

1. (Introduction)

a. رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي وَاخْلُفْ عَنِّي لِسَانِي بِفَهْمِ قَوْلِي

b. *My Lord! relieve my mind. And ease my task for me. And remove the impediment from my speech so that they may comprehend what I am saying:*

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ نَحْمِدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا، مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ. وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

Indeed, all praise is for Allah. We praise Him, we ask for His help, we beg for His forgiveness, and we seek refuge and protection with Allah from the evils of ourselves and from the evil consequences of our sins. Whoever Allah [SWT] guides to the straight path, no force in the universe can misguide him. And whoever Allah [SWT] misguides, no one can guide them to the Truth. I bear witness that there is no deity, no object worthy of any act of worship except Allah [SWT], the One without any partners, associates or equals. And I bear witness that Muhammad [SAWS] is His slave and messenger.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ
(3:102)

O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except as Muslims.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا
(4:1)

O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person, and from him He created his wife, and from them both He created many men and women; and fear Allah through Whom you demand your mutual rights, and do not cut the relations of kinship. Surely, Allah is an All-Watcher over you.

2.

Unsettling innocence: Liberated Khutbahs

Assalamulaikum my community; my brothers and sisters; my family and friends. Welcome back to chapel hill. I see a number of unfamiliar but undoubtedly bright faces and I pray that we move forward in the weeks to come with grace, consciousness, and a drive much like the beloved prophet Muhammed (s).

If we take a moment to look back at last semester the khutbah topics centered largely around critical self reflection, establishing the self, and coming to a more complete answer to the question, “Who am I...in relationship to Allah?” Whether it was by means of examining the importance of salah or conceptualizing our theological doubts, we ultimately strived to reach a better understanding of self.

In the coming months however, I hope to shift our lenses of analysis to a higher level of abstraction, to instead ask the question: Who am I as a Muslim...in relation to my surrounding communities? To understand what it means when Allah SW says in surah al hujaraat:

وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا

“..[we] made you into people and tribes so that we may know one another”

I want us to challenge our ideas of knowledge, power, and governing institutions, to stand boldly in the face of what we’ve accepted as tradition and question its very thesis.

The islamic faith tradition has historically been a leader in innovation and critical pedagogies and praxises and I hope that we can embolden this practice within the cultures of our respective communities. I have faith in our ability as a people to rise above mediocrity and set standards for generations to come.

Of all the variations and difference that creates and recreates the islamic faith tradition Hajj stands as a staple of muslim practice. Every year millions of muslims set aside their time and money to make the holy pilgrimage of hajj. People from all of the world travel to mecca to embark upon what many describe as a cleansing and revitalizing journey. As Allah sw says in surah Hajj:

22:27

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وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ
يَأْتِينَكَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِجٍّ عَمِيقٍ



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And proclaim to the people the Hajj [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass -

As many of you may assume this mass collection of people is incredibly diverse. The countless narratives of people from across the globe intersect to form the phenomena that is the hajj experience.

But is it really as amazing as we romanticize it to be?

A particular hajji story comes to mind. And for the sake of anonymity I'm going to give this person a random name...Anas. Anas Baghdaadi. Anas, like many of you was a diligent Muslim student. He was in his senior year of highschool up in Harlem NY and like many of his fellow Muslim peers he, for as long as he could remember, aspired to one day make Hajj. So for his graduation present his mother surprised him with a fully paid trip to attend hajj in the coming summer. Excited to travel outside of the U.S. for the first time Anas spent the coming weeks carefully planning the specifics of his trip.

What Anas would soon come to learn however was that for him and many other muslims, Hajj wasnt what many imams advertise it to be.

It all began well before he even boarded the plane.

"Sir, can you please follow me to the back." As they continued to berate him with questions during his the 'random selection' (which was then followed by a full body search) Anas couldn't help but wonder, "was this really worth going through all the harassment." But he silenced his doubts with something his father would always say,

Hasbunallahu wa ni`mal Wakil': حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ "Sufficient for us is Allah , and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs."

And so on he pressed.

After what seemed like traveling for an eternity Anas finally touched down in Saudi Arabia. A family friend picked him up and took him around to explore the area. As they drove passed mecca. Anas couldn't help but notice The Abraj al bait towering over the ka3ba. The huge Big Ben-esque tower dwarfed everything for nearly 30 kilometers. Anas frowned. His friend noticing his dismay went on to point out the huge economic disparities growing in the city. The rampage of capital and its maintenance of a poverty. Anas sighed.

“Hasbunallahu wa ni`mal Wakil”

Finally it was the 8th of Dhul Hijjah and Anas was excited for Hajj to finally begin. As he was boarding the bus with his traveling group anas could hear the sound of an escalating argument. Tuning in, Anas realized to his dismay that the other group leader didn't want to travel with “these 3abeed” (which is the arabic word for slave, referring to Ana's group of companions). To his relief the driver dismissed the man and put the bus in drive as an awkward tension settled amidst the passengers.

“Hasbunallahu wa ni`mal Wakil”

All that aside Anas's pilgrimage to mecca was unlike anything he has ever experienced in his life. Drinking zam zam right from the source, standing atop mount arafaat, and simply witnessing such a raw display of diversity was refreshing in more ways than one. With optimism running through his veins Anas couldn't help but smile.

He had now reached the airport to return home and was looking for the boarding area when Far off to his left he heard a whistling noise. He turned to discover a man catcalling a woman. In the middle of the airport. The women shouted in disapproval as seas of people rushed pass. And just like that, the woman walked away. The man disappeared into the crowd as if nothing had occurred.

Anas still trying to process what he had witnessed, sat down. How easy it would have been for him to have missed that incident of sexual harassment. How quickly did everyone move along without giving any notice.

“Hasbuna-”

Anas stopped himself. Witnessing the gross deviations from the what he understood to be Islam, from what he understand to be a praxis of justice...surmounted to something

bigger than the 'separate' events that tainted his Hajj. They extended beyond his perception of an Islam in isolation. As he sat down in his seat on the plane back to NY Anas leaned his head forward and began making duaa. He made duaa for the Muslims being disproportionately affected by Islamophobic legislation, he made du'ua for the slaves toiling away in the alleys of Saudi Arabia, he made duaa for the Black Lives relegated to subhumanity, he prayed for both the women we see and the women that are erased from our narratives, he prayed for an Islam for an Ummah free from the structures twisting it in ways unakin to the prophetic tradition

In a Sahih Hadith Narrated by Abu Ma'bad, the Prophet (SAW) was reported to have said, ***"... and be afraid of the curse of an oppressed person because there is no screen between his invocation and Allah."***

~Break

Aqulu Qawli hadha wastaghfirullah li wa lakum Wa lisaairil muslimina fastaghfiruhu Innahu huwal Ghafurur Rahim.

"AlHamdulillah was Salatu Wassalamu 'ala Rasulallah"

~Break

As some of you may have already assumed, Anas Baghdadai is character from my imagination. But the stories I told are very real. Whether it's in between Isra and Mi'raj or in the ghettos of Detroit, the events highlighted in Anas's narrative are based on very real abuses that happen to Muslims every day. These deviations from fairness occur even during what you and I would consider the holiest practice we can ever experience.

It is important to note that While Anas was appreciative of his experience he couldn't help but recognize that like the rest of the world, Muslims were just as afflicted by systems of oppression. Muslims face (and perpetuate) sexism, imperialism, racism, transphobia, just to name a few.

As a community we must recognize that the facets of our varying identities do not operate in isolation. That is to say while, yes I am Muslim, I am also Black. While I am racialized I am also gendered and recognizes that while my race may be used to hurt me, my identity as a man still privileges my journey through this world.

The story of Anas allows us to see the instances in which oppressions and privileges intersect. From the maintenance of poverty through capitalism to the intricacies of anti-black racism via segregation. From experiencing oppression to realizing that in many ways we can be complicit.

On the authority of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudree (ra) the messenger (saw) said, "Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then [let him change it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart — and that is the weakest of faith." - Sahih Muslim.

It is imperative that we do not relegate these experiences to mere instances of "hate." What I and other people of marginalized communities encounter ties into a larger history of disenfranchisement. And these structures of exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, and violence are very very real and do not happen on a whim. There are whole departments of study dedicated to critically examining how such systems work to oppress certain groups.

Which brings me to my second point. The study of the world in which we live is a constantly growing and multisectoral body of knowledge and it is intellectually dishonest for us to address "modern" issues without first studying them or at least consulting those who do.

That is to say when we address race and racism in our communities we don't lethargically lean on narratives of bilal (ra). We seek out critical analysis of the issue and address it with methods striving for its eradication.

When we talk about gender we cannot dismiss the plight of women by policing their tone or misusing the prophet's wives to socially coerce them to adhere to the politics of respectability.

When we encounter muslims dealing with mental health issues our responses must go beyond stigmatized solutions and half baked efforts that don't include actual mental health professionals.

I want us to surpass simply understanding our personal relationship with Islam and to see our interpersonal connection, as muslims, with the world around us.

The practice of Islam is held hostage by the status quo. and it is up to both you and I to deconstruct and recreate our conceptions of Islam in ways free from the "thilm", from

the oppression allah so sternly warns us about. Join me in unsettling our lack of awareness and knowledge, our innocence, and recreating a future liberated from the misuse of power.

Du'ua

Oh Allah please see to the safety of Nuna and Loujaine and all those suffering from the tyranny of ISIL and its associated parties.

Oh allah please bless priya, her family and her friends with mercy and ease.

Oh all grant Razan, Deah, and Yusor the highest places in jannah. and aid us in carrying on their legacies and honoring their names.

Oh allah aid us in our pursuits for liberation and our attempts to validate the many lives dehumanized by the oppression rampant in this world.

Allah swt protect us. Shield us when we lose the ability to do so ourselves. Grant us success in our ways and justice in the spaces we inhabit. Line our perceptions with an iron honesty and guard our conclusions from the inebriation of laziness and the rashness of our egos. Give us patience. Patience and the wisdom to know when we no longer owe it.

Honestly addressing the realities existing within muslim communities

- Step away from dichotomous thinking, mutual exclusivity, etc
 - perceiving culture and islam as water and oil = inaccurate
- Understand inextricability of social constructs

- positive and negative peace
 - “I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council-er or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice;”
 - Example:

uncle sam, ahmad,

what we are capable of

how larger societal constructs effects how islam is created and recreated

- A colonized Hajj
 - Leaving from D.C.
 - (Islamophobia) check with thowb because god forbid anything but an Toblerone bar is stuffed beneath these threads
 - Checking into to hajj
 - (Sexism) The “where are their mahrams” scapegoat

- <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2012/sep/29/nigerian-pilgrims-female-saudi-hajj>
 - (Capitalism) luxury tents/hotels
 - <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/meccas-creating-capitalism-8479827.html>
 - (Racism) “I don’t want to ride with these 3abeed”
 - More than just “hate”
- Discussing the intersection

While anas baghdadai is character of my imagination the stories highlighted in his singular narrative are based on very real events that happen to muslims all the time.

It is of utmost importance to recognize where we stand and how the privileges us as non-indigenous peoples, **as settlers**

Secondly to look at decolonization as a system of process instead of a metaphor

- Decolonize?
 - Frantz Fanon wrote, “Imperialism leaves behind germs of rot which we must clinically detect and remove from our land and from our minds as well.”
 - <http://www.blackgirldangerous.org/2013/12/mean-say-colonized/>

This is about understanding what needs to be said. This is most definitely not about the specifics of you are I discomforts.

“follow not personal inclination lest you be just”

community-care
self-love

Honestly advocating

Cite weak hadith and then comment on its example but then point out its weakness and the reality that hadiths can be thrown around even for good and that when we pursue justice it should be a pursuit that is resolute and unwavering. Fortified so much so that the path left can be walked upon by your predecessors with confidence.