



## Defining Justice through an Eternal Time-Frame

*Bismi-Llāhi-r-Rahmāni-r-Rahīm* . We have a beautiful truly spring today, today – not a summer day. For all the beauty in the world in front of us, there is almost equal trouble and misery. We have to ask Allah to give us health, and to give us patience, and stamina and try to discuss briefly the importance of justice and trust in the world, a world that is bereft of much trust. In the Qur'an Allah says:

**Allah commands you to render back your trust to those whom you are due and when you judge between one another, judge with justice. Verily how excellent is the teaching which He has given you.**

He also says:

**Allah set forth a parable of two men, one of them dumb with no power of any kind. A wearisome burden is he to his master, whichever way he directs him, he brings no good. Is such a man equal to one who commands justice and who is on the straight path? (5:45)**

Every day we turn on the news and see the challenges. We live in a world where people, whole nations, are very jaded. We listen to the news and hear about the circumstances of people in the world. I think we can not only say there is little justice, but there is little love and little concern. As you see in part of the translation of the *'āyat* that I read, all around us we see this *fitna*. We not only take it for granted, but a matter of form and fact that people today are much more attached to political ideologies than the truth. The truth in itself is almost meaningless. They let their ideology determine what defines justice. They change their point of view, and they don't trust in justice, what is the truth, or what

is correct. The whole society has become manipulated and manipulative. Whether it's the governor of this state who wants to impose on women really draconian measures, or the 20 some other states who are trying to pass the same bills, or the many other legislative actions that are being used today – just in the US, let alone the rest of the world – I think these people have forgotten their *dīn* / religion.

There was an article in Time magazine last week called “Jesus versus Christianity.” It is a very interesting piece of comparison between the two. What defines justice, honesty, and truth, which *inshā'a-Llāh* we strive for, is something many of us don't hold in our minds. We think that we can manipulate the truth and justice. We think that we can hide in what is right. For most people, truth and justice are defined by the Word of Allah. But if you have no regard for the Word of Allah, whether you are a Christian, Muslim, Jew, Hindu, or whatever, then how are you going to have a just society? We ought to really be honest about what it is, what it says, what the Qur'an teaches us, what the Prophet Mohammed (sal) said, what comes through the family of *Rasūlu-Llāh*, what comes through the great scholars, the teachers, and the *shuyukh*.

We ought not to be so caught up with the idiot, stupid, ignorant people who, using the name of Truth, try to identify themselves with it in name without form, but not attributing any knowledge of truth or justice to the people who are listening. I could probably spend the whole time of the *khutbah* just repeating the lies that were told today in the news. All over the Muslim world, we have ignorant people, as we obviously have in the Christian world, and the Jewish and Buddhist and Hindu communities. All over the Muslim world, we have people who are so ignorant, that they don't bring their Master Allah Swt any good. They are a burden upon Allah, upon one another, and upon their countries, and a burden upon all Muslims. This is a *khutbah*, so I have to talk about Muslims. You can extrapolate it to anything you want.

Wherever these Muslims go, they bring no good. Certainly, they are not equal to the one who enjoins us to be just and who, himself, is on the right path. Certainly, they are not in the sway or even the shadow of the Prophet Mohammed, just as the people in other communities are not in the sway or the shadow of the Prophets Isa or Musa – or in the secular world, the Jeffersons and founders of this country, or the Gandhis or the Mother Teresas. Throughout the Qur'an, Allah commands us to be just and truthful. The subjects of justice and goodness are inseparable. Justice implies there is good judgment. All around us in the world we are living today, in this country and others, there is not very good judgment. Justice is based on goodness, and the inherent sense of the value of goodness and truth. It is based on the essence of our being, our *fitrah*.

Justice is subject to time, from the point of view of timelessness where there is absolute justice, because Allah Swt never changes. Within time and day to day life, there is both absolute justice and relative justice. There is absolute goodness and relative goodness. It is very good to tell the truth, of course; but sometimes the truth is misplaced and can bring about negative results in relative time. A single event by its own circumstance cannot determine goodness or rightness or badness. But when you start accruing these events, you see a pattern. It can be a person that begins by deceiving themselves, then deceiving others, then deceiving larger groups of others. Or it can be groups of people who are misguided, and who then misguide other groups of people.

Over time, it leads us in a direction. We can see where a people or a country is headed by how much goodness there is and how much justice there is, and how justice is dealt with. I won't go through the short list, let alone the long list, of what is happening in our country. I guess you could make a comparison between our country and some other terrible country and say how wonderful we are, but I don't think that's the point. I think the point is you are either striving for justice or you are not. That's either your primary goal as a nation, or it's not. The shorter the time scale that is under consideration, the more injustices we can see. It's been now 11 ½ years since 911, and we have seen a lot of

injustices in this country increase; some of which have been supported in the judicial system, and certainly in legislation.

Our hope is that over a longer time frame, goodness will prevail, and the hearts of human beings will be awakened, and we can turn back and say, “Ah, there was this cleansing and it was needed, *inshā’a-Llāh, inshā’a-Llāh.*” But, we don’t see it yet. It’s not just true because somehow the magnetism or the gravitational forces of the stars make certain things happen, and we are some kind of passive victims to cosmic events. It’s true because Allah Swt is present, and we have consciousness and responsibility. When we see the presence of Allah Swt, we still have to make determinations ourselves. During the course of one day, for example, each of us encounters good things and bad things. If we look over the framework at the end of the day or the week, or from a month or a year, it depends on what we are looking at, but we begin to see more trends.

Are we trending toward success? Are we trending toward health? Are we trending toward the well being of ourselves and others? Is our trend toward humility, toward gratitude? It may not be apparent on one day; but over time, it becomes apparent in your own personal life. What is a trend? Kids come home from school; they have an A on spelling. But what is the trend over a month or a year? That’s what is going to be graded; that is what the GPA (Quality Point Average) is going to be. You have to keep your standards high and your efforts strong. You have a goal in mind, maybe a specific goal or a general goal. “I want to get into college or university. I want to be free to do what I really want to do.” Society has certain guidelines for that and restrictions against that.

The decisions made in a short period of time tend to be a little less clear and a little less just. So we become flexible. In a time of war, we put aside certain rights and privileges; but over time, they have to be restored and strengthened. If they are not, then what’s going to follow is even worse than what made us put them aside. Unfortunately, I’m afraid that’s where we find ourselves today. They tend to be more emotional and more

reactive, these shorter time-span issues. Part of justice is prevailing in patience. One has to trust in its balance, and those who are too quick to punish, too quick to condemn, and too quick to point the finger, tend to make unjust decisions. When the good is mixed with the bad, there are innocent people who are harmed.

Justice therefore has a great deal to do with time. That's why when we look at what is happening in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Somalia, or Syria, where there have been many years of misguided use of Islam against people and not for people, we look back along the curve and see that things are not changing. Or if they are changing, they are changing for the worse and society has broken down. That means it's harder to climb out of that hole. Over a period of time, we can see what the prevailing sense of justice is. When people are talking about justice and time passes, relationships between individuals and families, people within nations and between nations, can either come into balance or back into balance or stay out of balance.

When they don't come into balance or harmony, we have to ask very serious questions about how people really understand what they are committed to. In our case, perhaps we could say that in Iran and Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, etc. that people don't understand the tool that they have in the Qur'an. Because the Qur'an has been used [inappropriately], like a hammer [being used] for a screwdriver. I don't care if they are called mullahs or imams or Sufis or Muslims, justice and time are related. If they don't see the truth and they promote ignorance, then what happens is there is no justice. It might be 20 years from now, 50 years from now, or 100 years from now, someone will say there was a period of time, after which 480 years of justice came. That would be wonderful. But we certainly can't say that now. None of us can even remember historically when that was.

Our nature as human beings should guide us to see good and avoid what is evil. Hence, the nature of reality has to be good, because human beings are not separate from reality. If we experience or make judgment about a situation being unjust, bad, imbalanced, out

of balance, not preferential, hard for me, difficult, [where one says,] “Gee, I don’t know,” or “I’m sorry, I’ll do better,” you’re looking at a very short time frame. You are lying to yourself, and hence you lie to other people – and you’d better do it. If we look at human beings as creatures of time, and we experience a mixture of good and bad circumstances, the good will probably prevail over the bad, but it might not for you. You might be on the bad side of it; not because you are bad, but because when the tsunami or tornado comes, it doesn’t choose. In Texas a couple of days ago, there was a house totally destroyed and right next to it, an untouched house. Did bad people live in the destroyed house? No. The bad people are the ones who poisoned the air and created climate change, including us and everyone else.

So everyone suffers – arbitrarily, it seems. Why me and not the person next door? But then if you back out of it, we are part of the human race. We are part of the community. Now we get included into a larger group that suffers. The longer the time frame in which this happens to us or others, the more likely we are to be able to recognize some justice, or justice was beginning to work, or I could have been more just, or whatever it is. The meaningfulness and balance inherent in events has to come forward eventually, but we will see justice to the extent that our objectivity and wisdom allow us, if we are still around. If we identify with our soul, every circumstance that happens in this physical, material world will be understandable as part of an interplay between cause and effect.

Awareness itself is the foundation of Divine justice. Our ability to see, be patient, and understand the concept of justice demands us to be patient and fair, not making snap or foolish decisions based on a moment, a feeling, or even a short series of moments.

When a person is obviously disabled, we make adjustments for their disability. Many people are disabled in ways you don’t see, unless you can stand back and look at their actions. You see, that’s a weakness. That’s a disability. That’s what we should be addressing instead of condemning. It’s natural that we make progress from the material, physical world to a more spiritual, timeless vision of life, since we are moving through

life. As we increase our knowledge and wisdom through our interplay and experience in the material world, we gain a better understanding of life and its circumstances. It empowers us to see goodness that underlies the perfection of the laws of creation. It allows us to understand what we cannot understand in the moment, in the framework of time, or we understand that we are powerless to change.

“Prove to me you are not a drunk anymore. Hold this glass of booze for 4 hours.” How can you do that? We have somehow learned that’s not possible. It can be with alcohol, drugs, other addictions, fears, or whatever it may be. There is an interconnection between circumstances, subtle laws, and our own development. That’s why over the history of humanity, you have people of every background, for example, who have been imprisoned, yet in the strangeness of the imprisonment they have found inner freedom and peace in Allah. Their time frame was stopped. Gandhi, Aurobindo, Nelson Mandela, and others – Aun Suu Kyi.

From a higher vision of increased wisdom, we can look over our circumstances over the horizon, the *a’faq*, into the timeless. From that dimension, the question of injustice may not even arise. All is good over the horizon. All is good because all that has been bad has been filtered out. All of this justice is in a different, greater, time frame. The physical realm, the material realm, is only an early stage of our perception, and this physical realm (*dunya*) is like nursery school. It is here we begin to refine our perfection. The thing is, if it were just me, as an individual, that would be one thing. But when a senator or president, mullah or imam, or ex-senator, gets up and tries to influence other people’s thinking based on their ideology, knowing they are just seizing the moment in time, having a material end in mind – greed, desire for power, even if it’s ideologically motivated, even if it’s just to maintain power and balance – when you see the long curve, you understand how in these moments, the line is de rigeur; and over time, the results will be seen.

If people were committed, in any of the countries I mentioned, not to only speak about justice, but become committed, like in the Arab Spring, to manifest justice in an essential sense, in effect if they could get away with it and really make it happen, you wouldn't find 33 years of Iranian theocratic rule and injustice. You wouldn't have rebellions being necessary, let alone put down. Things would have changed over time. Justice would have come. Balance would have been found, or could be found. If it is indeed a Jeffersonian ideology of conservative thought in this country, then harmony and balance would come.

I'm not comparing Qur'an with Jefferson, by the way. He took a scalpel to the New Testament and cut out everything that Jesus didn't say. I'm just saying the fact that when a person is true to what they espouse, the timeline changes. Therefore it is very important for us to understand that if the Qur'an is really being followed, Iran wouldn't be what it is today – nor Egypt, nor Syria. If the teachings of *Rasūlu-Llāh* (sal) or Ali (ra), were followed, Iran wouldn't be what it is today – nor Syria, nor Afghanistan. That's just the reality.

We are in this physical world, and can contemplate justice and rightness, and so we can understand our goal is to be obedient and serve Allah, not to gain material things, not to gain power and name and fame. It is to obey and serve Allah better and better in every way, every day. We can see that human justice is best when it is an echo of Divine justice. We can look around this world and see how justice is limited. We can also look inside ourselves and try to apply freedom in relation to the laws of creation. We can try to understand these days when we study Qur'an what it is that gives us the longer view and the extended truth in one's life, and how to apply real freedom to its fullest extent within the bounds of creation. It is very, very difficult, obviously. We can learn, however, that justice and this path are intimately related, even obscure and ephemeral issues.

We want the smoothest path, and we want to be able to be just to ourselves and to others. We want to look at others over a great spectrum of time, especially in the community, in

our community, in our *khanaqah*; therefore, we need to extend the time of the community and the *khanaqah*. We are all accompanied by others who are journeying and developing. We need examples for the young people, which we have, and we need the young people to be examples for the next generation, which *inshā'a-LLāh*, I hope we have, but I am not sure. We are all accompanied by others who are journeying, and we have to take the time frame into consideration.

How can we do this, not for ourselves, but for everyone else? We have to abide, if we can, by the laws of creation. We have to trust what Allah Swt tells us in Qur'an. We have to see the example of *Rasūlu-LLāh* (sal). We have to see the spectrum of truth. We have to be patient, because we are moving from time frame to time frame, to eternity. But anyway, in the framework of eternity; it is what we have accomplished in this time when we are alive as human beings that is important. We need to find, seek, and affirm justice in this world, beginning with ourselves, *inshā'a-LLāh*. *Asalaam aleikum*.