**A good assessment of India's pluralism by an Arab gentle man.**

By **Khalaf Al-Harbi**

**I am writing to you from India, the land of wonders. Right now, I am in Mumbai which was once the farthest place travelers on the Arabian Sea dreamed of reaching. Huge waves of humans fan out in all directions and fill the city’s streets. A river of sheepish eyes will look at you, immediately recognize that you are not a local and then try to figure out where you are from.**

**In Mumbai, luxurious building towers neighbor tin slums and such contradictions are an entertaining game which, despite the efforts of numerous thinkers, cannot be explained but only experienced.**

**In India, there are more than 100 religions and more than 100 languages. Yet, the people live in peace and harmony. They have all joined hands to build a strong nation that can produce everything from a sewing needle to the rocket which is preparing to go to Mars.**

**I must say that I feel a bit jealous because I come from a part of the world which has one religion and one language and yet there is killing everywhere. No matter how the world speaks about tolerance, India remains the oldest and most important school to teach tolerance and peaceful co-existence regardless of the religious, social, political or ethnical differences.**

**The stereotypical picture of India in the minds of many of us is linked to poverty and backwardness. This is a totally false picture which has nothing to do with reality. It is a picture which was created by our extreme judgment of things. When we were poor before the era of oil, the picture of India in our minds was linked to richness and civilization but immediately after our financial conditions improved, we converted India’s picture to one of poverty and backwardness.**

**If we had any sort of wisdom, we would never have been occupied by India’s richness or poverty. Rather, we would have been impressed by India’s immense ability to contain and respect the conflicting ideologies and thoughts so that people would flood the streets without any feeling of fear or anxiety.**

**If we took all the Arabs and placed them in India as part of a grand experiment, they would not make up any recognizable majority. They would, instead, dissolve in a fearless human ocean. Their nationalistic trends and sectarian extremism would also dissolve with them and they would realize that nothing in the world can justify the killing of their brothers and sisters in humanity.**

**India is one of the largest and oldest democracies in the world. It had never known huge differences in religions or races. The country does not disdain its poor people nor hate its rich citizens. It is a nation which is proud of Gandhi and the British colonialists at the same time.**

**The Indian people are distinguished in many ways. They are great people. Nobody can deny this fact except the envious or the ungrateful. The only problem with the hypothetical trip of the Arabs to India is that they may contaminate the Indians and remind them of their religious and ethnical differences. The Arabs may be able to convince the Indians that their religious and racial disparities may be enough of reason to kill each other.**

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