

A Special Tribute to Taha Jabir Al-Alwani

A man of his time and a pioneer of Islamic and Qur'ānic thought, the American Muslim scholar Dr. Taha Jabir Al-Alwani lived his life serving humanity. He dreamt of a peaceful world where people lived together as one, undivided by the vile forces of conflict, greed, hate, bigotry, ignorance, and selfishness. Before departing this world on March 4, 2016, he wrote the piece "I Am Muslim." It is essentially a mission statement for Muslims around the world — a message to uphold the true, untainted values of Islam. In this inaugural issue, we would like to share with you his final written words that truly embody the mission of the *Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice*:

I sanctify justice, celebrate freedom, and honor humanity. While demonstrating gentleness with the weak, I remind the strong that there is always someone who is stronger than him. I advise the rich to fulfill the rights of the poor, while I remind the poor that the rich among them have been entrusted with God's wealth to fulfill the rights of the poor.

I love goodness and gentleness and reject evil. I invite to piety and reject violence. I cling to the rope of guidance and uphold the truth.

I fight lies and deceit and forbid corruption. I seek reconciliation to the extent possible. I yearn for peace and despise war. I love humility and strive for a good life.

I stand in awe of death, yet I believe that this is a bridge I must cross, to cross from a fleeting life to one that is eternal. I desire the best ending and seek refuge in God from the contrary. I love heaven and detest hellfire. I seek security and hate instability. I abhor hatred. I am not profane, destructive or corrupt.

My lineage extends to Adam and Eve, for Adam is my father and Eve my mother. All of humanity are my sisters and brothers. I do not disdain, betray or humiliate a single human being. Rather, I strive to guide human beings, light their path and walk with them along the path to heaven. I seek to be a roadblock between them and falling into hellfire.

I love the universe and belong to it. I love all my neighbors in the universe, including its trees, plants, rocks, animals, mountains and rivers. God, most Majestic, has created me from this earth. To this earth, He will return me to it and from this earth, He will restore me once again. To this earth, I belong and for its cultivation, I call.

My desire is to elevate the truth; my goal is to spread peace and security in it. My means is to struggle with my own soul in order for peace to be

realized and security to prevail. I invite to God, to Whom is my ultimate return.

Peace is my objective. Security is my desire. Terrorism is my enemy. Conflict is my adversary. Inner peace is my pursuit.

Do you recognize me? Do you know on this earth anyone who parallels this description?

I am Muslim.

By Taha Jabir Al-Alwani