

An August 14th message for Pakistanis

Muhammad Zafrullah

For some days a scenario has been bugging me. Now that the idea has started to haunt me, I thought of sharing it with you. The thought of such a scenario actually taking place is crazy, but you never know when a crazy man may be making sense.

In Small Town Somewhere, some folks started to quarrel and then to fight among themselves. The bone of contention was the Authority Figure of the town. Every one claimed to support and love the Authority Figure and blamed everyone else of being against the Authority Figure. The Authority Figure was very important for the Town's people. His servants used to squirt and sometimes flood the town with muddy water. The muddy water was very important in that it contained very small pieces of gold.

The economy of the town was sort of woven around sifting for the pieces of gold from mud and making all sorts of nice pottery from the mud. They knew the gold and the mud came from the Authority Figure, so they loved the Authority Figure and they wanted everyone else to love Him. But some had one way of loving Him and the others had other ways of loving Him. This would often lead to heated arguments and sometimes to clashes. But these disagreements were usually short-lived. Usually they would get back to their gold and their pottery.

But this time it was different. They seemed to have forgotten their gold sifting and their pottery. The mud came and caked itself hard, they did not care. All they cared about was making sure that everyone in town loved the Authority Figure as they did. It looked as if the whole town had gone crazy. They borrowed from other towns and at times even begged for their sustenance, but kept the fight alive. In their fight some folks would get their clothes torn, some would get hurt, and some would die but no one seemed to care.

On a closer look it appeared that there were some folks who were not affected by the fight. Looking at their clothes and their demeanor they appeared to profit from it. Somehow they appeared to want the fight to go on. They were the town's tailors, the washer-men, the dry cleaners, the physicians, the coffin makers and the clergy. One could also see a few others who wanted the fight to go on, because their employers from other towns wanted the fight to go on. Let's call these people the beneficiaries.

The tailors were hoping for more torn clothes and more dead so that they could sell more clothes and sew more shrouds, the physicians were looking for more wounded, the washer-men and the dry cleaners for more dirty clothes. The coffin makers and the clergy wanted more dead and hence more funerals. The agents for other towns wanted more and more mayhem because their paymasters wanted that. Some folks engaged in the fight would fall and mysteriously others would come forth to take their place. It appears that the beneficiaries had their agents working in the population. These agents would come up with all sorts of lies and half truths about "the others" not quite loving the Authority Figure the way they should.

Finally when the fight became so intense that it started to threaten the very existences of Small Town Somewhere, the Authority Figure ordered His servants to pour so much muddy water, from a different angle, on them that they forget their fight. The result was that some of town's folks drowned, fighters or no fighters, and for a short while there was calm. In this process some other towns were also affected, but it happens.

The scenario that I have in mind is that folks from Small Town Somewhere realized, during the period of calm, that the Authority Figure did not like their fighting about how to love Him. This sort of extended the calm. The gold sifters got back to their sifting for gold to find that there was a lot of gold that they could extract from the deluge and the pottery makers got busy with their pottery. Since everyone got busy in what they were supposed to do they had no time to listen to the beneficiaries' agents and the town's folks lived happily ever after.

Everyone says that yarns like this are spun to spend/waste some time; it is a plus if someone draws a lesson from them every now and then. The "gold in the mud" idea comes from the fact that while the floods cause problems they increase the fertility of the land. So, if you have got my drift, get busy. I hope and wish that the 14th of August in the year 2011, and every year after that, is a happy independence day for all Pakistanis.

Yearning to see Pakistan a peaceful and prosperous country,

Muhammad Zafrullah