



The Election of London's First Muslim Mayor is Not a Victory for the UK's Muslims

News:

Sadiq Khan's victory in last week's London Mayoral elections to become the capital's first Muslim mayor has been hailed by many as a victory for Muslims and multiculturalism in the UK as well as a defeat of the agendas of Islamophobes. He received the largest number of votes of any London Mayoral candidate and won with a margin of over 10% over his main rival, Zac Goldsmith despite facing an election campaign by his Conservative opponents which has been described by many as racist and Islamophobic. They implied that Khan could be a threat to national security and 'legitimised' extremist views due to previously sharing platforms with an Imam who supported the establishment of an Islamic state. These results therefore led to some arguing that democracy can work for Muslims in the UK regardless of the hostile Islamophobic environment they face. Other Muslims went as far as describing Khan as a role model for young Muslims in Britain, and his election win as a good sign for the future of Muslims in the UK.

Comment:

The belief that Khan's election as London Mayor is a victory for Muslims is extremely misguided. This is a politician who voted for same-sex marriage, calls himself – "The British Muslim who will take the fight to the extremists", and expressed his opposition to boycotts of the Jewish entity while previously lobbying for sanctions against the country. In an interview to the Jewish Chronicle he also promised to be 'a champion to Israel', while in recent weeks, he publically denounced two of his Labour colleagues who were suspended from their party due to comments against Zionism and the Jewish entity which were labelled as anti-Semitic by pro-Israeli politicians and media. In contrast, he had no qualms about pouring fuel onto the fire of Islamophobia which is already intense within the UK by suggesting during his election campaign that there should be suspicion towards Muslim households in which women and girls wear the hijab or niqab, and that Muslim women should consider whether to remain veiled when interacting with public service providers. How can such an individual ever be presented as a role model to Muslim youth whose success in this world and the next lies in their adherence to Islam and their obedience to their Rabb?

It is blatantly clear that within Western secular democratic states, only those who tow the dominant secular liberal line and shed their Islamic beliefs and values will be provided the oil to grease their wheels up the secular political ladder and secure top political positions within the society. How can Khan's victory therefore ever be viewed as a victory for the Muslim community in the UK? This democratic political system only works for those who are willing and ready to discard their Islamic beliefs and opinions for the sake of securing their own personal political ambitions. Furthermore, the belief that Muslims securing high positions in this system, is a means to improve

the state or rights of Muslims is extremely naïve and ill-judged. When you have a whole political system which is aggressively secular in nature and allows politicians, media, even Prime Ministers to publically and relentlessly express Islamophobic rhetoric as well as churn out anti-Muslim policy one after another – such as the anti-extremism PREVENT strategy – how can electing any Muslim into power within this system ever hold the key to protecting the interests of the Muslim community? Such Muslim politicians will only ever merge into the secular fabric of the institutions they serve in order to protect their political careers – with Khan a case in point.

As Muslims in the West, countering the Islamophobic environment in the societies we live and securing our basic right to practice our Deen in peace, cannot be achieved through engaging in a system which sanctions the expression of Islamophobic venom, and is doing its level best to take Muslims away from their Deen. Adopting this strategy for change only wastes the energies of the community and diverts their attention from the real path of fighting the flames of Islamophobia. To deal with this problem requires for us to take away the oxygen upon which the fire of Islamophobia and suspicion towards our community thrives – which are the lies and false accusations and narratives about our Deen and Muslims – such as the link between Islamic beliefs and terrorism, or the oppression of women, or the mistreatment of non-Muslims, or the dangers of the Shariah or the Khilafah (Caliphate) to the world. This necessitates us to explain with courage the truth of Islam to those around us in a frank, open and uncompromising manner – that it is a Deen that is starkly different to the liberal way of life but this is its strength for its values and laws elevate the morals and wellbeing of societies and hold real solutions to the intractable problems caused by liberal values and man-made systems in the world. The way to secure a better future for Muslims in the West is therefore not to discard our Islamic values in order to be accepted by the political system of the states we live but rather to adhere firmly to our Islamic beliefs and to dominate the discussions and debates about our Deen in our societies with the truth. Allah (swt) says,

﴿وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ﴾

“And whoever seeks a Deen other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him and in the hereafter he will be one of the losers.” [Al-i-Imran: 85]

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