

OPINION

An Islamophobic Eid?

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BY **RAHEEL RAZA** Tuesday, June 19, 2018



Raheel Raza

My Islamic holiday of *Eid al-Fitr* started with an incredible and unbelievable tweet by the Canadian parliamentarian and the MP for Mississauga Centre, Omar Alghabra, which went viral:

"Eid Mubarak, friends! I wish I could celebrate it with you but @AndrewScheer couldn't set aside partisanship for 1 day and is forcing votes for 30 hrs straight on one of the holiest days for Muslims!"

In response, MP Erin O'Toole wrote, *"It is clear you recognize your tweet was misleading Omar. Considering the context you really should apologize"* to which Mr. Alghabra responded by tweeting *"You don't believe Islamophobia exists! You disrespect the importance of Eid!"*

Seriously? Mr. Alghabra is citing Islamophobia? The vote was called for by the Liberals, the party that Mr. Alghabra belongs to. But he decided to make *Eid* a political issue and embarrass Canadians. He certainly embarrassed me by making such an ignorant remark.

Mr. Alghabra has a clear choice: Whether to identify as Islamist or Canadian. His constituents are not just Muslim – they are Canadians of every faith.

Eid is a celebration of the feast after the fast of Ramadan for Muslims. *Eid* is a time where one is meant to think about others, and what better way to do this than to spend time resolving Canadian issues in parliament?

Therefore, this Eid was very meaningful for me. I was in Ottawa where I attended an event hosted by the Hungarian ambassador about persecution of Christians in Muslim-majority areas of the Middle East. Following this, I attended an event about the continued genocide of the Yazidis in Iraq and Syria.

It was heartrending to meet some of the victims of ISIS brutality. At this event, it was mentioned more than once that the Canadian government is dragging its feet about bringing Yazidi families into Canada, especially those that already have some family members here.

Canada has agreed to bring 40,000 Syrian refugees, which is a good thing. However, Syrians are victims of a civil war and many will be able to go back home when things clear up. The Yazidis, on the other hand, have no place to go because they have been persecuted for centuries and have now been ousted from their place of birth.

Even though I was unable to be with my family for Eid celebrations, the fact that I was able to contribute in some small way to the cause of justice for humanity definitely made it worthwhile.

Canadians should be aware that we are going down a slippery slope – first with M103 (the motion condemning Islamophobia and all forms of religious discrimination in Canada) and second with this latest tweet by Mr. Alghabra – which may be the first shot to show how Islamophobia will be used as a weapon at every turn, even in parliament.

So if Mr. Alghabra wants to know the real meaning of *Eid*, he should stop being selfish and consider the intention of the holiday. Although Muslims are a large part of the Canadian mosaic, if he wants to observe all Muslim holidays at work in a secular country, he should not be in the Canadian parliament. I hear there are vacancies (due to members who whose heads have been chopped off) in Saudi Arabia and Iran.

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