

## **our souls are not tethered, they radiate everywhere**

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salaamz (with a z), xxx. come into this space with me, and leave the flutter of danger outside. take off your shoes, there is plentiful hand sanitiser and here are the masks. you are more than welcome to lie down, the textiles are comfortably cushioning. you can exhale, and your stories are not only believed, but inherently an indispensable part of us all, of the whole.

we refuse surgical detachment of our souls from our bodies from our minds a flattening; instead, we reach outwards to every part of the globe, a calling out to siblings who think the same sentences of salvation we do, with far less chance of success. we know the challenges inherent in existing even within empire's core.

notice the slight intake of anxious breath before entering a space supposedly for all disabled people. what do we silence about ourselves in order to receive disjointed care, disjointed community? why should we care for these options?

meeting you all feels like a breath of relief. we are all creating against the lowering ceilings, the closing-in walls. our imaginations transcend concrete and distance and threat of fire.

who is an ideal disabled and ill person amidst continued imperial genocides?

observe the following truths we live with as if on a screen, that we can close and dismiss at will:

if you're in a zone under settler colonialism, the ideal disabled one is dead, or unable to save yourself and your families, you aren't in contact with the outside world, you are fundamentally bombable. you are vaporised or burnt to ash or buried by rubble or dirt or bullets or your relatives' bodies above you. you are drowned. or you exist with the aftermath of torture in many forms, with no healthcare since they killed the doctors. your pain must continue with no relief.

if you are in a country that supports colonisation actively, you remember that the hospitals you frequent are those allowed to survive. within them are roadblocks to your salvation. your pain must continue with no relief. you and your families are not the priority, even as so many healthworkers from your communities self-sacrificed in a plague.

you do not bring up genocidal violence stretching back interminable decades, you do adhere to false equivalencies, a 'both sides' inanity.

your muslimness must be artificially extracted from your identity as a disabled person, your racialised existence there to season the disability community with 'diversity' and a sense of being welcoming.

your cPTSD must be polite and severed from its source, from your intergenerational trauma, from the current news cycle. you must discuss coping with symptoms divorced from cause, and this coping must not go into depth about your spiritual needs and wants.

those who believe you as a whole being must also be marginalised. community cannot be your answer.

your disability groups will be led by white people who believe in 'disability rights', not the term 'disability justice' as coined by queer crips of colour. collective sins invalid, also a prior concept similarly found in thousands of indigenous cultures around the world in different guises, before ableist imperialism. in these groups, you are assumed a citizen with rights to public funds.

we cannot separate body and mind, and thus say bodymind. but evidently we must remove or silence shalat, dzikir, zakat fitrah, fasting, prayer as things that keep some of us alive and connected to lineage and future, help some of us believe in a future where we are accepted as whole. in indonesian, jiwa raga means soulbody.

you, my sisters, have been telling me to tell everyone: don't change us. don't require a wholesale reconstruction of a human being at cellular level to fit into

societies run by our oppressors. yet the outside says to deny your flesh's myriad dimensions and reconstruct everything.

your therapising must be likely to come with a dollop of making others 'uncomfortable', of explanation. you do not have mental space to create a diagram of the five pillars.

you must be painted as homo- and transphobic, even if you're queer or trans. your communities deserve to live only if they admit their whole societies are built on a queerphobia. do not mention how all that came with 'enlightenment', imperialism and colonial laws, how muhammad pbuh scolded a non-binary member of his congregation only for gossiping, for betraying the trust of the women. how a medieval muslim surgeon crossed out a deadname and changed his patient's sex. how queer sex was a natural part of medieval muslim life, just read the ancient astrologers.

you must argue and you are expected to disclose, to vomit up everything in hopes of 'understanding'. do not remember that true empathy does not come with suspicion or caveats.

your must play down your rise in heart rate when receiving 'care 'from those who might look down on you in hijab.

you must prefer a hijabless life, you must not 'appear 'sick through the less-human filter through which you apepar to many clinical staff. if you yell in pain in an ER, you may in my personal experience be yelled at to be quiet. this may cause you to stop screaming when under level 10 pain. you must remain silent.

you might waste time trying to assuage the guilt of white people in your life, who want to centre themselves.

END

you may dispel the aforementioned screen at any point, and i encourage you to do so now. it was presented to you in order for us to understand that none of us are imagining things, and that there is power in naming them.

we teach our children islamic philosophies that have adapted to local cultures the world over, syncretic in ways that make our cosmologies and world views a vast prism of multilingual keys to the self, to familial peace in ways that make sense and align with home soils.

subhanallah

walhamdulillah

wa laa illaaha illallah

our husbands or male partners are not inherently 'oppressive', even as certain mosques may be. and even then, for those in sharper situations, this is our fight, not for outsiders who are more than happy to annihilate our ancestral societies and call them misogynist and therefore deserving of white phosphorus. muslim men and non-binary people deserve their whole souls to be protected too. disabled people among them deserve unflinching belief.

inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi roji'un vast mourning these horizons feel like constant danger the children are screaming and tuesdays demand we still queue and be still when we feel the wailing rise up amidst primal screams of millions of protestors welling up through our eyes.

grief is a continuous white cloth unfurling over our heads, and we have been trying to find others for whom this is not an optical illusion, but felt reality, cellular impact, gasping withheld in front of others but needing a just release.

our bodyminds are all ill or disabled in vastly different ways; even with the same conditions on paper, look at our different families and life stories and wants and different islams we grew up with and different tongues within our own. look at all we can tell each other about.

look at how frequently we can still summon laughter!

we believe everything about each other.

we want to know each other. we want to be known, we want our wholeness, our souls to rise up into the hillscares we draw and beyond the cycles of disbelief we sketch, our voices record our persistence and our fingers type out more evidence of our lives, our soveryprecious lives.

i asked us all to think of past and present and future as continuous and intertwined planes, as per many of our languages that do not have time tenses. we exist in all the time zones and chronotypes, and i thank you for affirming that reality with me.

our pasts are full of thorns, yet our futures, where our minds also exist, contain hope in a solid state, a firm conception of mutual support, stemming from mutual belief, even if we do not and cannot tell each other every single detail of what we have survived.

the point of gathering is to hold each other, our surviving bodyminds, the ache that persists is assuaged by this knowing. masya allah. we practice or don't in so many different rhythms, but what matters is our continuing to live. we support all the ways we choose to punctuate our day with reminders that life is for something, that we are not here in vain, that what we experienced, though no one should experience it, requires a loving and a holding that comes from solidarity, a relief. a sheen that comes over us in the presence of each other.

you have all been so kind and generous with your time and with your stories. i cannot thank you enough for all you continue to make me feel. my bodymind has always needed to know yours exist, and all the others i have come across in life, that i hope you will also find more of. we must find belief in each other, and with each other create more belief, more years and more ramadhan kareems. all your creations depicting futures soft with light, we have seen it.

bismillah is traditionally said at the beginning, but we can always be beginning again.

bismillahirrahmanirrahim.

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