

Letters to a President

Runner-up Year 12 – Aisha M

Dear President Biden,

The world seems to be getting darker day by day as the malignant disease that goes by the name of islamophobia and infects countries all over the world. Although leaders and politicians recognise it as a threat to society, they do not do anything about it. Islamophobia stems from many things; fear, lack of understanding for the religion of Islam and sometimes it's just pure hatred for another human being. But that's exactly what people who commit these iniquitous acts of violence forget – we are just humans! We aren't above or below anyone and no one is above or below us. So how can we stop the hateful acts carried out to daunt and scar innocent men, women and children?

Education. Educate those who commit these awful actions and show them that, in all honesty, the followers of Islam are not a threat. For example, islamophobia is on the rise because of people being misinformed by the media. Journalists repeatedly use the term terrorists when associating any attacks done by so called 'Muslims' (I say this because Islam is about peace and sincerity and these terrorists do not fit into this religion). Reporters should distinguish the fact that though these terrorists claim to be acting in the name of God and beliefs of Islam, they are not. A Muslim never causes harm to another human being. A Muslim never justifies the killing of innocents to spread terror across the world. A Muslim is NOT a terrorist. The meaning of Islam itself is peace so how can you believe that someone who carries out these rancorous attacks on human kind is associated with a religion that promotes sincerity, kindness and generosity? As the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said "Be kind, for whenever kindness becomes part of something, it beautifies it. Whenever it is taken from something, it leaves it tarnished."

Furthermore, when it comes to a white man driving a van into civilians walking returning home after prayer they are called mentally unwell? Isn't that an act of terrorism killing people because of the faith they follow? Doesn't that strike fear into the hearts of others? After all, the definition of terrorism is "the unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians". How can the people learn the truth if they are being fed half-truths and, sometimes, lethal lies by the journalists who are supposed to report the truth? Who are supposed to inform others of the righteous truth?

I, personally, have experienced some islamophobia. When I was in high school, my other and I were going shopping. We were all alone on the street when a man behind us yells "go back to your country!" Confusion, despondency and glumness wracked my mind as I realised he was talking to us. Should a child be made to feel like she is not welcome in her own home? I don't believe so.

The eradication of islamophobia is possible, but it starts with that one person who has the will and power to achieve it. And I know that person is you. Perhaps, 2021 can be the year things go right instead of left. Perhaps America can once again be the country which others seek to be like. In the words of Banksy, "We were all humans until race disconnected us, religion separated us, politics divided us and wealth classified us." Please, Mr President, bring the change we all wish to see.

Yours faithfully,

Aisha