

Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia

I immigrated to Australia from New Zealand in the mid 80's and my husband migrated from England to Australia with his family in the early 60's. In Australia we have been involved with many ethnic communities and have hosted homestays and other guests from many nations including Korea, Japan, America, China, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. I count people from these nations among my closest friends and am continually interacting with different ethnic groups within Australia.

The question as to whether multiculturalism has failed must be put into the context the European leaders put it; they say this failure pertains to the lack of integration and development of parallel societies by Muslim communities; it is *Islam* that has been identified as the differing factor in successful integration. It is therefore not an issue of race but of ideology. Closer to home in our own region, the same has been said in Singapore.

Singapore's founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew in his book *Hard Truths to Keep Singapore Going*, had this to say:

"I would say today, we can integrate all religions and races except Islam," and...

"I think we were progressing very nicely until the surge of Islam came and if you asked me for my observations, the other communities have easier integration -- friends, intermarriages and so on,"...

Quite apart from the apparent difficulties throughout the Islamic world, it is therefore necessary to pay particular attention to Islam in addressing this question, because it is the difficulties being experienced in Europe and Singapore, with lack of Muslim integration and development of parallel societies, which have facilitated this question in the first place.

The differences between Islam and other religions are quite well documented; Islam is not just a religion, but also a political and legal system. Law and state identity are enshrined in the Islamic religion. Islam is totalitarian in nature with its own *identity, values and religious culture* which crosses ethnic boundaries. And there is no separation of religion and state, as westerners would understand this. Islam permeates every area of life. Through Islamic eyes that see through the lens of religion, the 'west' represents the united trinity of *Christianity, Liberal Democracy, and the Rule of Law*. It is for this reason that author Robert Reilly notes that democracy may be seen as a competing '*false religion*' and therefore something to be overturned rather than embraced; democracy is seen as a by-product of Christianity.

As I will try to demonstrate, it is this idea of identity that appears to be at the heart of whether people are able to truly integrate.

When Muslim people call for *sharia law* this is actually the call for another parallel legal system, something they can identify with. This is a quote from a Muslim parent in Australia documented in *Muslim Communities in Australia* by Abdullah Saeed and Shahram Akbarzadeh identifying *common* concerns.

'When you are in a different religious and cultural society, you become more aware of yourself. You cannot become part of mainstream society due to the cultural difference. So, for the sake of maintaining one's identity, you tend to find refuge in religion and start practicing it more strictly. Moreover, religion gives you a sense of security. Away from you homeland and family you become closer to God'.

I think it would be a mistake to say that Muslims cannot become part of mainstream society because Australian culture is unaccommodating. Commenting on Immigration Minister Chris Bowen's recent speech on the topic, Greg Sheridan said *'(Bowen) puts the entire burden for the success or failure of an immigrant communities experience down to the attitude of the host society and places absolutely no analytical weight at all on the performance and behaviour of the immigrants themselves'*. He then adds, *'the problems Bowen is talking about are problems with Muslim immigrants, not with immigrants generally'*.

I have personal experience that illustrates these points. My close Egyptian friend was a well integrated, contributing member of Australia and very integrated into our family's daily life until after the 9/11 incident. She then began to identify with Islam and Muslims rather than Australia and multi-ethnic Australians. At this time she adopted Islamic dress, stopped her son eating at my house with our son because our food was now forbidden, put gloves on to get in my (infidel) car, began aggressively trying to convert others, including myself, to Islam, and distanced herself from me. This was after a long, genuine friendship, helping her to paint her kitchen, buy her furniture, assisting her with assignments, running errands for her and having my husband repair things in her home. In this instance I don't think there could be any question about Australians being unaccommodating. The movement I saw in my friend was from a secular well integrated Australian of Egyptian background to a *segregated* religious Muslim. Winston Churchill's famous quote about *Islam paralyzing the social development of its adherents* comes to mind and was certainly demonstrated in this instance.

This segregation when implemented by a community has the effect of ultimately establishing a 'state within a state'. Evidence of this can be seen throughout Europe with 'no go zones' that even the Police and other state services cannot enter. This further facilitates *Islamic identity* rather than *national identity* and runs contrary to ideas about social inclusion and integration. Ironically, to this present day in Australia, this same system of segregation is being sanctified under the guise of 'social inclusion'. Separate prayer rooms and toilets for *Muslim only* use, separate swimming and dress codes, separate food and finance. All these things can breed is a separate society for *Muslims only*. And this unwittingly supports those extremist groups who are calling for the Islamic

Caliphate – the universal Islamic State and sharia law. This is essentially upholding religious apartheid practices and undermining the integrated Australia we seek.

If we are to learn from the problems being experienced around the world, I believe we need to stop facilitating segregation, and stop recognizing and respecting it, because it runs counter to the national interest of real integration. In 1980 the Islamic Council of Europe published a book *'Muslim Communities in Non-Muslim States'* documenting the strategy for Muslims to *resist assimilation* and further the cause of Islam in their host countries. With 85 sharia courts operating in the UK it appears their strategy has been very successful and I believe we should take note in order to *not* facilitate this in Australia.

The importance of national identity is highlighted by **Nicolai Sennels** – Danish psychologist and author of “Among Criminal Muslims”.

In his article ***Why Multiculture will always fail*** Sennels notes that *for a society to succeed, its citizens must be able to unite around common core values. When people identify with a culture whose values are not rooted in the nation's indigenous culture, this identification happens at the expense of identification with the greater community. The step towards acting in violation of the community's interest is therefore shorter, which is one of the reasons for the dramatic over-representation of certain immigrant groups in crime and unemployment statistics.*

Not respecting Australian law or authority, the flag, the history or the culture. Perhaps these are legitimate reasons why Muslims are over-represented in unemployment and crime statistics. I have heard Australian law referred to as 'infidel law' and money from Australian banks as 'infidel money'. I attended the vilification hearings against the two Pastors accused of Vilification against Islam by the Islamic Council of Victoria. At one of these hearings when we all stood to acknowledge the entrance of the Judge, two women in Islamic dress with full-face coverings remained seated in the back. They were overheard saying, 'I wont stand for an infidel judge'. This made quite a mockery of a vilification hearing!

The truth is, every nation has ideological roots and those advocating multiculturalism are unwittingly promoting the uprooting of the host ideology. Where multiculturalism has been successful it appears to be when immigrants are 'grafted in' ideologically. If they accept and embrace the core values, which in Australia are things like freedom of speech, freedom of religion, openness, transparency, indiscriminate charity, equality, secular democracy and the Rule of Law. Individuality is a core value; to eat, dress, work, befriend, and to marry whomever one chooses. Conversely, in Australia conformity is viewed as a weakness rather than a strength.

While many Muslims no doubt do embrace many of these things, it is also true to say none of these things are core values of ideological Islam itself. And this is the Islam that is being revived around the world and being promoted in all western nations, including Australia.

The importance of freedom of speech cannot be overstated. Ayn Rand notes that freedom of speech is fundamental to the health of liberal democracies.

“Once a country accepts censorship of the press and of speech, then nothing can be won without violence. Therefore, so long as you have free speech, protect it. This is the life and death issue in this country: Do not give up the freedom of the press – of newspapers, books, magazines, radio, movies and other forms of presenting ideas. So long as that’s free, a peaceful intellectual turn is possible.” **Ayn Rand - Russian-American novelist, philosopher, playwright, and screenwriter**

Former ministerial adviser to the federal Coalition Ted Lapkin in addressing the current Andrew Bolt controversy refers to the ‘high church of political correctness’. He notes *‘Free speech is the essential prerequisite that underpins all other democratic liberties.’*

However we live in an age and society where freedom of speech is becoming increasingly difficult and intellectual honesty compromised. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe stated that member states must *“condemn and combat Islamophobia” and ensure “school textbooks do not portray Islam as a hostile or threatening religion”.*

This is in effect mandating that only *positive* representations of Islamic history and Muslim people be presented, and therefore vast amounts of Islamic literature and history be completely overlooked. This is not limited to Europe of course. The government funded Media Guide published in partnership with AFIC adopted a similar stance throwing academic integrity to the wind to foster a *positive only* image of Muslims in history and contemporary Australia. There are other similar publications but none so overtly *indoctrination rather than education* than the Curriculum project *Learning From One Another; Bringing Muslim Perspectives Into Australian Schools.* (LFOA)

LFOA is essentially censorship undermining academic integrity, critical thinking and the basic liberty of freedom of speech; and it is censorship that supports sharia law and its mandate against any criticism of Islam or its prophet. According to sharia law, to criticize Islam or its prophet is a criminal offence, which may incur the death penalty. At its core, this value undermines the western value of freedom of speech, not to mention basic human rights.

Adopting this stance of 'positive only presentations' under the guise of 'tolerance' is therefore undermining true tolerance of varying public views. People should be free in a liberal democracy to state openly the historical facts about Islam, its prophet or current events without fear of punishment. Such positive discrimination towards Islam and Muslims does not endear them any further to other Australians who have grown in a culture that is known to 'take the mickey out of others and oneself'. Put bluntly, Australians are not outwardly religious or overly sensitive. This is a new and unwanted imposition.

Embedded in the concept of multiculturalism is this doctrine of *tolerance*. In 1945 philosopher and scientist Karl Popper foresaw this tendency and spoke on the 'paradox of tolerance'. *Unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them...In this formulation, I do not imply, for instance, that we should always suppress the utterance of intolerant philosophies; as long as we can counter them by rational argument and keep them in check by public opinion, suppression would certainly be unwise.*

But we should claim the right to suppress them if necessary even by force; for it may easily turn out that they are not prepared to meet us on the level of rational argument, but begin by denouncing all argument; that they may forbid their followers to listen to rational argument, because it is deceptive, and teach them to answer arguments by the use of their fists or pistols.

*We should therefore claim, in the name of tolerance, the right not to tolerate the intolerant. We should claim that any movement preaching intolerance places itself outside the law, and we should **consider incitement to intolerance and persecution as criminal**, in the same way as we should consider incitement to murder, or to kidnapping, or to the revival of the slave trade, as criminal.*

The freedom of speech Australians enjoy allows for individuality and is part of our culture. Also part of our culture is the colloquialism 'fair dinkum' which is associated with honesty and integrity. If things are 'fair dinkum' they are what they say they are; i.e. authentic. It is fair to say that in eastern cultures, and certainly prevalent in Islamic culture, is the idea of 'honor and shame'. Primary importance is not placed on honesty, whether someone is being 'fair dinkum', but on whether they are bringing honor to the community and avoiding shame. So once again, a 'positive only' presentation of Islam supports these foreign cultural values - honor and shame - rather than upholding the Australian norm of being 'fair dinkum'. This amounts to intellectual dishonesty and in Australia an appalling lack of integrity by academia as it pertains to Islam. And this undermines building trusting relationships and real integration. My Muslim friend from Iraq always says 'you can't trust an Arab'. If I say this, I'm racist. She is an Arab but prefers to deal with other Australian's because *they do what they say they'll do* - they don't just tell her what they think she'll like to hear.

This freedom and intellectual honesty are aspects of Australian culture that must be encouraged to maintain the freedoms we enjoy and build an integrated and united nation. And lack of this by accommodating another cultures' ways merely undermines the nation. This is one of the inherent problems with the concept of multiculturalism, that *all* the ways of other cultures are equally beneficially. If this were true, all nations would not be flocking to western nations.

In relation to the eradication of freedom of speech as an imposition of sharia law the demands of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) should be considered. In analyzing the aims of the OIC, Bat Ye'or documents why abandoning a national identity, to embrace multilateralism and multiculturalism is so detrimental to citizenry:

The OIC represents 56 countries and the Palestinian Authority (considered a state), the whole constituting the universal Ummah with a community of more than one billion three to six hundred million Muslims.

*Among its targets, the OIC Charter specifies the propagation, promotion, and preservation of Islamic teachings and values, the spread of Islamic culture, and the preservation of the Islamic heritage (I-11). Article I-12 promotes the protection and defense of the true image of Islam, the fight against its defamation, and the encouragement of dialogue between civilizations and religions. The other objectives deal with protecting inherent Islamic family values (I-14) and the preservation of rights, dignity, and religious and cultural identity of the Muslim communities and minorities in non-Member States (I-16). This issue points to the **OIC authority over immigrants abroad** and its pressure on the governments of the non-Muslim host countries through the channel of dialogue, including the Alliance of Civilizations, whose Report backs OIC programs, and interfaith and immigration networks.*

*The Charter stipulates that the International Islamic Court of Justice shall become the Organization's main legal body (Chap. X, Art. 14) and that "[t]he Independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights shall promote the civil, political, social and economic rights enshrined in the organization's [OIC] covenants and declarations and in universally agreed human rights instruments, in conformity with Islamic values" (Art. 15). **It implies that the covenants which do not conform with Islamic values will not be followed.***

One can note that Sudanese President Omar al Bashir, accused (according to Western criteria of justice) of genocide committed in southern Sudan and Darfur, has not been troubled by the Islamic Court of Justice. His colleagues at the OIC do not consider him in any way a criminal and receive him with great respect, as does Turkish PM Erdogan.

***The Islamic Court of Justice has an international mandate and could try foreigners, both Muslims and non-Muslims (blasphemers, apostates, resisters to jihad) who have broken the laws of shari'a anywhere.** Moreover, the claim by the OIC to be the guardian and protector of Muslim immigrants living in all countries that are not members of the OIC implies an extension of its jurisdiction and political influence over all the Muslims of Europe, North and South America, and the other non-Member States. This situation exacerbates the danger*

incurred by non-religious European Muslims, whether atheists, apostates, or free thinkers.

It is worth noting that this multilateral agreement supports, at least in spirit if not in fact, *not* recognizing law contrary to Islamic sharia law. When adopted by Muslims in western nations, this is seditious. Yet it is this Islam that's finding it's way into western nations and undermining the rule of law and genuine integration. Polygamy, child marriage, female genital mutilation, domestic violence and other crimes go unreported because they do not contravene Islamic sharia. And to report them would contravene sharia principles, which do not allow for any criticism or shame to be brought to the community. Australia is therefore neglecting to protect some of its citizens at high risk of being violated in one way or another by encouraging such attitudes. As Sennel noted, nations need to unite around common core values. For many Muslims living in western nations this is almost impossible.

As already stated, the Islamic response to freedom of speech may be blasphemy laws, and the response to freedom of religion may be archaic apostasy laws. To unwittingly promote a missionary religion in Australia, which universally agrees on the death penalty as a legitimate punishment for leaving Islam, is tragic. In this sense, multiculturalism is undermining the Australian culture and freedoms many have come to embrace. Respecting 'religion' may mean that some Muslim girls may not have the freedoms in Australia even to basic human rights that they should; to eat what they want, dress as they want, pursue vocations they may want or marry who they want. Encouraging Islamic identity encourages a greater sense of Islamic community and pressure for all to conform. It encourages segregation and sedition.

As Sennel notes, Muslim culture and religion have demonstrated some inherent self-protective mechanisms which makes Muslim immigrants resistant to external influences from the host culture.

The unfortunate combination of excessive Western tolerance and a lack of flexibility from the Muslim culture's side has resulted in a kind of cultural osmosis, where Western values have not yet been able to penetrate the Islamic world while Islamization diffuses from the Muslim community into non-Muslim societies.

Instead of integrating into the common society, parallel societies appears, where benefit fraud and tax evasion are highly prevalent and where lawlessness and hostility against non-Islamic authorities are extreme and often violent.

Instead of respecting everyone else's cultural heritage at the expense of our own, it is time for Australia to gather people around the flag to celebrate what makes Australia great or we too will end up fragmented with no go zones, the disproportionately high rates of welfare dependency noted in European nations (Denmark's Muslim population was 5% in 2002 yet consumed upwards of 40% of welfare spending); and the disproportionately high crime rates (Britain's Muslim population is less than 5% yet 95% of women in refuge homes for

battered women are Muslim, Sweden's Muslim population is associated with one of the highest rape rates in Europe, in Norway politicians advise women on how to dress to avoid rape while there is a high assault rate on homosexuals and Jews are hunted down and beaten) . These are some of the disturbing elements that have led European leaders to say 'multiculturalism has failed' – the common denominator is Islam.

While many want to blame poverty, racism and discrimination against minorities for these statistics, I am inclined to believe that Australians by nature are generally open to give all a fair go, and there are other reasons for these trends and the worldwide problem of Islamic terrorism. Having frequented many Islamic lectures in Australia and New Zealand and read a lot of Islamic literature circulated throughout the West, I know there is strong anti-West and anti-Semitic sentiment.

I was given a Quran by a Muslim friend a number of years ago and the commentary in this Quran notes that non-Muslims are '*najasun*'. This is then explained; *najasun* means '*impure spiritually and physically; spiritually because non-Muslims do not believe in Allah and Muhammad and physically regards urine, stools and blood*'. Clearly these attitudes of disdain toward the other, combined with westerners' willingness to endorse Islamic practices of segregation, only undermine all efforts to be genuinely integrated and promote Australian values and law. If this is multiculturalism we would be better off without it.

I have been in a meeting in the Melbourne University where there has been a rousing round of 'Allah Akbar' by 500 or so Muslim men at the telling of a joke about blowing up Jews. Imagine if this had been a westerner telling jokes about blowing up Palestinians – this tolerance game is not played on a level playing field. Had I supported the use of vilification laws there were plenty of opportunities to make use of them after frequenting Islamic lectures. The Muslim community itself does not abide by laws they are happy to use against others. This hatred preached in Australian mosques has been documented by a number of journalists including Richard Kerbaj.

While this inquiry is designed *to assist new migrants and stay in touch with the challenges the migrant communities face*, I believe it is time to show some consideration for average Australians and put some responsibility where it should lie; on migrants responsibility to embrace Australian freedoms, law, ways and culture. I do not believe that Australians are generally racist or not accepting of all ethnic groups. But to insist Australia accepts Islam is quite another matter. Australians should not have to accept the propagation of a religious, legal and political system undermining our own.

It is true all migrants regardless of religion or ideology will have teething problems adjusting to their new environment. One of those problems, not restricted to Islam, is this loyalty to Australian law. We have had numerous homestays and their friends who have often relayed the appalling work conditions in Australia. In every case I have encountered, this has been at the hands of immigrant employers who either will not pay at all but insist on a 'training period' akin to slave labor or make an offer of as little as \$5 or \$8 an hour to work casually in a restaurant or café. It does not seem to worry these 'new Australians' that they are paying below the award wages, avoiding tax, exploiting vulnerable immigrants and unfairly disadvantaging their honest competitors who pay legally and therefore have higher operating costs. This undermines the Australian economy and destroys morale and business ethics. This is all because multiculturalism seems to take things to the lowest common denominator rather than upholding Australian values of honesty and integrity.

I believe Australia has a great future as a multiethnic melting pot if people can really identify with some core Australian values. We must remember that it is because of *Australian culture* that people come to Australia. They have had enough of the corruption, totalitarian religious regimes, human rights abuses and inequalities. For these people multiculturalism is not good enough; they came for Australian culture with its honesty, integrity, equality, freedoms and fair go for all. We should not tolerate any less. We should not tolerate sharia practices of any description, for it is this that is responsible for the parallel societies developing in the European nations that initiated this discussion. We should not tolerate the importation of intolerance and the teaching of it that is radicalizing second generation Australians. Australian identity needs to be revitalized.

Vickie Janson
Councillor
Christian Democratic Party
PO Box 99
Sandown Village
Vic 3171