

Are you morally superior to the Taliban?

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Are you morally superior to the Taliban? That is the opening line of Lloyd Newson's sensational show [Can We Talk About This?](#) at the National Theatre, which I finally saw last weekend. In answer to the question, very few people in the audience raised their hand to say there were (I did by the way). This response so amply demonstrates the problem with multiculturalism and cultural relativism – when you can't bring yourself to say you are morally superior to a group that denies women medical treatment, imprisons them in their homes, allows domestic violence, and executes people by stoning for having a private life or the audacity to not believe in God – then the multicultural rot has truly set in.

Multiculturalism could have been a wonderful thing, and in many ways it is but it of course depends on how you define it. If by multiculturalism you mean that people of all shapes, colours and backgrounds live together and share things such as food, music, and festivals then multiculturalism is indeed wonderful. But a mix of food, music and festivals is not what multiculturalism has come to mean. Instead, it means we can't bring ourselves to criticise even the most appalling actions if the people committing them happen to not be white. In other words, multiculturalism is the new racism – it is racism repackaged, dressed in a bow-tie and sold to us as the next big thing.

Multiculturalism goes right to the top of Government. When I wrote to the Justice Secretary on behalf of [One Law for All](#) asking why it is allowing sharia tribunals, dealing with matters of family and criminal law, to thrive in Britain even though they discriminate against women as a matter of course, they said "we do not prevent people living in accordance with religious beliefs or cultural practices".

We've noticed. And so have thousands of young girls.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) involves the butchery of a young girl's genitals. Her clitoris is cut away and in some cases, so are her inner labia and even her outer labia. She is then sewn up to be opened again (often using a knife) on her wedding night. FGM is a crime in the UK and can carry a 14 year prison sentence – or at least it would if the law were ever enforced. Despite figures and statistics showing thousands of young British girls being mutilated both here and abroad every year, nobody has ever been prosecuted for this horror.

I spoke to the police about this who told me that the problem is one of evidence. While this may be true to some extent, we manage to prosecute parents for other sexual offences, why not this one? Why is it so much harder to gather evidence on this? Surely a routine examination of the child will provide enough proof? Forgive my cynicism but I can't help thinking it might be a lack of will rather than evidence that is the problem here. On pushing her further, the police woman I spoke to finally got to the crux of the matter when she said "we can't attack anyone's culture or faith". (God forbid). So in the meantime, more and more girls will live a life of agony because we won't criticise a precious culture.

Here is what I think; this happens to these girls because they aren't white – and deep down we all know it. If a white family took a blade to their young daughter's genitals, they would be in jail and the child in care. So what's the difference? Are we saying that it is less of an evil to harm a young

black or Asian girl or that her body is worth less? This is what multiculturalism has brought. It dehumanises young girls and makes them less important than their white counterparts. What constitutes rape and abuse for a white girl dramatically becomes "culture" (a wholly positive thing that does not change and cannot be challenged) for a black or Asian girl. It is a national disgrace.

This is not the fault of the police though. The police have been politicised to the point where they are in a lose-lose situation almost all the time. If they did come down hard on FGM, they'd probably find themselves up on charges of causing offence. This is the mess we are in. Causing offence is more important than bodily harm and real human suffering. This is what multiculturalism has brought.

Forced marriage (aka rape, kidnap, enslavement) is something else that multiculturalism allows to prosper. In an article about the lack of response from state institutions to the issue of forced marriage in 2009, [the BBC reported](#) "Critics say some [schools and local authorities] are non-responsive and failing to intervene as they dismiss forced marriage as a cultural issue or fear a backlash from powerful figures in minority communities". In other words, they don't want to cause offence.

But while this cultural sensitivity is going on, more young girls are sold into a life of rape and servitude. I met a young woman at an event recently who told me of her friend; a British-Asian girl who was born here, went to school here, read the trashy mags, watched *Friends* and thought she was just another English girl. That is until her mother died and her father "married" her to an old man in rural Pakistan – and that was it for her. That was to be her life. Any dreams, any hopes were gone. She was to be taken to Pakistan where she would be a domestic slave (perhaps one of many), where she could well be beaten and abused and have nowhere to turn (domestic violence is permitted in sharia-soaked Pakistan), and to top it all off, she gets to be raped for the rest of her life.

But far be it for British schools or local authorities to talk openly about this – to tell young girls what the law says, that this practice is unacceptably cruel, and that they – Asian and black girls – are worth every single bit as much as white girls is and will receive the same protection. But we don't do that and we don't do it because someone might be offended. This is what multiculturalism has brought.

One of the worse aspects of multiculturalism however is the spread of sharia law. It's worse because we don't even pretend to disapprove of it. Forced marriage has a lawful remedy and FGM is a crime, but sharia is thriving in the open and multicultural governments do nothing to challenge it. This is in spite of the fact that women are treated absolutely disgracefully. Their word is worth half of their husbands, they can be beaten and raped with impunity, and they have no rights whatsoever over their marriage or their children. This is what multiculturalism has brought.

There is an answer to this. We can have a thriving multi-faith, multi-race, multi-ethnic society while enforcing the law and ensuring that all people, regardless of their colour or religion or ethnic background, receive the same treatment and protection. That's all it takes – equal and fair application of the law. It is not rocket science. All people should be equal citizens - this is the only response. Let's continue to enjoy the mixture of food, music, festivals, philosophies, and viewpoints that a mixed and vibrant society brings. But let's not pretend that allowing black and Asian girls to be treated with cruelty that we would never allow for a white girl, makes this multiculturalism anything other than the vile filth of racism.

I spoke to the Nottingham Secular Society on Monday night and a very wise woman in the audience told me that in fighting sharia, I would have to take on racism. "We look at black and Asian women and think it isn't our problem, they're different from us" she said, and she's right. That is where we are, and for the sake of millions of human beings, we have got to move on to somewhere else, and fast.

I suggest a place where all people are equal before the law with equal rights, responsibilities, and protections. Let's try to get there soon.

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Anne Marie Waters was a member of the NSS. The views expressed in our blogs are those of the author and may not necessarily represent the views of the NSS.

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