

Islamic Summer Intensive Course 2020

Brothers' Component: Course Descriptions

Upholding Justice by Witnessing Fairness, Goodness, and Truth

Instructor: Shuja Ali Mirza

Duration: 3 sessions

Introduction:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ
وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ ءَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ءَاعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

O you who have faith! Be establishers for Allah, witnesses of just allotment [imparting], and ill feeling for a people should never lead you to be unjust. Be just; that is nearer to Godwariness, and be wary of Allah. Allah is indeed well aware of what you do. (5:8)

Upholding justice is one of the most basic and most innate aspirations of human beings, but it is also one of the most difficult of affairs, due to not only the entropic conditions of the world, but also the imbalances brought about in human souls by the evil that they choose to do. Allah helps us to carry out this difficult task by asking us in a number of verses of the Qur'an to be a *witness*. We can understand this better by breaking it down into three levels. When we do, we see that we can better uphold justice by:

1. Being a fair witness and imparting Material Benefits and resources in an impartial manner based on their Source and the legal precepts of the Source;
2. Witnessing goodness in souls and intending the balance of Psychic Faculties based on their Source and the ethical precepts of the Source;
3. Envisioning truth in the universe and seeing the imparting and manifestation of Divine Attributes in all things based on the mystical principles of the One.

The series of short talks will explain these more fully and will provide the participants with guidelines that can help them to live more just lives.

Justice: Definitions and Implications

Instructor: Murtaza Bachoo

Duration: 3 Sessions

Introduction: The course will introduce students to the definition of justice from scriptural and theological sources. The students will first become familiar with the terminology from the Qur'an, its root meanings, and common usages. They will then also look at how Divine justice has been defined by scholars of theology as it applies to the realm of creation and legislation. Finally, these definitions will be considered in light of social justice and activism, and the course will seek to redefine how Muslims should approach social justice within their societies.

“I have darkened my soul”: Finding Equilibrium in the Du’a of Tawbah

Instructor: Yasar Ebrahim

Duration: 3 Sessions

Introduction: The course is intended to present learners with an overview or what could be termed a philosophy of *Ṣaḥīfah al-Sajjādiyyah* by Imam Sajjād (ʿa). As the general theme of this year’s Summer Intensive Course is Justice, we will attempt to look at this concept from a personal and ethical perspective. We will focus on the thirty-first supplication of the *Ṣaḥīfah*, “the Supplication for Seeking Repentance”. Specific concepts from within the supplication will be expounded upon with a focus on practical advice and action. We will supplement and support our discussion with verses from the Holy Quran and traditions from the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) Insha Allah.

Tending Downwards: Metaphysical, Individual, and Civilizational Roots of Entropy.

Instructor: Rizwan Rashid

Duration: 3 Sessions

Introduction: Entropy is the process of degradation, degree of uncertainty, or trend towards disorder. In this course, we will examine the concept of entropy from three perspectives. The first pertains to reality and the creative order. What is the nature of reality and why must entropy exist in creation? The second pertains to the human realm of self-awareness, knowledge, and free-will. How does entropy manifest itself within the souls of individuals? What are the causes of entropy within man? The third pertains to civilizations and historical time. How is the integrity of a civilization weakened over time and what are its causes? How is this related to the idea of progress and technological advancement? These are some of the questions we hope to broach insha-Allah by taking guidance from verses of the Qur’an, words of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa), and works of our great Muslim scholars (r).

Striving for Spiritual Equilibrium through Hope and Fear

Instructor: Ali Karamali

Duration: 3 Sessions

Introduction: In this course, we will examine the concepts of hope and fear in Islam. We will determine the relationship and interplay between them and what to do to achieve a homeostasis. By understanding this balance, which is a necessary prerequisites for maintaining spirituality in an entropic world, we will explore how this can be a catalyst for establishing social and political justice.

Imam Ali (ؑa) and the Pivot of Truth: Dimensions of Justice in the Nahj al-Balāghah

Instructor: M. Mahdi Kassamali

Duration: 3 Sessions

Introduction: In a unanimously-narrated and beautiful hadith, the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) provided Muslims a yardstick when he unequivocally stated, "Ali is with the truth, and the truth is with Ali. O Allah, turn the truth wheresoever he turns."

One of the outstanding characteristics in the magnificent personality of Amīr al-Muʿminīn (ؑa) is that of his justice. It is as if the very name of Ali conjures up a notion of unwavering justice. This course will briefly introduce the Nahj al-Balāghah and then attempt to shed light on the ʿAlawī paradigm of justice by looking at various narrations taken from this blessed book.

Islam: a Panacea for all the Imbalances in the World

Instructor: Husayn el-Mekki

Duration: 3 Sessions

Introduction: The nature of this world is that there will be some trials and tests on an individual as well as communal level. The reality is that we do not always look to or see Islam as the solution to our problems. What causes us to seek out and/or embrace man-made or western theories as solutions, which may even be in opposition to Islam? What factors contribute to Muslims not always being synonymous with Islam? What implications exist if Muslims are not aware of or not looking to Islam for answers? How much does our level of understanding of Islam have to do with this phenomenon?

Due to the general impressions people have not only with Islam but with the whole idea of a divinely mandated religion/way/standard to live by, many are unable to appreciate the value of what Islam is able to provide for us, nor are they fully comprehending that Islam is holistically a solution for all aspects of life. This differs significantly from the western compartmentalized definition of religion and the modern manifestations of deviant thought positioned as religion or freedom of religion.

In this course, your participation is vital. Come prepared to class with an open mind and empty cup.

Justice of the Imam (a) of our Age

Instructor: Hassan Fatemi

Duration: 3 Sessions

Introduction: The Imam of our time (atj) is one of the strongest manifestations of Allah (swt). This short course aims to exam the justice of our Imam (atj), how it will be embodied, and its effect upon creation. With this understanding, we will get a glimpse of how justice will work when he returns to rule and extract lessons for how justice should materialize in our lives currently.

First steps towards Fairness: Family and Finances

Instructor: Assad Dharsi

Duration: 3 Sessions

Introduction: Fairness in the world has some basics, out of which the most essential is the control of the 'carnal' within. Self-purification in youth albeit easier, the endurance test sets in when self-love conflicts with Divine love in the family (especially after marriage) and in society (especially when power and money become accessible). In this course, we shall explore the first practical steps human beings have to pass through—the *fitnah* (trial) of *amwāl* (possessions) and *awlād* (children) (8:28)—in their preparation to become pieces of the puzzle that will herald the dawn of Universal Justice.

The Vanguard of Justice: Imam al-Ḥujjah and Justice in the Supplications and Visitations

Instructor: Saleem Bhimji

Duration: 3 Sessions

Introduction: One of the legacies left behind by Prophet Muḥammad and his family are the supplications (*ad'iyya*) and visitations (*ziyārāt*). These elegant compositions, replete with heart-moving and evocative words are, first and foremost, used to confess our submission to Allah and to recognize Him as the ultimate sovereign. They also serve to guide us to the means of communion with Allah. We use them to send our salutations to and remember the struggles and sacrifices of the infallibles, while they also contain historical narratives giving us a glimpse into the past, teach us how to live today, and speak to our longings for a brighter future under the guidance of the last luminary tomorrow.

Under the theme of “*The Vanguard of Justice: Imam al-Hujjah and Justice in the Supplications and Visitations*,” we will seek to understand the role of the 12th Imam as it relates to the establishment of true justice on earth as embodied in the supplications and visitations related about and by him.

We will analyze the function of both the supplication (*du'ā*) and the visitation (*ziyārah*) in changing the destiny of the human being by looking at them both as not only being a means to communicate to Allah, appealing to Him to change the situation we find ourselves in, but also as a personal catalyst for self-introspection, education and inspiration to make changes in ourselves, our families and the community. We will delve into the corpus of supplications which speak about the role of Imam al-Hujjah in establishing justice and equality upon an earth which will have been filled with injustice, inequality and oppression and will touch upon passages found in: *Du'ā al-Iftitāḥ*, *Du'ā al-Nudbah* and other supplications. We will conclude the discussion by reviewing passages from some of the commonly recited *ziyārāt* such as: *Āl Yāsīn*, *'Āshūrā*, and the *ziyārah* for Friday which give us further exposure into the Divine revolution to transform the heart of the supplicant and eventually the entire society to create the 'Just social-order'.
