

Identity, Empowerment and Change, Handout 20

Fairness For All – Some Words and Dates

Mutual assistance and charity

The Jews shall bear their public expenses and so will the Muslims. Each shall assist the other against any violation of this covenant. Their relationship shall be one of mutual advice and consultation, and mutual assistance and charity rather than harm and aggression... Charity and goodness are clearly distinguishable from crime and injury, and there is no responsibility except for one's own deeds. God is the guarantor of the truth and good will of this covenant. This covenant shall constitute no protection for the unjust or criminal.

Mithaq-e-Madina (Covenant of Madina) 622 CE

No superiority

Allah says, 'O People, We have created you from one male and one female and made you into tribes and nations, that you may know one another. Verily, in the sight of Allah, the most honoured amongst you is the one who is most God-conscious. There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab or for a non-Arab over an Arab, nor for the white over the black, nor for the black over the white, except in God-consciousness.

Final Sermon of the Prophet Muhammad, c. 630 CE

We shall not go against him

No free man shall be arrested or imprisoned, or deprived of his property, or outlawed or exiled, or in any way destroyed... we shall not go against him, unless by legal judgement of his peers, or by the law of the land.

Magna Carta, Clause 39, 15 June 1215

A civil body politick

We whose names are underwritten ..., do by these presents solemnly & mutually in ye presence of God, and one of another, Covenant & Combine ourselves together into a Civil Body Politick, for our better ordering & preservation & furtherance of ye ends aforesaid....

The Mayflower Compact, 11 November 1620

Detained by your Majesty's special command

Nevertheless ... divers of your subjects have of late been imprisoned without any cause showed; and when for their deliverance they were brought before your justices ... and their keepers commanded to certify the causes of their detention, no cause was certified, but that they were detained by your Majesty's special command ... and were returned back to several prisons, without being charged with anything to which they might make answer according to the law.

Petition of Right, drafted by Sir Edward Coke, agreed by King Charles I on 7 June 1628

Parliaments held frequently

... That the pretended power of suspending the laws or the execution of laws by regal authority without consent of Parliament is illegal.... That levying money for or to the use of the Crown by pretence of prerogative, without grant of Parliament ... is or shall be granted, is illegal... and that for redress of all grievances, and for the amending, strengthening and preserving of the laws, Parliaments ought to be held frequently.

Bill of Rights Act (England) 16 December 1689

The consent of the governed

...[t]hat all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed....

Declaration of Independence, United States, 4 July 1776

The business of the state

You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or any other place of worship... You may belong to any religion or caste or creed - that has nothing to do with the business of the State.... We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State. We should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State.

Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, founder of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, presidential address at the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, 11 August 1947

Endowed with reason

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948

Sacred and inviolable

Human life is sacred and inviolable and every effort shall be made to protect it. In particular no one shall be exposed to injury or death, except under the authority of the Law. Just as in life, so also after death, the sanctity of a person's body shall be inviolable. It is the obligation of believers to see that a deceased person's body is handled with due solemnity.

Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights, 19 September 1981 (21 Dhul Qaidah 1401)

United in our diversity

We ... recognise the injustices of our past; honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land; respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

Preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 4 December 1996

Equality of opportunity

A public authority shall in carrying out its functions have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; between men and women generally; between persons with a disability and persons without; and between persons with dependants and persons without.

Final report of the Northern Ireland Bill of Rights Forum, 31 March 2008

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