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## Communal Harmony

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Once upon a time there was a beautiful village called Maanjur located in South India. The village was known for many popular things most importantly for the communal harmony among the villagers. There were around sixty families living at the village. People from different communities lived there like brothers and sisters. Rahman, a twelve years old boy was studying eighth standard at the village local school. He lived with his mother in a small hut like house. His father was working abroad. He had two siblings. He was the elder one in the family. His close friends were his classmates Kannan and Marlow. He used to spend his leisure hours with them apart from school timings. He joyfully played with his friends on holidays.

The village had a beautiful Masjid, an attractive Church, and an alluring Temple. All these buildings located nearby. People had good understandings and brotherhood. So they did not have any problem like menacing situations. Monday will be a bad day for children as well as adults too. One fine Monday Rahman was still at his bed. He was too tedious and wanted to take leave. But his mother won't allow him. So he was forced to wake up from bed.

“Rahman, wake up its already late go and get yourself ready”, his mother said.

“Mom, I am not feeling well I would like to take leave, please let me have some rest. I will go to school tomorrow”, replied Rahman.

“No way, get up now”, his mother shouted.

“Ohh almighty why the hell do we need to go to school, it's too boring”, Rahman said to himself waking from bed half-mindedly.

“What did you say?”, asked his mother showing her face terrifically.

“Nothing mom, I just said okay to you”, replied Rahman walking away from the spot.

“Such a poor boy he is. Like his father, he doesn’t like to go to school. What will be the condition if he was an illiterate”, said his mother to herself.

He got himself ready, took breakfast and went out from his house. While going to school he met his friend Marlow. Usually all the three friends go to school together. Marlow and Kannan will join with Rahman half a way.

Marlow asked Rahman, “Have you completed your homework for English teacher?”

“No, I haven’t completed fully. I have three more pages to complete”, replied Rahman.

“What? You have not completed, see you will be punished by him for not completing the work given”, warned Marlow.

“We have leisure period before English class, I will complete the work at that time”, hopefully replied Rahman.

“Hmm okay”, replied Marlow.

By the time Kannan joined with them. All the three were going to school sharing the news and events took place in the previous day. It was 9.10 when they reached the school campus. The first period was Tamil class. Tamil teacher Mr. Narayanan came to the class and the students greeted him in their proper Tamil language. He was happy by the performance of the students. After 45 minutes the bell rang and it was leisure period but unexpectedly the English teacher advanced his class.

“Good Moring! My dear young and energetic students”, he greeted.

All the students were speechless by the sudden entry of the English teacher. Most of them were shocked. Two, third of the whole class follow the method of Rahman. They have planned to complete their homework at the leisure period.

“What is wrong with you guys? Why you people neglect to give response?”, he asked them.

There was no reply from anyone. He doubted whether anything was wrong with them. He had almost forgotten about homework. Indeed he had come with full enthusiasm in teaching a fascinating lesson to his students. But they were not aware of this.

“Today I would like to start a new lesson for all of you”, he said.

All the students heaved sigh by hearing this. They became so happy. The poor teacher thought that his students were happy because they’re gonna learn a new lesson.

“I am happy you guys are really interested to learn a new lesson. I appreciate your thirst to acquire knowledge”, he said.

“Sir, we really like your class than other classes”, as usual lied a student from back side.

“Okay, good. Let’s begin the lesson. The topic of the lesson is ‘Communal Harmony’, by a well-known English writer from our mother land India”, the teacher said.

He began by explaining the topic in detail. The lesson portrays an incident that took place many years ago. People were divided into groups by some selfish politicians. India is a secular country, where citizens maintain a kind of relationship and understanding with all communities. Religion and language play a secondary role in India. Humanity and harmony place a primary role. People empathize the later rather than the first one. One of the popular pledges normally taken in educational institutions is “We, Indians, are brothers and sisters”. Almost all the people follow this pledge they have taken when they were school children. Nobody neglect to follow it. The role of educational institutions is significant in making a society which has communal harmony.

The teacher taught the lesson well. He gave best examples for the better the understanding of the students. They felt that as if they were at the spot where the incident took place. Some poor politicians normally do their politics in a different way. A good political leader is the one who can understand the minds of the people. Because of those people the event took place and it broke down the important aspect that is communal harmony. Man will be the worst animal in the world when his emotional intelligence is kindled through religion. That incident still remain as a best lesson for everyone.

“My dear students, have you all understood that humanity is more important than that of community?”, asked the teacher.

“Yes Sir. We have understood well”, replied some students who had listened to the lecture deeply.

“See if you are not ready to show mercy to a fellow human being you will not be shown mercy by the almighty, whoever knows this fact will never involve in breaking the harmony”, the teacher explained.

“I don’t understand this, Sir”, a boy said.

“See for example before that incident people of all communities behaved and lived like brothers and sisters. They showed mercy towards one another. Later their mind set was changed because those politicians played with the religious aspect of people. The result as they did not show mercy what happened they lost peace. Have you understood now?”, asked the teacher.

“Yes sir”, the boy replied.

He continued his lesson for about fifteen more minutes and finished the lesson. Five more minutes for the next class. He invited questions from his students.

“Any questions or clarifications or doubts you can ask me”, he said looking at the students.

“I still don’t understand what communal harmony is?, Sir”, Kannan asked his English teacher.

“Poor boy, haven’t you understood the main concept?”, asked his teacher.

“Yes sir”, he replied.

“Communal harmony is nothing but a way of treatment or behavior of a different community people within one another. A man is expected to come up and ready to mingle with a person from other community. Forgetting the differences he will be ready to give respect to the religious aspects of other communities”, the moment bell rang. He stopped and said he would continue in the next class.

After the school hour the three friends started moving towards their homes. They shared their thoughts and interpretations with one another.

“Rahman you had a great escape from our English teacher today?”, Marlow said.

“Yes, I have to thank the almighty for saving me from trouble. I was happy that our English master completely forgot about homework. It was a great escape”, replied Rahman.

“I was even so confused with the explanation given by him. I don’t still understand the topic handled by him”, Kannan said.

Rahman replied, “Kanna don’t confuse too much. It is very simple. We, three, are the best example for the topic. I am a Muslim, Marlow is a Christian by his religion and you are a Hindu. We all have different religious background. But still we are good friends. We don’t bother the differences. This is communal harmony”.

“Ohhh yes, now I have understood the concept. Under this umbrella called India, we all are same though we have different cultures and backgrounds. **Proud to be Indians**”, exclaimed Kannan and they went far from the school, reached their houses and started their new day with a new understanding.

### **About the Author:**

Mr. Mohamed Iqbal Hussain is a young living short-story writer and a future novelist. This is his third short-story being published in “The Criterion International Journal”. He studied his Master Degree at The New College, Chennai. Currently he is doing his Ph.D. at Jamal Mohamed College, Trichy. He has four years of teaching experience. He worked as an Assistant Professor of English in a reputed college in his native town Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu.