

Following the Norwegian Massacre

As-salámu ‘alaikum wa rahmatul láhi wa barakátuh!”

“A-úthu billáhi minash shaytánir rajeem. Bismilláhir rahmánir raheem.

Al hamdu lillahi nahmaduhu wanasta’eenahu, wanastagh-firuhu, wanatoobu ilayhi, wana’oothu Billaahi min shuroori an-fusinaa, wamin sayyi aati a’maalinaa.

May- Yahdillahu fa huwal muhtad, wa may- yudlill falan tajidaa lahu waliyan murshida. Wa ash-hadu an Laa ilaaha ill-Alláh, wahdahoo laa shareeka lah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhoo warasooluh”

In the Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Following the brutal Norwegian massacre of 77 Norwegian people, I would like to discuss what Islam says about killing the innocent in today’s sermon.

Allah (SWT) declares that killing an innocent person unjustly is like killing all of mankind and saving a person’s life is like saving all of mankind. In order to understand this, let’s discuss the very first murder committed on earth.

Adam and Eve had two sets of twins, two girls and two boys. In order for the population to multiply it was viable for brother and sister to marry, however both brothers wanted to marry the same sister and in a bid to win the better sister the “two sons of Adam” both offered a sacrifice to God; but only one was accepted. The brother whose offering was declined told the other brother “I will surely kill you.” In Islam murdering anyone, let alone your own brother, is a huge transgression; however the brother who had succumbed to anger and jealousy slaughtered his brother. This was henceforth known as the first murder on earth and every time somebody is murdered the brother too takes a share of sin for introducing death to mankind.

The unfortunate ending of the brother who sinned in murder is mentioned in the following verse: ***“His carnal, evil-commanding soul prompted him to kill his brother, and he killed him, thus becoming among the losers” (Maida 5:30)***

Following the reminder of this sad incident, Allah (SWT) pronounces the following to reflect the great magnitude of sin committed in murder.

“He who kills a soul unless it be (in legal punishment) for murder or for causing disorder and corruption on the earth will be as if he had killed all mankind; and he who saves a life will be as if he had saved the lives of all humankind.”

Drawing on this hadith we see clearly that the atrocious killing of the innocent in Oslo is condemned in Islam. No act of terror can be accepted or justified. Terrorism and violent extremism should find no shelter or refuge in any society or religion.

Following the shocking tragedy, some news outlets reported that the purported motive behind the killing was to “save Europe” from Islam, which is quite ironic as Islam prohibits any kind of harmful act let alone slaughter. If the murderer had been

knowledgeable about the teachings of Islam, he would have been aware that Islam is a religion of peace and forbids any kind of violent behaviour.

We are currently living through a very difficult era, one which feeds prejudice and hostility towards Islam. It is our duty to set good examples of a true Muslim brother or sister, if not through words through our actions.

I'd like us all to think about what we have done for Islam today. What intentions did you wake up with this morning? And did you carry them through? Every step or action you take will be magnified and criticized,. It can be the very thing which either brings communities together or destroys them. Please remember that we live in a very diverse country and not everyone is as educated about the requirements of Islam as we are. Let's take this opportunity to stand by one another and build a stronger community. Islam necessitates diversity, dialogue, respect, cohesion, freedom and loyalty to the law of the land. Let's make sure that our actions reflect these values.

I would like to conclude this khutbah with a touching letter written by a Norwegian brother whose friends were murdered during the Oslo attacks. Let us pray for all those who lost their lives in Oslo and to all those who are the victims of terrorist attacks all over the world. May Allah (SWT) give patience and strength to their families insallah. Ameen!

Dear Anders Behring Breivik,

A lot of the friends I met at Utoya are dead and you are the perpetrator. You are the man who, by coincidence, didn't kill me. I was lucky.

You might think that you have won. You might think that you have ruined something for the Labour Party and for people around the world who stand for a multicultural society by killing my friends and fellow party members.

Know that you have failed.

You haven't only made the world stand together, you have set our souls on fire and should know we've never stood together as we do now. You talk about yourself as a hero, a knight. You are no hero. But you have created heroes. On Utoya that warm day in July, you created some of the greatest heroes the world has seen, you unified people from all over the world. Black and white, man and woman, red and blue, Christians and Muslims.

You made your victims martyrs, immortals, and you have shown the world that when one person can show as much hatred as you have done, imagine how much love we can show when we stand together? People who I thought hated me have given me hugs on the street, people I haven't been in contact with for years have written 300 to 400 words about how much it means to them that I survived. What can you say about that? Have you broken anything? You have united us.

You have killed my friends, but you haven't killed our cause, our opinions, our right to express ourselves. Muslim women got hugs of sympathy from random Norwegian women on the street and your goal was to protect Europe from Islam? Your actions worked against its purpose.

You deserve no thanks; your plan failed. A lot of people are angry, you are the most hated person in Norway. I am not angry. I do not fear you. You can't touch us, we are greater than you. We do not answer evil with evil, as you wanted it. We fight evil with good. And we win.

~ Ivar Benjamin Østebø, aged 16.

Originally posted by Ivar Benjamin Østebø on his Facebook profile in Norwegian, translation by The Independent