

Harriet Lindman:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Harriet Lindman:

And welcome to morning prayers here at Appleton Chapel. Our speaker this morning will be Nour Khachemoune, the Senior Talk speaker from Dunster House. Welcome. Please rise in body or in spirit for responsive greeting of Psalm 100 found in your black psalter. May all lands be joyful before you, oh God, serve you with gladness and come before your presence with a song.

Congregation:

For we know that you are God. You yourself have made us, and we are yours. We are your people and the sheep of your pasture.

Harriet Lindman:

We shall enter your gates with thanksgiving, go into your courts with praises, give thanks to you and call upon your name.

Congregation:

For you are good. Your mercy is everlasting, and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Harriet Lindman:

Please be seated.

Choir:

(singing)

Nour Khachemoune:

The very first chapter of the Quran, Surah Al-Fatiha, includes the verse, [foreign language 00:07:38], meaning, "God will guide us to the right path." Muslims recite Surah Al-Fatiha at least 17 times a day during prayer, and it is the first part of the Quran that children memorize, so that makes it easy to forget some of the details when we hear them so often. But at least for me, I've always been reminded of this idea of the right path because my mom really likes to tell me that I am on the wrong path. Now, usually this is inspired by things like me getting extra earlobe piercings, which clearly indicate that I won't graduate. But here I am. I seem to have made it to this last month of school, so I guess I must have found my way to at least somewhat of the right path while at Harvard. My mom's concept of the wrong path, while mostly a joke, has inspired me to think about my path here, all the same and the aspects of it that I shared with all of you on this campus.

At the very beginning of our journey as students, we were greeted by the physical paths of the yard on move-in day, and they soon formed a key part of our experience. As first years, we saw people moving about on the paths of the yard in big groups of friends almost immediately, and we wondered how they

met all those people so quickly. Next, we encountered a familiar face or two with a, "Hey, are you also in wind ensemble?" And we began to feel more comfortable on campus. In later years, our paths have grown to include the farthest reaches of campus as well, like that path to Northwest that is so devastatingly far from Dunster. These paths make us feel united. We see friends, familiar faces, and even those we don't recognize, all on these paths.

To me, the spontaneous interactions that happen on these paths of Harvard Yard have always been some of the most meaningful. In the 10 minutes on the way to a 10:30 class, the different paths of Harvard Yard come alive with all of us. At 10:22, you might encounter a first-year [inaudible 00:10:03] and be reminded of your first home at Harvard. At 10:24, you might crisscross Tercentenary Theatre alongside your sophomore-year friend and hear about their latest new project. At 10:27, you might hold the door open for that person who you somehow see in the dining hall every day, even in your last semester. To me, the best part of the day is this walk to class, even over the classes themselves. In each interaction on these paths, we can be reminded of the people that study alongside us, beyond the usual circles of our blocking groups, houses and concentrations.

In the very briefest of interactions, we might ask, "What class are you headed to?" and learn about entire departments that we hadn't heard of. In longer conversations, when we stop to chat, even if we're a few minutes late, we are struck by the different extracurriculars that our community engages with. All of these experiences have shaped or transformed us into the people we have become as we prepare to face the outside world. The moments where we share our experiences with each other on these paths contribute to our growth. And when we converge on Harvard's physical paths, the different paths we have taken to arrive here stand behind us as well. From different corners of the world, our childhoods differ and now provide us with so many experiences to learn from. To me, the most unique part of Harvard is all of us and the stories that we bring to it. In any conversation, serious or lighthearted, I am always captivated by the way people share how they view the world.

Now, as us seniors prepare to graduate, our paths will diverge as we move off into different parts of the world. I know that although we are moving apart, the sense of connection that occurred on these paths of Harvard Yard will persist when we meet again as alumni. In any corner of the globe, when we meet again, we will be reminded of our time on campus and how we have grown together. Our paths to Harvard differed, then converged for four years, and now they will diverge again, at least physically. But as we diverge, we will be armed with so much enrichment that we have gained from our time together and the stories we have shared with each other. Parts of who we are have converged in these past few years and contribute to what we will bring to the outside world. And the convergence that occurred on these paths of Harvard Yard, I think was truly the right path, not the wrong path, that I found here. Thank you.

Harriet Lindman:

Oh, loving God, be with us on the paths you follow and create alone and in community through times of familiarity and transition. Open our hearts and our minds to connection and to transformation along the way. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Harriet Lindman:

And now we pray as Jesus taught us, saying:

All:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Harriet Lindman:

Please rise in body or in spirit, and join in singing the hymn This is My Song, Oh God, of All the Nations, number 29.

Congregation/Choir:
(singing)

Harriet Lindman:

And now, may the Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. Go in peace. Amen.

Congregation:
Amen.