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The Real Professor Gareth Evans

Written By Sri Lanka Guardian on November 1, 2012 | 5:26 AM

by Gajalakshmi Paramasivam

(November 1, 2012, Melbourne, Sri Lanka Guardian) It's confusing. I received emails from the Tamil Diaspora about article by Professor Gareth Evans on Sri Lanka. The titled of the article is 'Remembering Sri Lanka's Killing Fields'



'Selective memory is a defense mechanism with which we are all familiar. For governments and international organisations, as with individuals, moral failure is easier to live with if we can pretend that it never happened. But mass atrocity crimes did happen in Sri Lanka, there was moral default all around, and if we do not learn from this past, we will indeed be condemned to repeat it.'

Professor Gareth Evans says 'We agonise about the failure to halt the atrocities being committed almost daily in Syria. But, at least until now, the world has paid almost no attention to war crimes and crimes against humanity comparable in their savagery to any of these: the killing fields of Sri Lanka in 2009. '

As per my knowledge, Professor Gareth Evans is the current Chancellor of the Australian National University (ANU). Hence, any karma carried by the ANU becomes the Responsibility of Professor Gareth Evans. For wider issues such as Equal Opportunity and Reconciliation, the karma of Australian

Universities is also the Responsibility of Professor Evans now. Likewise, the karma of the Australian Foreign Ministry is also included in the karma of Professor Gareth Evans.

It's like the individual's role in family Responsibility. Professor Gareth Evans who has become very popular in relation to his theme 'Responsibility to Protect' has the Responsibility to know and relate through the total reach of his current positions. This would include the depth (past) and width (wider world) of his position's reach. As an Australian, Dr. Evans needs to include his own past in Australian Governance and the influence he had through Australian Government to take actions against those who were common to Australian and Sri Lankan Governments. One who stands out most is Dr. Palitha Kohona against whom I complained to the Human Rights Commission in March 2011. I am an ordinary Australian stripped of official portfolios within the Australian University system – through the unlawful actions by the Central Administrators of the University of New South Wales. I doubt that Dr. Gareth Evans even knows about this. He would have, if his investment in 'Responsibility to Protect' was deep enough to go beyond the seen and the known. I believe that it was my own investment in Racial Equality and Self Governance that added to the existing karma of the University of New South Wales, to surface the Racial Discrimination Issue at that University – through foreign students who went straight to the media (ABC). When we are genuine and are not driven by personal interests – our work and sacrifices go to the appropriate depth and width to surface outcomes needed by other genuine investors in the issue. Identifying with these manifestations and recognizing the path of karma, to my mind is the ultimate reward. We therefore work our own system of 'fate'.

Did Dr. Gareth Evans therefore contribute to the suffering of Tamils in the Sri Lankan war ? Is he continuing to contribute to such suffering by reading one part of the Sri Lankan Government as a 'foreigner' and the other – close to Australia - as a 'relative'? It's through our own Truth that we can identify with another's Truth. Without our own Truth being our basis – we would be driven by external knowledge and/or hearsay. We need position authority to express through knowledge and direct observation to express through the seen and the heard.

Professor Evans states in his article 'Specific estimates of casualties in the combat area were compiled by a UN team in Colombo from early 2009, based on regular radiophone contact with a handful of reliable sources - NGO, medical, and local UN Tamil staff - still on the ground. The information was incomplete, but it was solid - and alarming. But an institutional decision was taken not to use this information on the grounds that it could not be "verified."

The real reasons are now emerging. In part, the UN team wanted to keep humanitarian assistance lines open. The team was also subjected to shameless verbal bullying by Sri Lankan officials (a deeply unpleasant experience to which I, too, have been subjected). The team's members also knew that Sri Lanka's government had wide support among UN member states, and that the LTTE had none at all.'

If Dr. Evans with all his official status felt bullied by Sri Lankan officials – then he ought to be able to appreciate how I – a professional of Sri Lankan origin would have felt when bullied by Australian Police Officers; by Judges (especially Justice Tamberline & Magistrate Pat O'Shane) and Lawyers supporting the Administrators against whom I brought action. I was not only bullied but was unlawfully arrested and sent to prison and was threatened with enforced medication for alleged mental illness. To me the damage is roughly proportionate to our currency values – 1:100. Dr. Evans could therefore claim to have felt bullied by Sri Lankans only to the extent of one hundredth part of his actual pain and/or loss in Sri Lanka. Likewise when he relates to the pain and loss of Sri Lankans. But when dealing with Dr. Palitha Kohona, it needs to be taken along the same base line – due to their UN relationship.

Dr. Evans is therefore showing strongly the symptoms of the disease that the Sri Lankan Government headed by President Mahinda Rajapakse is showing to be suffering from – cronyism. This in turn confirms that the judgment is based on the seen and the heard and physical attachments rather than on global outcomes – measured from all angles of this issue to provide a wholesome picture.

Professor Evans states 'Selective memory is a defense mechanism with which we are all familiar. For governments and international organisations, as with individuals, moral failure is easier to live with if we

can pretend that it never happened. But mass atrocity crimes did happen in Sri Lanka, there was moral default all around, and if we do not learn from this past, we will indeed be condemned to repeat it.'

True and equally applicable to Australia and Australian leaders – starting with Mr. Howard when he was Prime Minister. Once we consider ourselves to be equal to or higher than the other side - Learning begins with recognizing our weaknesses that caused someone else pain and/or loss. When the two sides are equal - both sides have to own their side's weaknesses first. That's when they would have the moral authority to look into the 'sovereign area' of the other. If one's status is lower than that of the other – one is teaching / telling and the other is learning / listening. These days I hear Australians telling me 'Will you listen to me?' more often than 'listening to what I have to say'. All of them as per my assessment have not done as much as I for Australian society and/or this issue in particular. Where I am confident that I have the real higher position – I accept their weakness as mine and this helps me cure them confidentially. It's like parenting. Children pick up later and that is why they are children and we are parents. One whose real position is higher and yet accepts the weakness of the other – is the real leader. Such leader naturally works that system/relationship.

One's 'sovereign area' is the area of independence actually felt by that person/side. Beyond that we need to use conscious calculations on the basis of common principles – including Equal Opportunity principles – both for Australian breaches as well as for Sri Lankan breaches. To the extent both sides to the Sri Lankan war breached global policy – the country needs to be demoted in its international status – which is happening any way. Those who call for only one side to be demoted need to first access their own internal mechanisms. For example – Professor Evans needs to research and find his own government's breaches of Equal Opportunity laws and principles if he is to prevent further contribution to global threats against Australians.

As per my discovery, if we feel Australian and we have positive karma in Racial Equality / Racial Independence – we would naturally share that credit with all Australians current and future. Likewise if we feel Sri Lankan and we have positive karma in Racial Independence – we would naturally cure all Sri Lankans suffering from the Disease. Others are outsiders using external medication – for which they need to have the appropriate position as global doctors. Such medication needs to be as per the acceptance of official authorities. Truth is the natural authority for moral weaknesses. That comes with us – including through our positions – to the extent we draw more benefits than the costs we put into those positions.

Professor Evans could call for the status of his current parallels to be reduced and / or that they be punished for their role / negligence in this issue. Given that Professor Evans is not our head of State – I take it that the contribution by Professor Evans would go in real terms to reducing the status of his parallels in Sri Lanka – his real positions. As per my discovery, that's how the system of Natural Justice works. If it is the Sri Lankan President – then we need to conclude that Dr. Evans is our real Head of State and that Australian Political and Administrative systems are not as real as they seem to be.