

YOURSAY | More confessions, this time from Malaysians

Malaysiakini

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Yoursay

YOURSAY | 'We need to open our hearts and minds for a better M'sia.'

Existential Turd: Dear Malaysiakini columnist Fa Abdul, what you related is what most minorities suspected and/or experienced. So, no surprise there. Not only are the minorities denied their rights and benefits, but obstacles are also put in their way to sabotage their efforts.

What is surprising to me is that there are different classes even among Muslims. From your name, I would have guessed you are already part of the community. You proved that achieving unity through assimilation is just a big fat lie.

You trust those within your community by default and distrust those from outside by default. I don't blame you for going through the agony of distrusting Malays in general after what you have experienced throughout your entire life.

Remember, a drop of poison is enough to contaminate the whole bucket of milk. That is why negative experiences are always more powerful and longer-lasting than positive ones.

From what you have related, the majority has been fed with much poison when it comes to views about minorities. It seems the prejudice of the majority towards the minorities is systematically inculcated, while those of the minorities are gained through experiences.

We need 10 times more positive experiences to mitigate one negative experience. But if there is only a 1-to-1 ratio or even lower, negative prejudices and stereotypes are formed.

Those who have been poisoned will become parents and pass their prejudice to their children. Apples don't fall far from the tree. That prejudice will be impossible to overcome in one generation, even if we start reversing all policies contributing to these negative stereotypes.

And there is no sign of that happening. In fact, the deterioration is being ramped up.

Diedienevergiveup: In the 60s and 70s, discrimination was already happening in

awarding scholarships. One thought only the needy were qualified. But children of the elites were also getting it, no matter how good or bad their results were, especially for overseas education.

And that was then. Can you imagine what the level of discrimination would be now? Nothing will change unless the education system is overhauled, and that too can only happen if the government has the will to do it, which in turn requires the right leadership. This is all too much to hope for.

The senior citizens today are fortunate to still have Malay friends. Look at our children. How many Malay friends do they have? If there is no necessary/mandatory interaction, there would likely be none.

Can you imagine what the state of the country would be like when the future generations take over this country if this is allowed to continue? The only hope is there will not be violence.

Cheong Sai Fah: Fa, you have put many of our thoughts well and in proper context. I was especially offended when Dr Mahathir Mohamad suggested that the non-Malays need to be assimilated. Assimilation does not make one a Malay.

If only he had designed policies to integrate everyone as Malaysian, this country

could be a much better place. Unfortunately, in his advanced age, he is still trying to divide us into those who use their hands and those who use chopsticks to eat.

Shouldn't he be more concerned with ways to put food on the table?

Iphonezours: Fa, I fully appreciate what you have gone through as I am a non-Malay myself.

All the fractures in our society started from school with the ever so prevalent segregation between Malays and non-Malays, bumiputera and non-bumiputera, and Muslims and non-Muslims in education, opportunities, advancement, etc.

This is exactly why now we have so much racial and religious intolerance, more so perpetrated by our politicians.

I hope more Malaysians, especially the Malays, realise that all these differences have brought more harm than good. The future is for all Malaysians to rectify the flaws, and that can only be done through the ballot box.

Cyclonus: I am angry. Angry and embarrassed.

I am angry that my non-Malay friends and relatives and those perceived to be

less than Malay by the establishment and community are being marginalised and disenfranchised.

I am embarrassed as a Malay that we still need to be spoon-fed, hand-held and be sheltered from the slightest hint of an affront to our culture and religion as though we are constantly weak and handicapped and crumble at the sight of a cross or whiff of alcohol.

Politics have only made this worse in Malaysia. How I long for the days of the 60s and 70s.

Business First: When I read your comment, Fa, I really felt very emotional. It is absolutely tragic that you have been denied the opportunities you deserved.

I was more fortunate. I knew of all the unfairness when my parents' friends from Malaysia (Chinese, Indians, Malays and Eurasians) would visit and stay with us when visiting Singapore. My family left in the early 1970s after the incident in 1969.

In Singapore, I never had to grow up where I was discriminated against because of my race or religion (I had no religion then). As a good student, I was given the recognition that was due and never thought anything of it.

In school, the people we looked up to were based on their brains and brawn, not religion or race. I recall teachers fighting over "good students" - in one case, a very clever Hindu boy to join her debate team with another asking him to join his chess team.

This was a Catholic school. Merit was the order of the day lest you let down the school with your poor performance when you represented the school competitions.

How sad to have grown up (and for many who continue to do so) in such an environment when in your formative years light and water should be given to help you grow and blossom but instead, you have barriers thrown around you.

And at such a young age too, where one does not have the maturity to deal with and process the unpleasantness of discrimination and complex emotions. It is no surprise that it has affected you so much.

What has been done to you and countless others cannot be changed, but I think we owe it to future generations to ensure that this injustice does not continue to affect future generations. It will not be easy, but if everyone gives up hope, then there is no hope for those who come after us.

BlueZebra9479: I'm a Malay by birth but I'm Malaysian by choice and I cannot deny the double standards practised by most Malaysian (read: Malay-controlled) institutions, particularly the government-controlled ones.

There isn't much we can do to fight this bigotry and bias - unless we change the people in control and those who make the rules. Racism is rampant because it is propagated by politicians who have vested interests.

IndigoGoose8330: @BlueZebra9479, speaking up about it is the first step. Thank you. May more of your brethren be enlightened enough to stand up for the rest of us at the receiving end.

Doing the right thing requires a moral compass. And some compassion for your fellow human beings who, through no fault of theirs, happened to be born in this land. Not by choice, might I add.

Coward: Who pays the most taxes is not a consideration for me. The reason is that is a function of earnings. As long as you do not do tax evasion and the tax system is not biased towards a particular group of people, I am fine.

However, I must say that in our tax system, there are groups that are favoured and that is not a good system.

As for who received the most help from the state from my tax money, again I don't care as long which group got more, as long as it is distributed fairly based on needs.

How are we doing on this front? Not good. We have separate incentive schemes for different races and the funding for the schemes has no relation to reality or needs.

So, my beef with the tax system is not who pays more or who benefited more, but the politicians in charge of handling the money are not handling the system based on the ability to pay or need to receive help.

GrayCondor1956: This is what institutionalised racism does to us Malaysians.

Racism amongst people can never be totally wiped out, but institutionalised racism will make sure we are never one big Malaysian family.

This is thanks to the ruling elites who wish to keep it going after more than 60 years and are the cause of the degeneration of this once beautiful nation.

We can only hope that the younger generation will be different, but then again, this hope is quickly eroding with the current screwed-up education system. I

dread to think about what life will be like here in the coming years.

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