

Justice, honesty, and the value of life

1. Justice (Introduction)

a. رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي وَاخْلُفْ عَنِّي مِن لِّسَانِي يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ
وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا
مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَلَاحُ مُضِلٌّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ

b.

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

a.

c. *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:*

d. *(Praise be to Allaah, we seek His help and His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allaah from the evil of our own souls and from our bad deeds. Whomsoever Allaah guides will never be led astray, and whomsoever Allaah leaves astray, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allaah, the One, having no partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger*

e. ~~~~~

f. Assalamsmualaikum Brothers and sisters it is truly a pleasure to see you all gathered here in this room today. I see many familiar and bright faces. Some of which I've gotten to know over the years and this past summer but Inshallah in the coming future i pray and intend at the very least to become acquainted with the rest of you I haven't had the privilege of meeting.

g. The past year was difficult in an abundance of varying ways. Many of us have been tested academically, spiritually, physically, and mentally as we navigated through the spaces in this community. We were challenged with realities that affected each of us in our own way. Personally i've found myself challenged to question death, justice, and the goal of liberation. My perceptions creak under the strain of taken life and the resulting ripples of distress that echo throughout my individual and the shared muslim psyche.

h. Notably, I and many close to me have found it increasingly difficult to perceive injustice in mere numbers, to see those killed, directly or indirectly, as another statistic. Because the names, lives, and legacies even in their singularity are of people intrinsically intertwined in the realities of us and others. So i ask that while

we push for reform, recognition, research, and emancipation we not forget the names and nuanced lives taken in projects of injustice.

- i. That we not forget:
 - i. Tanisha Anderson, Ahed Atef Bakr, Eyricka Morgan, Zakaria Ahed Bakr, Eric Garner, Kandis Capri, Mohamed Ramez Bakr, Ismael Mohamed Bakr, Amber Monroe, Mya Hall, Abdisamad Sheikh-Hussein, Deah Barakat, Yusor Abu-Salha, and Razan Abu-Salha

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ
الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىَٰ أَن
تَعْدِلُوا وَإِن تَلَوْا أَوْ تَعْرَضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٣٥﴾

- j.
- k. **Sahih International:** O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah , even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do.
- l. Surah An-Nisa ayah 135 is an ayah that is not only profound in its message but also in its linguistic prowess. In the beginning of the ayah Allah SWT says
 - i. قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ
 - 1. Here the usage of “qawm”
 - 2. it is understood not only as to stand, but to remain standing, literally TO EXIST and for what, justice.
 - ii. And as we skip ahead into the ayah
 - iii. وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ - “even though it be against yourselves”
 - 1. this conception of justice is founded on the sense of self, a sense that crosses lines of class, race, gender, **and religion**.
 - 2. The ayah starts with the self, and then progresses it works it’s way out in term of identity.
 - 3. so you parents, relatives, class.

iv. فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا - “So follow not the lusts, lest you may avoid justice”

v. فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

1. Here at the end of the ayah we are reminded that god is well aware of our actions. It has been translated that this awareness can be described as acquainted.
 2. And we see in other places in the quran where justice is mentioned the usage of the same phrase once reminding us and contextualizing our conceptions of justice within the reality that god is cognizant of the decisions we make. ([*Sûrah al-Mâ'idah*: 8]).
- m. It is imperative as individuals and as a community that we speak truths to the realities of injustice. To address them in ways that are legitimate and sustainable. We must stray away from intellectual laziness and the hypocrisy often resulting from it.
- n. Every day lives are disproportionately taken and legacies are cut short leaving families and communities with an absence that for some can be unbearable. In our pursuits for social, political, and economic equality it is important that we do not forget the centrality of Justice within the Islamic Faith tradition. We musn't forget to stand firmly.

2. Intermission

- a. *Aqulu Qawli hadha wastaghfirullah li wa lakum*
- b. *Wa lisaairil muslimina fastaghfiruhu*
- c. *Innahu huwal Ghafurur Rahim.*
- d. “*AlHamdulillah was Salatu Wassalamu 'ala Rasulullah*”

3. Honesty

- a. Justice as a discourse encapsulates both the external and the internal, our actions as well as the thoughts that motivate them. In recognition of this, I remind myself and you all to avoid intellectual stagnation, as regards our religion, communities, and imaginaries. Make the effort to discover the reason or reasons for which you declare your nuanced identity, as citizens of the state, and as students, and as muslims.
- b. Religiously and professionally this includes, not being lethargic reflections of our parents
 - i. If we are not confident in the ways we choose to be we should at least make honest efforts to determine how and why.
 1. I remember many months ago when Tell story about Khadijah. Fallfest. Other religious organizations.
- c. Being critical of our perceptions
 - i. socially, religiously, etc
- d. Not lethargically addressing community issues
- e. Recognizing nuance

- i. Specifically of the islamic faith tradition
- ii. And within muslim populations

4. Inclusivity

- a. The masjid is not a yacht club

5. Change

- a. I am here to provide the platform you need
- b. If you see an issue or have an idea we can make it happen

6. Safety (Conclusion)

- a. Du'ua
 - i. Oh all gives those unjustly taken from us the highest places in jannah. Aid us in carrying on their legacies and honoring their names.
 - ii. 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. Give us patience. Patience and the wisdom to know when we no longer owe it.

Wa aqimissalah