

Abstract

This essay is aimed towards putting a mirror to the Pakistani immigrant community in Europe, and elsewhere. Identity is one of the most twisted realities of this community, and it is eating up the very foundation of not just the immigrants, but the entire country, with whose responsibility they left home. The strength of nationalism in immigrants largely varies from one nation to the other, but Pakistani nationalism has turned into a car with high acceleration and no brakes or steering wheel. These issues on the upper level effect every issue underneath related to mundane life drastically. Marriage and love, specifically in respect to Pakistani girls, is one of those hard hit issues, that only seem to only get worse. While religion seems to get more and more suffocating, the glimmer of the western freedom is addicting.

The essay begins with talking about migration, and mapping the Pakistani demographics in Europe, and rolls into understanding the immigrant identity. The essay goes on to deeply question the issue of marriage and the politics surrounding it. It questions the divine law where Muslim men are allowed to marry women of Jewish and Christian faith, but Muslim women are restricted to other Muslims. Where in-case of failure to follow the law leads to unfair punishments, while the divine text boasts of equality to both genders.

With the help of several examples from media, and real life situations, I have projected neither a case for or against biracial relationships, but only highlighted the inequality and unfairness with which the community handles such information.

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Migration - History, Cause and the Return

“Human migration is movement (physical or psychological) by humans from one district to another, sometimes over long distances or in large groups. The movement of populations in modern times has continued under the form of both voluntary migration within one's region, country, or beyond, and involuntary migration (which includes the slave trade, trafficking in human beings and ethnic cleansing). People who migrate are called migrants, or, more specifically, emigrants, immigrants, or settlers, depending on historical setting, circumstances and perspective.”¹

Industrialization encouraged migration and the increasingly global economy globalized the labor market. Atlantic slave trade diminished sharply after 1820, which gave rise to self-bound contract labor migration from Europe and Asia to plantations. Also overpopulation, open agricultural frontiers and rising industrial centers attracted voluntary, encouraged and sometimes coerced migration. Moreover, migration was significantly eased by improved transportation techniques.

Transnational labor migration reached a peak of three million migrants per year in the early twentieth century. Italy, Norway, Ireland and the Quongdong region of China were regions with especially high emigration rates during these years. Immigration restrictions have been developed, as well as diaspora cultures and myths that reflect the importance of migration to the foundation of certain nations, like the American melting pot. The transnational labor migration fell to a lower level between the 1930s and 1960s, after which it witnessed a sudden rise again.

Though it is not logical to talk of pre-1947² Pakistani migration to Europe, and international students mostly are not classified as immigrants, one can find people of prominent importance in the creation of Pakistan having gone to Europe for apprenticeship or study. Among these, undoubtedly the two most important personalities are *Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah*³ (1876-1948) and *Sir Allama Muhammad Iqbal*⁴ (1877-1938). Jinnah chose England as his destination where he initially went for an internship at a trading company, but later went onto acquiring his Law Degree from Lincoln's Inn, Cambridge. Iqbal followed suit, but spread his study tour over Cambridge, Munich and Heidelberg.

1 Human Migration, <http://en.wikipedia.org/>

2 Pakistan was established and got independent of the British Raj (rule) on 14th August 1947 (27 Ramadan 1366).

3 Founder of Pakistan and it's first Governor-General.

4 His vision for an independent state for the Muslims of British India led to the idea of Pakistan. Persian/Urdu poet, philosopher, lawyer, politician.

The 1960s rise of migration also witnessed the emigration of the truly Pakistani citizens to many corners of the world, including Europe. Millions of Pakistanis emigrated during the 1970s and 1980s. These immigrants considered themselves to be *sojourners*, who had left to earn abroad but not to settle, or were students who intended to return to Pakistan when their degree programs were completed. During the 1980s and especially the 1990s, large amount of Pakistanis moved to western Europe as refugees and asylum seekers.

Unlike North America, which received more professional and skilled Pakistani emigrants, Europe got the more semi-skilled lot, probably owing to the opportunity of the easy migration as a *gastarbeiter* or under the *gastarbeider* programme⁵. Their primary aim was to make a decent earning and help their families back home live a better and educated lifestyle, which they could not provide for when still in Pakistan.

Since the 1990s, a large number of Pakistanis who settled in Europe have been returning to Pakistan. Those who were born in Europe, have maintained close links to Pakistani culture, however there are incidents of children growing up not learning Urdu or Pakistani culture, and hence those who return from Europe do sometime feel a "culture shock". Those returning from Norway are mostly found in Kharian, whereas those from northern England can be found in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and upper Punjab.

⁵ Literally translated as “guest worker”, *gastarbeiter* (German) or *gastarbeider* (Netherlands and Belgium) is a term used to refer to the migrant workers who had moved to Germany mainly in the 1960s and 70s, seeking work as part of a formal guest worker programme.

Pakistani Demographics in Europe

Several reports and surveys establish that Islam is the world's second largest religion after Christianity. According to the 2009 demographic study, it has 1.57 billion adherents, and makes up for 23% of the world's population. While I do challenge the validity of these numbers (according to the number of Muslims who may hide their identity, and the uncertain data available for Christians⁶, their constant decline in comparison due to various factors⁷), there is no denying the fear set in non-Muslim regions like Western-Europe and North America of the fast growing Muslim immigrant communities. There are various predictions mapping the growing numbers of Muslims in Europe. As a result of these predictions, several “Be Aware” type propagandist videos⁸ have also been made, which are strategically used by political parties and Muslim extremists to increase the distance and hatred between the two.

The European Union comprises of 27 countries today. The table below shows the Pakistani population versus the Muslim population in figure and percentage to the total population of relevant country⁹:

Table 1

Country	Pakistani Population ¹⁰	Muslim population (2009 est.)	Pakistani percentage(%) of total Muslim population	Muslim percentage(%) of total population
Austria	3,500	353,000	0.99	4.2
Belgium	14,500	281,000	5.16	3
Bulgaria	16	920,000	0.02	12.2
Cyprus	1,100	198,000	0.56	22.7
Czech Republic	n/a	1,000	n/a	0
Denmark	19,250	88,000	21.88	2
Estonia	n/a	2,000	n/a	0.1
Finland	525	24,000	2.19	0.5
France	50,000	3,554,000	1.41	6
Germany	35,080	4,026,000	0.87	5

6 Between 1.5 and 2.1 billion.

7 People giving up their faith; converting; less new births in comparison to those in the Muslim populations; celibate life for certain religious figures likes nuns and priests.

8 Muslim Demographics, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-3X5hIFXYU>

9 Demographic study by the Pew Research Center Mapping the Global Muslim Population, as of 8 October, 2009

10 Pakistani Diaspora, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistani_diaspora#cite_note-12

Greece	32,500	310,000	10.48	3
Hungary	45	24,000	0.19	0.2
Ireland	7,000	22,000	31.82	0.5
Italy	46,085	36,000	/error/	0
Latvia	n/a	2,000	n/a	0
Lithuania	n/a	3,000	n/a	0.1
Luxembourg	n/a	13,000	n/a	3
Malta	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Netherlands	40,000	946,000	4.23	5.7
Poland	180	48,000	0.38	0
Portugal	6,000	15,000	40	0.1
Romania	710	66,000	1.08	0.3
Slovakia	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
Slovenia	n/a	49,000	n/a	2.4
Spain	42,100	650,000	6.48	1
Sweden	5,250	149,000	3.52	2
United Kingdom	England – 910,000 Scotland – 70,000 Wales – 9,000 N. Ireland – 1000 total - 990,000	1,647,000	60.11	2.7
Europe	200,000+	38,112,000	0.53	5.2

While these figures can be danger bells to many, and celebration jingles to others, there is a section of society, the masses so-to-speak, who live under this very shell of data and care less. The Muslim immigrant communities are in their second-generation cycle, and some even in their third. To them, what makes an issue is not a number, but more importantly their social structure, and their identity. Post 9/11 has instilled in Muslims an even greater sense of identity. This may be a great outcome to generate more accurate numbers, but it has also strengthened certain rifts within the Muslim community.

There may be several similar issues in other non-Muslim immigrant communities and Muslim immigrant communities of other Islamic countries, and similar issues within the Indian immigrant community due to an immensely similar historical culture and tradition, I will stay focused on the Pakistani immigrant community in Europe, and more specifically the European Union, excluding countries either with a Muslim majority or a distinct Muslim population¹¹, as

11 Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovia, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Turkey

the demographics by itself create enough social distinctions. Where necessary, I will give examples from other communities for comparison-making.

Immigrant Identity

Disagreements are always a possibility, but counting on personal experience and numerous stories, I can very confidently write that the first time experience of going West (not for pleasure, travel or luxury) can be like that of soap bubble. The immediate visuals can be very nostalgic, as of walking through all the pirated Hollywood movies ever seen. To walk through the jungle of archetypes of the western man and woman. To feel empowered by the mechanics and electronics. To walk through a sound barrier where all human sounds are mute. To breathe in a different smelling wind. To feel different looking eyes upon your body. To look estranged to those you may recognise. To walk/ride on the wrong side of the road. To get to your house, not home, and have reality hit you - hard.

Regardless of what strength a human may carry, some impacts hit discreetly, only to be realised in time. The challenges faced in the real life, not only shape you for tomorrow, but also bring you closer to your self. There is no better way of self discovery, than to put your self in surroundings 180 degrees in contrast to what you are immune to. This makes you realise what you are really passionate about, and what defines you.

If Calvinism is a struggle to get rid of personal passions, and strive for the higher purpose of the betterment of society by realizing God and His law, then an immigrant is definitely one who(may) goes through a version of Calvinism, where his god is his country, religion and culture. In your zone by default, you are a rebel, a reformer, or a careless unit of society - struggling to break rules and feel independent. But when you are stripped of your default zone, and trapped in the nucleus of ultimate freedom, it feels like being a fish out of water¹² and struggling to hold onto any loose ends in sight that would restrain you. Unable to find much, you weave your own around you; and sometimes, a thicker, stronger, and darker rope, shaped like that of Anondos' tower¹³. The characteristics of this rope are very much dependant upon one's background, family, education, upbringing and strength.

12 <http://www.johnsesl.com/templates/reading/cultureshock/>

13 George MacDonald, *Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women*, Smith, Elder & Co., 1858, 323 pp

Pakistani Immigrant Community

As already discussed earlier, Pakistani emigrants to Europe are mainly the semi-skilled people, which automatically puts them in the category of those undergone a basic or average education. This also then defines their rather conservative, but not necessarily a religious background. Coming from a very general lifestyle – male dominant and earning head, female as the nurturer and caregiver, Pakistani lifestyle is still very different and distinct from other Islamic countries. Its culture and tradition is heavily influenced by that of pre-partitioned India, instead of Persian, Turk or Arabic. The latter is seen more in the western provinces, and more strongly near the western border.

Regardless of family, background or education, it is also important to note here that a female is never the starter of a new immigrant circle. She is either:

1. born to an immigrant society;
2. married into an immigrant society;
3. added to an immigrant society through an existing family part of an immigrant community.

Any other reason would exist in such a negligible number, that it would take a personal meeting to fully understand of how such a possibility of such a happening became possible.

The Pakistani immigrants live in close communities, and are not well-integrated into the larger society. They have their own specific neighbourhoods and networks, and stay bonded in it. This is done because of the reason of disliking the liberal lifestyle of the society which strongly clashes with their own; to protect their children from falling into that lifestyle and letting them understand their own family, culture and living-style; and in some cases, the women cannot speak the native language of the country, making them completely dependent on the men.

The biggest problem with immigrant communities is being time-trapped. While I realise how natural that phenomenon is to be cut off from your society back home, and not being aware of the development and progress, simultaneously I also feel the strong need of the people to not only be aware of it, but also develop an accepting attitude. While television is not the most objective medium to transfer social and cultural developments, immigrants should avoid the tendency of developing a sour heart.

As a result of not integrating, several issues and problems arise, a few of which are:

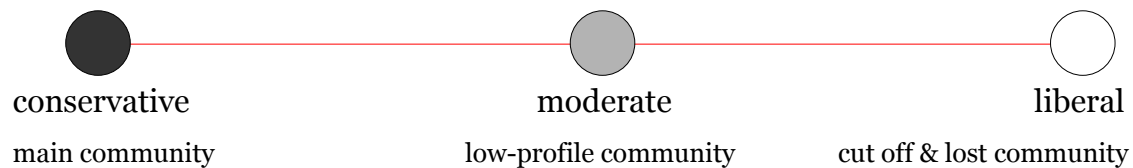
1. Staying in a small community gives rise to gossip and back-biting;
2. Lack of interest in learning the new language develops a big generation gap between parents (the mother) and the children;
3. Unhealthy enforcement of invalid rules in the new society;
4. Culture and language enforcement;
5. Depression and feeling of estrangement;
6. Fear of the small and well-informed community.

To have it their way, it is a common practice amongst immigrants to shift back to Pakistan with their kids for a few years, if not indefinitely. The reason for doing this is to make their children familiar with their own language, culture, traditions and lifestyle. While it may work well in a few cases, mostly this experiment it doesn't go very well, and parents are forced to go back. In very severe cases, there are incidents where parents have left their children in Pakistan without their knowledge at the mercy of some relatives, and taken their passports with them. That in itself is a big issue, and many disastrous and child abuse stories have come out of it.

This cultural disconnect is the root cause of several evils between the Pakistani and the Pakistani immigrant community. Being affected by it so badly, or hearing such disheartening stories, and in combination with the growing political disharmony and Islamophobia of Europe, several families have decided upon permanently moving back to Pakistan before too late. According to a survey, one out of three families are seriously considering moving back, and a few are already underway of making such preparations, regardless of the political situation of Pakistan.

Second and Third Generation

Ever-since emigration from Pakistan began about four or so decades ago, it is now the time when the third generation is being born and growing up. The second generation has faced a lot of problems with their immigrant parents having to deal with their non-Pakistani identity. And a lot has happened since. The community split into a few sections. Those who were raised under the strict guidance and culture outlines of their immigrant parents continue to live their lives on their parents footsteps, but have managed to make themselves better integrated into other Muslim communities because of fluency in language of host country. Some turned rebellious, went through a crisis of understanding who they were, as opposed to what they were expected to become, and cut themselves completely off from the community to form their own. Others remained in their cultural understanding, but could not cope with the politics of their community and its intrusion in private life, and overtook a low profile.



One of the biggest issue faced by the community was of marriage, and it is still struggling to make better the success-rate. The biggest mistake made is the unintelligent decision of having their EU born children marry a Pakistani partner in an incorrect situation. I am not declaring that all such marriages are a failure, but a large part of them are, and are creating an irreversible disconnect and disharmony between the second generation immigrants and Pakistanis. In this situation, such an inter-cultural arrangement proves a big failure, also because the couple has not gone through any proper courtship or spent time to know each other to understand if such a relationship should work. Regardless of several failures, these trends don't cease, and have given rise to planned weddings with ulterior purposes. Those couples asking to spend time together, don't get enough chance and are discouraged on the basis of religion.

The picture below shows a painted statement in a public space in Pakistan. It reads: “Before Nikkah¹⁴, it is haram¹⁵ for a boy to meet a girl.”

¹⁴ Nikkah is the act of being married under the supervision of an authorised person and signing the marriage document.

¹⁵ Declared unlawful and illegal by God.



According to a research done in September 1999 by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) on cross-cultural marriage:

Table 2

Married couples by country of birth of husband and wife, 1 January 1999

Country	Total	Husband and wife foreign-born (same country)	Foreign born husband, Dutch born wife	Dutch born husband, foreign born wife	Husband and wife foreign-born (different countries)
Pakistan	2600	1800	300	100	400

Table 3

Probability of divorce within a period of 10 years after marriage, 1997

Country of birth	Both partners born in the same country %	Dutch born male and foreign born female %	Dutch born female and foreign born male %
The Netherlands	14		
Foreign countries	31	30	49
European Union	21	23	29

This data is quite dated, and not very specific (in reference to Table 3), but gives an insight into certain trends with comparison.

The trends seen in the second generation are quite determinant of what could be expected of the third generation. The age of the immigrants has passed and the time is now in the hands of the second generation who have the possibility to learn from the mistakes of their immigrant parents. Though this second generation is divided into further smaller communities, and it is difficult to determine a single identity for the community at large, but hopefully they can be more lenient with their approach, thereby recollecting the dispersed community at some later stage and generation.

Inter-Racial/Cultural/Religious Relationships

Inter-religious and inter-racial are rather self-explanatory terms, inter-cultural is something that needs understanding. We can take a few examples to do this:

1. Dutch born male with Pakistani parents, married to a Pakistani born female with Pakistani parents;
2. Pakistani born male married to a Pakistani born female with Pakistani parents;
3. Dutch born Muslim male with Pakistani parents, married to a Dutch born Christian female with Dutch parents.
4. Pakistani born Muslim male with Pakistani parents, married to a Dutch born Christian female with Dutch parents.

Point number 1 and 4 are true examples of inter-cultural relationships. Regardless of race or religion, a truly inter-cultural relationship would be that where both partners have grown up in completely different traditional and cultural settings defined by their individual countries.

Since we are talking specifically of the Pakistani community, and it being a dominantly Muslim country (approx. 96%), it is not possible to keep religion out of the conversation. The common factor between all Muslim countries is the presence of religion as part of the culture. There is no distinction between the two like in non-Muslim countries between the State and the Church.

This fact in itself determines a lot of figures related to a male to female and female to male relationship in a cross-cultural/religious/racial setting.

Islam and the Female

The female is by far the most controversial subject of not just the Islamic divine text – the Holy Qur'an, but also of Torah¹⁶ and the Injil¹⁷. One of the most widely questioned part of this subject, both by non-Muslims and Muslim women alike, is the validity of the law where a Muslim man is permitted to marry any woman belonging to the Christian or Jewish faith (people of the Book¹⁸) - under certain rules and guidelines - but a Muslim woman can only marry a Muslim man.

Many feminists have declared this as discriminatory, but the men hold a strong stance for it, and several incidents have made it to the headlines where a female has taken a step against this law. The first of such incidents took place in Italy in the August of 2006. A 21 year old girl was brutally slaughtered by her father and two uncles because she had refused to give herself in for marriage with a cousin and move back to Gujrat¹⁹, Pakistan, and more importantly because she was living with her 33 year old Italian boyfriend²⁰.

Another incident was reported in America in the January of 2008 where two sisters were shot to death by their father because he was against their growing western lifestyle.²¹

After the occurrence of such incidents, it is very obvious that ex-Muslim communities and councils start appearing on the map. The most famous of them being CEMB, Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain²². And another formed in Germany in 2007, *Zentralrat der Ex-Muslime*²³. Though both men and women equally join such organisations, the reason for men is based mostly around lack of inner peace and societal pressure of being a Muslim with all things attached. Women join this organisation because of the lack of security and freedom.

16 The Hebrew Bible. The Pentateuch. Collection of the five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

17 The New Testament. Combination of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

18 According to the Qur'an, the People of the Book are all those nations to which a divine book was sent. There are four such books: Zabur, Injil, Torah, and the Qur'an. Zabur is the Psalms of David. But for this specific case of marriage, People of the Book are not just people born under any of the mentioned faith, but those who consciously follow it. It is also a controversial topic considering the persistent idea of the corruption of Holy texts, thereby declaring the People as not valid people.

19 Small city located in northern Punjab. Population: 298,731

20 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/murder-of-muslim-girl-rebel-by-her-father-shocks-all-italy-412633.html>

21 <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,320487,00.html>

22 <http://www.ex-muslim.org.uk/>

23 <http://www.ex-muslime.de/indexLinks.html>

Though the Qur'an declares equality to both man and woman, it is not practised as such, and incidents worldwide make headlines. One specific that I'd like to mention is that of a teenage Irani girl's execution²⁴²⁵. Atefah Sahaaleh got trapped in an abusive relationship with a man thrice her age, and it ended with her execution, and the man being freed after a 100 lashes.

Under such circumstances where a woman is not allowed to have a pre-marital relationship, talking about Muslim women being involved in relationships deemed *haram* by God is an instant spark for murder and harassment. It is obvious how man has made the law relaxed for himself, but tougher and suffocating for the woman.

24 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/5217424.stm>

25 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jqQVqsOw4U>

A Woman in Love

Love is a feeling that is not based upon a rational and mathematical sequence. “Love is any of a number of emotions related to a sense of strong affection and attachment. The word love can refer to a variety of different feelings, states, and attitudes, ranging from generic pleasure (“I loved that meal”) to intense interpersonal attraction (“I love my husband”). This diversity of uses and meanings, combined with the complexity of the feelings involved, makes love unusually difficult to consistently define, even compared to other emotional states.”²⁶

A woman in love is always a more complicated statement than a man in love. Although it takes two to let love be. Romance, in my opinion, is a much more severe, deep-fallen and fantasized emotion portrayed in Urdu, Persian and Arabic poetry and literature than in English and other Roman-script languages. This is also quite visible in societies, in their street language, behavior and media. It is the complexity of this phenomenon that makes it difficult for me to understand of how culture and religion so easily get separated here.

Going back to Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, he was a highly westernised man, which was apparent in his lifestyle, clothing, and in the way he carried himself. Being the first Pakistani, his data holds quite a lot of value. His first wife died within three months of their marriage due to an illness. His second wife, Rattanbai Petit, was a Parsi²⁷ woman. This marriage attracted strong Muslim orthodox opposition, and led Rattanbai into being estranged from her Parsi community. Though she changed her name to Maryam, and converted to Islam, not much is known of her lifestyle, only that she never used her Muslim name. Jinnah's only child, a daughter – Dina, was out of this marriage, and was raised a Muslim under guidance of his sister, Fatima Jinnah.

A strong rift arose in the father-daughter relationship when Dina expressed her desire to marry a Parsi boy. He tried to dissuade her, but in vain. Dina went onto marrying the Parsi boy, and settled in Mumbai, India, and Jinnah openly disowned her right after. In March 2004, Dina came to Lahore, Pakistan with her son to watch a cricket match between Pakistan and India. Never having lived in Pakistan, a great sense of drama was embedded in an old woman's visit, as a foreigner, to a country that was founded by her father.

²⁶ Love, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love#Chemical_basis

²⁷ Zoroastrian

Pakistani Women in Bi-Racial/Cultural/Religious Relationships

It is needless to repeat how different and stricter rules apply to women than to men in the choices permitted when starting a relation. It is taboo really for a Muslim woman desiring to marry outside culture and race, and intolerable for her to marry outside religion.

For a woman having grown up in Pakistan, and expressing her desire to marry a Muslim man from another culture of another country, there is a much more difficulty in overcoming obstacles, and seeking approval of the family. In a country like Pakistan, where there is a big cultural diversity from north to south and east to west, such cultural difference becomes invalid, but nevertheless the issue persists in its own distinct way, and it may be still an issue to caste-obsessive families. The initial investigation would arise from the fact for how, why and when did the contact with a man so far away initiate? These cases are unheard of.

A woman grown up and living in a country to which her parents are immigrants, and desiring to marry a Muslim from another culture, has become easier, though still frowned upon by many. With the small size of communities, and an inherent desire to keep oneself *pure-blooded*, the acceptance towards mixing and matching comes rather painfully.

When either of these women express their desire to marry a non-Muslim from regardless her own country or not, that hits the last nail! The numbers of such incidents are growing day by day, and is a growing cause of concern amongst the Muslim communities and countries worldwide. Various online Islam forums are full of inquiries from both parents, of what they should do about their daughter having married a non-Muslim against their will, and girls asking about the possibility of such a marriage and trying to find a loophole. The number of such marriages has grown so much, that one Imam has given in to this pressure:

“Dr Taj Hargey, chairman of the Muslim Education Centre of Oxford, said he had performed about 36 marriages in the past two years between Muslim women and non-Muslim men.”²⁸

There is a strong opposition to not only Dr Hargey, but these couples also end up losing family, especially the girl, and disconnecting themselves from their community and culture.

The last and worst kind of a setup is where the girl is not able to overcome her obstacles

28 <http://www.jihadwatch.org/2009/06/uk-imam-marries-non-muslim-men-to-muslim-women.html>

and has to take drastic steps in order to go against her parents, and satisfy her wishes by moving in with her boyfriend. Gossip of such happenings float freely in communities. In a better case, she is able to keep herself low-profile, and away from troublesome people, the worse case is her life becoming a headline.

In a response to a father's question about his daughter having married a non-Muslim, Sheikh Ounis Guergah, the Head of the Fatwa House, Paris, France, said:

“The Muslim father should not agree to that kind of marriage. He should try to persuade his daughter not to marry a non-Muslim man, for it is unlawful for the Muslim woman to marry a non-Muslim man. Such a relationship between the Muslim woman and the non-Muslim man is regarded in Islam as a kind of fornication. However, the parents should remain on good terms with their daughter, so that she may not turn away from Islam altogether. The parents also should be wise in dealing with their daughter's partner, so that he may one day accept Islam. If he embraced Islam, the contract of marriage would be rewritten, then, to be lawful in Islam.”²⁹

The only way of validating such a relationship in God's view, if not man's, for he remains forever unsatisfied, is if the non-Muslim man involved in this relationship with a Muslim woman also converts to Islam. This by itself is a perfect solution to any objection that there might be, but it doesn't end problems.

Sheikh Guergah's response is responsible and sensible one. He hasn't encouraged parents or other relatives to act harshly towards the female in question, and neither asked the society to react brutal against such a couple living together. Though it is a kind of fornication, but the couple has gone through a kind of marriage, which represents the value of the institution of marriage in their eyes. He has asked the parents to be patient, and wait for the possibility of the man's conversion to take place. The only loophole in this *fatwa* is the missing following action that is to be taken by the parents in case no conversion takes place. When giving their views on such topics, Imams and religious scholars should be careful with tackling every aspect of the problem, and being careful as to not say anything that would encourage violent behaviour from any side, and should say everything that would pressurize the people in question to maintain their calm. They must also touch the topic of society, of how their reaction should be towards such couples.

²⁹ http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?cid=1119503547874&pagename=IslamOnline-English-Ask_Scholar%2FFatwaE%2FFatwaEAskTheScholar

It is very unfortunate of how religious sections are very keen and enthusiastic about dealing with outward criticism with absolute force, but don't show enough passion in showing their repulsion towards incidents like those of murdered Muslim girls at the hands of male heads of the family.

Public View

On a forum³⁰ for Pakistanis living abroad, I opened up a thread about biracial relationships, and asked people's opinion about it. One post by a Pakistani boy from UK particularly caught my interest. It was in response to a girl's post where she told about her brother's disagreement of her relationship with a white English convert to Islam:

"It's sad that your brother thinks the way he does, it's wrong and not justified but I think I know the reason why...

We boys are pack animals, we need a group to identify with, whether that's country, geographical-location, skin-color, caste, gang or football team...

We lads need something to give us belonging, identity and security.

We need something to be nationalistic about and proud of or life starts feeling purposeless and hollow.

Your brother probably sees 'his group' as fellow South-Asians, for other people it will be just their own countrymen whether that be Paki or Bengali...

When your brother is with "his boyz" he sees them as his family, his people, they stand up for each other, fight for each other, together they hate on others different from themselves and others hate on them...

He wants himself and his family to identify with his own group, when his sister marries someone outside his people (South-Asians in his case) he starts seeing her as a traitor, not only that but his group wouldn't approve of it and it'd be like being stuck between a hard place and a rock for him (does he pick his sister or his group?), he probably also feels shamed and dishonored, just as back in Pakistan for the elders it was all about marrying in the right caste or people will talk, in this country caste is unimportant because most people in our generation don't even know what a caste is but they do know the difference between brown and white and they strongly identify with their group and don't approve of anyone who marries outside that group or anyone who has a family member who does so.

I once knew a gora[white], chav type from a racist area, we would link up as mates but he was always careful not to be seen with me by his white mates, not because he was racist himself but because his own loyalty to his group would be in question.

I know an Irish man who didn't speak to his sis all his life because she married an Englishman. I know the feeling of wanting oneself and ones family to belong because I'm a Pashtun-Punjabi hybrid...

30 <http://www.paklinks.com/gs>

When Punjabis called Pathans naswarkhor^{31,32} I'd get angry at them and when Pathans called Punjabis dalkhors[pulses-eater] I'd get angry at them...

I had a hard-time being accepted as a true Pathan by my paternal cousins because of my maternal family...

...For a while it gave me an inferiority complex and I started being racist to Punjabis just to fit in, I had to pick a side, I use to tell my siblings that we're all going to marry Pathans because we are 'dobi ke kuttey'³³ and we need to take a side, my siblings thought I was being a retard... But my retarded opinions have changed now because of Islam and I ended up marrying a Punjabi who I love, whilst my siblings who were more Punjabified than me married Pathans. It all boils down to partisanship/nationalism and there is a very thin line between partisanship, nationalism and racism.

Partisanship is innate, it's human nature. Islam recognises this human nature but gives a positive alternative, the Ummah to identify with based on common religion which is universal and welcoming of all rather than the exclusive/racist partisanship/nationalism based on land, geography, race, color, language etc.

If we all started putting more importance on being Muslim rather than Desi³⁴, kaala[black], gora[white], etc. life would be bliss.”

And another member wrote:

“Most pakistani parents I have met or seen are totally against this idea of their children marrying non-pakis/desis.

Surprisingly, even many so called 'broad-minded' people who have no problems drinking in parties even tell their kids to choose a Pakistani spouse for themselves.

I haven't been in a relationship with non-Pakistani but I have seen plenty of my friends who have been and most of them had to either end it or go against their parents will.

I think its racist to be against this concept of biracial relationships. Racism is so deeply rooted in our culture and society that no one even points it out. No one calls their parents racist even when they clearly are wrong.”

Both these posts clearly give a diverse overview on the ongoing issues and reasons

31 *Naswar*: a type of dipping tobacco, made from fresh tobacco leaves, calcium oxide, and wood ash. It is consumed in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and parts of India.

32 *-khor*: a suffix used to imply one who eats, and here it is meant in a negative connotation. E.g. *adamkhor* literally would translate as man-eater, and more appropriately as “cannibal”.

33 Urdu idiom, complete: '*dhobi ka kutta, na ghar ka na ghaat ka*' – to be left without a proper place.

34 A slang used to refer to people local to a specific South-Asian region: Pakistan, India, Bangladesh

related with biracial relationships. The first step towards creating an acceptance of an idea in the society is through media. This was done not so long ago when a British journalist, George Fulton, came to Pakistan in 2005 to do a 13 episode reality show – *George Ka Pakistan* (George's Pakistan)³⁵ - and ended up falling in love with the programme manager of the channel, Kiran. After the program, 65% of the Pakistani population thought George is ready to become a Pakistani, and he was happily offered Pakistani nationality by the government. George and Kiran's wedding took place at a national level and an entire wedding week was celebrated in their honor on ARY television, a private Pakistani television network.

More than those who like and appreciate the couple, are those who bash and criticize them on every detail, and the very first question is always regarding their religion.

sipraomer
Member
Join Date: Aug 6, 2009 - 9:47 am
Posts: 102

Quote:
Originally Posted by **Krazim3**
a white man got famous for simply goin pakistan n doing sme cheapo doc....easy for some. whilst bacharay paki presenters go thru hell jus to b sme VJ!

Do you know he also met Shaukat Aziz. It was just a America ki khushamad thing. I think there was a political good will or an absurd effort to make US Pak relation reasonable. Or may be the media wanted to show that Pakis are very advance and a new trend of non muslim men marrying muslims has started in this country. Blah Blah Blah! Though I doubt that Kiran is a muslim.

While the media is making an effort to to infuse liberal ideas in the Pakistani population worldwide, it will take more than a wedding weekend to convert the society overnight.

Aliya Nay Pakistan Chor Diya^{36,37} is a new show telecasted by GEO tv, Pakistan since May 2009. The show is about a young pakistani girl leaving Pakistan and living in London, trying to see the differences in the two lives; meeting some people from the immigrant community; discussing issues that make the young Pakistani feel bereaved; and overall trying to do what every immigrant does – trying to find herself in a sea of strangers. The program brings up a lot of bitter realities in a very casual and informal way, and has caused a lot of angry waves in the immigrant communities and protested for having the show banned³⁸. Such reactions

35 http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/industry_sectors/media/article386045.ece

36 Has Aliya Left Pakistan? A programme aired by GEO tv, Pakistan.

37 <http://www.geo.tv/geonews/program.asp?pid=981>

38 <http://pkpolitics.com/2009/05/02/aliya-nay-pakistan-kyun-chora-2-may-2009/>

make me realize time and time again, the lack of productive thought pattern, lack of patience, and the impossibility of the Pakistani community having the strength to face a mirror, and ever correct their destructive patterns!

Consequences of Biracial Relationships

I need to put together a survey of real couples in marriage, where the female partner is a Pakistani Muslim.

The Biracial Issue in Independent South-Asian Cinema

Khuda Ke Liye – Shoaib Manzoor

Other movies.

Conclusion

There needs to be a proper ending. I don't know what yet. I understand that I above information is a bit too much and going everywhere ... but it is overwhelming for me as well, and not possible to be put together in barely over a week. Hopefully the coming time will help me organise this better.

Also, personally for me, i don't find the sense in writing about biracial relations by itself, and it makes the information more understandable wrapped in context of immigrant problems and pakistani muslim identity, and this makes the data thrice as much. Therefore, perhaps I haven't been able to handle it very well for now.