respond to the comments [on Rev. Santora's online article – those “vicious and hateful comments”] – with facts. In other words, combat hate with education.

“Hate” directed at them is now an omnipresent claim of many Muslims, many of whom have been found to manufacture fake hate crimes. The word is applied here to the criticism elicited by Rev. Santora's previous piece on a Muslim doll and story book. As I noted above, his claims that there were “scores of vicious and hateful comments” are flatly untrue; at most, one out of 164 could be called “vicious and hateful,” and in that case only because the word “muzzie” was used. The Rev. Alexander Santora quotes exactly two of the “scores” of comments on his Sept. 7 column that he calls “vicious and hateful,” and to which these Muslim students at the Al-Ghazaly high school were asked to respond “with facts,” in order to “combat hate with education.”

Yet we are given no examples of any “responses...with facts” given to “combat hate with education.” All we get are the opinions of four students who, on being asked what Islam means to them, offered the most laconic of replies – not more than a couple of words. These opinions do not constitute a “response...with facts.” No other “responses” were apparently offered.

Instead, we get this feelgood report on Rev. Santora's visit to the Muslim school:

I was so impressed, I traveled to Wayne recently to meet with the entire Class of 2018 – 64 students – twice as many girls as boys. For a while, we talked about how they feel growing up Muslim in a multi-cultural society. They seem happy and adjusted and do not experience much prejudice, though the

girls wearing the hijab, or headdress, saw some.

The students attributed most of the prejudice to ignorance and not knowing any Muslims personally.

Anti-Islam feeling is not the product of ignorance, but of knowledge: knowledge of the texts, Qur'an and hadith, and knowledge of 1400 years of Muslim conquest and subjugation of many different non-Muslim peoples and ends.

The international discussion about terrorism attributed to extremists also has poisoned the well, they said, and they can understand how people can stereotype. But they said Islam is a peaceful religion.

Beyza Anil, 17, said she is a feminist and was quite articulate in a small group discussion on how "Islam is the most forward-thinking religion on women's rights." The Verona resident said that from its founding, Islam gave women the right to own property and wives are not a possession of their husbands.

"As a feminist and a Muslim I believe in equality between all races, genders, and religious beliefs," the aspiring artist or astronomer said.

Did Rev. Santora have any interest in reading what the Qur'an and Hadith say about girls and women, in order to check the accuracy of Beyza Azil's assurance that "Islam is the most forward-thinking religion on women's rights"? Does he know that in Islam, a woman's testimony is worth half that of a man, and that a daughter inherits half what a son does? As for other examples of "gender" inequality, not just as to inheritance and in giving testimony, but in many other aspects of life, Muslim women are treated differently from men. The polygamy that Islam permits, with a man having up to four wives, is an obvious indication that women are less valued

than men; so is the triple-talaq divorce, available only to men, while for wives to obtain a divorce is much more difficult and costly, if permitted at all. In many Muslim countries, those guilty of honor killings of female relatives whose conduct has “dishonored” the family are punished mildly or not at all. Husbands can beat – albeit, some insist, “lightly” – disobedient wives. All of this describes a form of dominance that amounts to possession.

Beyza Azil apparently believes that it was only the arrival of Islam that “gave women the right to own property.” This claim is frequently made by Muslims; it is completely false. Can she really not know that Khadija herself, years before Islam began, and before she became Muhammad’s first wife, and the first female convert to Islam, was a successful merchant and trader, and owner of property? Khadija was the most successful, but not the only female Arab owner of property before the coming of Islam. Furthermore, Beyza is apparently unaware that under Jewish law, since 1800 B.C. (about 2500 years before Islam appeared), women have been able to own property. In Hinduism, women could own any property that they possessed before entering into marriage. In the Roman Empire, women could own and inherit property. According to the Anglo-Saxon laws of the 800s, women could both possess and inherit properly. These examples give the lie to Beyza’s dreamy belief that it was Islam that “gave women the right to own property.”

When Beyza Azil claims “as a Muslim” to believe in the “equality” of “religious beliefs,” she needs to be informed that there is no such equality in Islam. In the Qur’an, the inferior status of non-Muslims is constantly reiterated. Muslims are commanded not to accept non-Muslims as equals, but commanded to conduct violent jihad against them, the Unbelievers, until Islam is everywhere dominant, and Muslims rule, everywhere. Once conquered, non-Muslims are to be offered only three possibilities: death, conversion to Islam, or the status of dhimmi, which requires payment of the jizyah,

a kind of protection money, and imposes other onerous conditions as well, such as not being able to repair old, or build new, houses of worship. Where is the “equality” of “religious beliefs” in the command to conquer, to kill, to force the kuffar either to accept the dhimmi status or to convert to Islam? Muslims must always be in a superior position; “equality” of religious beliefs has no place in Islam. Because the wife is always subordinate to the husband in Islam,, a Muslim man can marry a non-Muslim woman, but a non-Muslim man cannot marry a Muslim woman – for an Unbeliever would then be in a superior position to a Muslim, which cannot be tolerated. The Qur’an is very clear: Muslims must not take Christians or Jews as friends, “for they are friends only with each other.” (5:51). Muslims are the best of peoples (3:110), while non-Muslims are the “most vile of creatures”(98:6). Does Beyza Azil know any of this? Perhaps not; she’s 17; she may really believe what she says. Rev. Santora, however, is a grownup, and as a reverend he is regarded as a religious authority; if he is going to write about Islam, he has a duty to know what is in the Qur’an, not to pass on, with his seeming approval, gross misinformation from Muslim teenagers.

The school uniform requires the girls to wear maroon or red hijabs and full-length dresses that cover their arms and legs. Yet, they do not see that as subordinating themselves. They are free outside to wear it or not.

Confronted with hateful comments, Yousuf Tariq-Shuaib, 17, said “stay calm.” The Paterson resident said some people want to be “edgy” to elicit a laugh.

“If we respond in kind, we add fuel to the fire,” he said.

“He said we should simply try to inform.”

“Some people are afraid of what they do not understand,” 17-year-old Salma Zaiter, who lives in Clifton, said. She said to keep a cool head and inform so people get a little bit of

insight."

Rama Saadi, 17, advised: "Don't get angry and treat them well."

The Hawthorne resident said to "smile at them with respect."

Yes, we are all so familiar with Muslims keeping a "cool head," not getting angry, smiling with respect, with that supernatural calm and generosity of spirit for which Muslims are famous everywhere in the world, as with their soft answers they turneth away wrath.

The students are proud to be Muslim.

"As a child, love has been instilled in us," Beyza said.

"Love has been instilled in us"? "Love'" for what, exactly? Certainly not "love" for the Infidel, against whom Jihad must be waged, as 109 verses in the Qur'an command. Not love for the Kuffar, who are – this can't be repeated too often – the "most vile of creatures" according to Qur'an 98:6. In fact, Beyza surely knows these verses. Furthermore, the Islamic doctrine of al-wala a-l-bara' – loving and disavowal for the sake of Allah – means that Muslims must hold fast to all that is pleasing to Allah, and to withdraw from and oppose all that is displeasing to Allah; namely the Kuffar (non-Muslims), who are to be hated, for the sake of Allah. The "love" that "has been instilled in us" as children, though Beyza does not explain, whether out of ignorance or guile, to the endlessly gullible Rev. Alexander Santora, is love for Allah, for Muhammad the Perfect Man, and for all fellow Muslims, but never love for the Kuffar. That, theologically, would make no sense: how can Muslims possibly "love" those who deny Allah, who deny that Muhammad was his prophet? Their entire faith is based on an uncompromising division of the world of men between Believer and Infidel, and of the earth's lands,

between Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb.

"Islam is a tolerant religion," Rama added.

Salma said that the Quran respects different religions.

The verses commanding Jihad warfare against those of "different religions," that is, all non-Muslims – for the earliest Muslims this meant Christians and Jews – are verses which both Rama and Salma apparently have never read, or wish to ignore, and hope you too will ignore them, for they show an Islam that is relentlessly against toleration of non-Muslims, and commands endless warfare against the Infidels until they submit. Submission means conversion to Islam or acceptance of the deliberately humiliating status of "dhimmi," and hardly constitutes "tolerance" in the modern, Western understanding of that word. The broad remarks – "Islam is a tolerant religion" (Rama) and "the Qur'an respects different religions" (Salma) may just possibly be believed by the very young people uttering them – they are, after all, likely to mindlessly parrot what the adults around them say to Infidels, or even instruct them to say. Or they may simply be practicing – Muslims can't start too young – *taqiyya*, that is, the religiously-sanctioned dissembling about the faith for the greater good of Islam.

But it is not these young Muslims whose views should provoke our amazement and dismay. They're doing what we expect, defending, ingenuously or disingenuously, the faith of Islam. It's the Reverend Alexander Santora who, in reporting, with seeming approval, the remarks of these students, leaves unwary readers with the impression that what they say is not to be questioned; it must be true. That is why we need to remind those readers, and Rev. Santora, that there are 109 verses in the Qur'an that preach violent Jihad. There are also verses commanding the use of terror against Infidels (3:151, 8:12, 8:60), and Muhammad's remark in the most reliable hadith

collection, that of Bukhari, that “I have been made victorious through terror.” Has Rev. Santora read those Jihad verses? Or the verses about “striking terror” in infidels? Does Rev. Alexander Santora have another way of understanding those Jihad verses? How does he comprehend the verses that call for “striking terror” in the hearts of the Infidel enemy? And the hadith where Muhammad credits terrorism for making him “victorious”? What does Rev. Santora think of the verse calling Infidels “the most vile of creatures”? Or could it be – I’m afraid it could in this topsy-turvy world – that Rev. Santora has only skimmed the Qur’an, and has no clear idea of what it contains, and is perfectly content to rely on the understandings of four adolescent Muslims (Yousuf, Rama, Salma, Beyza) as each offers a soothing summary, just a few words, of What Islam Means To Me?

Yousuf acknowledged that there is a very small group of terrorists who are Islam [sic] and most Muslims condemn them for this.

After he graduates, he wants to combine engineering with business at MIT or Cornell; Rama has her eyes on the same schools for engineering. Salma intends to study graphic design and illustration in Chicago or Rhode Island.

Yusuf acknowledges “A very small group of terrorists”? Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Al-Shebab, Boko Haram, Hamas, Hezbollah, Sipah-e-Sahaba, and hundreds of smaller groups and groupuscules, with hundreds of thousands of active members, and many more millions of sympathizers? The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights estimated that at its height ISIS had in Syria alone 80,000-100,000 members. When we add in the members of all the other terrorist groups, it surely must amount to several hundred thousand terrorist jihadis worldwide. Islamic terrorists have been operating in more than 50 countries, and have been responsible for more than 32,500 terrorist attacks since 9/11/2001. And when we add to the total number those

Muslims who may not participate in terrorist acts directly, but nevertheless indirectly promote them, through financial, political, and “moral” support, we get a still grimmer picture. That moral support is substantial, though seldom mentioned in the Western media. Many assume that ISIS is deplored and shunned by almost all Muslims. It isn’t true. In 2015 in an opinion poll, fully half of all the Muslims in the U.K. expressed support for ISIS. That alone should worry Infidels everywhere. In two other polls of Muslims worldwide, only 38% said that terrorism was never justified. So much for terrorism being deplored by all but a “tiny group of extremists’’ who have a “twisted” and “distorted” version of Islam.

Khaldiya Mustafa, the principal, said that the senior class in general scores above average on the SAT with some reaching almost perfect scores. Past graduates have gone to the best schools.

The 350 students in Grades 7-12 come from many communities, including several Hudson County towns. Seventh- and eighth-grade students are separated by sex; high school classes are mixed.

The school also has an elementary school in Prospect Park.

The schools got their start from Al-Ghazaly School, which is still in Jersey City, where the principal grew up.

I have a rewarding feeling befitting youth to become great people in society,” Mustafa said.

So these students are aiming high in their vocational ambitions: MIT, Cornell. Many get high SAT scores. Some of the school’s graduates are going to the best colleges. All of this information, dear to the hearts of college counsellors, is irrelevant to understanding of what the texts of Islam teach. Such educational outcomes tell us nothing about either Muslim

beliefs or Muslim behavior. It is implied that because these are good students, with high ambitions, that therefore they couldn't possibly support Islamic terrorism. There are no grounds for such a belief. Muslim terrorists are on the whole better educated, and better off economically, than the average Muslim, as noted in a report by Giulio Meotti [here](#). Osama bin Laden came from a family of billionaires. Ayman al-Zawahiri, a doctor, came from one of the most prominent and prosperous families in Egypt. We have all read of the doctors, lawyers, professors, students at good universities, who went off to join the Islamic state. Telling us that Muslims are economically "middle-class" is no reason for us to feel relieved. The "middle-class" Dr. Nidal Hasan, who had had his medical education paid for entirely by the Army, and was earning \$90,000 a year, remained unswayed in his murderous hatred of Infidels. "Mike" Hawash, who was convicted in 2003 of trying to help his fellow Muslims in the Taliban, had been earning \$360,000 as an Intel engineer. Aafia Siddiqui had attended MIT, had a Ph.D. in neuroscience from Brandeis, and a brilliant career before her when she decided to trade it all for life as "Lady Al-Qaida." There are many more such examples.

When listing strengths of Islam, Beyza said "women's rights." Rama said "equality." "Getting to know your neighbors," said Salma. Yousuf noted the "concept of charity."

Let us take these in turn.

"Women's rights"? Let's see. We discussed this claim above, but without quoting directly from the Qur'an. Does young Beyza, or does Rev. Alexander Santora, know any of these verses from the Qur'an?:

Quran (4:11) – (Inheritance) "The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females" (see also verse 4:176). In Islam, sexism is mathematically established.

Quran (2:282) – (Court testimony) “And call to witness, from among your men, two witnesses. And if two men be not found then a man and two women.” Muslim apologists offer creative explanations to explain why Allah felt that a man’s testimony in court should be valued twice as highly as a woman’s, but studies consistently show that women are actually less likely to tell lies than men, meaning that they make more reliable witnesses.

Quran (2:228) – “and the men are a degree above them [women]”

Quran (5:6) – “And if ye are unclean, purify yourselves. And if ye are sick or on a journey, or one of you cometh from the closet, or ye have had contact with women, and ye find not water, then go to clean, high ground and rub your faces and your hands with some of it.” Men are to rub dirt on their hands, if there is no water to purify them, following casual contact with a woman (such as shaking hands).

Quran (24:31) – Women are to lower their gaze around men, so they do not look them in the eye. (To be fair, men are told to do the same thing in the prior verse).

Quran (2:223) – “Your wives are as a tilth unto you; so approach your tilth when or how ye will...” A man has dominion over his wives’ bodies as he does his land. This verse is overtly sexual. There is some dispute as to whether it is referring to the practice of anal intercourse. If this is what Muhammad meant, then it would appear to contradict what he said in the hadith (Muslim 8:3365)

Quran (4:3) – (Wife-to-husband ratio) “Marry women of your choice, Two or three or four” Inequality by numbers.

Quran (4:34) - “Men are the maintainers of women because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend out of their property; the good women are therefore obedient, guarding the unseen as Allah has guarded; and (as to) those on whose part you fear desertion, admonish them, and leave them

alone in the sleeping-places and beat them; then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them; surely Allah is High, Great.”

Quran (33:50) – “O Prophet! We have made lawful to thee thy wives to whom thou hast paid their dowers; and those (slaves) whom thy right hand possesses out of the prisoners of war whom Allah has assigned to thee.” This is one of several personal-sounding verses “from Allah” narrated by Muhammad – in this case allowing a virtually unlimited supply of sex partners. Other Muslims are restricted to four wives, but they may also have sex with any number of slaves, following the example of their prophet. A man is permitted to take women as sex slaves outside of marriage. Note that the verse distinguishes wives from captives (those whom thy right hand possesses). See also Quran 4:24.

Quran (53:27) – “Those who believe not in the Hereafter, name the angels with female names.” Angels are sublime beings, and would therefore be male. In other words, if you don’t believe in the Hereafter, you obviously could believe something as absurd as angels with female names.

So much for “women’s rights” in the texts, especially the Qur’an. But there is also the observable behavior of Muslims. Are not “honor killings,” permitted or only mildly punished in Muslim countries, an expression of the Muslim male’s vast power over female relatives? What about the husband’s right to beat a disobedient wife (4:34)? Those bans on women going without proper veiling, the need for Muslim women to have male relatives as their guardians, the reluctance to allow women to travel freely without a male escort, all most pronounced in Saudi Arabia– are those the “women’s rights” Beyza has in mind? Perhaps the Rev. Alexander Santora, after studying the subject, beginning with the Qur’anic verses above, might devote another of his pieces to the status of women in Islam instead of leaving the last, and absurd, word on the subject to 17-year-old Beyza.

Another student, Rama, claims that Islam stands for “equality.” What kind of “equality”? If she means “equality” of the sexes, we can see, in the verses posted just above, what the Qur’an has to say, unambiguously, about the inferiority of women.

Could the “equality” she has in mind be “racial equality”? If so, then we have to ask Rama what she makes of the evidence from the Qur’an, from the Hadith, and from Muslim scholars on the subject of race.

Here are the passages in the Qur’an that are ordinarily quoted to show that Islam stands for racial equality:

“And mankind is naught but a single nation” (Quran 2:213)

“And among his signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the variations and diversity of your tongues and of your color, verily in that are signs for those who know.” (Qur’an 30.22)

“O mankind we created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you and God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).” (Qur’an 49:13)

Nothing here suggests inequality among the various “nations and tribes,” for we have everyone descended from the same couple, nor is there any ranking of the “diversity of tongues and colors,” and therefore, Muslims argue, these passages should be understood to express Islam’s belief in the equality of all mankind.

But there are other passages in the Islamic texts that suggest quite a different view of mankind, one where being black is regarded as a mark of inferiority. For example, consider what happens on the Day of Resurrection. Allah promises (Qur’an

3:185) that life in this world is an illusion, that every person shall die, and every person will receive his judgment on the resurrection day, and in Qur'an 5:26, he says that all that is on earth will perish. Allah then says that He will reward the doers of good with paradise and much more; their faces will be radiant-stained [i.e. white]. They will never be humiliated. (Qur'an 10:26).

Here is more on "white faces" in the Qur'an, and in the famous exegeses to the Qur'an of Ibn Kathir, taken from postings by an ex-Muslim, Abul Kasem:

It is clear from the exegesis of these verses that Allah likes white people and dislikes the black people, so much so, in fact, that even when a Black Muslim is entitled to enter Islamic Paradise, he will not enter it until Allah has turned him into a white person. Verse 20:102 says that on the day the trumpet is sounded (resurrection day), the sinners will be gathered together with blue eyes and black faces. A hadith in Mishkat says that on judgment day, Muslims will have white faces, white arms, and white legs." (Mishkat al-Masabih)

Allah's preference for light-skinned people and His disdain for dark-skinned people is repeated in verse 7:46. Ibn Abbas writes that this verse tells the joy of the believers when they know those who enter hell by their darkened faces and blue eyes and those who enter Paradise by their lightened faces: at once handsome and radiant.

In verse 18:29 Allah says that He does not care whether people believe or disbelieve in Islam. The disbelievers (non-Muslims) and the wrongdoers will be surrounded by the tent of fire; they will be given water (acid) like molten brass to shower and to scald their faces. Ibn Kathir says that this verse means the water of Hell is black, and it itself is black and its people are black.

In verse 3:107 Allah emphatically pronounces that white faces

on the judgment day will receive His mercy. Jalalyn writes that, on judgment day, Muslims' faces will be white."

Islamic Paradise will offer its white male residents unlimited, unbridled, uninterrupted sex with houris of exquisite beauty. These houris will also be of fair (read white), radiant complexion (44:54, 55:70). Even the wine-serving boys will be white, like pearls (52:24, 76:19).

Here is more about "white" and "black" in Islam:

Muhammad was white, according to Sunaan Abu Dawud, 1.486.

In various Hadith Muhammad is asked for and described as "This white man reclining on his arm." Or when asked to describe him, another early Muslim said "he was white." And again: "And a white person who is requested to pray for rain. And yet again, the Prophet raised his hands so high that the "whiteness of his armpits became visible." And one more: "He uncovered his thigh and I saw the whiteness of the thigh of the Prophet."

Here is a hadith from Sahih Bukhari (1.3.63). Narrated Anas bin Malik

"While we were sitting with the Prophet in the mosque, a man came riding on a camel. He made his camel kneel down in the mosque, tied its foreleg and then said: "Who amongst you is Muhammad?" At that time the Prophet was sitting amongst us (his companions) leaning on his arm. We replied, "This white man reclining on his arm." The man then addressed him, "O Son of 'Abdul Muttalib."

Tabari [the famous historian of early Islam] writes that Muhammad was of white complexion (al-Tabari, Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarir, History of al-Tabari):

"In Ash-Shifa, Allah, an apparently shared disdain among Muslims for black people is expressed in this manner:

Ahmad ibn Abi Sulayman, the companion of Sahnun said, "Anyone who says that the Prophet was black should be killed. (Ibn Musa al-Yahsubi, Qadi 'Iyad. Ash-Shifa).

Muhammad was white. His arms were white, his thighs were white, even his armpits were white. This was very important to establish. And anyone who said he was black should be killed. Then there is the hadith where God is said to divide humanity first into two groups, and then one of those groups divided further into three parts, and then He separated the "best" one of those three parts into two halves, with all non-Arabs in one half, and all Arabs in the other half. And then, God further divided the Arabs between those of the favored Quraysh tribe, and all the others. And finally, among the Quraysh, the family of Muhammad is separated from all the others of the Quraysh tribe, as the very best of the "best of peoples." This can be found in the well-known biography (Sira) of Muhammad by ibn Sa'd:

Muhammad, then, is the best man from the best stock (the Quraysh) of the best people (the Arabs). And he is – this is endlessly repeated – a white man, with white thighs, white armpits, white legs.

The unflattering portrait of black men in the Qur'an, Hadith, and Sira should not be forgotten, even if some young Muslims allow themselves to believe that the essence of Islam is "equality":

Umar, who was one of the Companions of Muhammad, his friend, and his successor, after Ibn Bakr, as Caliph, had a profound dislike for black people.

Among them, with Muawiyah b. Hudhayl, were young men of black complexion and straight hair. 'Umar turned his face away from them several times until it was said to him: "Do you have anything against these people." He said: "I am perplexed with regard to them. No Arab tribe more hateful to me than these

has ever passed by me.” He then let them go, but he frequently mentioned them with hatred, and people were puzzled by ‘Umar’s attitude..

Muhammad himself preached unquestioning obedience to authority in this way: “you should listen to and obey your ruler even if he was an Ethiopian (black) slave whose head looks like a raisin” (obey him, that is, despite his being an Ethiopian).

The constant references to Muhammad’s whiteness, the pejorative remarks made about black faces (the faces of those who on Judgment Day will go to hell are all black, while all those going to Heaven will have white “radiant” faces), the hatred that Umar, friend and companion to Muhammad, felt for blacks, the repeated statement that “anyone who calls Muhammad a black man ‘should be killed,’” strongly suggest that in Islam the importance placed on the superiority of the white Quraysh tribe undercuts claims about a lack of “racial inequality” in Islam.

And what is the evidence for racial discrimination in the actual practice of Islam? First, of course, is the matter of slavery. Muslims recognized slavery as legitimate, given that Muhammad, the Perfect Man and Model of Conduct, had slaves, even bought and sold them. It should be conceded that those enslaved could be black or white. More than one million Europeans were enslaved by Arabs who raided the coasts of Europe over the centuries, or attacked Christian shipping in the Mediterranean. But far more important in numbers, and duration, was t