



*Unleashing and harnessing the full capacity inherent in the group intellect.*

## **Balancing Individual Rights and Responsibilities with Societal Rights and Responsibilities: Constructing a Better Approach to the Chronic Issues of Substance Abuse, Criminalization and Mass Incarceration**

### **CWSC Resolution on Criminal Justice and Drug Policy Reform Adopted February 22, 2016**

With the Name of Our Creator, The Merciful Benefactor, The Merciful Redeemer

*"...By the Soul and He Who perfected it, then inspired it to understand what is wrong and what is right for it;  
Indeed he succeeds who purifies it, and indeed he fails who corrupts it."*

**Al-Qur'an, Chapter 91 (Ash Shams), v. 7-10.**

### **PROLOGUE**

The paradigm for which the Community Wide Shuraa Conference, Inc. (CWSC) and endorsing institutions offer this resolution, is rooted in both faith and science, a combination of disciplines with an illustrious history in Al-Islam,<sup>1</sup> beginning with the first verse of its Scriptural Revelation to the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) over 1,437 years ago, a verse recently shared with the world by U.S. President Barack Hussein Obama on February 3, 2016, at Baltimore, Maryland, United States.

The first word of the first five verses revealed is an intellectual exhortation toward enlightenment—*Iqraa* or *Read* and it continues, "*Read in the Name of thy Lord and Cherisher Who created—created man from a clot of mere congealed blood, read and thy Lord is Most Bounteous Who taught man the use of the pen; taught man that which he knew not...*" **Al-Qur'an, Chapter 96 (Al Alaq), v. 1-5.**

We begin this discussion and subsequently adopt a resolution seeking to be fully cognizant of all of the complexity and nuances the subject matter demands. Indeed by citing the two Qur'anic verses in our introduction, we are discretely and emphatically asserting our belief that the optimal solutions to the chronic issues of substance abuse including the demand for illicit drugs and their unlawful production and distribution, and the resulting societal response of punishment with an ever increasing harsher ostracism of low level offenders in particular, through mass incarceration and stiffer prison sentences, lie in the unified realm of both faith and science.

Before one can find a solution, he or she must believe a solution exists and can indeed be found, and then properly applied to remedy not only the symptoms, but the root cause of a problem.

## **RESOLVED**

Any solution to the chronic and growing crisis of substance abuse and addiction must be viewed as a continuum with the first level being prevention. At its most fundamental level, the current crisis remains one of supply and demand. That is, there is a drug user and a drug producer; and at the risk of oversimplification from reliance upon the discipline of economics, eliminating one end of the supply channel ends the crisis.<sup>2</sup> The question arises how does one eliminate the drug user or more aptly drug use?

### **Focus on Prevention**

At the prevention stage of the continuum, the current debate as to if addiction is a disease is moot. For the question is not one of disease pathology, but one of social psychology and the moral personal, family and community responsibilities in that order that serve as buffers to prevent substance abuse. At this stage, the familiar adage from one of the U.S. Constitution's Founding Fathers aptly applies: "*An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.*"<sup>3</sup> Under the circumstances, the benefit of prevention is existentially immeasurable in the saving of lives, families, communities and trillions of dollars lost now to criminal prosecution and defense, long-term containment of human beings, devastated families and communities on a generational scale.

In addition to the economic losses we endure, there is the opportunity cost not only resulting from diverted public funds that could be used for education, housing, health and the like, but also the lost opportunity cost of millions of would be productive citizens, leaders, contributors...teachers, doctors, lawyers, and all that a well functioning society might otherwise produce...now just burning scraps laid upon the heap or lost in the chinks of poor reasoning, misdiagnosis and a cruel system disproportionately applied to those least able to defend themselves.

Direct anti-drug campaigns targeted at children Pre-K to age five remain essential. Parenting and mentoring examples speak louder than words to older youth and young adults. Prevention must also come in the form of greater personal responsibility undergirded by truly quenching the thirst in the individual intellect and soul to find real meaning in our lives and consequently our place in the world, and to help the next generation find theirs; we do so by returning to the greatest reservoir of social and moral conscience from which our man-made laws are derived and have taken shape over millennia—our religions and our faiths which help us define man's relationship to his Creator, man's relationship to man, and man's relationship to society. A failure to see that the solution to substance abuse lies in the realm of faith and science leaves us to the fate of disjointed reasoning and the law of unintended consequences.

We, from the parents, to extended family, to the church, mosque, synagogue and all temples of faith, to the schools and daycare centers, to the youth activity centers, to the city council, state legislatures, the congress and White House to the United Nations, we must help children develop into empowered citizens and help them discover the tools given them at birth to cultivate the greatest gift given them by their Creator in their soul and in the power of their intellect to know what is good as well as what is harmful for them. Our children must know they have the capability to reject not only the illicit drug of heroin produced in the desperate barrios of Mexico and South America or trafficked over the border from Canada; but also the cocaine, methamphetamine, marijuana, and MDMA brought into our brown,

black, white, yellow or red neighborhoods in America, and the homegrown intravenous terrorism in the form of meth labs dotting the landscape of both rural and urban America.<sup>4</sup>

*“Paradise lies at the feet of the mother.”* —**Prophet Muhammed Ibn Abdullah (S)**

But long before we look to the state house and the White House, we must look to our house...our home, where the first teacher, the mother, traditionally builds the character and personality for her child...a child for which she herself should be old enough to not only bear, but to rear according to the best systems of knowledge in parenting and family life. The mother who instills either the values of belief and accountability, by personal example, in her child...that the ego must serve something greater than itself, lest she unwittingly becomes a drug dealer with the birth of her crack or cocaine addicted offspring, must be willing to sacrifice as previous generations have for a better future for her child. She can no longer passively listen to what popular culture gives our minds to feed the next generation and then mimic in her lifestyle, Luther’s lyric: *“If Loving You Is Wrong, I Don’t Wanna Be Right.”*<sup>5</sup> No she [and he] has to be right based on the proven values that have been the saving force for mankind for generations. You see, we have come full circle since the sixties in hopefully realizing that you and I can’t simply do whatever we want and it only affect us and no one else...that there is indeed a price to be paid individually and collectively for reckless personal decision making, the domino effects of which can last beyond a generation.

The experiments of promiscuity and lackadaisical morals must end. The experimentation with illicit drugs, pharmaceutical drugs, alcohol and binge drinking and even looking for a high to dull the pain in a can of paint thinner and other harmful self-destructive conduct must end, regardless of whether it comes with a criminal conviction; it can end, but the preceding activities cannot end until the experiment with family life and erosion of stable two-parent family values come to an end. We must return to the reservoir of knowledge that has guided mankind to a greater and greater destiny, lest we lose ourselves to the laws of unintended consequences.

Yes, first our mothers, properly prepared themselves, must be capable of being on the front lines of the drug prevention buffer. And then father must be there to support her. Some of the best help for family life and the future generations of this nation and all global citizens, are of course jobs with living wages, opportunities to own businesses and expanded productivity and wealth creation that can sustain safe and secure, drug-free communities, while creating viable tax bases for good schools, parks and recreation facilities, hospitals and a pro-growth economic environment that encourages reinvestment in infrastructure and attraction of global business in a system of fair taxation, and not simply fair for business, but fair for the first organized unit of government and business—the family household.

All the above must be brought to bear to strengthen the drug prevention buffer.

*“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”* —**Holy Bible, Matthew 6:10**

Simultaneously along with a renewed and urgent call for greater personal responsibility and accountability against the winds of political correctness, must be the eradication of public policies, business practices and *media* entertainment trends that crack and eviscerate the substance abuse prevention buffer and disarm families and communities of the very tools or protections they need to be effective parents and institutions.

Working families and especially poor, rural and minority families and communities can better arrest the home and school to substance abuse and drugs to prison pipeline, when they can have access to affordable housing in rising value neighborhoods free from pollutants and poisoned waters coming from their taps; they can give brighter futures to their children by first having the time to be there for their children instead of needing to work 40 hours per week on one job and having to take on another because of corporate employers depressing wages in favor of high dividends, executive bonuses and artificially simulating stock prices for next quarter's shareholders' report, despite the fact their coffers are overflowing from the revenues generated by the sweat of their underpaid workers and with public bailouts, and corporate welfare in the form of tax subsidies and welfare benefits received by their labor force because of depressed wages, and of course arcane tax regulations that allow U.S. corporations to move their tax liabilities offshore. Then there are the lobbyists representing the same corporate interests who are paid to influence the legislatures so that the last avenue for redress for economic and financial wrongs are cut off at the pass by forcing citizens to surrender their constitutional rights at the door of the courtroom only to be forced down the hall to arbitration with a deck of business cards stacked against them. Or what of our political systems including our campaign and electoral processes now awash in super pac monies? We watch while voting protections suffer regression and an already low participation rate suffers from suppression, each slowly withering away the process by which the most disenfranchised can change the very circumstances that oppress them, including oppressive public policies in the war on drugs.<sup>6</sup>

Minority families and communities like other families and communities need positive net worth to create better outcomes for future generations. What they don't need are deliberate targeting by courts, unscrupulous politicians and municipal officials targeting the poor with spurious nuisance fines to collect and transfer yet more wealth to those who least need it while placing a disproportionate tax burden for city maintenance and infrastructure on the poor as seen in Ferguson, Missouri. What they don't need is redlining by banks with the complicity of federal regulation masking unfair housing as fair housing policy. What they don't need is deliberate targeting by banks with mortgage products designed to siphon off home equity and net worth.<sup>7</sup> What families don't need are usurious interest rates on consumer purchases and deceptive student loans and some predatory for-profit colleges destroying real opportunities to education and careers while leaving insurmountable debt on the backs of the not yet working poor.

Or what about our health care policy that stifles creativity in lost entrepreneurship and new industry or product development, that keeps mothers and fathers tied to a tenuous corporate rope fearful of leaving an oppressive position paying disparate and lower wages to a female because she is female, or to a minority because he is a minority, or either one suffering unfair and disparate treatment or harassment?

Yes, what about a health care system beckoning for improvement at the federal level while local governments deny coverage to the most vulnerable among us while watching costs precipitously shift to families through premiums and deductibles and limited plans and the annual rate for medical care costs rise, while comparable health care outcomes remain steady in comparison with other developed economies? Included in the healthcare reform observation and debate too are rising prices for prescription medicines that are growing ever more narcotically potent with the side effects listing seemingly longer than the benefits courtesy of big pharma and a medical community accustomed perhaps more to treating the symptoms than finding the root cause, because insurers don't allow sufficient time with a patient to discuss root causes. What might happen to a patient exposed to such a health care system? Might he or she be enticed to find help elsewhere if his or her salary or medical plan no longer affords them the luxury of the high price relief of that big pharma super narcotic remedy that

has now created a chemical dependency in the brain that's far worse than the original pain? It is at this stage, we readily assert there is a chemical dependency and likely subsequent disease of the body and human spirit. Pharmaceuticals can be the embodiment of an unintended consequence. It may be prudent to therefore *require* patients being prescribed narcotics for more than the briefest period of time to take a course on addiction and substance abuse as a condition of being prescribed the medication so as to reduce the chance of substance abuse. The prophylactic cost benefit may be justified.

Our media and entertainment industries including music, film and television, must pull back from the brink of ever more lowering standards that claim to reflect where the public is in terms of values and mores, yet appear to be instead leading the public via its small group of writers, producers, and entertainment executives, down a morass of programming with higher and higher violent intensity, sexual promiscuity, and glamorization of substance abuse. Perhaps families will find greater allies in faith-based institutions and communities willing to go beyond mere interfaith dialogue, and toward interfaith collaboration to directly take on the juggernaut of entertainment and communication venues feeding our lowest appetites for all addictions.

The *all addiction* should also include alcohol that is popularly glamorized, and is arguably in many settings, a common gateway to marijuana as surely as marijuana is a gateway to more illicit drugs. Not mentioning alcohol in the discussion on drug addiction and the fight against substance abuse, gives the non-use of a red herring an interesting and invisible twist. Perhaps alcohol is not included anymore, because that industry, like gambling has been embraced as a public good because of the derivation of taxes from both. But beware of the law of unintended consequences.

*“Two men look out through the same bars...one sees the mud, and one the stars.”*

—Frederick Langridge

Have we undermined our argument for personal responsibility and accountability in the face of perhaps multiple systemic failures? No, for despite the environment, every individual must still continue to be encouraged through faith, their family and community to exert him or herself, to seek the higher purpose in life. Furthermore, could all the structural problems related above really have tentacles into the issues related to substance abuse, and the sometimes ill-conceived public policies such as those controlling criminalization and mass incarceration?

We believe the definitive answer is *yes*, and there are many more related issues of glaring social injustices and unintended consequences of public policies that reduce the protective buffer against substance abuse.

### ***Eliminating the Supply Side***

*“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”*—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The global community is now more than ever a part of our local communities. The structural and systemic issues recounted earlier that are eroding the middle class in the U.S. and lowering the buffer zones protecting us from social ills like substance abuse have their corollaries in other parts of the world. We must work jointly with other nation states to address similar and worse circumstances, especially in our hemisphere.

It is clear we don't have the luxury of dealing with only one end of the distribution chain. Illegal drug trafficking is a threat to a nation's national security and a threat to global security as trafficking can be used to fund terrorists operations. Consequently, the necessity to end international drug trafficking, the cartels, and production at the point of inception cannot be understated.

We earlier mentioned there is the drug user and the producer and that eliminating either end of the supply channel ends the crisis theoretically. The question here is how does one eliminate the drug supply? While both ends of the drug economic equation require attention, it seems logical to ask which is easier, removing the demand or the supply, and then perhaps adopt a policy that favors one strategy over the other in terms of resource allocation.

Foreign policy engagement in modified nation building, beneficial trade policies, crop substitutions and incentive strategies that discourage production are worth pursuing over the long-term. With respect to answers to the equally difficult issues of interdiction, local, national and international law enforcement and border control issues, perhaps a suggestion that comes from CWSC's mission statement which is to unleash and harness the full capacity inherent in the group intellect, may be of benefit. The group intellect in terms of problem solving can have *eureka moments* when interdisciplinary intellect and resources are brought to bear to help reset paradigms.

If we are indeed serious about *eradicating* the drug problem, then why not treat it as we would a pathogen endangering public health, and necessitating outright eradication? We believe it could be beneficial to have current law enforcement, intelligence and other traditional interdiction agencies engage the economics and pathological disease prevention and control communities and perhaps other non-traditional intellectual partners to compare how destruction of distribution channels in economic theory and destruction of pathogens in communicative disease outbreaks can be brought to bear on the illegal drug supply.

## **Focus on Intervention & Treatment**

*"The mission is to combat the needless waste of human and material resources..."*

—Imam Dr. W. Deen Mohammed

Prevention alleviates intervention. But lest the argument be made that this resolution fails to address those already fallen victim to substance abuse, we now turn our attention to intervention, the second ladder in the continuum of strategies to regain our families and communities and nations from the clutches of drugs. Before you can treat the patient, you have to stop the bleeding.

Intervention refers to all remedies<sup>8</sup> at the individual, family, institutional, community and state levels to protect the individual and the society, with the proper balance that society ought not suffer from the undue individual breaches of the civil contract between citizen and state and conversely, the individual should not be treated unjustly by an overbearing state with punishments that obliterate due process and make a mockery of the term and intent for rehabilitation. What we should consider:

- **Equipping families with more tools** at the faith-based level and from community education outreach using the disciplines of psychiatry, psychology, and biochemistry based on the latest scientific research. Families are on the front lines of engagement, particularly from ex-inmate re-entry programs in which the offense was drug related and the ex-inmate has gone through or going

through treatment. For minority communities of color in particular that bear the brunt of incarceration and the resulting broken families, there is already existing a burden on the black middle class to extend financial and other resources helping family members, even without the added issue of substance abuse. Families need to know more about understanding the treatment cycle and how to truly help without inadvertently enabling drug dependency and learned helplessness.

- **Funding more independent research** on the brain and chemical dependency connection such that we are more confident in the clinical approaches for chronic dependency.

- **Expanding faith-based outreach** in the corrections system including connecting an inmate's religious advisors with medical and mental health specialists. We know that faith or religious-based education has a proven track record demonstrating the power to reform the most hardened drug addicts even inside the prison system. The basis of such reform lies in its ability to empower the user without utilizing bridge drugs to kick the habit by creating faith-based and cultural pathways to recovery.<sup>9</sup>

- **Ensuring neighborhood policing is fair**, non-racially discriminatory, and citizen support focused. Streets should not be *beats*, but pathways to engaging citizens as partners, and encouraging youth not to be afraid of police, but to see themselves in blue, someday working in an honorable career in their own neighborhoods—neighborhoods where citizens report drug or other criminal activity and are willing to stand together against drug and other criminal perpetrators no matter their complexion.

- **Ensuring the laws binding attorneys general and the courts are fair** by ensuring they do not create disparities in sentencing across diverse populations for essentially the same class of offense. Despite passage of the *Fair Sentencing Act of 2010*, we are still treating the poor with harsher penalties<sup>10</sup> for abusing crack than the more well to do for abusing cocaine, while also underfunding and understaffing public defender offices.<sup>11</sup> Disparities do not simply create inequality; they in fact do a great injustice to individuals (and by extension, families and communities) who might otherwise get their lives back faster and regain their reputations, like others given more lenient sentencing have the opportunity to do.

- **Forgiveness as an intervention** must become a hallmark of our criminal justice system. By forgiveness, we don't mean zero accountability and hence no measure of consequences; but, we believe the emphasis should be placed on true human rehabilitation and treatment, that includes decent accommodations, food and health care; a safe and secure environment free from violence and fellow inmate abuse; access to education, job retraining, and follow on access to post secondary educational opportunities, so that when persons re-enter society, they enter as citizens ready to contribute. A criminal justice system with incarceration should not be structured on systemic degradation, humiliation and desensitization to what it means to be humane to one another.<sup>12</sup> We must rethink the purpose of incarceration in general and for drug related offenses in particular, if we believe there is redemption; and we should, for at least three men have served in the highest elected office of our republic and admitted to illegal drug use at one point in their lives.<sup>13</sup>

- **Linking incentives to treatment** can be a powerful complement to traditional individual, family, and group counseling. Incentives empower the substance abuser to become a change agent in her own treatment and recovery which is the ultimate end for rehabilitation programs. Incentives in methadone maintenance for example might include less frequent psychotherapy based on phased

promotions and take home medication for eligible participants. Take home bottles can be a best practice in leveraged incentives as they untie clients from an agency as quickly as possible. However, incentives must be carefully designed and continually evaluated so as to avoid harsh inadvertent punishments that interfere with treatment. For example, while it is illegal to deny a methadone participant a treatment dosage, if participants fail to engage in group or individual sessions, or keep mental health appointments; they render themselves ineligible for a treatment dose, which is counterproductive. In the design of drug rehabilitation for ex-offender re-entry programs, incentives could include expedited release while maintaining psyche regimens for those having manageable mental health challenges and demonstrated abstinence targets of perhaps 30, 60, and 90-days for diagnosed pathologies, and follow on work searches and educational or vocational training documentation.

## **Focus on Aftercare**

The aftercare environment must be fundamentally different than the environment that precipitated substance abuse. Maintaining sobriety involves changing people, places and things that are triggers for relapse. With the proposed early commutation of sentences for non-violent offenders currently under consideration, the transitioning of many who were convicted for low-level drug offenses is not just a matter of emptying overpopulated prisons. Families and communities are on the front lines of helping re-integrate ex-offenders whether they want to or not. Just as in intervention, families need to be equipped for the challenge.

- **Expanding public private partnerships** including greater funding for faith-based institutional community outreach programs that provide meeting space for 12-step programs and faith-based and cultural individual and group counseling services and a ready pathway to volunteer civic engagement, can help meet the transitioning challenges individuals and communities will face.
- **Removing the continuing lifetime stigmatization of drug offenses and incarceration** once sentencing and/or rehabilitation are completed by clearing criminal records, and giving access to limited term *bridge* benefits for obtaining subsidized housing, health care, and food assistance, along with employment training and job placement services and rights to educational loans for school and professional certifications particularly in occupations to help others suffering from addiction. Former substance abusers can be powerful motivators for those seeking to reach sobriety. Lastly, if we want ex-offenders to become law abiding productive citizens instead of a permanent second class citizenry, then restore to them their voting rights that all other citizens enjoy. Thus the component of forgiveness mentioned under intervention must also extend to aftercare policies.

## **EPILOGUE**

Once drugs or narcotics have been introduced into the system of a human being, whether illicit, pharmaceutical, or other, the short-term and long-term effects we've learned are not so predictable due to individual unique genetic and metabolic predispositions and other factors.<sup>14</sup> Here we insert a cautionary note on the suggestion by some to decriminalize marijuana for general use as a prescription for addressing poorly targeted, inefficient policing and overcrowded prisons. We caution that decriminalizing marijuana should be studied most carefully to ensure public health is not further endangered by a substance that may be less addictive and not legally classified as a narcotic, but

nevertheless is an intoxicant with serious effects known to impact the brain, heart, lungs, and immune system;<sup>15</sup> it has the potential to add to a public health crisis. If we err on the side of substance abuse prevention, then marijuana, or components thereof, might best be a controlled substance limited to medical use wherein the benefits far outweigh any deleterious side effects. However, not decriminalizing marijuana, does not mean there can't be reform on the law enforcement end for infractions. We readily concede there is a conundrum in designing an enforcement policy that balances society's interests in protecting public health with its now apparent competing interest in ending the wholesale warehousing of the very citizens whose health it seeks to protect. We believe that despite the dilemma, policy makers must nevertheless urgently seek a balanced solution.

Drug policy on both a national and global scale, must be comprehensive in nature, stressing what works in prevention and addressing the full socio-economic, medical and neurological causes, complications and consequences of drug abuse and our societal response.

Ultimately, we maintain prevention is our best hope. The solution to our drug problems, may in fact be found at the same knowledge reservoir right along with the solutions for alcoholism, sexism, racism, terrorism, and any other "ism" bearing down on the human condition.<sup>16</sup> Faith must not only inform us, but it must affect us in seeking a just polity. We believe that at the intersection of legislation, law and public policy must be a cornerstone of respect for the faith traditions and their historical impact on law and civil society. It appears we have some significant political movement now in the White House, and in the halls of justice and even Congress to practically examine the unintended consequences of our societal reaction to the so-called war on drugs. Mass incarceration under inhumane conditions followed by alleged rehabilitation for the currently *unforgiven*, no matter how much time is served or punishment meted out, is clearly not working. Export of the current U.S. approach is ill advised.

We have the knowledge to seek a different course. The question is, do we have the political will, compassion and faith?

In the words of Dr. William Worrall Mayo, left open for further thought and research.

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## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document, the proper term for the religion practiced by some 1.7 billion Muslim globally is Al-Islam and it is used to insert a clear line of demarcation between the religion proper that is practiced peacefully by Muslim citizens around the globe, and what has become regularly associated in media and popular culture with misconduct, aberrant practices and beliefs foreign to the doctrines of Al-Islam as contained in the Qur'an, in the Life Example of Muhammed the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him), and a long history of tolerance, respect and collaboration through scientific methodology and an embracing of advancement of the best thereof in knowledge, both spiritual and material that all of mankind has been blessed to gain throughout the course of human history.

<sup>2</sup> The collapse of supply or demand eventually ends the crisis, at least for illicit drug use.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Franklin. The axiom that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is as true today as it was when Franklin first made the quote. Although used frequently when referring to health, Franklin's quote actually was made in the context of fire safety. Under an assumed name, Franklin stated, "In the first place, as an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, I would advise 'em to take care how they suffer living coals in a full shovel, to be carried out of one room into another, or up or down stairs, unless in a warming pan shut; for scraps of fire may fall into chinks and make no appearance until midnight; when your stairs being in flames, you may be forced, (as I once was) to leap out of your windows, and hazard your necks to avoid being oven-roasted." (courtesy of ushistory.org). How apropos that Franklin's *Scraps of fire may fall into chinks and make no appearance until midnight* can be a metaphor for the souls locked away in our prisons cut off inexorably from society and society conversely cutoff from the use of their talents and intellects...the crime and punishment solution itself akin to society leaping out the window, and stairs aflame.

<sup>4</sup> National Drug Threat Assessment 2010. Drug Movement Into and Within the United States. United States Department of Justice, Feb. 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Banks, Homer and Hampton Carl and Jackson, Raymond (songwriters). If Loving You Is Wrong, I Don't Wanna Be Right (performed by Luther Ingram). Stax Records. 1972.

<sup>6</sup> Once again, the circumstances of the status quo do not negate the personal responsibility and accountability to engage in the electoral process, and not just at the traditional federal level, which has for decades been the most important for disenfranchised communities of color waiting on states for basic human rights. Now in this new century, historically disadvantaged voters in particular must be engaged locally now as state and city legislatures seek to block implementation of key federal legislation designed to help families. The U.S. Supreme Court ruling in favor of Citizens United must truly cause concerned citizens to unite.

<sup>7</sup> We should even begin to question the efficacy and fairness of mortgage products that place 100% of the risk over 30 years on the borrower instead of allowing for shared risk due to market fluctuations.

<sup>8</sup> See National Institute on Drug Abuse; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment: A Research-Based Guide (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Dec. 2012. "Effective treatment attends to multiple needs of the individual, not just his or her drug abuse. To be effective, treatment must address the individual's drug abuse and any associated medical, psychological, social, vocational, and legal problems. It is also important that treatment be appropriate to the individual's age, gender, ethnicity, and culture."

<sup>9</sup> White, W., Sanders, M. & Sanders, T. Addiction in the African American Community: The Recovery Legacies of Frederick Douglass and Malcolm X. *Counselor*. 2006, 7(5), 53-58.

<sup>10</sup> Vagins, Deborah J., Policy Counsel for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and McCurdy, Jesselyn, Legislative Counsel. Cracks in the System: Twenty Years of the Unjust Federal Crack Cocaine Law. American Civil Liberties Union. Oct. 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Van Brunt, Alexa. Poor people rely on public defenders who are too overworked to defend them. *The Guardian*. Jun 17, 2015.

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<sup>12</sup> Benkomarch, Jessica. The Radical Humaneness of Norway’s Halden Prison: The goal of the Norwegian penal system is to get inmates out of it. *The New York Times* (Digital Edition). Mar. 26, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> “And those who, having done something to be ashamed of, or wronged their own souls, earnestly bring Allah to mind, and ask for forgiveness for their sins,- and who can forgive sins except Allah?- and are never obstinate in persisting knowingly in (the wrong) they have done.” Al-Qur’an, Chapter 3 (The Family of Imran), v. 135.

<sup>14</sup> Draud, Jon W., MS, MD. Role of Dopamine in Addiction and Drug Abuse. *Psych Congress Network*. Feb. 22, 2012.

Under the effects of narcotics and similar substances, the dopamine producing pleasure center of the brain is artificially stimulated, causing a massive abnormal secretion of dopamine, a natural pain reducing substance. Over a period of time this substance is depleted, but neurological receptors are still open which can lead to severe depression. Then the central nervous system becomes negatively affected and genetic adaptation and damage can result.

<sup>15</sup> Narcotic News. Detox Santa Barbara. Alcohol & Drug Detox Services Private In Home Medical Detox. 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Everything about our lives is interrelated. We must consider that our human problems are spiritual problems and we ignore the spiritual condition at our own individual and collective peril.

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NOTE: As part of its idea clearing house and think tank mission, CWSC conducts discussion and Qur’anic-based problem solving on what are often complex issues of interest that affect broad segments of the community. Discussions may take place in teams, conferences, on the airwaves of CWSC’s broadcast network, American Muslim 360, or in other online and offline forums. The goal of such discussion is to seek dialogue and solutions from an informed group intellect that in turn leads to an improved quality of life. CWSC published documents seek to engage more minds that are not only aware of an issue, but wish to be actively engaged and operationally networked in the problem solving and application of solutions. All CWSC white papers, working papers, resolutions and related publications are offered in the spirit of shuraa baynahum to all societal stakeholders.

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