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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ
*In the name of Allah, praise be to Allah and
Peace and Blessings upon the Messenger of Allah*

Witnesses for Allah: Our Responsibility in an Age of Injustice

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ

Allah (SWT) selected this Ummah to bear witness to His truth before humanity. A witness cannot remain silent in the face of oppression, regardless of who the oppressor or the oppressed may be.

Introduction

Every Muslim bears witness five times a day that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah and that Muḥammad (ﷺ) is His Messenger. This testimony, the *shahādah*, (*shahādat al-tawḥīd*) which is the foundation of our faith. Yet the Qur'an calls us to another testimony, one that extends beyond our words and encompasses our entire lives, i.e. *shahādah 'alā al-nās*.

Allah (SWT) says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ

"O you who believe! Stand firmly for justice as witnesses for Allah" [al-Nisa', 4:135]

This is not merely a legal testimony. It is the testimony of an entire life.

This is not the testimony of a witness in a courtroom. It is the testimony of a believer whose life reflects Allah's truth through worship, integrity, justice, and compassion. It is the testimony of an Ummah selected by Allah (SWT) to bear witness before all of humanity.

The mission of justice did not begin with the Muslim Ummah. It began with every prophet whom Allah (SWT) sent. Allah declares:

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ

"Indeed, We had been sending Our messengers with clear proofs, and We sent down with them the Book (Law) and the Balance (of rights and responsibilities) so that mankind may establish (and abide by) justice." [al-Ḥadīd, 57:25]

This magnificent āyah encapsulates the entire history of divine revelation.

Justice, therefore, is not simply a political philosophy or a social ideal; it is a divinely inspired and a prophetic mission. Every prophet confronted oppression in one form or another.

The mission remained the same throughout history, to guide humanity to Allah (SWT) through truth and justice. For this reason, the Qur'an consistently links justice with revelation. Justice is not left for humanity to discover independently; it is taught, clarified, and safeguarded through divine guidance.

Allah first sent His messengers with clear signs (*al-bayyināt*), establishing the truthfulness of their mission. He then revealed the Book (*al-Kitāb*), containing His guidance and divine laws for the people. Along with revelation, He sent down the Balance (*al-Mīzān*), the moral standard by which truth and falsehood, right and wrong, justice and injustice are distinguished.

Only after mentioning the Messenger, the Book, and the Balance does Allah (SWT) reveal the purpose: "so that mankind may establish (and abide by) justice."

The sequence is deliberate and profoundly significant. The Book precedes the Balance, and the Balance precedes justice. Humanity cannot establish lasting justice apart from divine guidance because justice requires an objective moral standard that transcends personal desire, political expediency, and social convention. Revelation does not merely encourage justice; it defines it.

This order also reminds us that justice is never an end in itself. The ultimate purpose of revelation is to guide humanity to Allah (SWT). Justice is one of the greatest fruits of living according to that guidance. The Qur'an begins with Allah (SWT) and ends with Allah. Justice occupies the path between them.

The prophetic mission therefore extended far beyond correcting individual acts of wrongdoing. Every messenger was sent to restore the proper relationship between humanity and its Creator. Once that relationship was restored, every other human relationship was transformed. Tawḥīd became the foundation upon which justice was built.

This point cannot be overemphasized. The first injustice committed in creation was not political, economic, or social, it was spiritual. Iblīs refused Allah's command to prostrate before Adam (AS) because arrogance overcame obedience. His claim of superiority, *"I am better than him"*, introduced pride, discrimination, and rebellion into creation. Soon thereafter, the sons of Adam (AS) witnessed another manifestation of injustice when Qābīl murdered his brother Hābīl out of envy and resentment. Before injustice became institutionalized in governments and societies, it was already present in the human heart.

The Qur'an therefore addresses injustice at its source. It seeks first to reform the individual before reforming society, to purify the heart before restructuring institutions, and to establish faith before establishing law. A society cannot remain just if its people are governed by greed, arrogance, hatred, and unchecked desire. Lasting justice requires moral transformation, and moral transformation begins with faith in Allah.

As history unfolded, injustice assumed many forms, yet the mission of the prophets remained remarkably consistent. Every prophet confronted the dominant corruption of his own people while calling them back to the worship of Allah (SWT).

Nūḥ (AS) called a people who had abandoned tawḥīd and become immersed in spiritual and moral corruption. Hūd (AS) confronted a civilization intoxicated by its own strength and power. Šālīḥ (AS) warned his people against abusing the blessings Allah (SWT) had entrusted to them and spreading corruption throughout the land. Shu'ayb (AS) challenged commercial fraud, dishonest trade, and economic exploitation, reminding his people that cheating in the marketplace was not merely a business offense but a betrayal of their covenant with Allah (SWT).

Ibrāhīm (AS) stood against both idolatry and political absolutism, demonstrating that no ruler possesses ultimate authority when sovereignty belongs to Allah alone. Mūsā (AS) confronted Pharaoh, whose tyranny combined political oppression, economic exploitation, and claims of divinity. Dāwūd and Sulaymān (AS) illustrated that power itself is not condemned in Islam; rather, power becomes a sacred trust when exercised with wisdom, humility, and justice. 'Īsā (AS) challenged religious formalism and hypocrisy that had obscured the spirit of revelation beneath ritual and legalism. Finally, Muḥammad (ﷺ) completed the prophetic mission by establishing a community whose foundation was tawḥīd and whose public life was characterized by justice, mercy, consultation, accountability, and the sanctity of human dignity.

Although the historical circumstances differed from one prophet to another, the mission itself never changed. Every messenger sought to liberate human beings from every form of servitude except servitude to Allah (SWT). Idolatry, tyranny, economic exploitation, tribal arrogance, racism, corruption, and moral decay are all manifestations of the same underlying disease: human beings assuming for themselves powers and authorities that belong to Allah alone.

This explains why the Qur'an never separates tawḥīd from justice. Tawḥīd is not merely a theological doctrine concerning the existence and oneness of Allah. It is the moral foundation of a just civilization. When Allah (SWT) alone is recognized as the absolute Sovereign, every human being stands equal before Him. No race possesses inherent superiority over another. No ruler enjoys unquestioned authority. No nation has the right to oppress another. Wealth does not grant moral superiority, and poverty does not strip away dignity. Every person is equally accountable before the same Lord and equally deserving of justice under His guidance.

The Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) did not inaugurate a new mission. Rather, he completed and perfected the mission entrusted to every prophet before him. With him, revelation reached its completion, but the responsibility of bearing witness did not end. The mission continued, not through new prophets, for prophethood had come to its conclusion, but through the community that accepted the final revelation and pledged itself to live by it.

This raises one of the most important questions in the Qur'an. If every prophet carried the divine mission of justice, who carries that mission after the Seal of the Prophets (ﷺ)?

The Qur'an answers that question with extraordinary clarity: *"He selected you..."* هو اجتباكم [al-Ḥajj, 22:78]

With these words, the Qur'an shifts the responsibility of bearing witness from the individual prophet to the collective Ummah. What the prophets carried individually, the Ummah is now called to carry collectively. To understand this divine trust, we must now examine one of the Qur'an's most remarkable declarations concerning the identity and mission of the Muslim community.

The Qur'an's declaration, *"He selected you, هو اجتباكم"* is one of the most profound descriptions of the Muslim Ummah found anywhere in revelation. Within these two words lies the identity, purpose, responsibility, and mission of the final community raised by Allah (SWT) for humanity.

In one of the most profound ayat of the Qur'an, Allah (SWT) says:

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ ۚ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ ۚ بَلَّةٌ أُنِيَكُمْ إِلَهُكُمْ ۚ هُوَ سَمَّكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ ۚ

"Strive for Allah as He deserves to be striven for. He has selected you and has placed no hardship upon you in the religion, the way of your father Abraham. He named you Muslims before and in this (Revelation, so that the Messenger may be a witness over you and that you may be witnesses over humanity." [al-Hajj, 22:78]

Allah (SWT) did not merely choose this Ummah; He **selected** it (*ijtabākum*). Selection always carries purpose. We were selected for a mission, to bear witness before humanity that Allah's guidance is true. This responsibility is echoed again in the second surah of the Quran, al-Baqarah, where Allah (SWT) describes Muslims as a balanced nation so that they may be witnesses over humanity while the Messenger (ﷺ) is a witness over them.

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۚ

"And thus We have made you a middle (just and balanced) Ummah so that you may bear witness over humanity, and the Messenger may bear witness over you." [al-Baqarah, 2:143]

Indeed, Allah did not merely choose this Ummah. He **selected** it **هو اجتباكم**. Selection implies purpose. No one selects without assigning responsibility. For what purpose? *"So that the Messenger may be a witness over you and that you may be witnesses over humanity."*

This is our job description. Our mission statement. We were selected to testify before humanity that Allah's guidance is truth.

What, then, does it mean to be a witness? And What does a witness do?

A witness does not conceal the truth. A witness does not distort the truth. A witness does not remain silent because speaking is uncomfortable or costly. Allah (SWT) commands:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ بَالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ ۚ

"O you who believe! Stand firmly for justice as witnesses for Allah, even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or your closest relatives..." [al-Nisa', 4:135]

Justice begins by overcoming our own biases. We must place truth before family, tribe, ethnicity, politics, nationalism, and personal interest. Whether the person involved is rich or poor, friend or foe, our loyalty remains with Allah (SWT) and His command to uphold justice. A believer's testimony cannot be purchased, intimidated, or manipulated because it belongs to Allah (SWT).

The Qur'an also teaches that this mission requires striving. Before assigning the Ummah its global responsibility, Allah commands believers to bow, prostrate, worship their Lord, and do good. Only then does He command:

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ ۚ

"Strive for Allah as He deserves to be striven for." [al-Hajj, 22:78]

Jihād, in its broad Qur'anic sense, is the lifelong struggle to uphold Allah's truth. It includes striving against the ego, resisting the whispers of shaytān, confronting false ideas, reforming moral corruption, and standing against oppression. One of the greatest instruments of this struggle is the Qur'an itself. Allah (SWT) instructed the Prophet (ﷺ):

فَلَا تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا ۚ

"Do not you yield (and obey) the disbelievers (O Prophet), but strive against them with it (the Qur'an) a mighty striving." [al-Furqān, 25:52]

Therefore, a witness is one who doesn't hide nor distort the truth. A witness doesn't remain silent because speaking is uncomfortable. A witness is one who speaks the truth if it is against himself, his parents or relatives.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ بَالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ ۚ

"O you who believe! Stand firmly for justice as witnesses for Allah, even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or your closest relatives..." [al-Nisa', 4:135]

The Qur'an reforms hearts before it reforms societies.

Every generation produces its witnesses, and every generation is tested. Our generation is no exception. We are given the opportunity to bear witness for Allah (SWT).

If we look at the world around us today, what do we see? We see Gaza, where innocent families have endured unimaginable suffering. We grieve for the innocent children of Gaza. We see Lebanon, still struggling with instability and the devastation of conflict. We grieve for civilians in Lebanon whose homes and livelihoods have been destroyed despite ongoing ceasefire efforts.

We see Iran, where war has brought uncertainty and fear to millions. We pray for the people of Iran who have endured war and uncertainty while diplomatic efforts continue.

We see refugees and immigrants fleeing violence and persecution in search of safety and dignity. We see racism that continues to deny people their God-given equality, and we see attacks on religious freedom that seek to deprive people of their right to worship their Creator. These are not merely political issues; they are moral tests. They are opportunities for this Ummah to fulfill its divine responsibility as witnesses for Allah (SWT).

Our response must never be driven by tribal loyalties, nationalism, political partisanship, or emotional impulses. It must be guided by the principles of the Qur'an. We mourn every innocent life. We reject the killing of civilians, collective punishment, terrorism, occupation, ethnic cleansing, genocide, revenge, and every form of oppression, regardless of who commits it or against whom it is committed. Our loyalty is not to governments or political parties. Our loyalty is to Allah (SWT), who commands justice. When we speak, we speak for Allah. When we defend the oppressed, we do so for Allah. When we condemn injustice, we condemn it because Allah has condemned it.

Yet our responsibility does not end with global concerns. Allah (SWT) will also ask us about the injustices within our own lives. Are we just with our spouses? Fair with our children? Honest in our businesses? Faithful to our trusts? Do we defend those whose reputations are unjustly attacked? Do we speak the truth when it is personally inconvenient? The witness for Allah is not merely an activist who condemns oppression abroad; he or she is a living testimony to justice in every aspect of life.

The credibility of the Ummah before humanity begins with the credibility of every individual Muslim before Allah (SWT). Justice begins long before it reaches the battlefield or the courtroom. It begins in the heart, in the home, in the workplace, in the masjid, in our neighborhoods, and in every interaction we have with others.

Allah (SWT) did not select this Ummah merely to worship Him within the walls of the masjid. He selected us to bear witness to His truth before humanity, to establish justice on earth, and to invite mankind to the path of salvation. This is our honor. This is our responsibility. This is our enduring legacy.

The Qur'anic Concept of Justice

To understand the Qur'anic concept of justice, one must begin where the Qur'an itself begins, not with society, government, economics, or even human rights, but with Allah. The Qur'an does not present justice as a human invention, a political ideology, or the product of social evolution. Justice originates with Allah (SWT), who is Al-'Adl, the Absolutely Just, whose knowledge is perfect, whose wisdom is absolute, and whose judgments are free from every form of prejudice, passion, or error.

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَاتِلُ الْمُفْسِدِ ۖ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٨﴾

"Allah Himself bears witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Him, the One who establishes and upholds perfect justice. So too do the angels and those endowed with true knowledge. There is no deity worthy of worship except Him, the Almighty, the All-Wise." [Āl 'Imrān, 3:18]

Because justice belongs to Allah (SWT), it can only be fully understood through the guidance He reveals.

This principle distinguishes the Qur'anic worldview from every human philosophy. Throughout history, civilizations have developed their own concepts of justice, each shaped by its culture, political order, and understanding of the human being. What one society considers just, another may condemn as unjust. Standards change with time, circumstances, and the interests of those who wield power. The Qur'an, however, anchors justice in the eternal nature of Allah (SWT). Since Allah (SWT) is the Creator of humanity, He alone possesses complete knowledge of human nature and therefore alone establishes the perfect standard of justice.

In sum, it is easy to condemn tyranny when it is far away. But Allah (SWT) will also ask us about the injustices closer to home. Are we just with our spouses? Are we fair with our children? Do we honor the rights of our employees and coworkers? Do we speak truth when it is uncomfortable? Do we defend the reputation of those who are slandered? Do we stand with the vulnerable when there is no applause to be gained? The witness for Allah is not only a voice against global injustice; he is a living testimony to justice in every aspect of his life.

The Ummah can only be a credible witness before humanity if each Muslim strives to be a truthful witness before Allah (SWT) in his or her daily life.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ

"O you who believe! Stand firmly for justice as witnesses for Allah" [al-Nisa', 4:135]

Our loyalty is not to governments. Our loyalty is not to political parties. Our loyalty is to Allah. And Allah (SWT) commands justice.

Allah (SWT) did not select this Ummah merely to worship Him in the masjid. He selected it to bear witness to His truth before humanity, to establish justice on earth, and to invite mankind to salvation. That is our honor. That is our responsibility. That is our legacy.

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