

The Tale of a City

Mahmood Jawaid

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We have all read or heard the first passage of Charles Dickens' novel "A Tale of Two Cities:" "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way--in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only." Dickens has painted a picture of how life was in England and France in 1775.

My story is the tale of a city where Muslims in great numbers reside. It all started with few Muslims moving into the city. Happy to see a few co-religionists, they started a Quranic study program. They would get together, recite few Quranic verses, would have a lively and un-inhibited discussion, pray, eat, and disperse. Nobody cared for what sect the individuals belonged to. All that mattered was that they were all Muslims. As their number grew, they decided to build a mosque. With quite a bit of fund raising a mosque was built. Muslims of all persuasions rejoiced, prayed, and celebrated their individual as well as collective festivities. While in Rabi-ul-Awwal, Mauloodies (people who celebrate the birthday of the Prophet^{SAW} with great fanfare) could celebrate Maulood-un-Nabi, the Shias could celebrate Ashoorah in Muharram. Of course everyone celebrated Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha together. People would take turns to lead prayers and give Friday sermons.

The wheelers and dealers did not like every Dick and Harry leading the prayers and giving Friday sermons. They also started itching for Traweeh, which required a Hafiz. So they imported one from overseas. Indeed it was a heartwarming and spiritually uplifting event in Ramadhan for most of us. Throughout the month we listened to the Quran during Traweeh led by Hafiz saheb. After few months came Muharram and, as usual, the Shias celebrated Ashoorah. The Hafiz saheb used to be a Wahabi. To him Shias were almost Kafir. So he ran a campaign against them. Both the Wahabis and the Mauloodies joined hands and booted the Shias out. Poor Shias left crying with all their donations absorbed in the now 'Sunni mosque.' They had to start a Shia mosque from scratch.

Soon after came the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal. The Mauloodies as usual celebrated Maulood-un-Nabi with great fanfare. But this was a big Bida (innovation) for Wahabis. So the Hafiz saheb ran a campaign against the Mauloodies. Both Arab and Indo-Pakistani Wahabis joined hands and booted the Mauloodies out. The Mauloodies, who till yesterday were in the forefront of booting the Shias out, left crying with all their donations absorbed in the now 'Wahabi mosque.' They had to start a Mauloodi mosque from scratch.

The wheelers and dealers by now noticed that the Hafiz saheb was getting stronger and was gathering power around him. They realized that if nothing was done, the Hafiz saheb will boot them out. It is better him than them. So they booted the Hafiz saheb out. Now it was Hafiz saheb's turn to leave crying.

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The Hafiz saheb had the sympathy of another strong group in the city. Its head wiped his tears and gave him his place to lead a congregation. Hafiz saheb was still licking his wounds. He recalled the Hadeeth that a Muslim is never bit by the same hole twice. He was not to let the booting happen to him again. He transferred the title of the land in his name and established his own mosque. It was now the head's turn to be booted out. He left crying. The poor guy is still wandering in the wilderness and licking his wounds.

Thanks to the wheelers and dealers and Hafiz saheb, the city now has hundreds of mosques; each is led by one of the Hafiz sahebs. We have heard of the phrase "too many chiefs and very little Indians." Ideally speaking there should be too many Indians and very little chiefs. Muslims are an anomaly. There are too many chiefs, each having quite a few Indians to support them. Each of the Hafiz sahebs have carved out a fiefdom of their own. Every one of them proclaims that others are not bona fide Muslims. According to the Prophet^{SAW}: "By Him in whose hand is my soul, my Ummah will split into seventy three sects: one will enter Paradise and seventy two will enter Hell;" (Sunan Dawood 3/4580). According to each one of the Hafiz sahebs, it is their group who will go to Paradise. The city now celebrates at least two Eid-ul-Fitr, two Eid-ul-Adha and multiple Mauloods and Ashuras. It has thousands of Wahabis, Mauloodies, and Shias, but I still have to find a Muslim in it.

This is not just the tale of a city, but the tale of almost every city in the North America. What was true for London and Paris in 1775 is now true for every city in the USA and Canada, where Muslims reside in great numbers.

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, 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.