

My Comments on “Draw back the veil”

Thank you for publishing the article of Tanveer Ahmed and the reply of Monirul Islam Monir on the same subject. I am not an academic or a scholar on the subject of integration or religion and my submission is only my very personal understanding. My English language skill is also not refined as an academic or writer so please forgive me if I made too many mistakes with the language.

First point that I like to make is, I could not understand why Tanveer in his first paragraph mentioned that the tragic incident has something to do with Islam. He mentioned this with out presenting any fact to support that claim. After the first paragraph he continued with integration, culture, clan etc. etc, but not a single fact on how Islam has any connection with the incident.

Apart from reading few articles on the incident I myself don't have much facts in hand to analyse the incident, but few points that I could make out of the news of different newspapers are.

- The local Imam did not know the family.
- The girl was going to a Christian School.
- The neighbours did not describe them as religious.
- Police did not find any relationship with the incident and Islam.

I think rather than start talking about Islam and the incident, I should rest my case here. But I simply could not understand why Tanveer used the heading of the article as “Draw back the veil”. As if too many of these incidents are happening and that will stop these types of incidents from happening.

After the first paragraph the article continued with findings of attitude of first generation migrants from South Asia and Arab countries. The purposes of migration as described are economic and educational and according to Tanveer that is noble and understandable wishes. I do agree with him on this point. Migration is a natural process and we should not confine that with today's world. Among many other animals we also migrate from one area to another for better life and better living. It happened in past, happening now and it will be happening in future. So, one should not have any guilty feeling about the same.

Now Tanveer wrote about the condition imposed by the first generation migrants to their children in achieving two wishes (economic and educational). I also do agree with Tanveer on this view. But I could not agree with his view that we see the western life primarily as moral degradation. It's seems to me that Tanveer believes that all of the Western life is much superior in every ways and we the first generation clan based migrants simply don't have the capability of understanding that. The basic reasons on development of every culture and society primarily is to survive and secondarily is to get a better life by doing good to each other, and in doing so its develops its own boundaries and rules for the betterment of human life. The intention is to do good and that is the

fundamental truth. But the conflict is in the definition of right and wrong at its lower level. Brutal killing of whales along with small kids were very much common only few years ago in many Scandinavian countries but you could be disgusted with the practice. Finding skinned off dogs in many countries open markets could make us offended. To understand these practices we need to know the history of development of those cultures. Blanket agreement that everything the Western culture has is superior is not right. On the one hand I try to pass on the good practices of my culture to my next generation and on the other hand I encourage my next generation to practice the good part of the western culture. My view is:

- 99% of the migrants came from Urban educated and cultured family and clan practice of them is a ridiculous idea.
- Western culture is not always right. It has many good sides and also has many bad sides.
- We the first generation mostly try to pass on the good sides of our inherited culture, but bad side of our culture sometimes also get in the way due to our practice.
- Interaction of many cultures will help our very new young Australian culture. It should be encouraged.
- All the social events of western culture should not be judged as right. Many of them are creating problem in this society and experts are finding ways to solve them.
- Migrants should not be blamed as a group for the error of few individuals among them. Not everyone is perfect in the western world either.

Tanveer claimed that honour, shame and obsession with saving face is core of Muslim identity and it is unique in Muslim society. I am very much puzzled with such a statement. World history tells me a different story. History of the Western world is full of bloodshed in the name of the king, honour, country and religion. Our South Asian culture is not like that. We are basically humble in nature and reluctant of taking revenge. Our history could be different if we were arrogant in that sense.

I am not sure but reading the article of Tanveer it seems to me that he is trying to justify something. I don't have any doubt that he is intelligent and gifted with the ability to write. He should use his ability to tell the truth.

Lastly, the integration issues: Please do not try to justify everything on this ground. Integration is not abandoning your roots. Let the trees from other culture flourish in the new ground of Australia. Nourish it, take care of it. It will automatically enrich itself and will come up with new colour, flavour and taste.

Chowdhury SADARUDDIN
Darwin, 17/11/06