



lest they cue the killer to their presence. “All I could do was pray,” she said. After some hours, the ordeal ended. Towards the end of the interview, from the standpoint of having survived a brutal assault, Jones spoke for many in the LGBT community when she said, with candor and dignity, “I’m a transgender individual. Getting work isn’t the easiest thing for me. I had a safe haven, a place that I could come, call work — able to pay my bills. The terror in the attack,” she said, “took that away.”

No Muslim would take away from anyone else their safe haven. We know ourselves well enough what it’s like to lose that. From a Muslim perspective, the test of a God-minded society is how well it cares for those who need a haven, a job, a place to come to feel at ease. We do not claim innocence of homophobia. But we hold up for all to know a point from our jurisprudence that few likely do know. Islamic law is quite specific on matters of inheritance. We are talking now about laws from a thousand years ago. The classical books of Islamic jurisprudence stipulate that male children inherit from parents twice what female children do. Set aside for a moment the offence this may be to our modern feelings for gender equality, and consider what the jurists had to say about transgender identity. Note that, a thousand years ago, it registered on their radar! But here is what worried them — not that it challenged gender norms or broke with the general public’s expectations of human sexuality, but what the transgender’s fair and just portion was to be of their inheritance. Were they to get the portion due a male or a female? They were concerned about the justice owed transgender individuals. They wanted to make sure that transgendered Muslims got their fair share of their parents’ estate. When was the law ever more considerate, or striving more in its own modest way to channel the divine mercy and compassion?

The divine concern extends further. It is not only for all of us to flourish in our lives, however we were born. Family is a value — and marriage a human right — under Islamic law. We must do better around the world to acknowledge the rights of LGBT people to find emotional happiness and physical fulfillment in the lives most natural to them.

We know that LGBT identity is widespread in the Muslim world. And we know that homophobia is a long-standing blight on the history of human cultures. It has been a human failing for many of us. But none of us can find any excuse in that for its presence today. We mourn all who died in the Orlando shooting, and pray for the survivors’ return to physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Where the LGBT community inhabits a margin, we stand there with them too.

By the mercy and compassion of God, let all the margins fill with divine love.