

Islamic Summer Intensive Course 2020

Sisters' Component: Course Descriptions

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.

Upholding Justice by Witnessing Fairness, Goodness, and Truth

Instructor: Zainab Syeda Mirza

Duration: 4 sessions

Introduction:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ
وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ ءَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ؕ اعْدِلُوا 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.

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.

Understanding 'Adalah: Critiquing Postmodern and Godless Notions of Justice

Instructor: Fatemah Meghji

Duration: 6 Sessions

Introduction: Understanding 'Adalah: Critiquing Postmodern and Godless Notions of Justice

In this 6-session interactive module, we will analyze and critique today's postmodern Godless notions of justice. By examining the subtle and unconscious ways in which we have built our impressions of justice (often through language and culture), we will dissect if and how these secular notions can be helpful in pursuing social justice. Is it possible to have justice in a society where ethical relativism is predominant and operative with an increasingly plastic definition of truth and justice? What type of an impact does this have on true justice? We will attempt to answer these questions by looking at Imam Ali's letter to Mālik al-Ashtar in Nahj al-Balāgha and reading excerpts from Reza Shah Kazemi's "Justice & Remembrance: Introducing the Spirituality of Imam Ali (a)"

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.

“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.

A Comparative Study of Prominent Women in the Qur’an and the Bible with a focus on Justice.

Instructor: Batool Arastu

Duration: 4 Sessions

Introduction: It is commonly perceived that only male characters have been mentioned in the Qur’an. The truth is that both genders—men and women—appear in the verses. In fact, not only has the Qur’an presented female individuals but some of them have been praised and raised to the level of role models for all believers.

In this study, we shall examine two female characters: Sarah (s.a.), the wife of Ibrahim and Asiya (s.a.), the wife of Pharaoh. We shall study their role in the Qur’an as well as in the Bible. Our goal in this course will be to study each verse mentioned in regards to them and to derive lessons that would be applicable for us today.

Maintaining Justice by following the guidelines of Surah Qalam

Instructor: Zainab Arastu

Duration: 4 Sessions

Introduction: The Qur’an - a book of guidance for the mankind - encourages us to ponder over all that we see and hear rather than confirm to blind belief. We are asked to reflect upon God’s creations from the tiniest insect to the largest of animals; upon the clouds that form in the sky and pour down in the form of rain; upon the sky decorated with stars; the sun, the moon, the alteration of day and night, the lofty mountains, or the velvet green meadows. Allah asks people to ponder over the infinite might and to recognize that He has created everything and that He is the Master of every living being.

He has sent down this book – Qur’an – for our guidance and filled it with messages for us. Our goal in this class would be to ponder on its verses and learn from them. We shall be studying the commentary of Surah Qalam from the renowned scholars of both the Shia and Sunni school of thought, such as Tabatabai’s *Al Mizan*, Makarem’s *Nemune*, Arusi’s *Nur us Saqalain*, Bahrani’s *Al Burhan*. In this age, many shout for justice. What does the Quran say in its regards? Surah Qalam reminds us of the history of Islam and provides us with the best role model, the Holy Prophet (s) to live a just and balanced life. Insha’allah!
