

Ben Habib x Ayaan Hirsi Ali: Islam, Free Speech & Limits of Tolerance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ky2bBGtlku8>

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Ben: Good morning folks. Thank you as ever for tuning into the news of Ben. Now today I want to replay an interview I had with the brilliant Iron Hersy Ali on Islam. It really walks through her life with Islam and indeed my childhood as well because as some of you will know I was born in Karachi in Pakistan which is a Muslim country

And the interview I think is particularly important because it charts the change in the way that Islam has been practiced over the last 40 50 years and particularly the form of Islam that we have in the United Kingdom that poses challenges for the United Kingdom and no political party it seems, is prepared to have a discussion about it.

And unless we do discuss it, unless we get to the root issues of the challenges that Islam posed for the United Kingdom, we won't be able to find solutions to it. And so I highly recommend if you haven't seen this interview that I did with the brilliant Iron Hyers Ali, I highly recommend you watch it.

Advance UK will in due course have policies that restore our constitutional uh our Christian constitution and of course one of the issues with which we will be grappling is how you do that in a country where there are 5 million Muslims or thereabouts. Anyway, I hope you enjoy the interview. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to Iron Hers Ali and it was very revealing for me as I hope it will be for you. Thank you very much folks.

I'm not really a podcaster, as I might have explained, Iron. Um, but I'm absolutely delighted to be talking to you today. I've wanted to talk to you um for many months now, and we had a kind of false run at this, didn't we, a few months ago when I tried to do it from my office and my phone blew up.

It must have been the intensity of the conversation. Um, but thank you very much, Iron Hers Ali, for agreeing to speak to me today. And the the the topic dour in many respects from a cultural diversity, equity, inclusion, um societal perspective is Islam. You know, everyone's talking about it. It seems um it it's divisive in the nature of the discussion. uh and I can't think of a better expert to take us through your personal journey and the journey of western civilization if you like in its relationship modern western civilization in its relationship with Islam where we are at the moment and how western civilization navigates the difficult landscape in which I think we are in a difficult landscape and how we navigate that um for a peaceable outcome

Childhood Experiences and Political Awakening

for all people uh preserving our traditions, our values, our culture and our open society.

That's the kind of scene that I'd like to set. And um and before starting perhaps I'll just declare I I'm sure you're aware, but I'll declare that my father is a Pakistani Muslim. Um I would call him a lapse Muslim because he used to deny that spare ribs was actually uh pork. He'd insist that as children we mustn't reveal the identity of the animal from which spare ribs came so that he could eat them.

So you know I'd say he's a lapse Muslim but I was born in Pakistan in 1965 and I have you know quite an association with Pakistan the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. I've got Pakistani friends. So I have a kind of view on Islam not as formed and as well educated as your view. Um but I just declare that for the purposes of the discussion but can we start on with your childhood and you know how it is you got from Somalia to where we are today in Oxford.

Ayaan: Yeah. So Ben first of all let me say it's um wonderful and lovely uh to meet you and to talk to you and I'm really glad that you've started podcasting. It's an honor to be the first one or second after your mother.

Ben: Well, that was an impromptu Easter gathering. Yeah.

Ayaan: Yeah. Yeah. So, I was born um not much later after you. I was born in 1969 and I was born in Somalia. Um and this was um in November of 1969. And for Somali of that time, October the 21st was when Somali was seized by a Marxist uh member of the military and he was supported by the Soviet Union.

So that was sort of I was born in the throws of um the overtaking you know the coup a coup which um unfortunately during my youth many African cultures many African countries went through these coups uh after independence a number of years after independence. Somalia became independent in 1960 and then this coup occurred in 1969 and my father was imprisoned and so I hadn't met my father I think until I was seven or eight years old in Saudi Arabia.

Ben: Yeah. Quite a miracle to have ever met him frankly if he'd been incarcerated for that period.

Ayaan: Yes. And also because he was lucky enough not to be some of those who were killed. I don't know if you are familiar with how Kuzokai in Africa but they come in and they they kill the president or the head of state and then they declare themselves I am now president. This is how the world is going to to move forward.

Um, and so my memories of Somalia those first seven or eight years were memories of what they, you know, when they tried to to implement Marxism, there were very large pictures on the streets of Marx, Lenin and Engles.

Ben: Oh wow.

Ayaan: Along with our dictator. So before I even understood what ideology was, that's that was the introduction to me of the Communist Manifesto. And I just remember I have memories of uh food shortages and famine.

I have memories of um even our family members mistrusting one another. I had an aunt who was very much devoted to this communist cause. My mother's older sister and she was also my mother's mentor. But my mother wasn't. My mother was much more devoted to being you know a member of the clan.

Somalis are divided into clans. Um and we are one tribe and you know at that point one religion but religion didn't really play that much of a role at that time.

Ben: This was a political ideology political ideological battle that was taking place.

Ayaan: Yes. And it was introduced a nomadic culture um you know I don't want to say premodern but parts of Somalia at that time were actually quite premodern or quite primitive.

And the only um I'd say the most familiar association between Somali was along clan lines. And a clan is a very large family based on the patriarch. You know, the father of the the son of the father of the father of the father and so on. And so we defaulted to that then. and it's members of our clan, my mother's side and my father's side who colluded to um extract passports for us and get us out of the country and this is perhaps in 1977-1978 and so we go to Saudi Arabia and Saudi Arabia uh we walk into a theocracy and so that for me was the first introduction to Islamism.

This is Islam not practiced as a religion. And I mean it was practiced as a religion but it's also the governing theology or the governing theory of Saudi Arabia. And you know some of the most uh I'd say uh visually the most uh striking features were this really radical separation of men and women uh not just in the streets. On the streets you know you had one corner women walking around covered from head to toe. Even for us as Muslims at the time, we were shocked by you just what seems to be a black huddle suddenly move.

Ben: Yeah.

Ayaan: And but then they were also separated at home. So homes were designed in such ways that there is there's the men's side and then there's the women's side and when boys turn seven years they move to the men's side and you don't see them again. Um and we lived there for a year. My father was able to conduct his opposition to this Somali dictatorship from there. But he had promised the Saudi government that he would not be involved in Somali politics.

And when they found out, they deported him promptly. So we lived in Saudi Arabia all of 12 months.

Ben: And then he was deported back to Somalia was he?

Ayaan: No, he couldn't they couldn't do that. My father had registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the UNHCR. And **back in the day, the UNHCR actually did what they had promised to do**. You know, the their mission was very narrow, which was to look after um refugees and displaced peoples.

And because I don't know if you how much of that you remember, but there was um the two hemispheres, the Soviet hemisphere and the American hemisphere.

Ben: Yeah. And um it was a simpler time. **We knew who the enemy was.**

Ayaan: Yes. Yes. And um a lot of us used to joke that um white people called this a cold war but for us it wasn't a cold war it was a very hot war.

Ben: Yeah. Um because because it was being played out in your countries

Ayaan: basically in my country in my continent at the time. And in any case so this childhood experiences were very very political very disruptive. um people spoke of ideas but because the ideas were implemented throughout our lives they weren't just ideas.

It's later on in my life when I come to the Netherlands that I try to sort out, you know, what is what is Marxism? What exactly was he saying? You know, I read the Communist Manifesto um in 1995, 1996 in Leiden in the Netherlands. And only then did I understand the images of those three men and and what they were up to, you know, the the way they they visualized the world and the utopia that they expected. Um and they had persuaded um hundreds of thousands of people to come and believe in this utopia.

Ben: A utopia delivered so often as utopias are at the end of a gun if you know what I mean. It's not the best birth for a potential utopia, is it?

Ayaan: No, it's not. And it is and it was in this case the communist utopia led uh to the largest number of dead people. So it is actually in terms of uh the death toll of ideologies. It's great. we know bigger much bigger than um national socialism and to a certain extent perhaps even Islamism but that's because Islamism is much older um that's disputed but in any case my family left um Saudi Arabia we were kicked out and we went to live in Ethiopia which was undergoing its own Marxist transformation and Ethiopia is a much older society split into several tribes Christian and so I think I was about 9 years old when I first became acquainted with a religion that wasn't Islam. I mean, I really thought that the whole world was Muslim. Until we came to Ethiopia and then my mother and my grandmother said, "Don't go anywhere near them because they are infidels. They are Kufar." And so that was my, you know, first introduction to aha. So they believe in a different god.

And and on it went and we were very unhappy for 18 months in Ethiopia because my mother didn't want to live there. Somalia and Ethiopia were at war. That's why the Ethiopian government was hosting the Somali rebellion and my father was one of the rebels.

Ben: Did he have to fight during that period?

Ayaan: He he didn't. He was one of the intellectuals but uh there were we lived in a house that uh also um was a home to uh the soldiers, rebel soldiers in uniform armed. And so for 18 months again at that age I was listening to all sorts of attempts at uniting these clan factions to become one and stand up to Muhammad Siad who was the dictator who had taken power by force and stand up to the communists and uh I mean again I I was a witness firsthand to all these different attempts to unify people with different interests and it just they just couldn't do it.

Ben: Yeah. I mean it it plays out today in many respects. I suppose that's what you're hinting at, isn't it?

Ayaan: Yes. Yes. It's been such now that I look back and I think what an interesting life uh it is politically speaking, you know, to to be introduced to politics that way. And then later on for me that's when I got into the theory and thought, okay, how do I piece these things together?

But these various Somali factions um they failed. The the dictator in Mogadishu was perfectly capable of dividing them and of making amends with the leader of one of them and then falling out with the other, inviting them back, bribing them, setting them up against one another. But all of that, those were along clan lines. And there was a little bit of an ideological dispute where some of the re rebels would appeal to America for help

The Role of Clan Identity in Somalia

and America would throw them a bone or two, but actually never really got the Somali um opposition groups to form any kind of credible

Ben: yeah force or unity to Muhammad's but all these clans were Muslim I take it just different sort of son of son of son of son and derived their authority ity for their clan from various different lineages. But in other respects, they were quite would would it be right to say homogeneous in their cultural and uh belief system?

Ayaan: Yes, from an outside perspective, absolutely homogeneous. I mean, we were one tribe. I think there was one a German commentator who joked that he didn't understand what Somali were waring about because they spoke one language. They were one tribe. They had only one airline. I mean when I said one airline, they had one airplane, one aircraft. So there were all these jokes, but it was along clan lines and a clan is, as I said, very a very large family.

And so these very large families just couldn't agree on who was to lead. And um Somali were nomadic. We all, again, it was a terrible joke, but it was we only had leaders and no followers. and and so there was a complete and utter failure in terms of ousting this man who had taken uh power and control and we lived in Ethiopia again uh I think you make a good point there. Um we were different clans but we were all Muslim and Islam and religion played at that time no almost no part.

I mean people cast people said you know wishing the other clan um that they be annihilated by Allah. They said things like that but then the other clan said the same thing and everyone thought Allah was on their side. Yeah. But there were no citations from the Quran. There was no Sharia law. Everybody you know people you were a Muslim so there wasn't.

Ben: Yeah. You didn't have to wear it on your sleeve. It was taken for granted.

Ayaan: It was taken for granted. And if I listened very carefully to my father, what he was saying was he was fighting for a democracy. He wanted us to go back to Somalia and he wanted to establish a democratic system or to continue with the democratic system that had just been planted by the colonial powers but then was disrupted so badly by Muhammad Yadbar. So that's all he So the only ideas that I ever had were there is communism bad and there's democracy good.

Ben: Yeah. So that I mean that's very interesting for me because it resonates with my own experience in Pakistan where everyone took took their um Muslimness or you know the fact that they were Muslims for granted and the debates that used to take place when I was a child weren't about Islam versus you know the rest of the world or other religions but you know what form of democracy we would have in Pakistan whether we were more western facing more Russia facing and of course we had our own issues across the border in Afghanistan in the 1978 Afghanistan was invaded and we all thought the next stop would be Pakistan. Um it never happened thankfully but um and you know there was a if I I don't want to put words in your mouth but certainly in Pakistan there was a what I would call a more gentler form of Islam being practiced. There was no notion that Islam would be on the political stage. the Islam was in the back room if you like and um the the political debate was all about the kinds of things we've just been discussing but then things changed in the late '7s at least in Pakistan

Ayaan: and for us it was in the mid80s so my family lived in Ethiopia for 18 months and in in the middle of 1980 we went to Kenya and Kenya was another Christian country or you know a majority of the people were Christian and then others were um not Muslim they were animistic, you know, they had their own local tribal spiritual um gods that they worshiped or they worshiped their ancestors or or things like that.

So, religion did not play a huge role in politics. When we went to Ethiopia, sorry, when we went to Kenya, Kenya, it was the Republic of Kenya and it was described and recognized by the world as a democracy, but it was a one party state.

So, there wasn't a lot of democracy going on and they had their own, I would say, democratically elected dictator.

Ben: Yeah. As one does. As one does. Yeah.

Ayaan: Um, but one of the scenes I'd like to describe is going to school as a child. And so at this point when we come to Kenya I'm about 10 years old and um we enroll I am enrolled in a school Jujarod Primary School and I'm attending school with the majority of the students are Kenyans and then we have a handful of Pakistanis and a handful of people from Yemen who fled from Uganda because Uganda had decided that they wanted to kick out their foreigners and then a handful of Somali and so at lunchtime the Somalis would sit with the Somalis and play with the Somalis and the Pakistanis would play with the Pakistanis and so on. So in that sense it was multiethnic but in some ways multicultural and again religion didn't really play a role.

Um there were prejudices. The Kenyans used to call the Somali shifters or raiders and we used to call them all sorts of bad names like slaves and and dumb and this and that.

Ben: Yeah.

Ayaan: And I don't want to say it was I mean we never talked about prejudice the way we talk about prejudice now. People people were just prejudiced. Full stop. And we knew that about one another. Um hence why we sat with our own groups.

Ben: It's the same in Pakistan by the way.

Ayaan: Yeah. And and I think people just that that was what reality was. This this is a poor environment. People just had to get along or not get along. Yeah. Um, in terms of the system, the system was very corrupt. So for us to live there, even to get, you know, the way we were enrolled in the school, we had to pay to bribe the school, for us to get enrolled um to get an identity card, you had to bribe the police.

In fact, anyone who was in uniform up until I came to the Netherlands, these were people I was afraid of because people in uniform were armed and all they did was harm you. There was never any trust in government that I remember until I came to the Netherlands.

There was a longing by citizens to establish a government that we could trust and build institutions, but it was never there. It was a dream always.

Ben: And was there an aspirational look towards the developed western world as you know this is the kind of system we'd like?

Ayaan: Oh yes, absolutely. Britain was admired very much. Um and America was admired and uh you know American culture was everywhere. So on television and in movies and on the radio and so on where

The Shift in Islamic Education in Kenya

one of the things I remember as a teenager was Americans are just wonderful because you can say whatever you want about the president of America and you won't go to prison. That was our definition of democracy was you could insult the president-- and they won't lock you up.

Ben: It's a very good definition

Ayaan: So now to go back to Islam, it's about when I'm age 15, 1985 that things start to change in a very subtle way. And so one of the scenes I describe in *Infidel* is where it's art school uh Kenya was a former British colonist. They had left the British model behind and so uh going to school was um it it was GCES but they didn't call it GCE they called it CPE

So this is the secondary school and you had as a child you could take you had a choice of taking Christian religious education or Islamic religious education or CRE and so when the bell rang and it was time to go to one of those if you are a Muslim you automatically went to and I remember in um the first two years Islamic religious education was really not that different from history.

It was a history class of you know there was this man called Muhammad and he founded the religion and uh and then it grew and then there was a telling a retelling of the conquests and the different caliphate that were established here there and everywhere but there was nothing political about it like I said it really wasn't different from a history class

Ben: yeah same with the way they taught what I would what was then called Islami art when I was a The study of Islam was really a history lesson in Islam. That's exactly how I remember it as a child.

Ayaan: Yeah. Yeah. And then um from one day to the next this woman comes who you know when we go to the class the older teacher is not there who had her head bare by the way and was I think Mrs. Mumas. She was probably Indian or Pakist of Pakistani origin, but she's replaced with a new teacher now who's got everything covered in black just like I remember in Saudi Arabia. Mh. And who sits us down and stops giving us this history lesson, this story from the past of, you know, the places that Islam conquered and that and instead she says,

"Are you a Muslim?" we start giggling and say, "Well, yes, that's why we came to the hire class." You know, we thought she's a new teacher and we are teenagers at the time and there's a little bit of teenage rebellion and naughtiness in the air. And so she starts to quiz us and say,

"Are you a Muslim? And how do I know you're a Muslim? There's nothing about you that tells me you're a Muslim." We were in school uniforms. And uh „when was the last time you

prayed?“ And you know, we started to giggle and get a little uncomfortable and and during the last Ramadan,

„did you fast? And and how many days did you actually fast?“

And so it just tells you how laidback we were about practicing our faith. We we the girls were not covered. We didn't remember how many days we fasted and **we didn't pray that regularly. Maybe once in a while.** The older people, **the older women prayed** and people when they started approaching age 40 or 50 and they were confronted with immortality,

Ben: that's when that's when they discovered God. It's a bit like Machaveli on his deathbed. You've heard that one, haven't you?

Ayaan: Yes. So that's how it was. and and and then this woman started to say, you've got to if you really think of yourself as a Muslim, then you have to realize there's a hell and there's a heaven and paradise or Jenna and you have two angels on either side of your shoulders and the angel on your right shoulder is keeping account of all the good things that you do. And the other one on the left is keeping account of all that haram that you're engaged in, including your thoughts. So, you have to

Ben: I was taught this, too, by the way.

Ayaan: And so she really started to introduce u what some scholars might call an orthopraxy at least that's what it was called in in uh Dutch which is you don't merely believe now you have to practice and you have to start doing things and you would have seen in those years the school changed the girls were covering themselves and it started with just you know um change the school adding things to the school uniform. A white headscarf to go with because you still had to come to school in school uniform. Yeah. And then a pair of white trousers under your skirt. And so that took care of

Ben: covering your body.

Ayaan: Covering your body. But by the time I left that school, I was just like the teacher. I was covered in black from head to toe.

Ben: And what do you think caused this sudden shift? Because again, I noticed this in Pakistan. I was sent away to boarding school when you went to Kenya. I was getting on a plane coming to um what I thought was actually pretty horrific circumstances. Rugby school in the 1970s. It was uh was I think a bit like coldits.

But I used to go back to Pakistan for holidays because I had my parents still lived in Pakistan at the time. And um uh and in fact my father went on living in Pakistan until very recently. Uh, but I noticed a change taking place in the same way that you noticed a change taking place. Society

becoming much more conservative, wearing Islam on their sleeves, having to bang the drum of Islam almost as a kind of society in order to be accepted within society, you had to wear it proudly, you know, whereas we'd all been um, you know, religion had been in one's pocket as it were until then. And so it happened

The Rise of Islamism and Political Islam

in Pakistan I think pretty much at the same time as it happened in Kenya. What do you ascribe that to? What created this change in behavior in the Muslim world?

Ayaan: So the three entities, the government of Saudi Arabia that provided the funding and other oil countries, all the other Gulf countries too. I mean, I think the UAE and Kuwait and all of these other wealthy countries did write huge checks for this sort of thing to be spread across the world. A competing power, Iran, Iran after 1979, um I think there was this competition between Saudi Arabia on the one hand and Iran on the other.

Ben: Competition that's still going on.

Ayaan: I think that's still going on and a rivalry that's still going on and the Muslim Brotherhood. Now I know in Pakistan I know that now and uh that in Pakistan you have other Islamic movements other Islamist movements but the the entity that came to us in Nairobi Kenya in Africa was the Muslim Brotherhood founded in Egypt but funded by Saudi Arabia and hosted by Saudi Arabia at the time and um

So we were basically these are I can't describe how poor these countries are these are very poor countries. People barely have um food and shelter and so on. And so when you bring in the kind of money that Saudi Arabia was dishing out and building mosques and then having young people, we were teenagers when we were told, you know, your life now is aimless.

Um, and it really was aimless because after you graduated from secondary school, what people call high school here, you didn't really have much else going on. Uh, you were barely there were only two or three universities at most for for this huge country. There wasn't any kind of career.

And so if if you didn't come from a wealthy family or a wealthy clan, uh you got stuck in into aimlessness, um and as a young woman, you were married off and you started having babies. And as a young man, um one of the things that Somali used, and I still think they use it, is this cart, this drug that young men chew, and eventually they end up becoming homeless and useless.

And so for many people when the Muslim Brotherhood came and gave us a sense of purpose, we were now

Ben: filled a vacuum.

Ayaan: It felt it filled a vacuum and we were going to mosques that were clean with these beautiful carpets uh on the ground in these beautiful domes and these large yards. And um we weren't just you know uh memorizing the Quran in Arabic without understanding what we were saying, what we were thinking. Now they had all of these teachers uh that were telling us what exactly was in the Quran and what it is that Muhammad said and wanted us to do. And many of these young men were being sent on scholarships to Saudi Arabia and to Egypt to Alazhar University and so on.

So we we we went through a process of Islamization by the Muslim Brotherhood and competing with the Muslim Brotherhood was Iran.

Ben: And is that because basically fund fundamentally for want of a better word Saudi is fundamentalist form of Islam and the kind of Islam that Somalia practiced, Pakistan practiced was less fundamentalist form. You know what I'm struggle with in my mind, if I can just put out what I struggle with is that, you know, the the Quran is the word of God dictated to Muhammad by the prophet Gabriel, which puts it beyond debate, puts makes it a truth which cannot be um perfected. It can't be made more perfect. It is perfect. It's the word of God, which ma puts it beyond reproach, puts it beyond debate, means there can't be free speech.

And so I struggled to understand how it was as a child that my experience of Islam was such a benign welcoming form of religion. I mean I understand the more fundamentalist form now because I see the foundations of it but I'm almost amazed that any Muslim at any stage could dial it back. Are you with me? have the kind of lovely childhood in I know you had a very challenging childhood but in terms of religion it was a very um you know it was it was sort of more relaxed wasn't benign

Ayaan: exactly it was benign and it was mixed with all sorts of clan superstitions and I mean some of the canyons in Mombasa for instance along the coast were Muslim and they had beautiful superstitions mixed up with Islam that they thought was Islamic practice and then later on they were told no none of that is Islamic you have to get rid of your own identity because it's not Muslim.

Um what happened I think is later on explained very well by Samuel Huntington. I think this was all the prelude to this clash of civilizations uh attitude which the Saudis and the Iranians at the time believed and perhaps to this day still believe. I don't know about Muhammad bin Salman. Maybe he's gotten off that uh that trajectory or

Ben: some of the trappings of what he's doing would indicate he's getting off it. Yes. You know, liberation of women, allowing them to drive, for example, that kind of thing.

Ayaan: And and and an acceptance of modernity because one of the things was that this clash of civilizations was the the Islamists. Um the so for me the distinction between an Islamist

and a regular Muslim I don't say there are different Islams. I just say there's an Islamist and then there are regular Muslims.

And so my grandmother, my mother during those years in the 1980s before the Muslim Brotherhood came along when they practiced and woripped and mixed Islam with uh their various other identities. To me that means they were just regular Muslims because there was nothing political about the way they practiced Islam.

They were political. There were clans that they hated. I mean we were agitating against Muhammad Sad Bare in uh Somalia. We wanted our country back. But we never used Islam as a tool or as a propaganda machine to say this is you know he is unislamic. um and and we are going to introduce Sharia law.

That was never a part of my identity. Yeah. Until the Muslim Brotherhood came along and made that my identity. And the other thing they did was um when I was little and again I think there are still parts of the world where Muslims first and foremost see themselves as members of their own families and their clans and their neighborhoods and their tribes and their regions and their countries.

Um but **the Islamists come and say none of that matters**. All of that's unimportant. The only identity that matters is your Muslim identity. **And your Muslim identity is political**. And what they mean by political is that we are seeking political power, government power. **And once we get that government power, we're going to use it to Islamize the rest of the world**

The Distinction Between Regular Muslims and Islamists

So even though they're engaged in social activism, they're engaged in charity, they're engaged in building schools and universities and even building infrastructure, they were they came and you know they were paying for our healthcare and

Ben: yeah it's quite a compelling way to to sell the message

Ayaan: to sell the message but ultimately all of that was directed towards the purpose of acquiring political power and that political power would then be used to Islam.

Romised **first your own family then your neighborhood and** then your school your own environment very very local and then move to regional and global and and that is that's what we are contending with and I think a lot of Muslims have a hard time rejecting it because the Islamists claim they speak for true Islam what they do is they take the prophet's um bounding and words and mission and say,

"You've got to keep it up. You've got to keep up uh where we left off when the Ottoman Empire fell apart in 1924. The caliphate was established. And it's the clergymen who responded to that

abolition by saying the caliphate has to come back. The caliphate is the Islamic State. It has to come back." And there was a rejection of modernity as western as infidel and as unislamic.

Ben: But I suppose my question to you Ian is is Islam in its because its holy book is the word of God and perfect. Is it prone to fundamentalism? Is it prone to coming back to this like a center of gravity pulling it back always not allowing it to modernize? Is it being yanked back always to a book that is, you know, 1,500 years old? Is Islam like, is Islam incapable like Christianity was to evolve?

And, you know, as society changes, as we modernize, Christianity has been very good at it. I would say it's been too good at it. It's actually vacated the playing field, if you like. Um, but is Islam capable? I mean, I certainly had a glimpse of it being capable when I was a child. Yeah. Um, and you did, but is it capable or are we facing something that will always tend back? Will Islam always tend towards Islamism is my question,

Ayaan: which is a very good question. And I think the the way to help us understand it conceptually is to drop the word fundamentalism because it's really not about when we talk about fundamentalism we imagine Christian fundamentalism for instance which is you know you've got to read the gospels for yourself.

Yeah.

Which is not what Islamists are saying. What Islamists are saying is **Muhammad's mission to begin with was political** and that anyone who says it's only about spirituality for instance praying five times a day fasting in the month of Ramadan going to Hajj and what was the other one zakat and and then starting with the shahada and that these are just the five principles and let's just keep it to that they say „Those people are wrong.“

The Islamists say „that's not true Islam. True Islam is Islamization. It's a da and it's jihad.“ And so I think that it's important to not talk about fundamentalism because people will think or even some people say conservative Muslims, fundamentalist Muslims, orthodox Muslims. All of these things make us think that there's not that there is political a-political Islamism and there is no a-political Islamism. **„Islamism is about it's the law Sharia law.“**

So you have to **establish Sharia law by seeking to achieve and acquire political power.** And I think it's important to distinguish between regular Muslims.

Ben: But how can you be a regular Muslim without accepting that basic tenant that you know it is a political system it is an education it is it is a legal system it's a political system even finance um you know has to be halal finance and so on

So how how do you how can you become a regular Muslim if if I can just profer my own little experience because my my experience is much much lesser than yours but you know I attribute

the form of Islam that I grew up with as a young boy in Pakistan to the fact that Pakistan had to rub along with Hinduism. Yes, it had to rub along with Christianity and um you know in the big melting pot that was the subcontinent of India particularly British imperial India where um you know Islam wasn't given any favors it had to morph it had to get into the local I mean it had been part of the local culture for you know hundreds of hundreds of years.

So, but it then tended back to this thing again, you know, and um so I don't know how you how one can be just a regular Muslim if that isn't a kind of loaded question.

Ayaan: You can be a regular Muslim as long as you're not challenged. Again, remember the years when you were a regular Muslim or you were living amongst regular Muslims and I was a regular Muslim. No one really talked about um or defined our identity exclusively as Muslim and and shared the other identities and you know there was no there was no politics in it. So then when I say regular Muslim it is to accept government and the source of politics to be man-made. So when we lived in Somalia, I know we rejected Muhammad Sadr and communism,

The Future of Islam and Modernity

but that was the government and if when you lived in Ethiopia and I in Saudi Arabia and so on, you know, you obey government power. **You live within that nation state and its strictures without seeking to transform it.** But within that nation state, you try and be as good a Muslim as you possibly can.

But you accept that laws are made by human beings. And that's what the Islamist rejects. And so when you ask me, „can this be resolved?“ I'd say **theoretically it can be.** I like to say **there are three big uh schisms within Islam** from the time it was founded.

The first one set the scene for where we are now because it was the one the dispute about leadership when Muhammad died and they had this big fight about well who's going to lead us. That's the dispute that led to on the one hand the Sunnis and on the other hand the Shia where the Shia were saying he has to have blood lineage of the prophets.

The Sunnis were saying the best among us. So that's not it's never been settled and that has saddled Islam with the lack of leadership. **There's no pope. There's no central power.**

Then the second schism I think is during this caliphate, the abolition of the caliphate when obviously you had all of these different caliphates. There wasn't just one. But the Islamic States was all powerful and there was an understanding even though it wasn't always adhered to but there was an understanding that **the mission of the Islamic States was to Islamize and expand and conquer and and bring the whole world under Islam.** But when that collapsed, the political leadership decided that they were going to modernize, westernize, and nationalize. The clergy,

the most important clergy at the time said, "No, we have to go back to the time of Muhammad and we have to Islamize." And that's the second great schism of the 19 early 1920s.

And I think there's a third one coming up now which is very interesting which may answer that eternal question of can Islam really modernize which is what Saudi Arabia is doing now and what the UAE has done where the UAE has decided that their national identity is Muslim but they're going to build a political and an economic nation that is not um under Sharia law and and so it looks like the UAE has gone down that trajectory and has what have they died and they've subdued the Islamists within the UAE.

They've banned the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists and it's their sultan who has the last word.

Ben: I think they've procribed more Muslim groups than we have in the United King. We got Muslim groups here that are prescribed in the UAE, aren't they?

Ayaan: Yes. And they're saying to this is this through this authoritarian and authoritative force that we are going we the UAE are going to decide the definition of Islam and it's also the trajectory in which Muhammad bin Salman is moving where he's deciding as the king in Saudi Arabia is much more important than the UAE. Yeah. If he were to say, "I define what Islam is," then I think you have this other shism where the Islamists will continue to seek political power. They'll want to overthrow him.

By the way, Muslim Brotherhood now is banned in Saudi Arabia and the other Islamists are also prescribed. They've been evicted. They've been defunded upon.

Ben: So interesting. So it all was birthed birthed in Saudi Arabia and now they're trying to put a lid on it in Saudi Arabia.

Ayaan: Yes. They created a monster.

Ben: Yeah. And they recognized it, I think,

Ayaan: to be such the Arab Spring. They recognized that it was coming for them.

Ben: Yeah. And so now this it very nearly got them inside, didn't it?

Ayaan: And I I don't think they're out of danger, out of the zone of danger yet. Um, but in any case, it's conceivable theoretically for the king of Saudi Arabia to say, I am the custodian of the holy places. I define what Islam is, and this is what it is.

Ben: So, can I just move that same question along? I wanted to talk more about your life, but this is such a I think such a

Ayaan: this is much more interesting than my life.

Ben: Well, your life is you. So, that is that's very interesting. I think will be very interesting for people to hear. But the next question that comes at least into my mind is well that's all well and good in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. They're basically dictatorships and you can do whatever you want to in a dictatorship within reason. Um but they're forcibly putting a lid on it.

And we don't practice that kind of political system in the United Kingdom. We have what I describe, and do correct me if you think I'm wrong, but I think we have a very advanced, very sensitive, very delicate um political system that has evolved over hundreds of years. Um, and it's an ecosystem, a political constitutional ecosystem that doesn't lend itself to muscular ideologies. Um, you know, we've all kind of set our religions behind us. And when we're faced with a muscular ideology, particularly if we give that ideology protected status, as we have done not just with Islam

Understanding Islam and Islamism in the West

, but any frankly any culture that's come to the United Kingdom, we wrap it up in DEI. We protect it. We promote it. We celebrate it. We set our own. You know, is Islam likely to go rogue in the United Kingdom for want of a better expression? Because we don't have the ability to control it like they do in Saudi Arabia or the UAE. I mean, UAE has a much better law and order uh record than the United Kingdom does. And um you know, again, for the same reason. But are we able do you think to make sense of our political system particularly coupled with DI which is a subject of its own I suppose and and this religion Islam which is a muscular it's a muscular religion is how I see it.

Ayaan: So I think for us to make sense of Islam and Islamism in the West, in America, in the United Kingdom, in France, in Germany, in Sweden, all of these places, I think we have to quit, we have to stop defining Islam as a religion and we have to wake up to the reality that on the one hand it does have religious aspects and those religious aspects ought to be protected and they are protected under the various constitutions when it comes to religious freedom

And the aspects of religion we've only just discussed praying fasting believing what you believe going to Mecca and so on your funerals and your weddings and your you know.

Then on the other hand it's a subversive political force and so the question for every western nation is how do you deal with a very mascul - masculine potent, subversive force, that is riding on demography, that is very well organized, that's infiltrating institutions using: diversity, equity, and inclusion. And these other paradigms of multiculturalism and that is advancing its goals.

Do you lie back? I think it was a justice or a judge right after 911 in uh uh 911 2001 in America. When they were they were looking at some of these questions who said,

„well the constitution is not a suicide pact is it? If there is a subversive effort in town to overthrow the government and the existing order - the existing way of life. **Should we just watch it happen or should we do something about it?**“

And I think that's where we are at now.

Ben: And I - And I suppose the answer is: You have to do something about it, don't you?

Ayaan: Well, yes. And in in the past, so of course um Islamism is not the first

The Political Nature of Islamism

subversive force that these western nations have seen. Uh I think in the history of Britain, which I'm not very familiar with, there was a moment when in fact Catholicism was seen as a subversive force and and it was dealt with. [Yeah.] And communism later on, I'm jumping quite in a big way. uh but the communism uh the Soviet Union wasn't or felt that it wasn't strong enough to uh bring America to her knees and and started resorting to subversive methods and there were counter subversive um methods that America used on the Soviet Union.

Um America used a whole I would say toolbox of cultural subversion within what was the former Soviet Union at the time.

Ben: Yeah, I mean communism in a way though is easier to deal with. I know it was a complex and difficult problem to deal with obviously but it's easier because it doesn't have the cloak of protection of a religion of a culture. Are you with me? It's um it's overtly and **obviously identifiable as a political system which threatens our system**. Whereas there isn't an Islamist uh political u Islamist in the United Kingdom who would volunteer. I suspect that they're **political Islamists that they wish to take over the system**.

Ayaan: I think they do now. I think 10 years ago, maybe 20 years ago when the numbers were smaller, there was a sense that we were talking about a theoretical um you know it was academic whether Islamists would grow large enough to want to overtake

Ben: because it was never going to happen

Ayaan: because it wasn't going to happen. But I think today where and we live in the information age.

So they're all over social media saying we do want to **take over the country. We want to establish Sharia law**. They've got they've got the Islamization process of implementing these halal measures and halal strictures. And um I mean they're openly saying what they want, but it's not just saying it. I don't think it's enough to um to to think about **introducing laws against subversion on the basis of what a handful of people say or don't say**.

I think the most important thing is to look at what people actually do. And what has been done by Islamists is the establishment of a very complex and effective infrastructure for this Islamization. There's the establishment of all of these mosques and Islamic centers and schools and they've now infiltrated political parties and they are they're applying the method that was applied by Erdogan when he took over Turkey. Um there were there was a time when it was when Erdogan was quite fuzzy about what his intentions were. And then as he got stronger relying on um votes from rural areas and as he became

Historical Context of Subversive Forces

stronger he made it very clear that he wanted to Islamize Turkey. And he islamized Turkey. He got rid of the military. He got rid of the courts. all of the checks out and balances that Atatürk had left behind to keep Turkey a secular modern country, Erdogan got rid of those. And so this is the playbook that the Islamists in the United States and in the UK and in France and this is the islam they're following and they did it in Egypt and they came to power democratically in Egypt.

Ben: I know. And then there was Yeah. Well, we incited the uprising against Mubarak, didn't we? And we were part of the creation of the Arab Spring. The When I say we, I mean the United Kingdom and the United States. You know, we're all banging the drum for the Arab Spring.

Ayaan: Democracy, democracy without really understanding these societies. That's true. And also even in Algeria, I think it was what 1989 when uh there was this drum beat about Algeria is going to become a democracy. Yes. It was going to be that one time democracy once only. [Yeah.] When um the Muslim Brotherhood in Algeria um would have come to power

Ben: and they didn't like the result and of course her didn't like the the results and then overthrew that and her masses are democratically all be in 2006

Ayaan: democratically elected. Yes. And also think about Kmeni in 1979. uh that was I don't want to say the equivalent of a democratic election but a majority of Iranians thought they preferred him to the shia and they thought things would improve for them.

So the the question I think that every westerner is avoiding today is is it possible given the demographics of today the birth rates immigration and so on. Is it possible for Islamists to come to power peacefully through the ballot box?

Ben: Can I go back one question uh what one step and ask a slightly different question which is, do you think Islam

Democracy and Islamism: A Complex Relationship

is compatible with democracy certainly western democracy the way we practice dem are they compatible in any sense?

Ayaan: If you define democracy as holding elections Muslims will hold elections to come to power and then uh they will um abolish democracy and they will say no more elections

Ben: And so the ultimate destination of Islamism is the end of democracy.

Ayaan: It is the end of democracy. It's the application of Sharia law. It is to say an Islamist does not believe that human beings can make laws. An Islamist wants to apply God's law, Sharia law, as he sees it. And so wherever Islamists take control, that's the first thing that they do. They come in and they say as of now, you know,

When the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, the Taliban in Afghanistan and in places people don't care about and never look to, but places like Mali, parts of Nijair, parts of the DRC, the Democratic Republic of Congo, um parts of Somalia, um everywhere where when the Islamists come out of Ache in Indonesia, when they come to power, what they try to do is to apply Islamic law or Sharia and they spell that out. They say it.

This is an it's one of those really important things where you shouldn't be listening to experts who talk and speak and analyze Islamist. You should listen to the Islamists themselves and what they tell you

Ben: of course which is the anti antithesis of free speech obviously you know and free speech is as we all know cornerstone of democracy.

Ayaan: Absolutely.

Ben: Um, so just bringing it to the UK if I may for a second. The 2021 census had the UK uh with 3.9 million Muslims. That was 2021. We've actually had 5 [to] 6 million people since then come to the UK. The net migration's obviously been lower. I think it's about 2 and a half - 3 million net migration. But you know the change in the nature of our population has been quite dramatic. I suspect the number of Muslims in this country is materially higher now than 3.9 million. Uh we also know that in the UK once you come here whether you come here legally or illegally.

We seem incapable of either deporting those who've come illegally or um you know encouraging those who've come legally to go back to their home countries. People come here and they stay here. They have indefinite leave to remain. They get British passports. It doesn't seem to be a privilege anymore to get a British passport. It seems to be a right, you know, and and they get it. And um how do we and we practice this uh

Navigating Multiculturalism and National Identity

regulatory framework of DEI, which is the protective status given to minority religions, um ethnicity, minority sexual preferences, transgender, any minority gets the benefit of protectionism, multiculturalism in effect, which I, you know, in its I completely agree is divisive.

How how do we solve the issues facing the United Kingdom? What needs to be done iron to make sure that our children and their children have a peaceable democratic system which is sustainable won't be hijacked but is brought about also peaceably through debate through the democratic processes that we have you know

Because one of the things I feel is that as you you you touched on this so brilliantly in the beginning when you said that you know you see the divisions being created you see the language becoming more aggressive and then suddenly there's a civil war.

[Yeah.] And you know how do we and I can see Russians in the United Kingdom and ethnationalists now emerging in a way that they weren't before. Um and I also believe forgive me I'm talking a bit too much since

Ayaan: No you're not. I'm listening. I'm really really fascinated by what you're saying.

Ben: But but the other thing I I fear is that um people will start justifying the ends by the means. [Yes.] And I I don't think you can ever justify the ends by the means because if the means are draconian and damaging, the end is never delivered and you end up in a kind of dystopia that you didn't wish to create. [Yeah.]

So how do we navigate ourselves back to the kind of country which is welcoming, kind to foreigners, loving by nature and so on, democratic that delicate political um constitutional framework that we have without having to take draconian steps. Is it possible?

Ayaan: Well, I think the way to do it is for us to recognize the urgency to acknowledge the urgency of the situation. uh again when I was referring to my childhood there were all these moments when unity could have been found among the various factions and we could have said well let's opt for order because what comes after this.

If we carry on with these divisions is going to be disorder and and eventually that's what a civil war is really and so if you describe uh Britain and again it's not just Britain I see it in France and I see it in Germany and I see it in in various other countries there is a looming disorder. Um people recognize that the the natives the white native populations of Europe recognize that their way of life is threatened.

So that is one reality that you have to acknowledge is threatened or is it not threatened? It is. There are changes happening at a pace that me you know most of the working classes and the middle classes and um other groups rural groups are saying this this pace is too fast for me I've got to do something about it. So let's first acknowledge that. Then the second thing we have to

The Urgency of Addressing Societal Divisions

acknowledge is that the people we've elected to govern us and to help us navigate these things haven't done a good job of it. The last 30 years, they've opened the borders. They've allowed

more more immigrants to come in from Muslim majority countries while allowing the Islamists to establish themselves and establish this infrastructure of Islamization and even protecting it as you say through **this multiculturalism and DEI and etc** etc. And the Islamists themselves are now in a place where they think they're large enough and strong enough **to have a fighting chance**.

So you have different factions alive within the borders of many of these European countries that um I mean it's it's it's um it's a tinder box taking

Ben: is that where you think we are tinder box kind of level?

Ayaan: we are take we are going to tinder box levels with and and **we have a crisis of leadership** so Um people blame the former government uh that was conservative for doing things that a majority of the population were saying,

„please don't do these things“ because they didn't invest in the assimilation in the integration of the people they brought into the country they allowed into the country and so and the dissatisfaction

We're also I think going through some sort of economic crisis and it's when these things come together when you have the cost of living and You have a war going on about it may or may not end, but with Russia and uh and what's going on with Ukraine

Ben: and a trade war now as well.

Ayaan: And now there's a trade war that's going to make things much worse.

Um and so I think that um the leadership the **the people in Westminster should stop calling people far right, calling them racist**. I think it's time to I mean you do have a royal family. You have you have a king. And so in America sometimes we think you know our king is Donald Trump. It's our head of state is the person we elect.

[Yeah.] And that person is almost always more polarizing than uh than we like. So most people will say, see if it was a constitutional monarch, if they had a king, the king would bring them together to the palace and they would work it out. And so I think maybe a scenario like that where you bring in all of these leaders and you say, "Let's work

The Role of Leadership in Crisis

out. We don't want a civil war. Let's work this thing out." I think that might buy you time, but even if you get all the time in the world, **you still have to face the fact that the agenda the Islamists are pushing is incompatible with what the locals want and sooner or later they are going to they're going to stand up to one another**.

Ben: Yeah. I mean, no amount of talking, I think, resolves this. And certainly, King Charles doesn't seem to have his head in the right place, as far as I can see.

Ayaan: I don't know the the constitutional system here. And it's not maybe it's not him having his head in some place. Maybe it's him simply not having the power to do anything about

Ben: he doesn't have the power, but his head's definitely not in the right place.

Ayaan: But I mean, I I really feel that there is a sense of urgency. I mean I look at a country like Sweden also a constitutional monarchy where the prime minister came out and said we have lost the monopoly on violence that it's as if he's describing an African country. It's as if he's describing a third world country. We have lost the monopoly on violence.

That means there are large swaths of the citizens of Sweden who no longer care about the police, who no longer care about um they're

Ben: living outside the institutional framework.

Ayaan: They're living outside the institutional framework. And if you start to get that in some of the larger countries and if it becomes Europewide, [yeah,] then you're really playing with fire. So I think we stop calling people far right and extremist and this and that and the other. Release Tommy Robinson and he speaks for a lot of people. Listen very closely to what they're saying.

And I have done that. I've done my homework. I've listened to various members of of the British working class describe how their neighborhoods changed, how their schools changed, how their economic situation changed, and how they've been completely ignored and even demonized

Ben: absolutely

Ayaan: by the political elite that they elected. I mean, the Labor Party of any the Social Democratic Party, the center left major party of any of these European countries no longer speak for the working classes. You look at the Jewish communities of Europe and they are frightened. Many of them are leaving some of these countries. You can't go on like this.

Ben: No, I appreciate that. But it doesn't seem to me that there's even a single political leader in the UK who would say what you've just said. Um even people on my side of the debate naming no names say that you can't afford to politically alienate Islam for example. Um recognizing the challenges faced by the country.

Ayaan: Yeah. Don't politically alienate Muslims who want to live by the constitution and abide by the laws of Britain. But I think you do have to make a decision about Islamism. That is an organized ideology and a movement that wants to replace your constitution with Sharia law. You've got to face that regardless of which where you sit on the political spectrum. That is what they want and it's a reality and it's a growing reality

Ben: and but I don't see anyone making that case. Not yet anyway. Um I mean Keir Starmer is busy giving sucker to the notion that we need to define Islamophobia that there perhaps should be laws against blasphemy as far as Abrahamic religions are concerned which is basically a backdoor towards **authoritarianism**.

Ayaan: Authoritarianism absolutely but it's also authoritarianism used against it. It's it's **only going to embolden the Islamists**. The Islamists have created this fake word Islamophobia

The Dangers of Silencing Debate

and it has the express intention of shutting down debate. So for British citizens to choose whether they want to live by Sharia law or they don't want to live by Sharia law, they should have the opportunity to discuss it. What is it? What is it that the Islamists want? How do they want to get, you know, work through the system to come to power?

What am I voting for? What is Islam? How are women treated? How are gay people treated? How are Jewish people treated? How is I mean, you you want to ask all of these questions. You can't ask those questions now because you'll be accused of Islamophobia.

And the way it advances the Islamist's agenda is the Islamist knows that if in 2025 the citizens take an interest in what they want and start asking questions, they will reject it. And so how do you stop the the population from rejecting what you want? By stopping them from talking about it, from discussing it,

Ben: shut it down.

Ayaan: And so that is what Keir Starmer, wittingly or unwittingly if he were to indeed um criminalize what he calls Islamophobia. If that were to happen then he would be giving I mean

Ben: we're almost there aren't we? You know with the ability to be detained by police over non-crime hate incidents. [Yeah.] Um you know you're almost there through the back door already without having to really legislate for it.

Ayaan: All - all of this non-crime hate, the sentencing commission, discriminating against white men and white people, all of these things are going to undermine faith in the institutions and especially in the leadership and in politics. And so groups within society are going to draw their conclusions. They're going to say,

„This justice system doesn't work for me. The police system doesn't work for me. The economy doesn't work for me.“

You're going to see the establishment of more and **more parallel societies and then they will start fighting with one another**. So that is that is what you are on the brink of if if you - if you

carry on - if you carry on hollowing out the legitimacy of the institutions, then you're going to have the system implode.

Ben: Do you - you mentioned it's urgent that we do it and I and I fully agree it's urgent. Is it too late or is there time?

Ayaan: I mean again it is it's a choice isn't it? Like I said some of the steps that have to be taken uh to show the local people if the the government wants the government in Westminster or in Paris or in Berlin. These governments have to go to the people and say we we take you seriously now and then show good faith. Come to the table and let's talk about what these problems are. If we do that, I think we have time. But it takes courage.

Um, and it also takes clarity of mind and clarity of thought. These people are locked up in their little circles and there's a great deal of group think.

Ben: Yeah. I'm not sure there's much think going on. If it's group think, it's a step forward from where I think.

Ayaan: But I think what about what about and in in um one of the things I've seen in um the United States that I think in in my view that has saved us from an implosion of the system is the November 2024 election. We had an election. We're highly polarized and we had an election and you know there are some people who are not happy with what Trump is doing. I think a lot of people are not happy with what Trump is doing, but they're gearing up for the next election.

We have midterms coming in 2026 and then we have um in 2028 the next election. I think the system is holding up. [Yeah.] And so here one thing that might be when you say what can we do is maybe all the center right people who are now in the opposition should go and and have

The Need for a Holistic Approach to Immigration

a chat about what to do um and how to work together.

Ben: Yeah. Yeah. We've got to be brave enough as you say to identify the issues to start with and I don't think we've really got there yet. There's a lack of preparedness, I think, from people on on our side of the debate, our movement, if you like, um to actually say things out um clearly without wishing to just cause division for the sake of causing division, you know, just say them out as they are in reality. [Yeah.] But I'm very encouraged. You think there's still time and that we've got, you know, we've got a lot of

Ayaan: Let's not waste it. There is a bit of time, but let's not waste it. I think people have to to imagine what it would look like uh if the system were to implode and none of us want none of us want the system to fall apart and so maybe there are you know priorities um policy priorities you want that could wait first let's fix the system

Ben: well I mean I think you know I don't know whether you'd agree with this but I think you know it's a it's the solution ution has to come through a a holistic multifaceted approach. [Yes,] we've got to stop the rampant form of immigration taking place. We've got to stop illegal migration. We've got to I think we've got to put a moratorium on indefinite leave to remain granting British citizenships like confetti.

Ayaan: Um encourage people the welfare state. You have to reform the welfare state. You can't have, you know, I don't know, hundreds of thousands of people, perhaps even millions of people, millions,

Ben: one and a half million foreigners on benefits in the UK.

Ayaan: You see, it's those sorts of things. It's just it's that's unsustainable.

Ben: It's unsustainable. Absolutely.

Ayaan: The other thing that I think is may give people a sense of urgency is these official numbers that we get. You know, you have so many Muslims in Britain. I think that these numbers are all wrong.

Ben: Yeah. Much greater numbers.

Ayaan: It's much greater number. The birth rate is much greater. Um, and so I think it's just an acknowledgement of reality, however unpleasant it is. [Yeah.] To keep things together.

Ben: That's the first thing we've got to do is ditch DEI. One of the one of the funny I think not funny, one of the collateral uh results of DEI in my view actually is that Jews become more vulnerable even though they're theoretically protected. [Yeah.] by the same progressive discrimination that DEI should afford them because they're the smallest group of people within the protected status. [Yeah.] They are prone to bullying from other protected statuses.

Ayaan: This is the whole protected status nonsense has to stop. Yeah, it has to stop. This is where you get nationalism. I think we actually we've entered an era of deglobalization. We're not globalizing anymore. Read the trade tariffs. [Absolutely.] and maybe whatever confrontation the US is having with with China. Um but as as we go back to national sovereignty, national identity and nationhood, I think let's emphasize nationhood based on citizenship and that means no one is protected more than anyone.

There will be no protected groups. We we are all equal before the law. And and then you have to ditch all of these legal infrastructure. Some of it national and some of it um

Ben: given to us by international

Ayaan: by international organizations. You've you've just got to I mean you should campaign on that.

Ben: I am. I've just written I don't know if you're aware but I'm launching a new political party. Are you aware of this?

Ayaan: Well, I'm not aware of it.

Ben: No, it's a daft project, no doubt. But um I think we absolutely need it because I I won't I won't get into domestic politics but I was drafting the objects clause of our constitution yesterday and actually firmly there is everyone is equal. uh there's only one law in this country that's UK law and everyone is equal uh you know in the face of the law and that's a fundamental component of um

Protecting Women and Children in Society

of any sensible system frankly there cannot be any other system which makes sense and progressive discrimination um the word progressive gives it legitimacy but actually progressive discrimination is negative discrimination against the majority that's

Ayaan: it's primitivism it's progress towards primitivism it's so backward

Ben: I don't know why they call it It's it this this whole notion of equal outcomes rather than equal opportunities. It's doing away with me always negative.

Ayaan: The outcomes always negative

Ben: because all you can do is drag the everyone down. [Absolutely.] But and that is labor policy of course I would argue. You know that is what they do. They like to drag people down. They don't have a vision for taking the country up

Ayaan: and they like to inverse things. So you know they'll say they'll call you a racist when in fact they're the ones who are implementing racist policies and absolutely this type of thing. And the other thing I think is that's really important, we don't talk enough about it, is the protection of women and children.

Again, from my past in all of those countries that I lived in, women were not protected. And so when I first came to the Netherlands, the first thing that struck me, Ben, was it's just amazing that women can walk in the streets dressed as they please at daytime or nighttime, and that's gone. that's gone in almost all European countries that have substantial numbers of immigrants from where I come from.

Ben: I'm stunned by it! 100 years into equating men and women at the ballot box. Yeah. And bringing them onto the same level playing field, liberalism has somehow managed to

convince us that putting a woman from head to toe [Yeah.] in a nicab [Yeah.] is perfectly acceptable because that her is her choice.

Ayaan: It's and it's not her choice.

Ben: It's not her choice. And I I you know if the state if the government was going to make a statement of its intent the first thing to do is ban the nikab in my view.

Ayaan: Yeah. Uh the nikab so most people don't understand this is why I think I'm against you know nonsense uh propaganda machines like like Islamophobia. The nikab I don't know if anybody's ever had a chance to actually dis discuss what it is and what it does and what it's supposed to do.

The female form is seen to be arousing for the male. And the way Sharia law Islamic law deals with it is simply to say, why don't we hide her from view? Well, she can't be at home locked up all day long. You know, some of these women have to go about their daily um daily routines and daily business.

As soon as she leaves the house, she should be covered from head to toe. And there's a lot of discussion, a lot of it exhausting and fascinating about how much of the female body you have to cover, how much of it what which part of the body stops to be arousing to drive men so crazy as to throw themselves at her. And so you have these discussions control the men of it. Well, and of course, this is what we've

The Intersection of Islamism and Gender Ideologies

seen in modern life is you can actually socialize men to be civilized and to control their urges and not to jump on women. No. So one of the things that's so upsetting about the failure of assimilation from you know I know there are societies out there where the attitude towards women is different but once those men come here and they come in large numbers and it's fighting age men

It's the responsibility of the host society to assimilate those men in other words to civilize them. In other words to spell out that they have to learn to control their urges. We're not going to cover up women and we're not going to lock up women and if you misbehave, we're going to deport you. That I think should have been the trade-off. That should have been the social contract between the immigrants.

Ben: Absolutely. But we've done the opposite of that. We've done the polar opposite of that. Integration doesn't form any part of the agenda.

Ayaan: No. And and the Islamists are now overconfident. I'm sorry. They just they feel that they are improving British society or French society and so on.

Ben: What I find quite peculiar, I think we probably need to end quite soon. We're probably out of time. But what I quite find quite peculiar and **sinister actually**, is the way um a lot of these Islamists have allied themselves to the transgender ideology movement because they are **comfortable bedfellows** for their political aims at the moment. [Yes.] But the transgender lot haven't cottoned on to the fact that if Islamism takes over,

Ayaan: they'll be beheaded.

Ben: They'll be the first ones for **the proverbial or actual chop**.

Ayaan: Absolutely. Yeah. The It's unfortunate because there are people with gender dysphoria. And the people with gender dysphoria, I think, are not the ones who are the activists behind this ideology. the the people pushing the ideology may or may not have gender dysphoria. In fact, I suspect many of them don't. Most of them don't.

And the **Islamists are quite cunning** and they have they have made these temporary alliances because again I think you may have heard of takyya.

Ben: Yeah. The going underground and

Ayaan: Yes. It's the concept of deception. As long as you're advancing um advancing Islam and you're working towards Islam, the Islamization process of a society, if the host society is bigger, it's the kufur, the infidels are bigger and they are stronger, then you are allowed to be deceitful, to be deceptive.

And so that explains the relationship that they have formed with the far-left, with the LGBT Q and so on uh communities, but also with labor. Um, and you see some of these uh, you know, at times when no one is looking, you you see them sometimes uh, clash. We saw them with the Gaza protests when some of the MPs here um found themselves um in precarious places. Um and and and in America, we've seen it, I think, much more openly when suddenly um the Democratic Party was confronted

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with losing the election because of a small group of Muslims who said, "We're not going to come. We we will stay at home. we're not going to vote.

Ben: It becomes pivotally important. I mean, democracy often is made or one at the periphery, isn't it? You know, power is made in one at the periphery.

Ayaan: Yes. And the Islamists know this. The Islamists know exactly how to use diversity, equity, and inclusion and how to subvert the various institutions that we have. And so that's why we need we have to have a sense of urgency to wake up. **Wake up because this monster is getting bigger and bigger. So you just you can't just sit there and wait for it to swallow you.**

Ben: No. And um well I hope that my new political party should have some success. And you know, we will abolish DEI, abolish the Equalities Act, and I think have a very um well, abolish, frankly, the Human Rights Act, which has taken the European Convention of Human Rights into the body of UK law and set aside our ability, I think, to think straight.

You know, we don't even really know what we are as a culture anymore. We've been hijacked by these laws and so on. And I think we need a restoration of common sense and a restoration of you know um of the United Kingdom.

Ayaan: My advice is I've seen in the last what 30 or so years uh new parties spring up and then Dian Ali death and I think the investment really is in competent people and people who put the country first and not I couldn't agree more.

Ben: Yeah. I couldn't agree more and I won't give away the constitution of my new party on air right now. Yeah. But it's structured precisely to deliver that outcome. Um so that we have a body of very capable, educated, fearless people who will make the case. [Yeah.] Along the lines we've been discussing during this interview.

Ayaan: Wonderful.

Ben: Can I just say that, you know, it's been a great privilege to speak to you, Ayaan, and thank you very much for taking the time to to speak with me. And um, you know, I think the challenge is massive. And, uh, I hope we can have a peaceable, sustainable, democratic um, British future in the United Kingdom and and and in Western civilization more generally.

Ayaan: Thank you. I'd like to invite you to come to my podcast to talk to me about **the constitution of your party** and and the way you you hope to make uh those changes that you aspire to achieve.

Ben: I'd love to do that. I I hope to have the constitution done and everything sort of you know ready for launch in the next couple of months. So maybe after that I'd love to come back and have another chat with you.

Ayaan: Beautiful. Thank you so much.

Ben: Thank you very much. Thank you for the chat. [Music]