

According to Islam, It is Not Permissible to Run For, or Vote in, Democratic Elections

The Guardian Newspaper reported on 2 July 2024, regarding Australia, “A new “grassroots” political movement called the Muslim Vote says it will back at least three independent candidates aiming to topple Labor ministers and the government whip in western Sydney at the next federal election. The Muslim Vote – established in response to community anger at Labor’s handling of the war in Gaza – plans to back candidates in Watson, Blaxland and Werriwa, a spokesperson said on Tuesday.”
<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/article/2024/jul/02/muslim-vote-political-movement-candidates-labor-federal-election>

Indeed, Muslim participation in Democracy is a concern for rulers, politicians, intellectuals and policy makers. This is whether the Muslims are in the Muslim World, or living as diasporas in the West. Thus, there is debate about Muslim participation in Democracy in Australia, Britain and the United States, just as there is debate about Muslims participating in elections in Turkey, Pakistan and Egypt. The issue of Muslim electoral participation has become a greater concern in recent months, in the light of Muslim response towards Gaza. Muslims are angry with the existing governments and systems of ruling, because of their injustice regarding the issue of Gaza.

As with any issue in life, the Muslim turns to the Deen of Islam, when deciding about standing as a representative, or voting for a representative. In order to give the Shariah ruling, it is first necessary to understand the reality that requires a ruling to be extracted for. This is known as Tahqeeq Al-Manat. The reality here, or the Manat, is the parliament or the legislative assembly in the democratic state, along with the nature, tasks and powers of its members, who are the representatives.

The reality of the secular state is that it is based on democracy. It is built on the idea of sovereignty for the people, through their representatives. The people decide what is permitted, and what is forbidden. If the people permit marriage between two men, it is permitted by law. If the people forbid the wearing of Hijab, it is forbidden by law. The reality of the parliament is that of a legislative authority. It approves the constitution in force in the country. It enacts the laws that are obligated on the executive and judicial authorities. This is in addition to other powers, include the right to grant, or withhold, confidence from the government, and the right to monitor the executive authority, and hold it accountable for any action it implements.

The reality of Democracy is that it contradicts Islam. In Islam, Allah Alone is Sovereign. He (swt) does not share sovereignty with the people. He (swt) alone decides what is permitted or forbidden. If He (swt) forbids marriage between two men, the people cannot make it permitted. If He (swt) obliges the wearing of Hijab, the people cannot forbid it. The evidence of the ruling by all that Allah (swt) has revealed, are divine texts, in the form of definite texts, with definite meanings. As one example, Allah (swt) said, **﴿وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾** **“And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the disbelievers.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Ma’idah 5:44]. Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbas (ra) commented, **﴿مَنْ جَدَّ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَقَدْ كَفَرَ وَمَنْ أَقْرَبَهُ وَلَمْ يَحْكَمْ فَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ فَاسِقٌ﴾** **“Whoever rejects what Allah has revealed, will have committed Kufr, and whoever accepts what Allah has revealed, but did not rule by it, is a Zalim (unjust) and a Fasiq (rebellious) and a sinner.”** [Narrated by Ibn Jarir]

There are many evidences, which are of definite text and definite meanings, which include, **﴿وَأَنِ احْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَاحْذَرْهُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنُوكَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ﴾** **“And**

judge, [O Muhammad], between them by what Allah has revealed and do not follow their inclinations and beware of them, lest they tempt you away from some of what Allah has revealed to you.” [TMQ Surah Al-Ma’ida 5: 49]. ﴿إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ﴾ “The rule is for none but Allah” [TMQ Surah Yusuf: 40] ﴿فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا﴾ “But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muhammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission.” [TMQ Surah An-Nisa’ 4:65] ﴿أَفَحُكْمَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ﴾ “Then is it the judgement of [the time of] ignorance they desire? But who is better than Allah in judgement for a people who are certain [in faith]” [TMQ Surah Al-Ma’ida: 50].

As for the Blessed Sunnah, we see that the Prophet (saw) did not participate in the system, where Allah (swt) is not Sovereign. The Kuffar of Quraysh had offered the Prophet (saw) that he rules over them with their laws, not Islam. He (saw) refused. According to the Seerah of Ibn Ishaq, “السير والمغازي As-Siyar Wal Maghazi,” “It was narrated from ‘Ikrimah from Ibn Abbas that ‘Utbah and Shaybah son of Rabi’a and Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, and Nadr bin al-Harith brothers of Bani Abd Ad-Dar, and Aba Al-Bukhturi, brothers of Bani Asad, and others... They met, or those who met amongst them after sunset behind the Kaaba, some said to each other: Summon Muhammad and speak to him, and discuss with him and make up with him... They called him and said to him: O Muhammad, We have sent you to make up with you ... If you came with this talk to ask for money, then we will collect it for you from our money, so that you be the richest among us, but if you demand honor we will give you power over us, if you want leadership we will make you our leader... The Messenger (saw) said, ما أدري ما تقولون، ما جئتمكم بما جئتمكم به لطلب أموالكم، ولا الشرف فيكم، ولا الملك عليكم، ولكن الله بعثني إليكم رسولا وأنزل علي كتابا، وأمرني أن أكون لكم بشيرا ونذيرا فبلغتكم رسالة ربي، ونصحت لكم فإن قبلوا مني ما جئتمكم به فهو حظكم في الدنيا والآخرة، وإن تردوا علي أصبر لأمر الله حتى يحكم الله بيني وبينكم» “I do not accept what you say. What I brought to you is not for the sake of money, or honor amongst you, or leadership over you. Allah sent me as a Messenger to you. He sent down to me the Book. He ordered me to be the bearer of glad tidings to you and be your guide. So I delivered to you the message of my Lord, and advise you, if you accept what I brought you, it will bring you the good in the world and the Hereafter. However, if you refuse then I will wait for the decision of Allah to judge between me and you.” The same was mentioned in “دلائل النبوة لأبي نعيم الأصبهاني” Dala’il An-Nubuwa of Abu Na’im Al-Asbahani” and in “السير النبوية لابن كثير” As-Seerah An-Nabawiya by Ibn Kathir” and in other Seerah books.

The Quraysh also offered the Messenger of Allah (saw) to engage in power-sharing, some from them, and some from him (saw). So, they proposed to worship his Lord for a year, and he worships their god for a year. He (saw) refused and wanted Islam alone to rule. In the Tafseer of Al-Qurtubi of Surat Al-Kafiroon: ﴿قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ﴾ “Say: O disbelievers”, he said, دَكَرَ ابْنُ إِسْحَاقَ وَعَیْزُهُ عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ: أَنَّ سَبَبَ نُزُولِهَا أَنَّ الْوَلِيدَ بْنَ الْمُغْبِرَةَ، وَالْعَاصِمَ ابْنَ وَائِلٍ، وَالْأَسْوَدَ بْنَ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ، وَأُمَيَّةَ بْنَ خَلْفٍ، لَقُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالُوا: يَا مُحَمَّدُ، هَلُمَّ فَلْنَعْبُدْ مَا تَعْبُدُ، وَتَعْبُدْ مَا نَعْبُدُ، وَنَشْتَرِكُ نَحْنُ وَأَنْتَ فِي أَمْرِنَا كُلِّهِ، فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي جِئْتُ بِهِ خَيْرًا مِمَّا بَأْيَدِينَا، كُنَّا فَدُ شَارِكِنَاكَ فِيهِ، وَأَخَذْنَا بِحَظِّنَا مِنْهُ. وَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي بَأْيَدِينَا خَيْرًا مِمَّا بِيَدِكَ، كُنْتَ فَدُ شَرِكِنَا فِي أَمْرِنَا، وَأَخَذْتَ بِحَظِّكَ مِنْهُ، فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ... “Ibn Ishaq and others from Ibn Abbas said: that the cause of revelation (Asbab An-Nuzool) of the Surat, that Al-Waleed bin Al Mughira, and Al-Aas ibn Wa’il, and Al-Aswad bin Abdul Muttalib, and Umayyah bin Khalaf met the Messenger of Allah (saw) and said: O Muhammad, let us worship what you worship. You worship what we worship. We share with you the whole of our matters. If what you brought was better than what we have currently, then we will share it with you, and we take our share from it. However, if what is in our hands is better than what is in your hand, then you will share our matter

and take your share from it. Allah Almighty sent down ﴿قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ﴾ **“Say: O disbelievers.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Kafiroon: 1].

The rejection by the Prophet (saw) of participation in a system of non-Islamic legislation is also made clear by the classical mufasssir, At-Tabari. According to Tafseer At-Tabari, جامع البيان “Jami’ Al-Bayan” of Surah, ﴿قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ﴾ **“Say: O disbelievers.”** [Al-Kafiroon: 1], حدثني محمد بن موسى الحرشي، قال: ثنا أبو خلف، قال: ثنا داود، عن عكرمة، عن ابن عباس: أن قريشا وعدوا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم... فإنا نعرض عليك خصلة واحدة، فهي لك ولنا فيها صلاح. قال: “ما هي؟” قالوا: تعبد آلهتنا سنة: اللات والعزى، ونعبد إلهك سنة، قال: “حتى أنظر ما يأتي من عند ربي”، فجاء الوحي من اللوح المحفوظ: “Muhammad Ibn Musa al-Harashi mentioned, he said: Abu Khalaf said, Daoud said, from Ikrima, on the authority of Ibn Abbas: that Quraysh promised the Messenger of Allah (saw) ... we offer you one matter, it will be yours and it is good for us. He said, “ما هي؟” **“What is it?”** They said, Worship our gods for a year: Lat and ‘Uzzi, and we worship your God for a year. He (saw) said, «حتى أنظر ما يأتي من عند ربي» **“I will wait and see what my Lord decrees,”** the Revelation came from Al-Lawh Al-Mahfooth, ﴿قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ﴾ **“Say: O disbelievers”** [Al-Kafiroon: 1].

The eminent Alim, Ash-Shawkani, also asserted the rejection by the Prophet (saw) of participation in a system of non-Islamic legislation. In the tafseer of ﴿قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ﴾ **“Say: O disbelievers”** in “فتح القدير Fat’h Al-Qadeer” by Shawkani, أَخْرَجَ ابْنُ جَرِيرٍ وَابْنُ أَبِي حَاتِمٍ وَ الطَّبْرَانِيُّ عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ: «أَنَّ قُرَيْشًا دَعَتْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ... فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَإِنَّا نَعْرُضُ عَلَيْكَ خَصْلَةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكَ فِيهَا صِلَاحٌ، قَالَ: مَا هِيَ؟ قَالُوا: تَعْبُدُ آلِهَتِنَا سَنَةً وَنَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ سَنَةً، قَالَ: حَتَّى أَنْظُرَ مَا يَأْتِينِي مِنْ رَبِّي، فَجَاءَ الْوَحْيُ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ * لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَى آخِرِ السُّورَةِ، وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ: قُلْ أَفَعِيرَ اللَّهِ تَأْمُرُونِي أَعْبُدُ أَيُّهَا الْجَاهِلُونَ «On the authority of Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, and At-Tabarani from Ibn Abbas: “that Qureshi called the Messenger of Allah (saw)... if you do not, we offer you one good matter. He (saw) asked, «ما هي؟» **“What is it?”** They said: worship our gods for a year and we worship your God for a year. He (saw) said, «حتى أنظر ما يأتي من ربي» **“Let me see what comes to me from my Lord.”** the Revelation came from Allah: ﴿قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ * لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ﴾ **“Say: O disbelievers. I worship not what you worship”** [TMQ Surah Al-Kafiroon: 1-2] to the end of the Surah. Allah (saw) revealed: ﴿قُلْ أَفَعِيرَ اللَّهِ تَأْمُرُونِي أَعْبُدُ أَيُّهَا الْجَاهِلُونَ﴾ **“Say, [O Muhammad], “Is it other than Allah that you order me to worship, O ignorant ones?”** [TMQ Surah Az-Zumar: 64] Until the verse: ﴿بَلِ اللَّهُ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُنْ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ﴾ **“Rather, worship [only] Allah and be among the grateful.”** [TMQ Surah Az-Zumar: 66].”

Explicit evidences from the Noble Quran and Prophetic Sunnah definitely forbid ruling by other than all that Allah (swt) has revealed. They forbid all participation in such ruling. No one stands against such clear evidence, except those who disobeyed Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw) openly. Any argument they bring is refutable. There disobedience will engulf them with disgrace in this world, though the torment of Allah is the most severe.

The elected representative is part of the legislative process and so is undertaking a forbidden act. The representative represents people in expressing their opinion about legislation. In this respect, he is their representative (delegate). If a Muslim enters the parliament approving of this non-Islamic system, which makes sovereignty for the people, and not for the Shariah law, then he is undoubtedly sinning. No one has the right to share with Allah (swt) in legislation. Even if the representative is observant of fasting and Salah (prayer), it does not make it permitted. Transporting alcohol by someone who is pious, for example, does not reduce the prohibition of transporting it, since whoever transports it is bound by the rulings of Islam. Moreover, the sin of someone who does that, knowing that it is forbidden, is greater in the sight of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) says, ﴿كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا

﴿مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾ **“Great is the hatred in the sight of Allah, when you say what you do not do”** [TMQ Surah As-Saff: 3].

Voting for a representative is also a forbidden act. The voter will entrust individuals on his behalf to carry out the forbidden acts. If we look at these actions, we find them all Haram (prohibited) because they are based on falsehood, which is to give people the power to legislate instead of Allah (swt). If a Muslim who votes knows that his representative will choose legislation or a man-made law, or votes in its favor, then he is sinning. This is in addition to the fact that it is not permissible, in origin, to delegate for an act that is forbidden by Shariah. Just because a pious person nominates or delegates someone to transport alcohol on his behalf, that does not make that transportation permitted, let alone the delegation of that sinful task. The work of the members of the houses of representatives is strictly forbidden. There is no doubt that voting for representatives in these elections is also forbidden (Haram). It provides a delegated mandate for individuals and parties to do Haram.

O Muslims in General, and the Ulema and Khatibs in particular:

Based on clear evidences from the Noble Quran and the Blessed Sunnah, Muslims are not allowed to participate in Democracy, whether standing as representatives, or voting for representatives. To dispute this is being arrogant against the truth. Those who are arrogant will sit the furthest away from the Messenger (saw) on the Day of Resurrection, according to what Al-Tirmidhi narrated in the Hassan Hadith, that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, **«وإِنَّ أَبْغَضَكُمْ إِلَيَّ وَأَبْغَضَكُمْ مِنِّي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ: الثَّرَثَارُونَ، وَالْمُتَشَدِّقُونَ، وَالْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ»** **“And indeed, the most disliked among you to me, and the one sitting furthest from me on the Day of Judgement are the Thartharun, [pompous], and the Mutashaddiqun [garrulous] and the Muthafaihiqun.”** They said: **“O Messenger of Allah! We know about the Thartharun, and the Mutashaddiqun, but what about the Muthafaihiqun?”** He (saw) said, **“The arrogant.”**

We must declare our rejection of democratic elections that contradict the Law of our Lord (saw), rejecting His Sovereignty over all humanity. We must ask the candidates to declare their rejection of this democratic system, and its laws that contradict Islam. Any drop in the voter turnout has important positive political implications, the most important of which is showing the weak representation of those who took power. The drop in voter turn-out undermines the corrupting Democracy and its corrupted ruling elite. The drop will confirm to the world that the Muslims are making a stand against the corruption and sin of man-made law.

The strength of Muslims does not come from the arrival of a representative to parliament, or by the implementation or forbidden laws. The strength is by the return of Muslims to the path of righteousness, by adhering to Islam, and the establishment of the Islamic state, the Second Khilafah Rashidah (Rightly-Guided Caliphate) on the Method of the Prophethood according to the Shariah methodology stipulated by the Messenger of Allah (saw). So let us not earn sin and waste time by participating in Democracy. Let us participate in the righteous work to re-establish the ruling by all that Allah (swt) has revealed.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
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