

## VT Tragedy (04/16/07) - Sedki Riad's Convocation Speech

In the name of Allah Most Merciful Most Compassionate - **بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ**

On behalf of the Muslim Community in Blacksburg, and as members of the Blacksburg and VT communities we express our condolences to the families and friends of the innocent victims that we lost yesterday.

I stand here today to tell you that we are all in pain. All of us here, the children of Adam and eve, we all unite in pain and we are all hurt.

Death strikes every day all over the world ... we see it on Television ... we hear and read about in the media ... but when it hits home ... we feel its intensity ... and we recognize its reality.

The Islamic faith reminds us in Surat Al-Baqara [chapter 2: verse 156] of the Holy Quran

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

*Those Who say, when afflicted with calamity: "To Allah We belong, and to Him is our return"*

And in Surat Lugman [chapter 31: verse 34] Allah SWT Reminds us

وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

*Nor does any one know what it is that he/she will earn tomorrow: Nor does any one know in what land he/she is to die. Verily with Allah is full knowledge and He is acquainted with all things.*

Death strikes home ... when we least expects it ... to remind us of the only fact of life that we all subscribe to ...

Rich or poor ... young or old ... strong or weak ... ill or well ... in the battle field or in the classroom ...

It comes to remind us of how vulnerable we are ... no matter what we do ... no matter how much security we have ... no matter what we believe in ... it will happen.

Some would say it does not have to happen this way. I remind myself and remind them that there is a creator with wisdom beyond our comprehension and with mercy and compassion far beyond our appreciation.

*"To Allah We belong, and to Him is our return"*

I pray to God that this one incident will not change the character of our peaceful and friendly town and university.

I pray to God that the quality of life that we all enjoy and will continue to enjoy in this community will continue to attract new students to our university, attract professionals to make this place their home and continue to retire here.

Finally, we should not let this tragedy make us loose confidence in our great law enforcement officers. They have kept our community safe and provided for the great quality of life we all enjoy at this university and in this town. We know them as diligent and dedicated professionals. Even a singularity of this immense magnitude should never overshadow all the good work these great men and women have done to make this community so safe and so enjoyable.

I conclude with the Islamic greeting of peace, Wassalamu Alaykum.