

Four Quarters of Muslim Parties

Mahmood Jawaid

July 2, 2011

Know ye (all), that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying, (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children. Here is a similitude: How rain and the growth which it brings forth, delight (the hearts of) the tillers; soon it withers; thou wilt see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away. But in the Hereafter is a Penalty severe (for the devotees of wrong). And Forgiveness from God and (His) Good Pleasure (for the devotees of God). And what is the life of this world, but goods and chattels of deception? (The Quran 57:20)

Watching the news clips shown on TV about suicide bombings and crowds with raised fists and shouting mouths, one may get the impression that Muslims are dying to go to heaven. Actually they are not in a hurry to join supposedly seventy two Hoories in Paradise, even if they are anxiously waiting for them. If they exist and are destined for them, then what is the hurry, they will meet them eventually. Why not enjoy this life and have fun here too. There are some constraints though. They cannot drink, gamble, or have girlfriends (or boyfriends). That rules out going to bars, clubs, and casinos. They normally go to movie theaters, play and watch sports, and attend parties. Actually it is mostly parties.

Parties are usually held in the evening in one of the homes, where the host invites their friends. Actually it is the hostess that does most of the inviting. No, I am not talking about beautiful air hostesses. I mean the lady of the house. To be invited in these parties is not easy. You must meet certain criteria. If you meet someone, of course male, in the mosque you frequent or in some other social setting and found some common ground to be friendly, you still do not pass the litmus test to receive the invitation. Your friendship will be limited to a handshake, some friendly talks, and bye bye. You will only hit the jackpot, if his wife becomes a friend of your wife. Now you are really cooking, since you will now be invited to his house and vice versa. It will be an icing on the cake if his school age children are of the same age as yours. It is then the marriage made in heaven. You will then also be invited to their children's birthday parties. My icing melted long time ago when my son graduated from high school. I do not get any invitation for children's birthday parties. I advertised for renting a child, but did not get any response. The only thing going for me is my wife's socialization skills, which has given me some social outlet.

Granted you have been invited to a party, you have to play by the rule. Our parties are usually segregated: Men congregate in one room, women in the other room, and children have fun with video games, play basketball in the driveway, or watch Harry Potter movie in congregation. You are breaking the rule if you buzzed into women's section. You can only have a brief chat with them, if you happen to rub shoulders with them while filling your plate with food. Please do not get excited. I am only talking in literal terms. You will be in a heap of trouble if you physically rubbed your shoulders with them. I did once and I am still trying to grow hair on my head. Miracle Grow has not worked either.

I do not know much about what goes on in women's section, but the social interaction in men's section consists of four quarters. There is no half time, only two timeouts are

Four Quarters of Muslin Parties

allowed for the two evening prayers. While most of us are busy enjoying the party, one of the pious ones (there are few in every party) makes the call for the prayer. It is their duty to keep the rest of us straight. We do not want to disappoint them, besides we have to pay God his dues. It only takes five minutes each. So we suspend our joyous moment and join the prayer.

The first quarter is only a warm up. It is like the appetizer. We inquire about each other's health, job, and family matters. The second quarter is the meat of the party. We usually discuss the State of the Union. The Muslim community in the United States is one of the very highly educated segments of the society, mostly consisting of doctors, engineers, lawyers, accountants, and businessmen. In every social setting you will find some doctors. The issue of healthcare is usually tackled first. While most of the doctors do the slugging, the rest of us usually stay in the dugout. Listening to these discussions, I sometimes wonder why a majority of our children want to pursue medical profession.

The next topic is usually about stocks. It is now the turn of those who have made a killing to do the slugging. The rest of us do the fielding to catch all the advice we can. The discussion then turns to the United States foreign policy and the format of the party changes from baseball to football. Almost everyone takes turn playing as quarter back. Since civility is in our bones, we do not need any umpire. I have heard a very elaborate analysis about the War in Iraq and Afghanistan, IMF policies, and our Middle East Policy. I still wonder why these discussions have not made their way to the State Department or at least in "the Foreign Affairs Magazine" I can assure you that most of the men are well qualified to serve in State Department or on the editorial board of "the Foreign Affairs Magazine."

Having resolved all the issues affecting the State of the Union, we enter the third quarter during which we pig out. With our mouths full, we can hardly engage in any heated discussion. Occasionally, while getting refills, we talk about restaurants and caterer in the area.

After satiating ourselves and pouring a cup of tea, we settle down for the fourth quarter. The format of the party now changes into a basketball game, except that there are no hoops, no passes, no free throws, no referee, and no teams, just players. While one player is bouncing the ball, someone else steals it. It is now his turn to carry the ball till someone else steals it and that is how the game continues. The ball in this case is the current state of the Muslims all over the world. It is a very heavy ball to carry, but it has a good bounce. Once again we hear a very enlightened discussion. I am very positive, if we are appointed the President or the Prime Minister of all the Muslim countries, the terrorism issue will vanish in no time. Once again I wonder, with our economy in dire straight, why our State Department has not paid any attention to these discussions and solicited our help. We will save billions of dollars we are spending to fight against terrorism. President Obama, Secretary of State Clinton: Are you listening!

We would prefer to end the party with a phone call from either President Obama or Secretary of State Clinton, but we settle for a phone call from our wives sitting in the women section. It is then time to call it quits.

About the Writer:

The writer has authored "Secrets of Angels, Demons, Satan, and Jinns – Decoding their Nature through Quran and Science," "Atom to Adam – How, When and Where in the Light of Quran,

Four Quarters of Muslin Parties

Bible and Science (A Study of Human Origin),” and “Hunting to Cloning – Unearthing Civilizations through Quran” published by InstantPublisher.com (<http://instantpublisher.com/>) and “Lessons from the Qur’an,” published by Ta-Ha Publishers (<http://www.taha.co.uk/>). These books are available from Amazon.com (<http://www.amazon.com/>) and Ta-Ha Publishers (<http://www.taha.co.uk/>), respectively. He has also published many essays on religious issues in the Charleston Gazette, West Virginia and has written quite a few Islamic satires and poems. He is a Chemical Engineer and possesses Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Chemical Engineering and has Professional Engineers license from the State of Texas. His e-mail address is mnajawaid@yahoo.com. Many of his writings can be viewed at MahmoodJawaid.com.