Should Muslim Immigrants be Required to Assimilate?

Sure, accept Muslim immigrants… but they should prepare to be assimilated.

That seems to be the general message of James Kirkup in his editorial today for *The Telegraph* titled ["Yes, Muslims are different. No, we shouldn't accept that."](#)

His piece was in response to a British politician's [recent statement](#) that attempts to integrate Muslims into Western societies "is perhaps the deepest form of disrespect."

To the suggestion that Western countries should [simply] accept that Muslims are different and respect their different ways," Kirkus writes,

> *"[Y]es, in one way, we should. We should respect that Muslims practice a faith that is not followed by non-Muslims. That is their right, unquestioned by pretty much everyone, I think. Or at least everyone who accepts that the Middle Ages are over and that forcible attempts at converting heathen souls to Christianity aren't really very polite."*

But…

> *"On the other hand, there are some big and important differences between Muslims and non-Muslims. Differences that we cannot and should not tolerate."*

After clarifying that he wants Muslims to flourish in British society, he expresses further misgivings about an unconditional tolerance toward the beliefs and customs of certain Muslims:

"Does Mr Phillips' implied relativism mean we should adopt an attitude of supreme indifference to some Muslims' insistence on cousin marriage and thus congenital deformity? That the attitude of some Muslim men towards women (Muslim and non-) and the subsequent harm done to the wellbeing, freedom and happiness of those women should simply be accepted as "seeing the world differently"? That it's not reasonable to at least ask whether all the Muslim women and girls who cover their face and hair do so entirely freely and without coercion? And what of the fact that some Muslims are sympathetic to and even engage in violence in the name of their faith?"

In principle, do you agree with Kirkup's points? Does increased Muslim immigration require a more open and honest public dialogue about Islam, one that goes beyond mere generalizations and deals with some difficult issues? Moreover, should Muslims who immigrate to America be expected to adopt certain Western customs? If so, what specifically should that assimilation require of them?

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