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"Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them; that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like." — Lao Tzu

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The water business in the south west of Bangladesh

I am very thankful to this story as it is for me, for the people of Satkhira, Khulna and many remote villages in these districts. Water here indeed is very expensive. Compared to the luxury that we get in Dhaka and other cities where we have access to all purpose water for only BDT 400 a month, here a family has to pay almost BDT 600 taka just to ensure potable water. If families do not have the luxury of paying this, they then have to walk for miles in search of it. Women and girls especially are the worst victims as they are responsible for this backbreaking task. The government of Bangladesh has done brilliantly in ensuring water for millions across the country for free or minimal charge, but people in our districts are not enjoying these services even though we are equal taxpayers. Why shouldn't we get these services? I have been working on this issue for the last four years and will continue to fight for the water rights of the marginalised communities of Satkhira.

Jahin Shams
Satkhira



Perception matters

English as a second language is widely accepted in our country without question. Also, the ability to understand or speak Hindi is common to many Bangladeshis. But, while some people think it's smart to speak that language, others are hesitant or critical towards the use of that language.

I must admit that my ability to understand or speak Hindi is at a beginner level. A few months back, my wife and I met an old Indian lady at Melbourne airport who could not speak English. Thinking that we came from the same country, she approached us for help in finding her luggage. We knew what she was after and assisted her by providing some basic directions in Hindi. She was very happy and seemed relieved.

Moreover, I work in a company where sometimes, I need to deal with people who speak Hindi and some of them are not fluent in English. In those situations, I feel that it's acceptable to maintain basic communication by understanding what they are trying to say and talking with them in their language.

However, I feel really offended when I find that people start to think that all Bangladeshis should know or speak Hindi. When my wife was looking for a job, she was surprised when the Indian supervisor in the company said, "Oh...you can't speak Hindi. I thought everyone speaks that in Bangladesh." I believe many from that country has the same belief. I truly have no disrespect towards that language, rather I am

happy that I can understand a different language; just how I feel happy when a foreign friend uses a few words in Bangla with me. However, it is the perception of people that offends me. In many cases, I have seen, we are more enthusiastic to speak to them using their language and this sort of attitude might have created such a perception.

Although I am not against using Hindi in conversations, I feel it is highly important to maintain our own cultural identity. Languages are beautiful and it should be learnt, exercised and respected; it should not lead to misperceptions that put our own identity in crisis.

Md Niaj Morshed
Melbourne

Granted by the Quran, Denied by Men

This was such an informative and useful article. Most of the time this issue is bypassed and we don't hear or read much discussion on this topic. It would be great to have a Bangla version of this article for a wider audience on this important topic.

Nazmun Nahar

