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In Pursuit of Justice

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Panel: In Pursuit of Justice

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Mazen Sa'adeh (Palestinian Authority)

In Pursuit of Justice

Why did the news of Gaza and Jericho occupy a major space in the media, while Rwanda's massacre, where more than a million people were killed, did not get the same attention? Why, during the Second World War, did the holocaust, where about six million people were killed, become a cornerstone of the world's consciousness, when at the same time, no attention was given to the killing of more than twenty million in the country which used to be called the Soviet Union?

I believe the Holocaust to be the basis of an entire system; not a system of complete understanding, but a system of a new global world, which has evolved from an interpretation of the aftermath of the Second World War. The Palestinians were the one's most victimized as a result of the Second World War. And catastrophe after catastrophe, I think what Israel was and is doing against the Palestinians will remain a stigma in the history of the Jews, and in the history of those who were responsible for these catastrophes. The Palestinians have never been responsible for a catastrophe befallen on anyone; instead, they are paying for a crime committed by others.

The Palestinians today, more than others, feel the injustice of this world. This may be because they, more than any others, are seeking any sort of justice that can protect them from the ongoing catastrophes in what is called the *Holy Land*.

Personally, I do not wish for a single atom of the Palestinian land to be holy, for a simple reason: I do not wish to suffer the agony and destruction of colonialization, any colonialization.

After some time, I presume, the world may be able to free itself from injustice and darkness in many parts of the world. I think the key to this discussion will be the posing of a different question: how did the catastrophe of the Holocaust transform the victim into the executioner?

The new world order will admit that justice was not a dream but an illusion, and that ideology was a beautiful ladder to climb to that dream, that illusion, that haunts us all—the illusion of justice on this earth in the details of everyday life. Because of this, we like to be filled with moral systems, to be covered with ideology that is made by others from a longtime ago.

We will realize that the dream was not more than a wish, in the dark areas of our souls, that we carry every day.

Early in my life, I had unusual questions that made me fly high in open spaces. I asked: why did god send more than thirteen hundred prophets and messenger to the people of the Middle East? You can add to this list of prophets: Confucius, Zaradasht and Buddha. I was puzzled over this question at that time, and I was unable to obtain an answer. I was unconvinced with what the schoolbooks were teaching that had been put in my mind and in the minds of others for centuries: that god sent his prophets to the Holy Land to spread light and faith to the world.

Later, after many years, I understood that if justice spread among our people, and if our land was not full of corruption and injustice, god would not have sent his prophets and messengers to the people. This made me look deeply into the message of religions and holy books. Each of these

books claims the Holy Land as their own. Each claims to be the chosen nation. All those statements which I understood early in my life contain in them the seeds of colonialization, and they are a form of lies and not more than a bribe that god gives to a nation—a legal passport which carries the *truth*, only so to dominate and control the earth.

I realized that the prophets and messengers failed to bring justice to the people on the earth, so they escaped upward, and promised people justice in heaven.

I said to myself, *I want justice on earth, not in heaven.*

I also realized that justice could not exist in the world while there is the presence of laws of inheritance. These laws of inheritance only repeat the production of injustice in life and in the role governments. In other words, while needs change from generation to generation, who will have the ability to fulfill their needs, unjustly, does not change. Regarding this, I realized that the revolutions will continue. For they only change who will practice injustice and with which new tools.

Justice, in my view, cannot exist when man is still the dominant factor in the society: there is no justice when a woman has only half the rights of a man.

In the above mentioned I have said, from the theoretical point, that which was not due to natural causes, but a result of unstable consciousness—death. From this prospective, justice, as a concept, was not detached in our contemporary history from the bourgeois revolution which was led by a dominant class, and which produced its interests and the interests of the whole society in unbalanced ways. This class, which was economically, as well as politically dominant, had established its stance with cultural and linguistic dominance. It also made sure that the whole society is homogeneous, both culturally and linguistically, and it has produced common morals between the rulers and the ruled. Reforms were made in those countries in which the bourgeois revolutions had occurred.

What is the relationship between justice and revolution? This question asks another question: did revolutions produce the conditions of rationality that make justice a social phenomenon? The goal is for a political power to fight illiteracy and ensures the citizen's right for education, providing the conditions which are necessary for justice: democracy, prosperity, and dealing with reality through plurality. This means looking at justice with plural perspectives that are protected by organizations and the majority of the people.

The modern revolutions were not, in my view, productive, except for the beginnings of reducing the geographical boundaries, which attributed to globalization, and replacing the old revolutions with new ones. One of these revolutions we are living in today, which is the revolution of information. This revolution has dismantled those conditions of regional and national elements for the global.

The talk about justice today is a talk about a global space that has become an open space reaching all the inhabitants of the earth.

The concept of justice has become an internal element in both nationalism and globalization at the same time. This globalized space has produced, in a clear form, the need for creating international mechanisms which enable people, wherever they are, and irrespective of their color or ethnicity, to experience justice. Creating these mechanisms ensures the understanding of the value of justice, and

a society that accepts criticism and defends freedom and looks to the future. With such concepts, seeing the value of justice is an important factor for producing a common understanding for all people. This common understanding does not make a gap between justice and progress. The striking thing is that the concept of justice, to this day, carries to those who deal with it a number of perspectives. One of these perspectives is: *no justice except in heavens*—as if justice has no value in the conditions of the living—no forgiveness and peace. Another perspective says that justice is linked to the defeated person, while the victorious in being able to talk about justice, holds firmly to his superiority.

Those two perspectives point to a human state full of contradiction and struggle. So that is why the concept of justice looks theoretically impossible or close to a dream or illusion—an idea of a person seeking higher values, who found and lost it or did not find it and never will. Others may take the questioning of the nature of justice, considering its various complexities, and find that justice is not more than a question, or something close to that. But this cannot avoid a common question: what is the meaning of justice?

The question—the dream concerning the meaning of life and the nature of the social conditions that come out of it—raises three matters for consideration when considering justice. The first is the value of imagining that which looks to the living reality in terms of plurality, leaning on dynamic and changing reality, or reality that has yet to be changed. This will lead to rebuilding reality in a way that enables it to be free from its static state. In this present reality, which has come from a previous reality, there is a chance to create a new reality, capable of changing. A reality made by force can stop the power of a dream.

The second matter to consider is the need for equality between people and their languages and their needs. Justice must come from humanity and see in its dreams a universal condition without segregation and discrimination.

As I mentioned before, all the statements that are endorsed by many of the present rulers are nothing but repetition of divine statements. These allow them to rule their countries with the sword of god.

The third matter for consideration, freedom, is essential for justice. A freedom is needed that cannot be separated from political power, censorship, and the nature of education. The main thing here is the possibility of having the individual functioning in a society, because the real meaning of freedom needs a social frame. This needs to have happen now—the present for us is the master of all times—if objective justice (if there is any) is to release all the powers of the individual, internally and externally. We can say that justice as a value does not care about ethnicity, races, nationalities and religions. No one is better than another.

There are more questions I would like to ask: what is the role of literature in the struggle between the winners and losers? This question may seem to be without any meaning as long as the real literature looks to concepts of freedom, equality, and human dignity, looking to universal values, leaving the duality of winning and losing to the fake literature.

If one sees that a particular kind of literature is the best example for all of literature, it is a form of discrimination and a tool of racism. What is a justice that is shared by the victim and the victimizer? What is left from justice when the strong leader walks on simple and powerless people?

One again, I see that the dream of justice starts and ends by respecting the human soul, and the dream of justice will not be fulfilled until the human identity is established. The human identity is dignity. The way to get justice is by defending human dignity. It is no surprise that literature flourishes in places where the rights of citizens are protected, while it walks unbalanced in the places full of lies and corruption.

I see that the force of literature comes by reaching the dream of justice, from the power of the imagination, which cannot be put in jail.