

I am not negotiable

Jul 12, 2011 | Filed under: *Featured, Opinion* |
Posted By *MV Media*



<https://muslimvillage.com/2011/07/12/12072/i-am-not-negotiable/>

When you exist in the centre of a debate
As a topic, a hypothesis,
Otherised and stigmatised
You become the prop in a proposition
The opposition in somebody else's culture wars.
Cast into a reality TV program
You awake every morning
To learn who has voted you off
And who will allow you to remain another day in
citizenship limbo
In the name of my democracy
I am discussed.
In the name of my freedom
I am controlled.
In the name of 'breaking down stereotypes'
I am served on a platter to the media-
To an editorial, an Op Ed, talk back, a panel-
To be tasted, chewed over and spat out.
Leaving me with indigestion.
While you pat yourself on the back
For your magnanimous efforts
To understand 'the other'.
Understand this: I don't want you to understand me
If by understanding me you will insist on
misunderstanding me first.
Because the soundbites bite
And I am weary of your tabloids
Which reduce civilisations
Of diverse voices, intellects and realities,
Into your Ctrl-V headline.
Listen:
I would prefer it if you did not reduce me to a
suffix-
of terrorism, extremism, fundamentalism-
I tell you I am bored

By your laziness.
And I am bored by your obsession with undressing
me.
For how will I fight those who see my body as their
property in the name of my religion
When you see my body as your property in the
same of my liberalism?
My body is my body.
My conscience is penetrable only by God.
My intentions are not for you to judge.
And what I wear or do not wear
Is my choice.
To the media which wants to own me,
To those who judge piety by rendering modesty a
noun-
when it is a verb and must always first be a verb-
I say this:
I will not be a negotiable citizen
In my own country.
You will not tolerate me
Or decide if I have a place
In my own home.
I am not a noun for you to define.
I am weary of living in resistance.
I am no-one's victim.
Or pawn.
I will not be negotiated
In the bazaars of identity
The marketplace that peddles fear and belonging.
Listen to me clearly:
I am not negotiable.