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Where is authority to limit debate?

Muslim Group opposes sharia law

Aug. 28.

Mohamed Elmasry (President of the Canadian Islamic Congress) describes the Muslim Canadian Congress as "non-religious Muslims who have no right to tell religious people what to do."

How dare he question my right to participate in a civic discussion about a piece of legislation that would impact on the lives of hundreds of thousands of Muslims, mainly women and children?

As a founding member of the Muslim Canadian Congress, I strongly protest this false depiction of my religiosity. This is exactly what most Muslims fear from their clergy — their self imposed authority to declare the rest of us as good or bad Muslims.

Not only is this approach offensive to Muslims, but also denies the rest of Canada the right to participate in this debate. It is at best tribal, if not racist and segregationist.

When Elmasry says that non-religious Muslims have no right to tell religious people what to do, is he suggesting that Canadian Muslims not respect the laws made by lawmakers who are almost all non-Muslim?

I pray five times a day; I fast during Ramadan; I pay my obligatory *zakat* (wealth) tax and no one has a right to accuse me of being non-religious.

But even if I was not religious, who gave him the authority to prohibit my participation?

Ali Mallah, Toronto

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