

**Fadhil Thamir (Iraq)**

### **In Pursuit of Justice: Can We Make a Dream True?**

For me, and perhaps for most genuine writers, justice is not merely a legal or the political term related to achieving righteousness or equity in social life and international relations. More broadly, it is also a sort of human dream, fascinating and ethereal, that always slips away and escapes before being touched or achieved.

All through the ages, men sought to accomplish justice in their lives by various means and ways. Simple men, philosophers, prophets, men of religion, reformers, poets, artists, revolutionaries and thinkers tried to personify justice in order to be able to grasp it or see it as a concrete thing rather than as an abstract idea.

This fact amply illustrates that justice is changeable and relative and could be represented in different forms and aspects. Thus, each person may have his own concept or version for justice. But this subjective and deconstructive hypothesis does not imply that the notion of justice can not be formulated objectively.

For Plato, justice is one of the four main virtues, along with wisdom courage, and moderation. In his *Republic* Plato tries to apply the idea of justice theoretically and philosophically. On the other hand, Aristotle believes that justice implies the respect of all the rules that govern and organize the relationships between individuals.

Both Plato and Aristotle assume that reason and thinking can distinguish justice from injustice. All religions claimed to accomplish and maintain justice whether on earth or in heaven .The Islamic philosopher Al-Farabi, in the Middle Ages wrote of a *Virtuous City*, in which justice prevails.

The English thinker Sir Thomas More created his *Utopia* as a symbol for justice on earth. Artists devised iconography for justice, a steady balance with parallel and equal scales. Sometimes, literary critics and moralists defend the concept of what is called *poetic justice* in literature, where proper distribution of reward and punishment is performed by a literary work.

Whether justice can be achieved and implemented peacefully or rather by force is a controversial problem. Some believe that justice can be achieved legally, by applying laws fairly. Others believe that justice ought to be sought by means of revolutions, or even dictatorship. It is also widely believed that democracy, human rights, policy of non-interference, and full respect of national and ethnic identities of different nations and minorities are guarantees for erecting the kingdom of justice all over the world. In my country, the ancient Mesopotamia, Hammurabi founded the first legislation in history to lay rules that maintain justice. Nowadays, my people in Iraq have succeeded, in spite of all the challenges, to write down its permanent constitution which tries to lay legal rules for achieving justice through respecting human rights.

Some socialist thinkers support the idea that real justice cannot be maintained without socialism and radical social reforms, whereas democrats, and liberals, such as Francis Fukuyama, propose what is called the *end of history* where the flourishing of justice cannot be accomplished without free-market systems of capitalism and globalization.

So, justice seems for most people a glimmering dream that cannot be captured or grasped. It is part of our aspiration to discover truth and freedom.

Can justice then confront all types of challenges in our modern world, i.e. challenges of narrow-mindedness, extremism, terrorism, chauvinism, exploitation, racism and aggression? We hope so, otherwise, we will all be slaves to the forces of tyranny, violence and barbarism.

We must pray to make justice prevail for us as individuals and for people of the world, in particular those who suffer from poverty, disease, tyranny, and dictatorship. And our responsibility as writers and intellectuals is not just to pray, but also to work and act to defend values of justice everywhere.