



## The Heart Wrenching Malady of Racism

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# The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community



Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as)



AHMADIYYA  
MUSLIM COMMUNITY

*United States of America*

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in 213 countries in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjab province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (The Mahdi and Messiah).

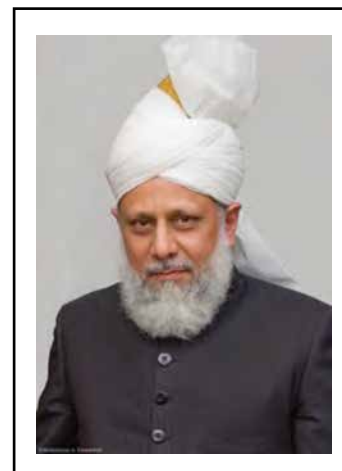
The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam – peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God – in its pristine purity.

Hazrat Ahmad (as) proclaimed Islam as the religion of man: “The religion of the people of the right path” (The Holy Qur’an: 98:6). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon Qura’nic teaching:

“There is no compulsion in religion” (The Holy Qur’an: 2:257).

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason.

The Community has been headed by his elected successors. The present Head of the Community, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khalifatul Masih V or Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah(as).



Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,  
Khalifatul Masih V (aba)

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# The Muslim Sunrise

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Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq (ra) was the first Ahmadiyya Muslim missionary to arrive in America. In 1921, he founded the Muslim Sunrise, which stands today as the longest running Muslim publication in America. The magazine seeks to open discussions on Islam and topics relating to religion in general. It highlights the role of Islam in an ever-changing global society. It provides a platform for public opinion on contemporary issues and presents their solutions from an Islamic perspective.

The Muslim Sunrise welcomes letters to the Editor, Questions and Submissions.

Email us at [MuslimSunrise@Ahmadiyya.us](mailto:MuslimSunrise@Ahmadiyya.us) or go online to [www.MuslimSunrise.com](http://www.MuslimSunrise.com)



## Acronyms for salutations used in this publication

- sa: Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)  
as: 'Alaihis-Salam (may peace be upon him)  
ra: Radhi-Allahu 'Anhu/'Anha (may Allah be pleased with him/her)  
rh: Rahimahullahu Ta'ala (may Allah shower His mercy on him)  
aba: Ayyadahullahu Ta'ala Bi-Nasrihil-'Aziz (may Allah support him with His mighty help)

Verse numbers in the references from the Holy Qur'an count Tasmiya at the beginning of a chapter as the first verse.

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Muslims follow the name of God's prophets with the prayer alaihis salaam or 'may peace be upon him,' and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, sallallahu alaihi wasallam or 'may peace and blessings of God be upon him.' Companions of prophets and righteous personalities who have passed away are saluted by radhi-Allaho anhu/a or 'may Allah be pleased with him/her.' While such salutations sometimes are not set out in the text for readability, we encourage readers to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

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# FROM THE HOLY QUR'AN

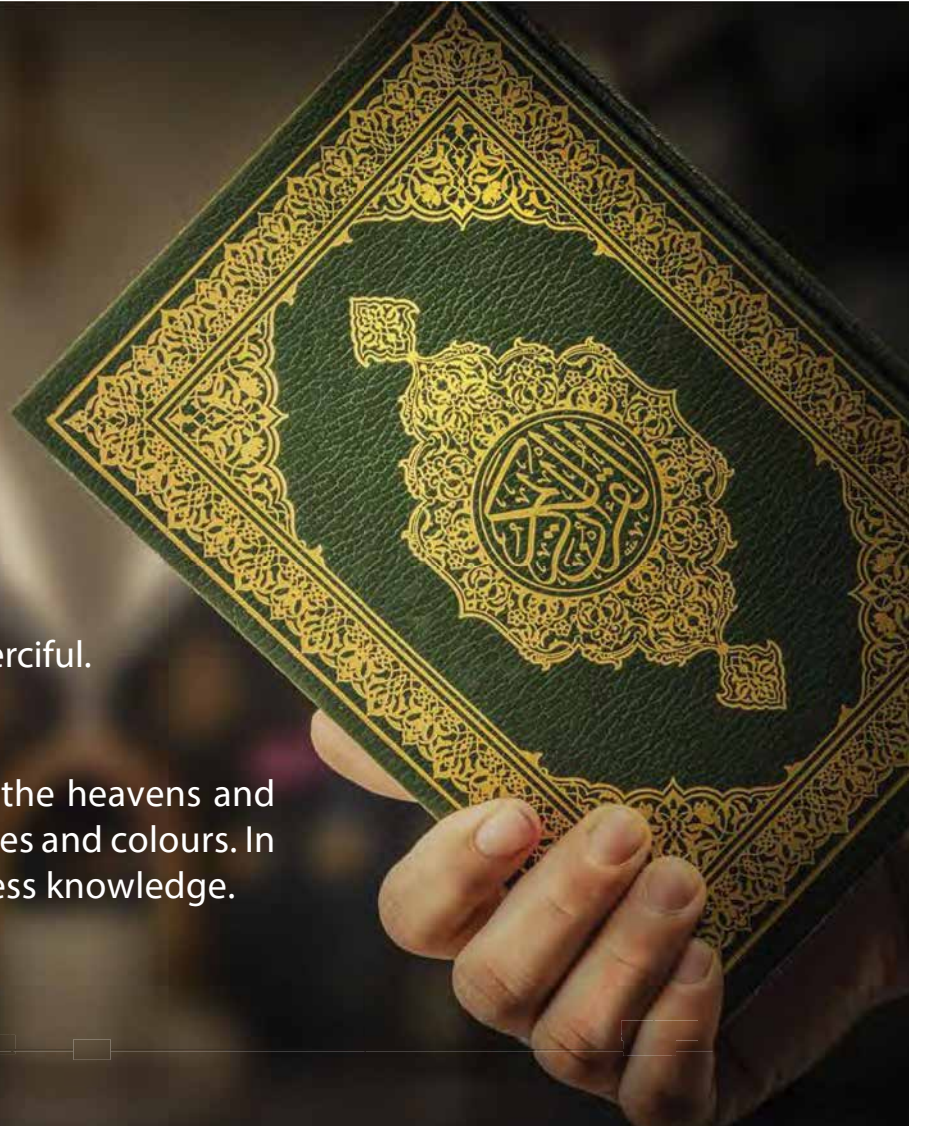
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

وَ مِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ وَ اخْتِلَافُ  
اللُّغَاتِ وَ الْأَلْوَانِ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ③

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colours. In that surely are Signs for those who possess knowledge.

The Holy Qur'an, (30:23)



SAYING OF THE  
**PROPHET**  
MUHAMMAD (sa)

حَدِيث

عَنْ أَبِي نَضْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي وَسْطِ أَيَّامِ التَّشْرِيقِ  
فَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَلَا إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنَّ أَبَاكُمْ وَاحِدٌ أَلَا لَا فَضْلَ لِعَرَبِيٍّ عَلَى  
أَعَجَبِيٍّ وَلَا لِعَجَبِيٍّ عَلَى عَرَبِيٍّ وَلَا لِأَحْمَرَ عَلَى أَسْوَدَ وَلَا أَسْوَدَ عَلَى أَحْمَرَ إِلَّا  
بِالتَّقْوَى أَبْلَغْتُ قَالُوا بَلَّغَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Abu Nadrah reported:

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said during the middle of the day at the end of the pilgrimage, "O people, your Lord is one and your father Adam is one. There is no preference of an Arab over a foreigner, nor a foreigner over an Arab, and neither white skin over black skin, nor black skin over white skin, except by righteousness. Have I not delivered the message?" They said, "The Messenger of Allah has delivered the message."

*Musnad Ahmad 22978*

# EDITORIAL

FALL 2020



The Grapes Hill underpass - graffiti 'No To Racism'

Photo © Evelyn Simak (cc-by-sa/2.0)

The United States of America is not alone in suffering from the fatal malady of racism; the entire world is affected in one form or another through the downgrading of ethnic groups who are marginalized on the basis of their color and/or genealogical background. For example, in India, since ancient times, people are divided into many castes, some considered superior over others on the basis of family lineage and profession. Stories were fabricated that the Brahmins, the highest caste, were born from the mouth of god Purusha, while the Kshatriya out of his arms, the Vaishyas from his thighs, and the Shudras from his feet. Consequently, the Shudras were the lowest of the low, and considered as 'untouchables'. This caste system was based on the family a person was born into, so no one could escape the consequential racist treatment meted out solely on account of his or her birth in a certain family.

Many among the European white races considered themselves superior and held strong prejudice against blacks. Not only did the white races conquer many of their lands but also brought thousands upon thousands to their own countries as slaves. In America, the establishment of slavery was the root cause of racism, and we are still experiencing its tragic effects.

In this issue of the Muslim Sunrise, we have tried to cover several aspects of the racism that is so deeply embedded in the world, and we have made an effort to provide answers to questions such as: What is racism? What does Islam teach to overcome racism? How to converse on topics related to racism. We offer articles that detail the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community's approach to solve the problem.

We are thankful to the 'Review of Religions' for allowing us to publish an important article entitled 'Islam and Black Lives Matter' by Abid Khan, UK.

Please read the articles and give us your feedback.

**Mubasher Ahmad**  
Editor-in-Chief



# IN THE WORDS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH(as)

*Truly righteous are those who walk with meekness and humility.*

The various races that exist are not any criterion of nobility. God has made these races only for the sake of easy recognition. Nowadays, it becomes difficult to identify someone's ethnicity after four generations. It is against the decorum of a pious person to indulge in racism because God has declared that one's ethnicity is not His measuring standard. The real basis of esteem and honor is only righteousness.

It is revealed in the Book of God that the truly righteous are those who walk with meekness and humility. They do not indulge in any arrogant talk. They converse with others in a manner as if they are talking with their elders. We should always adopt a manner that leads to salvation and success. God the Exalted is not a lease-holder for anyone. He desires of us pure righteousness. Anyone who adopts piety shall have a high station. The Holy Prophet (sa) or Hazrat Ibrahim (as) did not obtain dignity through the process of inheritance. Though it is our belief that the revered father of the Holy Prophet (sa), Abdullah, was not a polytheist, he did not bequeath prophethood to him (sa). That was God's grace upon the Holy Prophet (sa). All truths were embedded in his nature that facilitated God's grace. Hazrat Ibrahim (as) was the father of Prophets. It was his sincerity and righteousness that he did not hesitate even to sacrifice his own son, and he was thrown in the fire. (1)

There are some ignorant people who tend towards racism and feel great pride and arrogance about their race and ethnicity. I have observed that many are suffering from this sickness of racism, especially the Sadaat [descendants of the Holy Prophet (sa)] are suffering greatly from this disease. They consider others as despicable and are proud of their own caste. I say truly that the caste is insignificant to achieve nearness to God the Exalted, and has nothing to do with winning closeness to God. The Holy Prophet (sa), the greatest of all the Prophets, said unambiguously

to his own daughter: 'O Fatima (ra), you should not depend on the relationship that [makes] you the daughter of a prophet! On Judgment Day, it shall not be asked who your father is. On that day, only your good actions will benefit you.'

I know it with certainty that racism throws one away from nearness to God, and pride of one's caste/race is the greatest hurdle in the way of true righteousness. It creates arrogance, and arrogance is the root cause of spiritual deprivation.

Moreover, a person depends upon his race in error, thinking that he is a Gilani or a certain type of Syed; but he does not understand that these things are of no value in front of God. The matter of race and caste ends with one's death. After death, it disintegrates. That is why God Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an: "And whoso does an atom's weight of evil will also see it" (2).

Here, no uniqueness is given to race and nation. And at another place, God says: "Verily, the most honorable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is most righteous among you." (3)

Therefore, do not be conceited and proud of your race and caste, because it becomes a stumbling block in the way of being good. Yes, it is imperative to advance in piety and righteousness. In this way, God's blessings and grace are achieved. (4)

## Reference:

1. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Malfuzat, Vol. 1, pp 36,37
2. The Holy Qur'an (99:9)
3. The Holy Qur'an (49:14)
4. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Malfuzat, vol.7, pp 188-189

## Islam & Black Lives Matter – Guidance of the Khalifa

Abid Khan, UK

### What is a Jama'at? What is a community?

These questions have become increasingly pertinent as racial tensions that had long been simmering in the United States ignited recently following the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor earlier this year.

Such examples of police brutality have led to increased awareness and support for the Black Lives Matter movement. Founded in 2013, the movement aims to increase awareness of the injustices that have been perpetrated against the black community in the United States. It has since garnered support from people in other countries as well, while raising complex questions about communities, support systems and principles.

So, is a community something where members gather together only to enjoy the good times and to reap the blessings of when all is well? Or is it that when there are struggles, people of a community stick together and, above all, they stick to their principles – adhering to them without fear, without an inferiority complex and without weakening their resolve.

**I have particularly wondered about what distinguishes Ahmadiyyat as a Jama'at. Why do Ahmadis consider themselves different from other Muslims and non-Muslims? Why is it that Ahmadis are not inclined towards terrorism or extremism?**

Instead, the Ahmadiyya Jama'at's unremitting response to hatred is to show love, peace and to bow our heads in the worship of Allah rather than returning hatred with hatred and a desire for vengeance.

At a time when religion is being abandoned across the world, our community has continued to grow and flourish. It has spread to all corners of the world. It has been embraced by people of all races, nationalities and socio-economic status. Most Ahmadis, if not all, know that unity is what distinguishes us.



His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad(aba),  
worldwide head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim  
Community.

Together we are united at the hand of one: the hand of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (His Holiness, the Fifth Caliph) (aba).

To remain united requires faith in how our spiritual bond with the Promised Messiah (as), his Khulafa (Caliphs), and, above all, with the Holy Qur'an and the blessed teachings of the Prophet of Islam (sa), is of paramount importance in our lives. This spiritual bond far exceeds any political and worldly movement that may gain prominence from time to time.

When I first came across the news of George Floyd's murder whilst scrolling social media, I was honestly unsurprised that a black man had been killed by a white police officer in America. There was something incredibly ordinary about it. As horrific as that sounds, it did not even register as big news.

However, a little while later when I saw the video of what had actually transpired, I was left in complete shock. There was nothing new about a black person being killed in the United States, but my shock was provoked by the sense of impunity amongst those white police officers. 'I can't breathe, I can't breathe,' said George Floyd repeatedly, begging for mercy, as an officer had his knee firmly lodged onto his neck. And when no mercy was forthcoming, he called out in his dying moments for his mother, just as the last light of his life was cruelly extinguished. The look not only of contentment, but if I'm not mistaken, a hint of a smile, on the face of the police officer was perhaps the most disturbing and horrifying detail to me.

How could this be possible in a country that claims to be the most advanced nation on earth; a paragon of virtue and the so-called land of the free? The mounting resentment and frustration harbored by millions of African Americans reached a boiling point. Indeed, there has been a metaphorical knee at their necks for generations. George Floyd's murder, among countless other injustices against the black community, triggered a wave of emotion manifested in mass protests.

Members of our Jama'at across the world shared instantly that pain. Ahmadis in the United States were more directly involved and understandably felt visceral pain and emotion out of love and empathy for the plight of African-Americans. The question that arose was, do we and should we, as Ahmadi Muslims, and as a religious community, respond in kind as the world is doing? Should we take a knee, promote Black Lives Matters, join demonstrations? Should we go even further and join those who are violent and take advantage of the unrest to loot and plunder?

Or should we respond according to Islamic teachings? That was the stark choice that lay before all of us a couple of months ago. Of course, the Jama'at's

response, under the guidance and leadership of Khali-fa-e-Waqt (the Caliph), would always be to follow the teachings of Islam.

What every Ahmadi must realize is that what our faith decrees is not always going to be the easiest path – precisely why so many people across the world have abandoned their faith.

Our response should not be to align with a group or movement that has only existed a few years and which might, quite easily, morph into something else in three, four, five or ten years from now.

Rather, our response lies in the righteous example of the noble Prophet (sa) who proclaimed in his Farewell Address that a black person is not superior to a white, nor is a white person superior to a black, and that an Arab is not superior to a non-Arab, nor is a non-Arab superior to an Arab.

Our response is guided by the Holy Qur'an, which from the outset has condemned slavery and called for the emancipation of those who have been subjugated and oppressed. Allah's Word has unequivocally laid down that all people are born equal.

Moreover, our response is based on the example of Hazrat Syedna Bilal (ra) who was born in an era during which he was treated with contempt simply because he was a black man. His dark skin color was perceived as a symbol of dirt by his slave masters. Yet, due to his exemplary piety, faith and character, he was raised to the highest of stations by the Prophet of Islam (sa) himself who nominated him to be the first person to call mankind towards prayer.

Thus, the simple question for our Khuddam (Ahmadi youth) and other Ahmadis, is whether they want to take the path that, Insha'Allah (God-Willing), will surely lead to emancipation and freedom, but might require them to go against the grain. Arguably, the easier option will allow them to attain likes on Instagram and provide an immediate outlet to quell their frustration. The worldly path might lead to short term success, but it is not a united path. There are already cracks and fissures in the Black Lives Matter movement. Some people who initially supported the movement, are

now stepping away and saying that it is morphing into a far-left political crusade or has developed other objectives that do not align with the majority.

A day or two after the death of George Floyd, I sought the guidance of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba). The first thing I noticed was the pain and grief in the voice of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih (aba) as he described the killing of George Floyd. He had seen the video and heard the news.

Huzoor (His Holiness) (aba) immediately said that it was the Jama'at's duty to condemn this brutality and to make every single possible effort to highlight the injustice of this killing and the long-term injustices against black people in the United States. He said that we must not only advocate on their behalf, but also endeavor to achieve justice and equality.

Whilst, the path of Islam may not always be the easiest, or the one that gets the most recognition in the short-term, it is undoubtedly the path that is paved with wisdom and ultimately the means to success. Some Ahmadi expressed their desire at that time to join BLM protest movements and, upon this, Huzoor clearly said that this was the personal right of people to join peaceful protests if they desired. Thus, if anyone thought that the Jama'at sought to restrict their rights to join and protest, they were wrong.

However, Huzoor also firmly said that people should not partake in anything which could be a means of hurting their nation, or where violence or anything criminal could transpire. What would that achieve other than bring the protesters down to the level of those who oppressed them?

At a human level, Huzoor (aba) was extremely worried for the safety and well-being of Ahmadi Muslims. He loves every Ahmadi, every Khadim, every Lajna (Ahmadi woman) member, and every child, no matter their race or residence. I do not need to repeat the countless incidents that I have personally witnessed over the years which have demonstrated the love that Khalifa-e-Waqt has for each Ahmadi, and how he partakes in and feels their grief and burdens.

Huzoor cannot bear for a single Ahmadi to be hurt,

injured or even worse. Nor does he want any Khadim or Jama'at member to get entangled in something that could lead to arrest and see their lives destroyed. In addition, Huzoor (aba) emphasized that such protests are of limited effect. Who can deny this logic? In the United States, marches and rallies have taken place for decades. Giants of the civil rights movements have come and gone, some brutally lost their lives – yet this systemic racism persists. Whilst white privilege does everything it can to sustain the past, Khalifatul Masih (aba) is calling for real change.

The guidance of Khalifatul Masih is that if the black community wants to rise, if it wants to thrive then it must endeavor, it must strive.

Huzoor (aba) has lived in Africa and considers the black people amongst the brightest stars of humanity. He knows the rich potential of the black race and has openly expressed his hope that they come to lead the world. At a time when people continue to look down on black people, Khalifa-Waqt has consistently showered his love and appreciation upon the talents, intellect and piety of Africans and African-Americans. Huzoor (aba) has made it clear that it will take time, great effort and, above all, an unyielding, unbreakable and unswayable faith and resolve in Allah the Almighty.

Huzoor (aba) instructed that African-Americans and all those minorities who are looked down upon or who have faced injustice must use their democratic rights from the grassroots level up. Some people have suggested that it might be worth boycotting the democratic process as a means of protest, but Huzoor (aba) was very clear that such protests are futile and will only entrench the existing norms. Furthermore, it is not just about voting in the upcoming presidential election in November, but partaking in every field, at every single level of society. Go to the town hall meetings or join the housing associations, and most of all, educate yourselves so that you know your rights and have the ability to stand up and defend yourself – not through violence or cruelty, but through the unstoppable force of knowledge. Run for office if you have the potential.

America might have seen its first black president a few

years ago, but are black people proportionately represented across the board in society – in every district, in every town, in every city, in every state? Are they rising to the higher levels and echelons of society? The truth is, and it is a sad truth, that worldly people will only see you when you can affect them.

For instance, if they think that the black vote could swing an election, then they will listen to the African-Americans. The same applies to Pakistani or other Asian people who live in the West as minorities. For this reason, whenever Huzoor (aba) is asked about the persecution faced by our Jama'at in Pakistan, and our supporters, be they politicians, dignitaries or human rights activists ask how they can help, he tends to respond by suggesting that they should try to help Ahmadis get their voting rights in Pakistan.

He does not say to them that, in the first instance, that they should challenge the Pakistani Government to remove the inhumane blasphemy laws. Rather in his wisdom, Huzoor (aba) gives realistic suggestions that are practical and urges for them to take things step by step.

I remember when I asked Huzoor whether the Jama'at should align itself with the Black Lives Matter movement. I informed him that there were Ahmadis who had expressed their support for this organization and desired for the Jama'at to officially endorse it. As soon as I said this, to my surprise, Huzoor (aba) remained silent. For how long exactly, I cannot remember, perhaps 30 seconds or a minute.

After that short period of reflection, Huzoor said: "Innocent Lives Matter' and 'Supremacy of Justice.' These are the terms we should use.' Instinctively, I knew as soon as I heard these terms that both might prove controversial, especially Innocent Lives Matter. First and foremost, people had strongly opposed and criticized those who had not used Black Lives Matter, considering it an affront to the rights of black people. Furthermore, some terms like 'All Lives Matters' were being used by the alt-right or others who seemed to deny that there was any problem of racial inequality. Nonetheless, having seen first-hand how Huzoor (aba) had reflected and been inspired, I was completely sure that the terms and slogans given by him would be

blessed and prove to be of true value.

Subsequently, as Huzoor (aba) explained these terms, I was overwhelmed with pride. I saw how lucky and how fortunate we are to have a leader who is not thinking about how to win any popularity contests. Rather, he solely focuses upon how the problems facing humanity may be solved according to the teachings of the Qur'an and the Ahadith, which are his true inspiration at all times.

Huzoor (aba) said:

'Our actions, as Ahmadi Muslims, will always be underpinned by Islam's teachings. Thus, our statements and pronouncements are not motivated by politics but are always derived from the Holy Qur'an and the life and teachings of the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa). It is for this reason that better slogans, when confronting the issue are 'Innocent Lives Matter' and the 'Supremacy of Justice.'

Huzoor (aba) further said:

'However, if Ahmadis wish to personally tweet or use the Black Lives Matter term they may do so.' As I mentioned earlier, I thought that the term Innocent Lives Matter would prove particularly controversial. Who would be classed as 'innocent' and who would not be? Some people might assume it excluded black people or others who had made mistakes or bad choices because of the circumstances in which they had been raised and their lack of opportunities.

However, the way Huzoor explained this term showed me that such concerns were unfounded. This slogan is the epitome of Islam's teachings of valuing every single person, regardless of whether they are black, white or any other color.

Huzoor (aba) said:

'The term 'Innocent Lives Matter' is a very broad term based on the Holy Qur'an, which says to 'kill' an innocent person is akin to the killing of all mankind. It does not mean that those who commit low-level crimes or who may be forced into error due to the circumstances they have grown up in, where they have been denied opportunities and justice, are not deemed as innocent. In fact, if they are forced to commit such crimes to feed their families or to exist then they are

very much innocent.’

Huzoor (aba) continued:

‘The only people who are not ‘Innocent’ are those who have power or wealth and use it to persecute, to brutalize and perpetrate grave injustice and who deny people their rights. The very definition and standard of someone who is not innocent is that he violates the sanctity of life and a prime example of this is a member of law enforcement who abuses his power to mercilessly place his knee on the neck of a man and refuses to remove it for almost nine minutes even as the defenseless man repeats ‘I can’t breathe.’

So in essence, if you have confidence in Islam’s teachings, you will soon recognize that Innocent Lives Matter is a term of immense value. It is, at its core, a clear rebuttal and rejection of all forms of persecution, injustice and oppression. It is a call for mankind to show its humanity and to forgo all forms of subjugation, harassment and inequality. In terms of Supremacy of Justice, some people later expressed their fears that it may harbor some connotation of or connection with ‘White Supremacy’, yet nothing could be further from the truth.

As he explained the meaning of this term, Huzoor (aba) said:

‘The term ‘Supremacy of Justice’ is inspired by the Qur’an’s teachings that justice is paramount and the Farewell Sermon of the Holy Prophet (sa) in which he said that a white person is not superior to a black person or an Arab to a non-Arab. Hence, this term rejects and refutes the claim of those people who consider that the white race has ‘supremacy.’ Rather, it is ‘justice’ that is supreme.’

Therefore, rather than bearing any connotation of white supremacy, this term actually rejects the notion of any form of racial superiority. Instead, it elucidates that it is only justice and equality that may be considered to have supremacy.

In recent weeks, he has written a series of letters to certain world leaders at the apex of the corona virus pandemic.

In these letters, Huzoor (aba) expressed, without fear

or hesitation, that this pandemic ought to be considered a warning from God Almighty, as it had exposed how fragile the power and might was even of those nations that considered themselves the mightiest and most dominant. He wrote that it was a time for nations and their leaders to turn towards God Almighty. I was fortunate and privileged to be able to take the dictation for these letters and to type them up.

Huzoor also wrote a letter to the President of the United States, as the leader of one of the major powers. However, just before it was sent, the George Floyd killing took place. Upon this, very late at night, when most people will have assumed that Huzoor was resting or spending time with his family, I received a message from Huzoor which showed how at that late hour his mind was on other things.

In the message, Huzoor (aba) said:

‘In the letter to President Trump, I wish to add an additional paragraph regarding how it is necessary for him to treat every citizen, irrespective of their race or ethnicity, with absolute equality and justice and the very highest standards of equality and non-discrimination are expected from the President of the United States.’

Thus, in his letter to President Trump, which was recently delivered, Huzoor (aba) wrote:

‘For the sake of the peace and harmony of any nation, it is a prerequisite that the government, local authorities and law enforcement agencies treat all of their citizens equally, irrespective of their skin color or ethnicity. In this regard, the expectation of absolute justice and non-discrimination from the leader of a country as the United States is especially high.’

Aside from seeking Huzoor’s (aba) guidance in many Mulaqats (private audiences) about this issue, I have seen in every word, Huzoor’s (aba) love for African-Americans and black people shining forth and how he desires to see them achieve true peace, security and justice so that they, their children and future generations are able to reverse the vicious tide of oppression that they have faced for centuries.

With all humility, every Ahmadi Muslim should reflect

and ask themselves if they are ready to stay true to the principles of Islam. It is a question every one of us who has taken the Bai'at of the Promised Messiah (as) must ask. Will we abide by the teachings and instructions of the Holy Qur'an through thick and thin? Or will we forsake them in order to please people who we do not even know, and whose values are often opposed to those with which we have been raised?

Do we want to be amongst those who remain truly loyal and faithful to the mission of the Promised Messiah (as) and to the institution of Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya? Will we, God forbid, forgo our faith, trust and obedience to Khilafat, even though it is Khalifa-e-Waqt who has consistently demonstrated to us that our religion is the true means for peace, freedom, and equality.

It is our reaction to the trials and hard times that will define us as people, not as I said at the start, the moments of happiness and contentment.

Always remember that we are the people who swear by the words of the Holy Qur'an that states, 'Surely there is ease after hardship.' [94:6]. This includes in Pakistan, where our people have been brutally martyred for decades, where even our ladies are not spared and have been imprisoned in the most horrific conditions.

Or, in Bangladesh where not even the graves of our three day old infants are safe. Or, when one fights for the rights of those who have been scorned, oppressed and violated, so that they may be free of injustice and truly equal. Our belief now and always must be according to the teachings of Islam.

This is our challenge and I am sure that Insha'Allah (God-Willing) through the Grace of Allah and the prayers and guidance of Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya, every sincere Ahmadi will come to see the fruits of their labors, the rewards of their patience and have their prayers answered so long as they stand firm and united at the hand of Khilafat.

[About the Author: Abid Khan is the International Press Secretary of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.]

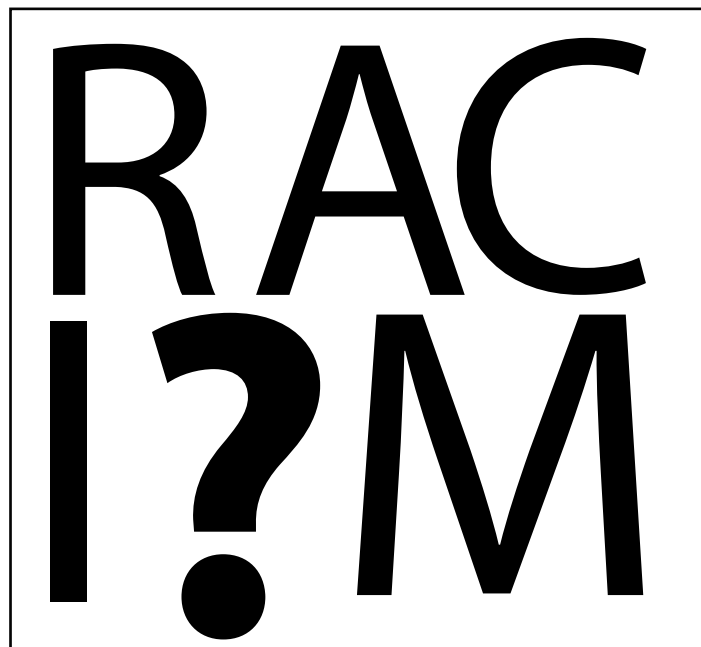
## What Is Racism?

Arifa Haleem

In the past, racism was defined as discrimination, inequality, and prejudice directed at an individual or group, based on biological characteristics. But, currently, it has been redefined as systemic, i.e., cultural, social, and institutional. Racism is embedded in almost all the institutions of the world, and it is deeply rooted in their socio-political systems. Our remote past shows that Adam and Eve, a beautiful creation of God Almighty, were created to live together and give company to one another and, under His command, live a purposeful and happy life. They were born without the element of discrimination. Though their origin was as one, later, when God settled their generations in different regions of the earth, they were divided. In this division, they adopted the traits of that region. The purpose of this division was to expand more families, recognize their identity, and teach the concept of mutual brotherhood and welfare of all the families of the world.

As God Almighty says in the Glorious Qur'an, "And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colors. In that surely are signs for those who possess knowledge" (1). This division was all a natural process that took place by the will of God for the benefit and cooperation and distinction of human beings. It had nothing to do with inequality or superiority or inferiority of one group over the other. But with time, human perceptions started changing, and racial discrimination in different forms began creeping into the minds of people. The 'enlightened' minds began thinking about various factors behind the repercussions of racism. They formed their own opinions about (a) Biological or scientific racism, i.e., a distinction based on physical characteristics, and (b) Systemic racism that is also called institutional and structural racism because it deals with the structure, system, procedures, and policies of different institutions.

In the past, people of different regions were being judged by their physical features. People with light skin and hair were considered more powerful, prestigious, and superior to people of other hues. Charles Darwin,



the father of evolutionary theory, believed in "natural selection" and "survival of the fittest" (2). In his view, those people who were best adjusted to their environment were called the most successful and beneficial in their lives. Nature awarded them with the best traits, abilities, ideas, and beliefs, and they were made for supremacy over the less successful ones. Black Africans were considered at the lowest level of abilities and traits because they were less "evolved" than the white Europeans. In this way, he gave a great push to biological or scientific racism and declared that only physical characteristics determine the inferiority or superiority of a race. This theory widened a great distance between whites and blacks by diminishing the traits and abilities of the latter. People forgot that superiority and inferiority have quite different meanings in the eyes of God. So God reminded the Children of Adam by saying, "O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female, and We have made you in tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognize one another. Verily the most honorable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is all-knowing, All-Aware" (3).



The ongoing process of discrimination at a larger scale not only affected the Third World countries but even in this age of enlightenment and progress, the most civilized nations are also not free from its after-effects. So, racism in a broader sense is an indicator of discriminatory practices, and in order to make this world peaceful and discrimination-free, conventions for scholarly discussions have been held at higher levels. A convention was held at Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre (January 10, 2020) where scholars from all around the world participated and discussed racism, its after-effects, and ways and means for its elimination. The viewpoint that was formed there was as follows: "Racism occurs between individuals on an interpersonal level and is imbedded in organizations and institutions through their policies, procedures, and practices" (4).

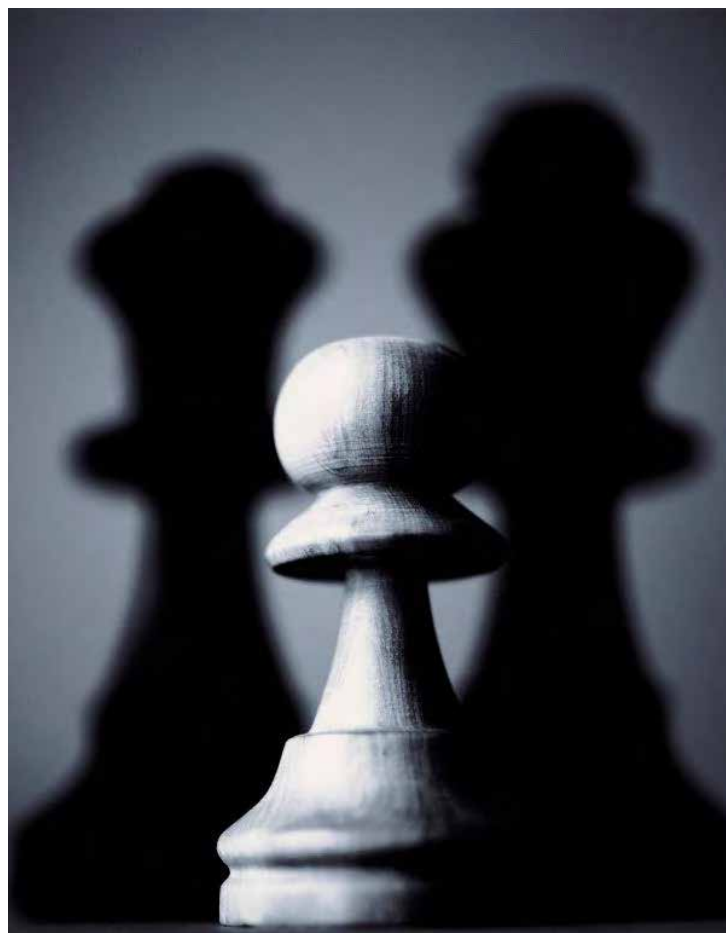
Racism consists of complex elements of inequality, prejudices, oppression, antagonism, the struggle for power, dominancy for the subjugation of other groups; these elements, with all their innate complexity, are embedded in all the European, American, and Asian political and socio-economic institutional systems. At some places, it is practiced openly, while at other places, it is hidden. There are also people in the world who are open-minded and do not believe in racism. Color, creed, race, and financial status do not bother them, and they are unbiased in dealing with people of other races.

Racism is a power-play game that is deeply rooted in socio-political matters. Whoever wins the game becomes the winner and is dominant. Power creates not only supremacy, but it also creates inequality and discrimination, which gives birth to superiority as well as inferiority complexes. These complexes divide people into two groups, i.e., oppressor and oppressed. This division and its perceived effects block or minimize the access of the oppressed group to different progressive opportunities of life. Moreover, the negative attitude of the oppressor group impacts the minds of the oppressed class, and they start suffering from an inferiority complex that later becomes the cause of medical as well as psychological problems.

Racism occurs not only at the interpersonal level, but it has also been perceived at structural levels. The

outcome of the perpetuation of certain policies formed on the basis of discriminatory elements is beneficial for more powerful and dominant members of society but is a hindrance in the path of progress to others. Policies based on ethnicity, color, belief, or other such factors pave the way for segregation, inequalities, and hatred that directly hit the members of a particular race.

To use taboo words for people of different colors and beliefs and commit injustices on them by creating obstacles in the way of achieving their goals are also included in discrimination. For example, if Mr. A commits a crime and gets punished, his action under the glasses colored with prejudice will not be considered as an individual action but all the members of his creed, culture, color, even the country to which he belongs will become the target of negative thinking. Islamophobia or xenophobia are very clear examples of prejudice toward Muslims. In the USA and western countries, people of different ethnic origins do not have access to equal opportunities in housing, health-care, and criminal justice, etc. It is also not easy for



students of other ethnicities to get loans for education because of challenging terms and conditions. The same is the case in business matters. Prejudice and discrimination in the name of religion also occur in many countries of the world. Different religious groups play their own part in accelerating the speed and intensity of discrimination. Political affiliations are also a glaring example of discrimination.

Inequalities and prejudices between whites and black also exist where blacks are denied equal opportunities and true justice. History is full of movements that became a forum to raise voices against racism. A recent example is that of the killing of George Floyd, a black man of Minneapolis, USA, where a policeman kept his knee on George Floyd's neck while he begged for breath by saying, "I cannot breathe." These words became a slogan after his death. This incident triggered protests all around the world, and people, including whites, demonstrated against this discrimination which led to homicide, and placards held by protestors conveyed the message "Black Lives Matter."

In Europe, the first signs of racism started showing in the 12th century and remained through the 19th century, where Jews were identified with the devil, witchcraft, and sorcery. They were accused of black magic and blood libel. Out of fear and insecurity of life, many Jews converted to Christianity. In medieval times, Jews were kept under periodic check and were commanded to mark their bodies and to wear a specific badge for identification and segregation (5). The holocaust was the genocide of European Jews during the Second World War. Six million Jews were killed in this war. It was a mass killing based solely on discrimination of them as an inferior race whose lives were worthless.

Another example of racial discrimination is that of the Atlantic slave trade. The Euro-American Atlantic slave trade, which enslaved African people and transported them to Europe and America, was also a driving force that gave rise to racism. In 1864, Abraham Lincoln called for abolishing slavery, and after passing the thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, he abolished it (6). The great human rights activist, Martin Luther King Jr., fought all his life for human rights.

In short, racism or discrimination, whether it is biological or systemic, cultural, institutional or structural, targets the individual as well as the masses. Whether it is practiced openly or secretly, it is still embedded not only in European and American institutions, but is deeply rooted in other countries of the world as well. Governments of these countries are trying their best to eliminate it and are taking different measures. As stated earlier, antagonism, hatred, and inequalities divide a nation into two groups, i.e., the oppressor and the oppressed, and generate superiority and inferiority complexes. The superiority complex generates a means of becoming more powerful and dominant, but it also leads to the violation of the human rights of the weaker group. The inferiority complex impacts greatly the minds of the subjugated and weaker class that gives rise to many psychological and medical issues.

Racism could be minimized or eliminated by keeping all these factors in view and having firm faith in one's own culture and beliefs. Fruitful results can be seen by accepting and honoring the diversity of different races with open-mindedness, irrespective of their biological or cultural characteristics. Good communication skills and access to equal progressive opportunities help to intermingle people of various cultures and develop mutual understanding.

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# The Revolution of Race Relations as Envisioned by Qur'anic Revelation

Rabia Munawar Mir

## Introduction

It is not an uncommon belief that humanity is fast approaching the pinnacle of its evolution. Scientific study has given us extraordinary insight into the physical world and the cosmos at large. Socio-cultural studies have enabled a profound understanding of the depth and breadth of human nature and interaction. Literature and art have expanded in scope and in substance, immensely developing our ability to capture the human experience in both its nuances and vastness. We have indeed covered a great deal of ground in terms of discovery and development in a shockingly short period. And yet, for all our accomplishments, we remain a fundamentally flawed species subject to the parasite of arrogance. This arrogance has rarely manifested itself more starkly than in the area of race relations. Even in 2020, it rears its ugly head. This article will outline the Qur'anic teachings surrounding race and interracial relations. It will highlight Islam's emphasis on humility, identity, and righteousness.

Globalization is altering the cultural landscape of the world and challenging our intellectual understanding of identity. As different racial groups merge across and within continents, we find ourselves struggling to reconcile seemingly competing cultures. The Holy Qur'an recognizes the importance of racial self-identification, even as it appreciates the complexity of inter-racial interactions. Numerous Qur'anic verses are highly relevant to this topic. However, this article will focus on one specific verse that effectively covers the gambit of the Islamic viewpoint surrounding race:

"O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and We have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognize one another. Verily the most honorable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware" (1).

## Humility

This verse can be divided into three parts. The first part, "O mankind, We have created you from a male and a

female," is a seemingly simple statement, but a mighty one. In his commentary of the Holy Qur'an, Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad (ra) stipulates that it lays down the "basis of an all-comprehensive, all-per-vading brotherhood of man... it firmly laid the axe at the false and foolish notions of superiority, born of racial arrogance or national conceit" (2). By highlighting that we are all subject to the same biological realities, this verse effectively establishes that all human beings are inherently equal, thereby establishing the necessity of humility.

This commentary is particularly crucial during the racially charged political climate of our time. As competing social and national interests emerge, our common humanity is being actively overlooked and undermined. Differences are being exploited to assert and maintain socio-political authority. If we are so evolved, what causes us to reject biological, bridge-building truths in favor of social division?

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh) discusses this in his Detroit Address of 1987 in which he emphasizes that arrogance undermines the capacity for sound judgment, stunts cultural growth, and ultimately heralds in national ruin. He cites the people of Prophet Noah (as) who refused to accept his message because they believed themselves to be economically and culturally superior to followers of Prophet Noah (as) (3). The arrogance of Noah's people ultimately manifested itself in the form of the flood that devastated their civilization. Giving value to affluence or skin pigmentation rather than integrity and character erodes cultural cohesion and cognitive development over time, eventually causing national disintegration, as happened during Noah's time, and is happening still in current times.

Interestingly, the Detroit Address of 1987, by Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh) explicitly states: "You may not be one of the insolents, yet you did not exhibit the desired love and affection to them" (4). So, it is not enough to abstain from arrogance, but one must also work toward building goodwill. This is an example of

anti-racism, which is not a new or unique concept, but one that has numerous examples in Islamic history.

### Identity

The second part of the above-referenced verse: “We have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognize one another” emphasizes inter-cultural relations and is interpreted by Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad (ra) as an emphasis on seeking knowledge (5). Indeed, it is no small secret that the point of intersection between different peoples can translate into socio-cultural, economic, and intellectual transactions that bear fruit well past their point of occurrence. The Silk Road is an example wherein engagement between merchants of different backgrounds resulted in the exchange of not just merchandise but also ideas (6). Another example is found within Islamic history, wherein the people of the tribe of Quraish, through their business travels, learned about the coming of a great prophet as promised in scripture (7). Arguably, this knowledge set the stage for them to receive such a prophet in their midst. Yet another example of inter-racial/cultural interactions yielding positive results can be found in the recent past, wherein it was a

By engaging with others and learning from them, we develop critical thinking. Cultural interaction demands intellectual engagement. Such engagement often results in a critical assessment of the other and of the self. Thus, cultural evolution comes about wherein individuals and cultures determine which new traditions to acquire and which old traditions to discard. Cultural interaction prevents social and intellectual stagnation and stimulates reassessment of, and a renewed appreciation for, our value systems. (Of course, there is an economic element inherent in such scenarios, wherein cultural ideologies of the powerful maintain dominance. As Muslims, we are taught that while we may adapt to new customs and traditions, we must retain core values and maintain them across the shifting dynamic of our cultural identities. But that is the topic of another article).

Essentially, inter-racial/cultural interactions, of noble intent, can generate meaningful dialogue and build valuable relationships. To that end, it is important to note that Islam does not demand racial/cultural conformity. It encourages diversity. As Malcolm X said, “a race of people is like an individual man; until it uses



well-known U.S. philosophy to pull into its orbit anyone who could provide the country with intellectual stimulus and reinvigoration. It promised safety, security, and a thriving intellectual atmosphere in exchange for intellectual prowess, which prowess it then incorporated into its own national narrative.

its own talent, takes pride in its own history, expresses its own culture, affirms its selfhood, it can never fulfill itself” (8).

Similarly, Islam’s idea of racial equality is not to annihilate color/culture-based identity, the way some

“non-racists” aspire to do. Rather, Islam recognizes the value of racial/cultural variety and respects growth within cultures in order to encourage bridge-building between cultures. But it also emphasizes that individual identity should not become a source of a disservice to our common humanity. Above and beyond that, Islam emphasizes the importance of recognizing that noble character and conduct exceeds all other elements of identity.

### Righteousness

The third part of this verse “Verily the most honorable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you” clearly establishes that regardless of which racial/ethnic group is in power, no matter the politics unfolding, regardless of the injustices endured, what is crucial is integrity. This portion of the verse highlights that our choices, our character, and our conduct defines us and, ultimately, the societies in which we live.

### Conclusion

The Qur’anic verse referenced above highlights our common biology and emphasizes our common humanity and inherent equality. It proceeds to appre-

ciate our racial/national distinctions as crucial aspects of individual identity and pivotal to inter-cultural development. Finally, the verse concludes by highlighting how all these things are ultimately dwarfed against the far more substantial quality of a noble character. It is important to note that the Holy Qur’an captures all this complexity in the span of a single verse. Also, the Holy Qur’an outlined these viewpoints centuries ago, long before the use of words like “diversity” and “inclusion.”

Issues surrounding race relations have existed throughout time. They certainly existed during Prophet Muhammad’s (sa) time, in the form of extreme racial bigotry and oppression. On the basis of Qur’anic teaching, the Prophet of Islam (sa) brought about a never before seen revolution in the hearts and minds of the people of Arabia wherein a system was developed for the gradual but effective dissolution of slavery. Ultimately, those enslaved bowed shoulder to shoulder, in prayer and prostration, with the most powerful chieftains of Arabia. This revolution came about through a revelation: “Holy is He. Who taught man by the pen, taught man what he knew not” (9).

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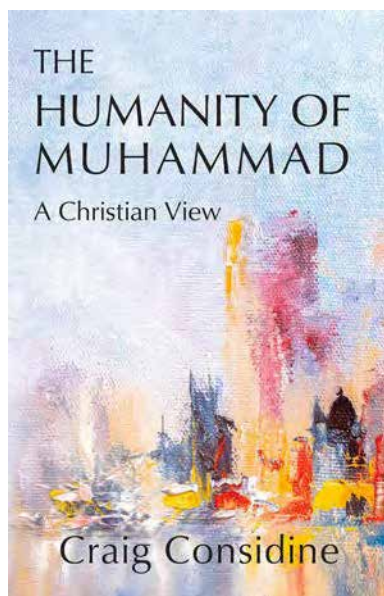
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# Attitude of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) towards Race

Seher Bhatti Chowdhry

Society has called attention to racism now more than ever with the recent incidents of African Americans losing their lives in horrific ways. The world is desperately crying out for a role model that will counter the bigotry and diseased hearts that bring suffering to humankind.

Craig Considine, a lecturer at Rice University and author of several books, including "Humanity of Muhammad: A Christian View," and "Muslims in America: Examining the Facts," seems to think this role model is embodied by Prophet Muhammad (sa). He points out in his writings that the role model who humanity is looking for is found in the personage of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa), who also encountered racial tensions and xenophobia during his own time, 1,400 years ago.



Craig Considine,  
Rice University

In the deserts of Saudi Arabia, Bilal Ibn Rabah provides a perfect example of overcoming racism at a time when a black slave had no status. Hazrat Bilal (ra), who had no voice or rights, rose from being looked down on and abused by his master, to holding a leading position within the Muslim community, with Muslims eventually calling him "Master" because of his knowledge and grace. It was Bilal whom the Prophet chose to be the first muezzin (one who calls to prayer) in Islam. It was considered an honorable role to the highest degree, highlight-

ing that exclusion based on skin color did not hold any significance in Islam. Bilal's beauty was in his voice, which shone out in its unique way. The Prophet Muhammad (sa) held Bilal dear to his heart; in fact, he defended him against one of his companions who said to Bilal: "You son of a black woman." But the Prophet replied: "Are you taunting him about his black mother? There is still some influence of ignorance in you" (1).

Here the Prophet (sa) was referring to the pre-Islamic state of Arab history known as jahiliyyah, "the state of ignorance of Divine guidance." Barbarism and lawlessness had ruled before the arrival of Prophet Muhammad (sa), and racism had been one of the symptoms of that, remnants of which still existed even in the companions of Prophet Muhammad (sa). It was rooted in the misguided view that a person's race reflects their moral character or social status.

The Prophet's (sa) message stood in contrast to the racial hatred of 7th Century Arabia. He was the first person in history to declare that no person is above another by race or ethnicity. It was in his last sermon on Mount Arafat in 632 AD that he made such a proclamation.

"All mankind is descended from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, and a non-Arab has no superiority over an Arab. A white person has no superiority over a black person, nor a black person has any superiority over a white person except by piety and good action" (2).

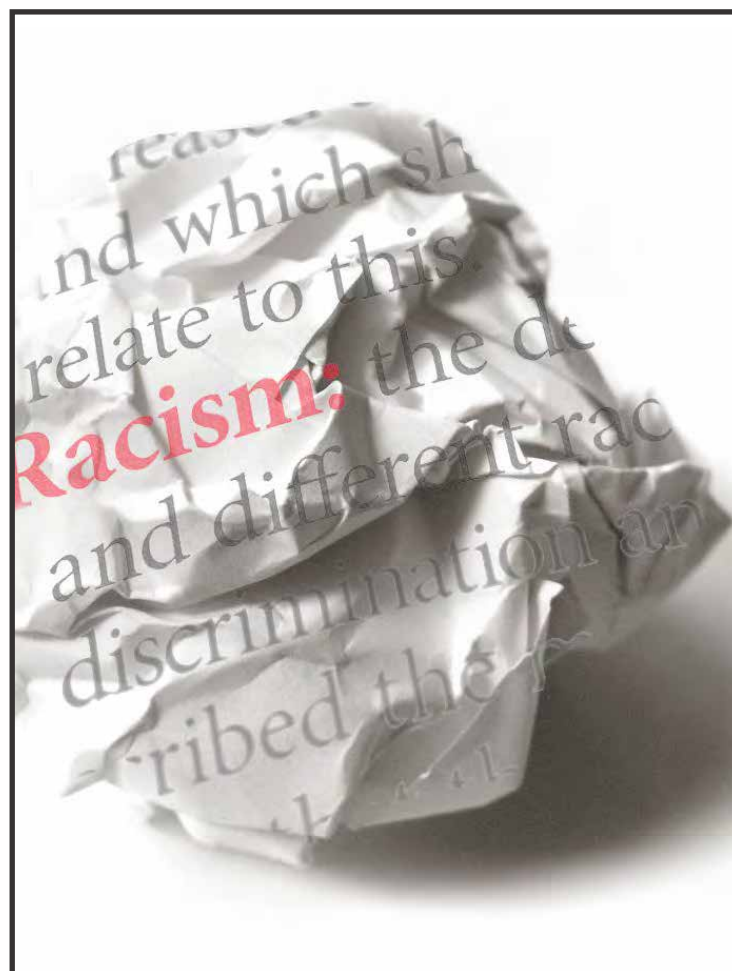
That was the beginning of inspiration for all to strive for racial equality and justice for all, particularly for El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, otherwise known as Malcolm X, a black civil rights leader who battled racism in the 1950s and 1960s. After performing the Islamic pilgrimage of Hajj in Makkah, he wrote his famous letter from there to his friends said:

"There were tens of thousands of Pilgrims from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed

blondes to black-skinned Africans. Still, we were all participating in the same ritual displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and the non-white" (2).

He also added that white Americans should be like Muslims and "cease to measure, hinder, and harm others in terms of their differences in color." Like Prophet Muhammad (sa), El-Shabazz was a role model for the anti-racist movement.

What, then, did Prophet Muhammad (sa) do? He took a society that had no prior experience in equal rights and freedom and advanced them into a peaceful and harmonious nation. Arabs had been overly proud of their tribal and ethnic roots, and this characteristic surpassed everything else in society. But Prophet Muhammad (sa) changed that view and instead taught that one's priority in life ought to be their piety and their spiritual elevation towards God. His influence carries great strength in conquering the hearts of the ignorant. Relations between Muslims and non-Muslims today would benefit greatly if the media outlets would highlight the anti-racial practices of Prophet Muhammad (sa).



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# The Psychology of Racism

Anser Ahmad

"The good news is that racist and antiracist are not fixed identities. We can be a racist one minute and an antiracist the next. What we say about race, what we do about race, in each moment, determines what -- not who -- we are" (1).

"To act is to be committed, and to be committed is to be in danger. In this case, the danger, in the minds of most white Americans, is the loss of their identity" (2).

While racism is not unique to America, this country has continuously fueled the debate of racism. However, what are the underpinnings of racism? What causes a person to be racist? What causes people of one race to be prejudiced against another race? These questions did not begin with the founding of the United States, as a sense of superiority of one's race and inferiority of other races has remained a challenge for humans since time immemorial. Even today, racism is rampant throughout the world. Some form of racism exists in every country on the globe. From apartheid in South Africa to the treatment of Romani people in Europe to the persecution of Uighur Muslims in China, it is surprising that while mankind is at the forefront of technological advancements, it has progressed very little in the areas of social reform and equity towards each other.

Some sociologists, and people in general, believe that racism is a social form of "survival of the fittest." They believe that throughout history, early humans were forced to deprive other groups of resources in order to survive. These sociologists believed that the ancestors of certain races subjugated and oppressed other groups to increase their own access to resources. According to psychologists such as Pascal Boyer, racism is "a consequence of highly efficient economic strategies," enabling us to "keep members of other groups in a lower-status position, with distinctly worse benefits"(3). Another related idea is that to see one's own group as special or superior would have helped early humans survive by enhancing group cohesion. However, contemporary anthropologists do not support these

theories. Their research does not show that one group of people viewed another tribe or group as competitors for the same food and resources. On the contrary, different groups have always interacted with each other often, regularly visiting each other, making marriage alliances, and sometimes switching members.

Present-day psychologists agree that "racism is a symptom of psychological ill-health." It is a sign of a lack of psychological integration, a lack of self-esteem, and inner security.

Psychologically healthy people with a stable sense of self and strong inner security are not racist because they have no need to strengthen their sense of self through group identity. They have no need to define themselves in distinction to, and in conflict with, others" (4).





### Defining Prejudice, Discrimination, and Racism

To begin with, many confuse the terms "prejudice," "discrimination" and "racism." Prejudice is a set of irrational or unjustifiable negative emotions or evaluations toward persons from other social groups(5). Discrimination, on the other hand, refers to the inappropriate treatment of people because of their actual or perceived group membership. This may include both overt and covert behaviors, including microaggressions (indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination) that reflect negative attitudes or beliefs about a non-majority group.

Racism refers to prejudice or discrimination against individuals or groups based on beliefs about one's own racial superiority or the belief that race reflects inherent differences in attributes and capabilities. Racism is the basis for social stratification and differential treatment that advantage the dominant group. It can take many forms, including explicit racial prejudice and discrimination by individuals and institutions (e.g., Jim Crow laws after the Reconstruction) as well as structural or environmental racism in policies or practices that foster discrimination and mutually reinforcing social inequalities (e.g., attendance policies that favor a majority group)(6).

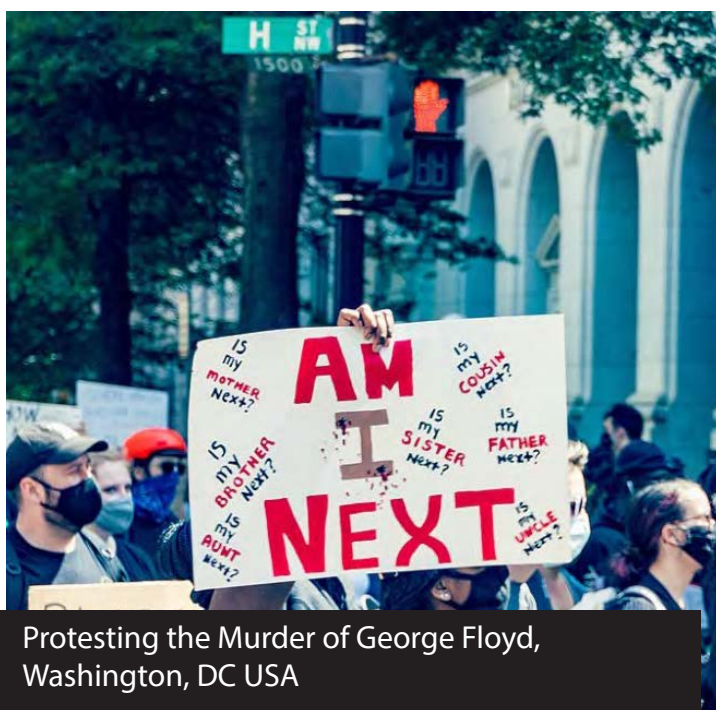
According to other psychologists such as Steven Roberts and Michael Rizzo, racism should be defined more broadly as "a system of advantage based on race that

is created and maintained by an interplay between psychological factors (i.e., biased thoughts, feelings, and actions) and sociopolitical factors (i.e., biased laws, policies, and institutions)." People are not born racist, they say, people become racist (or antiracist) "via a culmination of factors that are deeply woven into the fabric of American society (7).

However, if we analyze what causes a person to become racist, social experiments have shown that being placed in a particular group in itself affects individuals' behaviors, i.e., people tend to identify with others in their own group. This is known as Minimal Groups Phenomenon (MGP). The MGP is rooted in two general motivations: Firstly, people's positive perceptions of themselves often extend to positive perceptions of their group, which leads to an ingroup preference. Secondly, because people care about cooperative alliances, they intuitively interpret the groups that they are assigned to as requiring their cooperation, trust, and support, which leads to behaving in ways that benefit the ingroup and are consistent with ingroup norms" (8). For example, research has shown that even in playing a game, after being randomly assigned to a group or team, both children and adults alike feel and express positivity toward their ingroup, associate with their ingroup, empathize with members of their ingroup, distribute resources in favor of their group, and are more forgiving of and loyal to group members (9).

### How Institutional Racism Promotes Fear and Prejudice

Roberts & Rizzo conclude that similarly, Americans as a group promote racist views which affect all members in the group: "racism is not inborn; Americans become more or less inclined toward racism – or anti-racism – via a culmination of factors that are deeply woven into the fabric of U.S. society." Their view is that "American racism is reinforced by all Americans, though to varying degrees. Just as citizens of capitalistic societies reinforce capitalism, whether they identify as capitalist or not, and whether they want to or not, citizens of racist societies reinforce racism, whether they identify as racist or not, and whether they want to or not" (10). In cities across the U.S., there is a lower proportion of white individuals living in city centers than in the suburbs. Also, racial segregation tends to be higher in the U.S. than in Europe, which is a direct consequence of racist federal, state, and local policies (11). 'Redlin-



Protesting the Murder of George Floyd, Washington, DC USA

ing, for example, systematically denied communities of color access to real estate and set a precedent for a range of federal and state policies that continue to disadvantage communities of color today (12).

One result of these policies is racial segregation, which denies individuals the opportunities for interracial contact that could challenge racist perceptions, preferences, and beliefs. If a person is not able to be in contact with people of another race, they view them with trepidation and simply fear of the unknown. Therefore, when American society promotes implicit separation of races based on residential segregation, income, educational institutions, etc. it is no surprise that we witness daily examples of racism. The Minimal Group Phenomenon suggests that until segregation into groups is eliminated, the problem of racism cannot be overcome.

### How Leadership Promotes Racial Bias

Was every German citizen living in Germany during World War II racist towards Jews? To what extent did the government and leadership of Germany at that time contribute to the psyche of the German population? Hitler's autobiography, *Mein Kampf*, written in 1925, is littered with clear-cut categories, generics, and essentialism. As a leader, he bombarded Nazi Germany with the myths of an "Aryan race" with supposed "pure blood" and racial superiority that stemmed from "God's will." He systematically prevented interracial contact by sending German children to summer camps where they were indoctrinated with notions of Aryan supremacy, and by sending millions of Jewish people to concentration camps where they were forced into labor and killed.

Similarly, in the present U.S. presidency, while the President himself cannot be blamed as causing American racism, his authoritarian, divisive, and racially prejudiced statements have corresponded with a resurgent following of White supremacists (13). President Trump has vocally proposed that the U.S. accept more people from countries like Norway, a predominantly White nation, and fewer people from countries like Haiti, a predominantly Black-Latin nation. He looked the other way when Puerto Rico was in dire need of Federal assistance. He suspended immigration from Muslim majority countries and prevented Mexicans, whom he referred to as rapists and "bad hombre,"

from entering the U.S. by funding a campaign to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border (14).

As such, it is no surprise that individuals who were already inclined to bias were particularly likely to support Trump's political platform. Only a few months after Trump's presidential inauguration, a group of White supremacists marched upon the University of Virginia chanting Nazi slogans, including "Jews will not replace us" and "blood and soil" (15). Over the first three years of Trump's presidency, nation-wide hate crimes on the basis of race, religion, and sexual orientation all increased at a rapid rate. By normalizing various racist behaviors (e.g., publicly insulting entire nations of color), Trump has inspired Americans who already held prejudicial views to become outright racists. The likely outcome of having leadership that promotes division and segregation is a people who begin to exhibit racist behaviors in the open, as has been seen by local police authority throughout the U.S.

*"Not everything  
that is faced  
can be changed,  
but  
nothing can be  
changed  
if it is not  
faced"*

James Baldwin

### Conclusion: What Can Be Done, or How to Become an Antiracist

"The only way to undo racism is to consistently identify and describe it—and then dismantle it" (16). —Ibram X. Kendi

James Baldwin, a civil rights activist and writer, once said, "not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed if it is not faced" (17). Perhaps the most insidious component of racism is to remain passive. In America, there exists an apathy towards

systems of racial advantage or outright denial that racism even exists. The American psychologist, Beverly Tatum, characterized racism as a moving walkway at an airport. Individuals who are actively racist, she argued, acknowledge racial hierarchy and the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that reinforce it, and choose to walk – or run – along with it. Individuals who are passively racist, on the other hand, simply stand still and are moved along by the walkway regardless. These individuals are not actively reinforcing racism, but they are nonetheless moving in the same direction as those who are" (18).

While there is much research and discussion on racism, the road to break the circle of racism is to understand what it is to be an antiracist. Anti-racism has typically been defined as a system of equity based on race that is created and maintained by equitable thoughts, feelings, and actions, as well as laws and policies. Ibram Kendi, in his book "How to be an Anti-Racist" explains that "one either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an antiracist. There is no in-between safe space of "not racist." The claim of "not racist" neutrality is a mask for racism" (19). He goes on to describe racism as an addiction: "Like fighting an addiction, being an antiracist requires persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination."

Therefore, if a country's policies are creating equity among the people, then it is an antiracist.

Perhaps one of the most important steps towards fixing the race problem is to focus on the contextual influences, psychological processes, and developmental mechanisms that help people become antiracist. While an individual's own beliefs play some role, whether they are religious or just ethical, as is outlined above, such a large portion of the problem is with the society we live in, which subtly encourages racist thinking. Educators, as well as media, are two of the strongest platforms to influence these systems, beliefs, and outcomes.

Kendi summarizes the proper mindset that one must have to be antiracist: "To be antiracist is to think nothing is behaviorally wrong or right- inferior or superior- with any of the racial groups. Whenever the antiracist sees individuals behaving positively or negatively, the antiracist sees exactly that: individuals behaving positively or, not representatives of whole races. To be antiracist is to deracialize behavior, to remove the tattooed stereotype from every racialized body. Behavior is something humans do, not races do" (20).

To hold this attitude, that individual behavior should be attributed to the individual and not to a race, is the first step to being antiracist. However, to actively participate in policy change, whether it is in our educational system, housing system, financing institutions, etc., with the knowledge that many of our constructs are based on racist ideologies, is the much needed, yet far greater challenge in becoming antiracist.



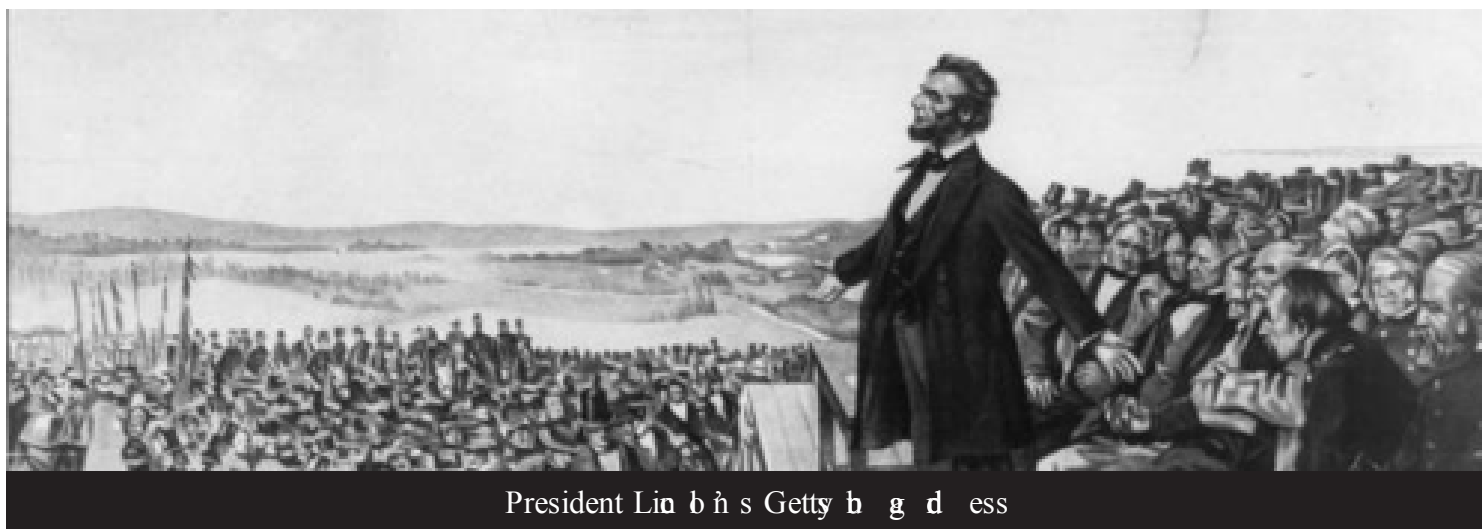
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# Building a Religious Case Against Racism

Zia H Shah, MD



President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

The Gettysburg Address by President Abraham Lincoln was only two minutes long, yet it is written in golden letters in history for all times to come.

On November 19, 1863, President Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address at the official dedication ceremony for the National Cemetery of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania, on the site of one of the bloodiest and most decisive battles of the Civil War. Though he was not the featured orator that day, Lincoln's brief address would be remembered as one of the most important speeches in American history. In it, he invoked the principles of human equality contained in the Declaration of Independence and connected the sacrifices of the Civil War with the desire for 'new birth of freedom,' as well as the all-important preservation of the Union created in 1776, and its ideal of self-government (1).

Lincoln's deep voice echoed passionately: "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. "Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It

is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. "But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us - the living- rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth" (2).

He was inspired by his polished human conscience and his Christian faith. In the Gospel of Mark, we read: "One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, 'Of all the commandments, which is the most important?'

'The most important one,' answered Jesus, 'is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the

Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these" (3).

In the Old Testament that is shared by the Christians and the Jews, we read:

"You must not exploit or oppress a foreign resident, for you yourselves were foreigners in the land of Egypt" (4).

"You must treat the foreigner living among you as native-born and love him as yourself, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God" (5).

"Do not despise an Edomite, for he is your brother. Do not despise an Egyptian, because you lived as a foreigner in his land" (6).

"You shall allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the foreigners who dwell among you and who have children. You are to treat them as native-born Israelites; along with you, they shall be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel" (7).

The first ideal in Confucianism is "Jen." This is Confucius' idea of the ultimate brotherly love. It is the idea that no matter where you live in the world, we are all brothers because we are all humans. To achieve Jen is to be able to devote yourself to making others happy, both those in your community and those within your family. As the old saying goes, treat others as you yourself would like to be treated (8).

Mencius or Mengzi (372–289 BC) was a Chinese Confucian philosopher, who has often been described as the 'second Sage,' that is, after only Confucius himself. He is part of Confucius's fourth generation of disciples.

He believed 'Jen' is implanted in the individual by T'ien (Heaven). One could say Jen is our Heaven-endowed nature. The Constant Virtue of Jen can be interpreted as the main principle of being Human (9).

Five centuries before Christ, Confucius set forth his own Golden Rule: "Do not impose on others what you do not wish for yourself" (10). The teaching of the Golden Rule in each religion is universal and transcends race, religion, and gender.

All the prevalent world faiths, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism, give a universal message. Nevertheless, they have parochial streaks available within their traditions and scriptures that those with myopic vision and ulterior motives can read in limited ways, in service of their nationalist or populist agenda as opposed to a universal one, in service of their political goals.

Read how Reid Turner, who attended Bethel University and Bethel Theological Seminary in St. Paul, MN and pursued additional graduate studies at the University of Chicago, is reading a parochial message just for the Christians in the New Testament, and accusing Pope Francis of misinterpreting the Bible, when the Pope speaks for universal brotherhood in our global village: "In the following examples, the Pope appears to be manipulating scripture to deemphasize Christian brotherhood and elevate universal brotherhood.

The Pope here is trying to identify the 'little ones' of Matthew 10:42 with the Universalist understanding of 'brethren' in Matthew 25:40, who he here equates with 'the vulnerable of the Earth.'

There is nothing wrong or contrary to the Christian message to see the face of Christ in those who suffer. The point here is that Jesus never identifies Himself with them in a general sense in Matthew or anywhere else in the New Testament. He identifies only with His followers.

In my estimation, there is evidence of a pattern; the Pope appears to be intentionally manipulating scripture to replace references to Christian brotherhood with the concept of universal brotherhood" (11).

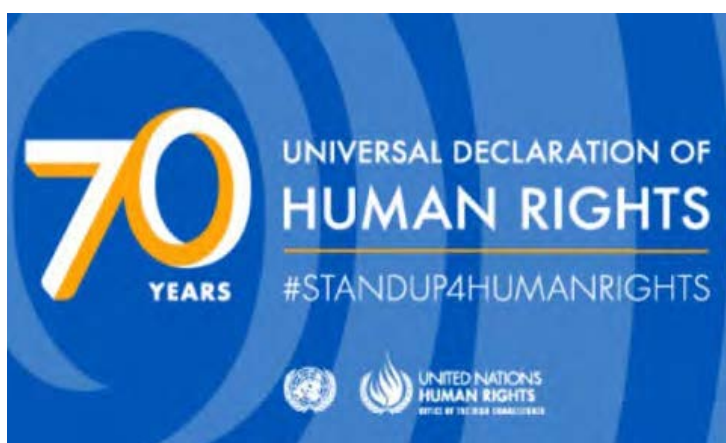
The New Testament and, for that matter all religious scriptures, are like a mirror; each reader, whether a Universalist or one with a myopic view, sees himself or herself in the mirror.

Likewise, all of the universal quotes of the Old Testament are ignored when the Zionist and the right-wing politicians in Israel want to insist on a Jewish state, at the detriment of the human rights of all the Palestinians, both the Christians and the Muslims.

Similar exploitation and misinterpretation of the

universal message of the Qur'an by the myopic Muslim leaders can be cited. But, in the interest of space, I am not going to pursue that here.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on December 10, 1948 (General Assembly resolution 217 A) as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected, and it has been translated into over 500 languages (12).



The first two Articles of UDHR, among the 30 states:

#### Article 1.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

#### Article 2.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth, or another status(12).

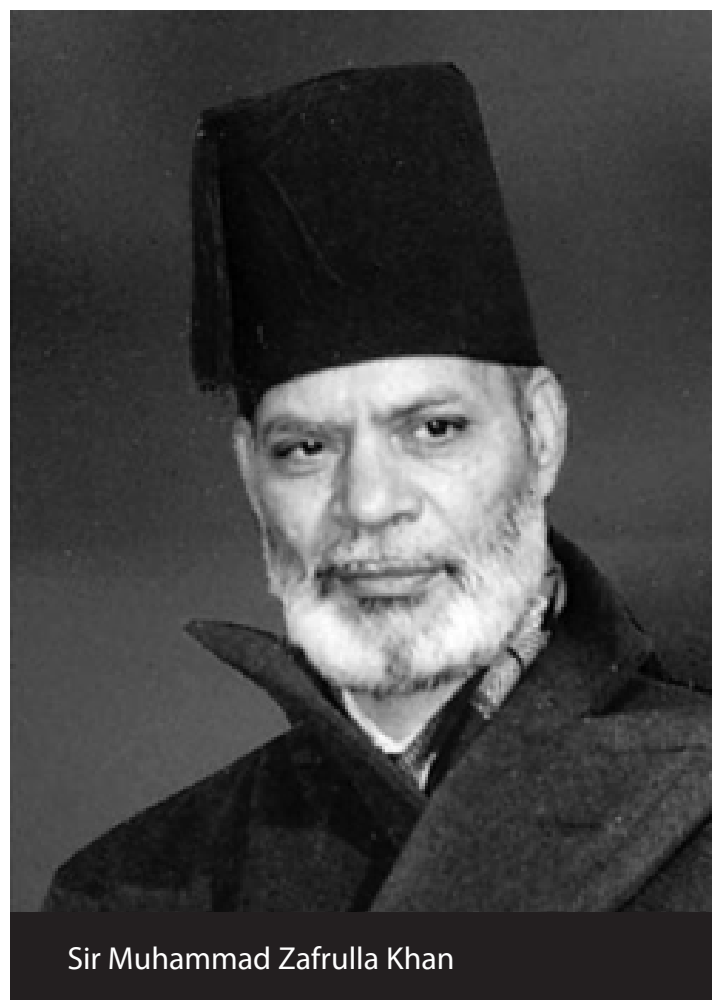
Devouts of each religion continue to claim that their religion is universal and in keeping with the 30 Articles of UDHR.

But, periodically, they also come up with a more limited reading of their tradition and scriptures in one guise or

the other. Allow me to ask the followers of each and every religion, do you believe in a universal religion or a parochial cult? Do you read a pluralistic message of justice and compassion for the whole human family in our global village in your scripture or do you preach a limited message of 'have' and 'have-nots' to the exclusion of others, putting one group in 'the chosen' sphere and the other in 'the heathens'?

I, for one, by the Grace of Allah, do not waiver from the universal and the pluralistic message of the Qur'an. No matter the circumstances or the audience!

This is how I read the Muslim scripture, the Holy Qur'an, the final literal revelation of the All-Knowing God.



Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan

My task has been made easy by none other than the celebrated polymath, Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan. He became Pakistan's first Foreign Minister in 1947 and served concurrently as leader of Pakistan's delegation to the UN (1947–54). From 1954 to 1961, he served as a

member of the International Court of Justice at The Hague. He again represented Pakistan at the UN in 1961–64 and served as president of the UN General Assembly in 1962–63. Returning to the International Court of Justice in 1964, he served as the court’s president from 1970 to 1973 (13).

He wrote a booklet correlating the 30 Articles of UDHR with various verses of the Holy Qur’an. The booklet can be read online. His booklet is titled, Islam and Human Rights (14).

I hope the Universalists in each religion will create a more comprehensive message from their respective traditions and scriptures and safeguard our one human

family from being broken down into factions by corrupt parochial voices, whether they come in the guise of patriotism, nationalism, fundamentalism of the respective religions or populism.

With this, I rest my case against racism or dividing human societies or countries on the basis of religions or sects.

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## What is White Supremacy?

Andleeb Shams Ahmed

***“Humanity is but a single brotherhood: so, make peace with your brethren” (1).***

In Islam, every man, woman, and child are equal. God will judge and treat us all not by the way we look, but by what is in our hearts. Unfortunately, our society today acts in completely opposite ways to this. If more people were to hear these words and act accordingly, we would have less strife in this world, something definitely needed today.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator, with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (2). When these words were written in the United States Declaration of Independence, did the authors and our forefathers believe this to include whites only, or for all of humankind who would come to America? We cannot answer this question; however, as centuries have gone by, most Americans believe this to be true for all races, not just whites. Yet with all the turmoil in America today, racism is more rampant, and white supremacy has begun to be more widespread, second only to the time of slavery.

What is white supremacy? By definition, it is an organization that holds an adamant viewpoint that white people are superior to any other kind of race, including Africans, Native Americans, Asians, Latinos, Middle Easterners, etc. White supremacists believe the Caucasian race is far superior to all other races and, therefore, seek to either separate the races in the United States and most European countries, or eradicate all other races on Earth. Because of this ideology,

they also believe that they should have the ability to dominate them and that only they should be able to live in white-only communities with no other race to be found. These “communities” include entire nations of purely Caucasians and no other race (3).

However, there are major differences between racism and white supremacy. What is racism? Racism is prejudice, discrimination, and antagonism directed against a person or people of the basis of their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized (4).

Although both racism and white supremacy refer to almost identical issues, it is important to know the difference. Racism is more a matter of prejudice, while white supremacy defines a power relationship. Racists do not like non-white people and will discriminate against them, but do not necessarily believe that only white people should have any or all freedoms. Racists judge non-white people harshly and treat them as such. White Supremacists believe all non-Caucasians do not deserve any freedom and disbelieve in their mere existence. They also belong to organizations whose goals are to control and hold power over them and even go as far as to try to eradicate their lives from our world.

Although white supremacy dates back to 15th Century in Europe, let us focus on America, from its past to its current state. This has happened all throughout history in many different places to many different races, starting from European countries, however, it was largely directed towards black people, and America made the biggest impact with white supremacy from slavery to segregation and now to the present day.

In America, white supremacy began as early as the discovery of the nation. Every nation has a story or myth of how it was created. The story of settling and finding of the United States begins with Christopher

Columbus “discovering” it, then its continued occupancy by brave Pilgrims to become independent from England’s rule to westward expansion until it becomes an enormous, rich, and free country today (5).

Yet, most of this is a myth. Columbus did not discover America, nor did he even land on any part of America. Yes, pilgrims did come here, fought difficulties, and made sacrifices to make America a new free country for others, yet it took centuries for any recognition or acknowledgment of Native Americans who were already settled here. This was when white supremacy began here. The treatment, abuse, and slaughtering of Native Americans is historical proof that white people felt superior to them and believed that their mere existence was such a hindrance on their lives that they tried to eradicate as many of them as possible and/or never recognized them not just as true founders and inhabitants of this new land, but as a race or people at all (6).

Many centuries later, Africans were kidnapped from their homeland. In America, they were subjugated, enslaved, tortured, abused, and sold to rich white people as if they were property. The United States could not have developed economically as a nation without enslaved African labor. Since this was a time of most financial gain from agriculture and some industrial work, there were not enough white people willing or able to do this type of work. They could not have used Native Americans, indigenous people, to do the work due to their population becoming insufficient. This is why and how they began the slave trade from Africa. White supremacists seem to have



Illustration of African Slaves Delivered in North America  
Designed by Wannapik

forgotten that it was the African slaves who made the growth and expansion of America possible.

At the time of slavery, white supremacy was politically supported. Even when the Constitution was decreed, there were still some signs of white supremacy. Article I, states that slaves are three-fifths of a person, and Article IV says that slaves must return runaway slaves (7).

When slavery was abolished, many people, mostly from Southern states, perpetuated the ideology of white supremacy. They created hate organizations such as the Klu Klux Klan (KKK) and many other neo-Nazi organizations that heavily supported white supremacy. Actually, these are just sub-sections of white supremacy. This was the era of segregation. These organizations, under the umbrella of white supremacy, still existed after the end of slavery and continued to treat black people in the same despicable manner. The only difference was that black people could not become slaves. Even with the end of slavery, segregation was allowed and highly encouraged. In addition, if a black person was murdered by a white person, most likely, there would be no repercussions at all.

As stated before, white supremacy also affected all other races outside of Caucasians. The fear experienced by immigrants that now live here has had a long history in the United States. This all helped white supremacy as a whole. One example among many is when it fueled the nativist political party and the racist rules of the 1924 Immigration Act. This act prevented immigration from Asia, and this remained in effect until 1965. This shows how other races also faced this problem of the white race having power over them. In other countries, white supremacy groups emerged everywhere, , such as the National Front in France, The Republicans (Die Republikaner) in Germany, and the Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partwi Osterreichs) and the Alliance for the Future of Austria (Bundnis Zukunft Osterreich) (8).

The Black Lives Matter movement has also spurred the creation of more white supremacy groups today. On July 23, 2019, Christopher A. Wray, the head of the FBI said that they made around one hundred domestic terrorism arrests since October 1, 2018, all having

to do with white supremacy. Racism and white supremacy came back into the limelight in the past several years, especially with the high number of black people being unjustifiably killed by the police. The latest death of a black man named George Floyd sparked a large debate once again since he was brutally murdered by police officers, while begging for his life as he could not breathe, surrounded by many witnesses and being videotaped. This video caused utter outrage within society everywhere. Many white corrupt police officers who commit these heinous crimes on black people are never disciplined for their actions, nor are they charged with a crime. During slavery and segregation, black people had no voices at all. Black people may not be as overtly oppressed today as back then, they still are treated unequally and can finally try to make their voices heard, not just in America, but all over the world (9).

The big question is does white supremacy still exist today? The answer is yes. Sadly, in America, the government and mainly its President have not only shown their own feelings of supremacy over black people, they also encourage others to not feel ashamed to act, say, and feel the same way. Instead of moving the country ahead by not repeating its unfortunate past, the President has been unabashedly open with his own racist and supremacy tendencies. White supremacists and our political leaders need to understand that their actions inflame each situation

beyond repair. When people hold hatred in their hearts for anyone who is not white, it is unfortunately not an “easy fix.” The challenge is to expose those that have these ideologies and demonstrate to them how fundamentally they are cruel to their fellow human beings, and their actions are actual betrayals of the ideals on which the United States was founded and for which Americans have fought and died.

If they can learn the ideals of Islam, they can see that God says we are all equal and one. He will treat us the exact same, no matter what our color, race, ethnicity, or nationality are. The Prophet Muhammad (sa) said: “O mankind! Your Lord is one, and your father is one. You are all descended from Adam, and Adam was created from Earth. He is most honored among you in the sight of God, who is most High. No Arab is superior to a non-Arab, no colored person to a white person, or a white person to a colored person, except in piety” (10).

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## Interracial marriage

Amtul Kafi Yadullah Bhunnoo



Marriage is a holy union of two individuals instituted by religion to establish a bonafide family unit in the eyes of God. Interracial marriage is a union of individuals who are of different races.

Today, the world is a global village. We appreciate the variety of food that represents a country or culture, which in turn makes us appreciate the native ingredients used to make that masterpiece. However, when it comes to people, we are less appreciative overall. You can be rich, poor, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, a Democratic or Republican voter, all of which can contribute to and influence your thinking and character. These characteristics can be found in anyone of any race, creed, or culture. But it seems that there are many people who are less concerned with character, more with the skin color of any given individual.

In the United States of America, interracial marriage has increased from 5% to 18% from the 1980s to 2010s (1). However, we are still dealing with people who are more concerned about the race than about the person him/herself. Let us suppose someone is looking for a wealthy individual; it puts many races, such as the Black, Asians, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups at a disadvantage. This is because more than 10% of people are likely to fail to earn the same rate as their white counterparts (2). There are advertisements that showcase a lighter skinned individual being more

successful than a darker-skinned individual. This also creates a delusional thought in the minds of the masses that Black is not beautiful. What is interesting is that people tend to have a problem with the levels of melanin, a pigment that is responsible for absorbing light and protecting from harmful UV rays of the sun. This means that Black people can be likened to a crystal prism capable of releasing various colors, i.e., the founding race of all other races. This is evident from the fact that all nations diverged from Africa (3).

All skin colors are beautiful, but if someone believes otherwise, perhaps genetics would help. For example, genetically brown eyes more prevalent in the BAME group contain high melanin, whereas hazel, blue or green eyes are formed by variably low amounts of melanin together with brown pigmentation, giving a specific color (4). In genetics, brown eyes are more dominant traits, or perhaps we can say the successful ones. However, natural selection and evolution have placed the recessive genes to be dominant in certain regions of the world, meaning that the physical features of a person only represent a shield for it to survive certain physical environments. These physical features that form to protect humans do not shield them from the mental and spiritual attacks by the evils of society.

Attraction to other individuals is often based on physical characteristics, and the decision is made to form a union. This is apparent from many online marriage sites as well as in the personal bio-data of people specifying a "tall, fair" woman or man. However, we do not realize that we are often limiting ourselves to something good that can be best for us and could be found outside these specific features. It is often the same as someone specifying social class and caste as well, all of which are baseless in Islam. A saying of the Prophet Muhammad (sa) states that "A woman is married for four things, i.e., her wealth, her family status, her beauty, and her religion. You should marry the religious woman (otherwise) you will be a loser" (5).

When an individual is looking to get married, they should be looking at a potential father or mother of their children, and whether they are mentally and spiritually capable of taking on that responsibility. You are also looking at an individual who will be a new child to your parents, a new sibling, a new friend, and so on. Family background is also important to consider since you want to know what kind of environment and teaching was involved in your potential spouse's upbringing. But this should not be confused with family status, financial assets, etc. As emphasized in the earlier Hadith which clearly states the importance of piety in a person as that will greatly motivate a person to exhibit their duties and be inclined to fulfill your rights. The Holy Prophet (sa) said the following on seeking a wife: "The whole world is a provision, and the best object of benefit of the world is the pious woman" (6). This is also true for seeking a husband as the Prophet (sa) said, "When someone with whose religion and character you are satisfied asks to marry your daughter, comply with his request. If you do not do so, there will be corruption and great evil on earth" (7).

This Hadith is a great reminder to those individuals and families who do not go forward with a potential proposal based solely on physical features, especially of race and skin color, despite the person showing a good character. People often do not want to show that they are open to marrying someone they like for their character, and due to their skin color and society's views and stereotypes on it, they show even more hesitancy. Sometimes it is seen that there are instances where individuals marry certain races for status symbols or as "trophies." This again goes against the teachings of Islam and is also a way to cheat oneself of finding good.

There are also cases where individuals who have had an unsuccessful interracial marriage due to their own character traits rather than the race of their partner will often persuade others to not delve into marriage with another race. It is true that the Holy Qur'an states that "He has created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them, and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that surely are Signs for a people who reflect" (8). This indicates that familiarity is an easier path as, indeed, it can be more difficult to adapt to living with a family or a part-

ner that is of a different race. For example, a Bangladeshi man marrying a Chinese woman or an Indian woman marrying a man from the Caribbean will mean that their staple diets are different and, therefore, may mean those food choices might clash. But this is very trivial and can be overcome with exploring and accepting the good. The fact that the genetic pool is so diverse shows that humans mixing and creating huge diversity is for the health and survival of humans in the long run.

The following Hadith point out that there is good and bad in all nations and that we must seek the good for ourselves, including marrying the person of the best character to create peace and love in our homes.

"And marry not idolatrous women until they believe; even a believing bondwoman is better than an idolatress, although she may highly please you. And give not believing women in marriage to idolaters until they believe; even a believing slave is better than an idolater, although he may highly please you" (9).

Allah also states in the Holy Qur'an: "The adulterer (or fornicator) shall not marry, but an adulteress (or fornicatress) or an idolatrous woman, and an adulteress (or fornicatress) shall not marry but an adulterer (or fornicator) or an idolatrous man. That indeed is forbidden to the believers" (10). This again emphasizes the importance of piety to build a person's character over the importance of their physical features. Islam promotes diversity and marrying individuals of unblemished character.

When an interracial marriage occurs, some family members and even relative strangers may speak ill and point at the skin color as a flaw. This is because family members often wonder what others would think, but they do not realize that they are stopping themselves from keeping their homes as sanctuaries and unwisely filling it with worries and thoughts of others' opinions instead of remembrance of Allah. "Aye! It is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort" (11). This means that we must make sure our homes are not under the influence of society's racism, and we do not let the Media or other individuals impact our thoughts more than following Islamic teachings.

Sometimes we also tend to forget that certain races,

especially of African descent, are less celebrated for their achievements and contribution in the world. In the West, they often are part of an intellectual group despite not being promoted or widely recognized, but in the East, racial diversity is often ignored, thus contributing to their regression. This is also very apparent due to their racial insecurity, too, and the high sales of 'making skin fair' creams. People slowly recognize that race has nothing to do with greatness or superiority. Allah has made everyone equal as the Prophet Muhammad (sa) said: "All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black, nor a black has any superiority over a white – except by piety and good action" (12).

The rank of an individual only becomes higher due to their goodness and that too only in front of Allah. Thus, as the Promised Messiah (as) said: "I do not like the words of those who limit their compassion to their own ethnicity. I advise you, again and again, to never ever restrict your sphere of compassion." He also said: "You should extend compassion to all of God's creations as if

you are their blood relative, just like mothers are with their children. One who does good with natural passion like that of a mother can never be ostentatious" (13).

When we look at longevity in marriages, the majority of those that last are due to overlooking the physical features of a spouse and accepting them as they are. A house can make two dishes but cannot worship two different Gods or hold different beliefs. If ideologies differ, we are likely not to unite, and unity is an important thing for the peace of any home. Beauty attracts, but character holds, that is, physical beauty may attract you to a person, but it is the character that will either break the relationship or make it a saga of lasting love.

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# How To Converse On Racism

Khalida Jamilah

“She is so loud and outspoken. No wonder; she’s Black.”  
“White people are exclusive, you know. They don’t want to mix with people of color.”

“This neighborhood is good because White people live there.”

These racist comments often come from our own families and friends. Most people will agree that the world will be better without racism. But how do we eliminate it? It begins with knowing what the definition of racism is. The most popular definition of racism is that one race thinks it is better than another race, and often the one which thinks it is superior is of lighter skin than people of color. Before talking about racism, one must understand what causes it. Jennifer Richeson, a Yale University social psychologist, explains one of many causes of racism: “This is not the product of some deep-seated, evil heart that is cultivated. It comes from the environment, the air all around us” (1). Thus, racism is not an intentional feeling that a person wants to have. People become racist because of influence from others. Racism is an ongoing problem; thus, it requires a constant engaging conversation to educate people about what racism is, why it is wrong, and how to talk about it. This article will focus on how to converse on racism.

## 1. Understand why you want to discuss racism.

When you begin a conversation on this topic, start with genuine intention because you want to educate other people that racism is wrong, whether it is direct or indirect. Finding a real purpose to start a meaningful conversation on a sensitive topic is essential because it gives a foundation to the conversation.

## 2. Be prepared: it will feel uncomfortable.

Racism is a sensitive issue, and most people, whether it is the minority race or the majority, will feel uncomfortable conversing about this. Some people try to ignore this topic. For instance, if your parent who was born and raised in a developing country commented as

follows: “He is a Black man. Be careful,” you may disagree with this comment, but at the same time, you also cannot confront your parents directly because the parent will think you are rude. Younger people often are not brave enough to speak the truth, especially in front of respected elders and family members like a parent, grandparent, uncle, or aunt. Some people do not want to confront racist comments or attitudes in front of their friends because their friends may think or say this person who speaks against racism is too serious. However, if one is truly passionate about conversing on racism, one must be ready to bear this uncomfortable feeling and to seek a solution to it.

## 3. Understand your audience.

Children need to be taught that the light-skinned race is not better than dark-skinned, or vice versa. What makes a person good or bad is the character of that person. If your sister says, “Why is my skin dark? I need to switch skincare,” then you must carefully and patiently reply that the most important thing is to have healthy skin. The dusky complexion is also beautiful. Your sister might respond, “Well, I want to have light and flawless skin, nothing wrong with that! It is my right.” This kind of answer is very common, and one

# KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE



must understand that for a long time, and even today, society defines women's beauty as synonymous with white and flawless skin. So we should not give up educating our loved ones. One can respond to someone who wants to have white skin by saying if you associate beauty with white skin, that's a problem because it is a product of colonialism and a really unworthy definition of beauty if beauty solely means white skin. One must use patience and different strategies when talking about racism to a 25-year-old or one's grandparent. But the common strategies are patience and perseverance because when we point out racist comments, the racist person will feel and acknowledge that this attitude is wrong, even if they may not want to show it to you.

#### 4. Identify an example of racism in daily life

Before saying racism is wrong, educate yourself about everyday examples of racism. This may consist of comments, attitudes, or even jokes. By educating ourselves about this subtle, daily-life racist attitude, we will have more knowledge when conversing on racism. Alvin Alvarez, a professor at San Francisco State University, conducted a study about everyday racism. He identified everyday racism as "subtle, commonplace forms of discrimination, such as being ignored, ridiculed or treated differently" (2). Everyday racism may seem insignificant, and people may not even be aware that these attitudes, comments, jokes, or words are all examples of racism because they are very different from the obvious direct examples of racism.

#### 5. Listen attentively

Do not try too hard to change people's minds. Converse respectfully, even if you have opposite points of view. The key is to have a healthy, two-way conversation. If you want to talk about racism, you have to listen to their point of view, even if it makes you uncomfortable and even if you disagree. Remember that talking about a sensitive issue like racism will take time.

#### 6. Self-educate and Self-reflect

Before talking about racism, ask yourself, am I racist? What do I think of people who look different from me? How do I feel about them? Am I making generalizations? Never associate crime, bad action to the race of that person. Family values, upbringing, and environment are the important factors that shape the character of a person. Having this mindset may be difficult if one has encountered people of color committing a

crime or having bad manners. It requires careful self-analysis to try to eliminate personal bias toward someone who looks different from us. It is normal to have a judgment about something, but when we start treating others as if we are better than them because of our skin color, that is wrong.

People might wonder why racism still exists in this age of globalization. The most effective solution to end racism is in our hearts. Conversing about racism, creating awareness that it is wrong, participating in voting, and social movements are all great efforts to bring attention to racism being wrong. Still, the real solution, and the most effective solution, is in our hearts. Conversing about racism will only work when we open our hearts and minds. When we accept that we all have implicit biases and prejudice, then we can engage in a meaningful conversation on racism. In a sermon titled "The Detroit Address," the fourth worldwide leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, His Holiness Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh), explained hatred and prejudice of a majority race toward a minority:

"Nevertheless, if you honestly search your hearts, it is possible that you may find that, unfortunately, you had locked your soul's door to them. Or, if you had not locked it completely, you had at least half-closed it to them. You did not desire to keep it wide open so that they could gladly enter into it" (3).

A real and genuine conversation about racism should first begin with an open heart and an open mind. Only when we make our hearts and souls open wide to people who look different than us will the conversation on racism be productive.

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# poetry

## CORNER

### RIGHTEOUSNESS

*A poem by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi*

*Translated by Wajeeh Bajwa and A. Bushra Salam Bajwa*

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*Mischief and arrogance are the identity of the evil spirited, the accursed;  
The humble ones are the true progeny of Adam.*

*O you who is created from dust: give up arrogance and pride!  
Pride is becoming to the Being of the Glorious Lord alone.*

*Consider yourself as inferior to all;  
Perhaps this will enable you to enter the House of Union [with God]*

*Give up pride and arrogance, for this is righteousness;  
Become truly humble, this is the desire of God.*

*The root of righteousness is humility for the sake of God;  
Virtue, which is a condition of faith, lies entirely in righteousness.*

*Those who adopt the path of suspicion  
Wander far away from righteousness.*

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*(Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi,  
Brahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Part V; Ruhani Khazain, Vol. 21, P. 18, Edition 2008)*



# NEWS VIEWS, ' & REVIEWS

## POLITICO

By **QUINT FORGEY**  
08/28/2020

Former first lady Michelle Obama condemned what she called the “systemic racism” emanating from the White House and elsewhere around the country in an explosive statement on Friday that addressed recent killings and racial unrest in Kenosha, Wis.

“These past few months, I’ve been thinking a lot about what our kids are seeing every day in this country — the lack of empathy, the division stoked in times of crisis, the age-old and systemic racism that’s been so prominent this summer,” Obama said. “Sometimes they see it on the news. Sometimes they see it from the White House Rose Garden. And sometimes they see it from the back seat of a car.”

Obama’s statement represents another intense criticism of President Donald Trump following her Democratic National Convention speech last week.

It also comes as the violence in Kenosha has emerged as a new flashpoint of the 2020 White House race.

Trump and his allies have sought to highlight incidents of rioting and looting that have accompanied the city’s protests against racial injustice and police brutality.

Those demonstrations began after Jacob Blake, a 29-year-old Black man, was shot in the back seven times by a white police officer on Sunday as he leaned over into his car.



Three of Blake’s children were reportedly in the back seat of his SUV when their father was gunned down. On Tuesday, two protesters in Kenosha were shot to death and a third was wounded during an attack apparently carried out by a young white man who was caught on cellphone video opening fire in the middle of the street with a semi-automatic rifle.

Kyle Rittenhouse, a 17-year-old police admirer from Illinois, was arrested on Wednesday.

Prosecutors charged him on Thursday with first-degree intentional homicide, one count of first-degree reckless homicide, one count of attempted first-degree intentional homicide and two counts of first-degree reckless endangerment.

Trump has repeatedly claimed that if Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden is elected in November, mob violence will descend upon communities across the United States.

At this week’s Republican National Convention, both Trump and Vice President Mike Pence warned that “no one will be safe in Biden’s America.”

Other administration officials also have seized upon the violence in Kenosha, with White House counselor Kellyanne Conway even suggesting Thursday that further unrest could help the president politically.

"The more chaos and anarchy and violence reign, the better it is for who is the clear choice for who's best on public safety and law and order," Conway said.

For his part, Biden used a video statement on Wednesday to demand a peaceful end to racist police brutality. He also asserted that "burning down communities is not protest."

On Thursday, Biden accused Trump of "pouring gasoline on the fire" of the country's divisions, and he reminded voters that "this happens to be Donald Trump's America."

Democratic vice-presidential nominee Kamala Harris issued a similar rebuke of Trump's response to racial unrest in a speech on Thursday, and she said she believes the officer who shot Blake "should be charged" with a crime.



### ***'That same fight': DC civil rights march commemorates MLK's dream***

**The civil rights march comes at the end of a summer rocked by protests over racial injustice.**

by Jihan Abdalla  
28 Aug 2020

Washington, DC - Tens of thousands of people gathered in Washington, DC on Friday to denounce racism, protest against police brutality and commemorate the anniversary of the 1963 civil rights march when Martin Luther King Jr made his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.



In his iconic address, King lamented "the unspeakable horrors of police brutality" and envisioned a reality, a future where his children would "one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character".

Kimberly Jones, a Black woman from Illinois, was one of hundreds of marchers, lining up to enter the National Mall.

"Fifty-seven years later we are still fighting that same fight," Jones said, "the fight for equality.

"I'm angry, I'm frustrated, and I'm disappointed," she said.

The march comes at the end of a summer rocked by nationwide protests and racial unrest over police killings of Black people - sparked by the death of George Floyd, who died in late May after a white police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes.

Civil rights activist Reverend Al Sharpton's National Action Network began planning for the march back in June in the wake of Floyd's death. On Friday, he delivered the keynote address in front of the cheering crowd.

"The reason we had and still have to say Black Lives Matter ... we go to jail longer for the same crime like we don't matter, we get poverty, double the unemployment like we don't matter, we're treated with disrespect like we don't matter," he said.

"So we figured we'd let you, Black Lives Matter and we won't stop until it matters to everybody."

Martin Luther King III, a son of the late civil rights icon, also took the stage and addressed his father's legacy as well as the issues that continue to plague this generation.

"We are courageous but conscious of our health, we are socially distant, but spiritually united, we are masking our faces but not our faith in freedom, we are taking our struggle to the streets and to social media," King said. "The nation has never seen such a mighty movement in a modern-day incarnation of what my father called the coalition of conscience," he added.

Relatives of an ever-growing list of police killings in recent years, including Floyd, Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor - also briefly took turns addressing the crowd.

The protest, called the "Commitment March: Get Your Knee Off Our Necks," gained new urgency in recent days, after police shot another Black man, Jacob Blake, multiple times in the back at close range in front of his children in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Blake's father and sister attended the march. The father had earlier said that Blake has been paralyzed from the waist down.

After the speeches at the Lincoln Memorial, participants marched to the nearby Martin Luther King memorial, led by the families of victims of police violence.

But unlike the historic 1963 event, when more than 200,000 people took part to demand equality and an end to racial segregation, this year's march comes in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic, a disease that has killed more than 180,000 Americans and has disproportionately affected Black people.

Participants were required to wear masks and temperature checks were conducted at the entrance. Hand sanitizer and face masks were being distributed by volunteers.

Organizers estimate some 50,000 took part in the march in Washington, DC after shuttle buses from coronavirus hotspots were cancelled. But hundreds of thousands tuned in to the virtual commemoration, which featured civil rights activist Reverend William Barber. Politicians, entertainers and celebrities were also in the lineup.

## The INDEPENDENT

**Former homeland security official under Trump says policies are 'impacted by white nationalism'**

**Donald Trump and many of his advisers have long been accused of pandering to racists – and of sympathizing with them**

Andrew Naughtie

A former counterterrorism official under Donald Trump has sounded the alarm about white nationalism within the administration, saying that extreme ideology is directly informing various government policies.

Interviewed on MSNBC last night, Elizabeth Neumann was asked by host Joy Reid to what extent the administration's policies on security and immigration were being shaped by white nationalist ideology.

Ms Neumann replied that while divining exactly what motivates senior Trump advisers and staff is not always easy, racist motives are clearly playing their part.

"Early 2017, I just assumed that the rhetoric we were seeing, the behavior we were seeing was from an inexperienced group, that they didn't understand how to govern – rhetoric and how it takes on a different effect when you're sitting in the White House.

"And I gave them a lot of grace, or room to grow, and was deeply disappointed at what I saw. And I came to realize that there is some design to it. And I personally believe – I don't know any man's heart, but from what I experienced and some of the people I worked with, I do think there are people who hold a white nationalist viewpoint, and that is actually impacting those policies.

"Some of those policies have good security means (sic), but when you poison it with this white nationalism, it kind of ruins the ability to do it well."

In the three-and-a-half years of Mr Trump's presidency, the FBI and counterterrorism monitoring organizations have warned that white nationalism and white supremacy are increasingly serious domestic terrorism threats.

Since the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, a long series of violent incidents across the US has indicated that both organized groups and individual extremists are increasingly prepared to take violent action in the name of far-right causes.

And as Ms Neumann alluded to, Donald Trump, his advisers and his administration have been accused of pandering to and even in some cases working with these organizations.

Certain Trump allies – including immigration hardliner Stephen Miller and nationalist agitator Steve Bannon, now ejected from the White House – have embraced certain far-right ideas and movements particularly openly.

They have been criticized on both left and right both for giving succor to racist movements previously considered beyond the pale and for translating extreme ideas into policy, particularly when it comes to immigration.

Mr Trump himself has often been accused of personally indulging in racist, xenophobic and violent speech to shore up his own base.

Ms Neumann was among more than 70 former officials who recently went public with concerns that Mr Trump and his administration had “imperiled” national security and that the president himself was “dangerously unfit” for the job.

She has herself recently appeared in a video for Republican Voters Against Trump in which she explains that she voted for Donald Trump in 2016 based on her pro-life views, but in her time in his administration came to realize that he was in fact fueling the very threats that she was meant to help defuse and eliminate.

“Over the period of 2017 to 2018,” she tells the camera, “we started to see the rise of the white supremacist agenda. I, and my leadership at the Department of Homeland Security, were very clear that we found the ideology behind white nationalism, white supremacy, to be a growing threat.

“A very common refrain that I was asked was, ‘Does the president’s rhetoric make your job harder?’ And the answer is yes. The president’s actions and his language are, in fact, racist.

“Things like, ‘there are good people on both sides’ or ‘send them back from where they came from’ – those words gave permission to white supremacists to think that what they were doing was permissible.

“And I do think that the president’s divisive language is indirectly tied to some of the attacks that we have seen in the last two years.”



***French magazine condemned for showing MP Danièle Obono as slave***



A French right-wing magazine has been criticised across the political spectrum in France for depicting a black socialist MP, Danièle Obono, as a slave.

The article in Valeurs actuelles accused Africans of colluding in slavery, and had a sketch of Ms Obono with an iron collar around her neck.

Prime Minister Jean Castex said it was a “revolting publication”.

The magazine apologised to Ms Obono but denied the

article was racist.

Ms Obono, born in Gabon, is a deputy in the National Assembly for left-wing party France Unbowed, led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon. She represents a Paris constituency.

She tweeted the image with the words "the far right - odious, stupid and cruel".

"This image is an insult to my ancestors, my family and my political movement," she said, adding she was "more determined than ever to fight against #racism, for liberty, equality and fraternity" - repeating the most famous slogan of the French Revolution.

The French presidential office said President Emmanuel Macron called Ms Obono and "expressed his clear condemnation of any form of racism".

Wallerand De Saint-Just, a senior figure in the far-right National Rally (RN), condemned the magazine's image of Ms Obono, saying it showed "contempt for her".

France saw big protests in June and July condemning colonial-era slavery and racism in France today, inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement and fury at the US police killing of George Floyd.

President Macron has vowed to combat racism but said France would not remove controversial statues of colonial-era figures. There have been campaigns against such statues in the UK and US.

The magazine Valeurs actuelles - meaning "current values" - said it had placed Ms Obono back in the context of 18th Century slavery as part of a fictional feature series.

"Our text is not racist at all," it argued. "It is convenient for our opponents to throw that accusation at us." It went on to say that the illustrations "reinforce the inherent cruelty of the subject itself".

"We are clear-sighted enough to understand that the person most affected, Ms Danièle Obono, could have felt personally hurt by this fiction. We regret that and apologize to her."



**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
apnews.com



### ***Supreme Court rejects challenge to limits on church services***

Published Sat, May 30 2020 07:07 AM EDT  
By DEE-ANN DURBIN

More than 50 Black former McDonald's franchise owners are suing the burger chain, saying the company steered them to less-profitable restaurants and didn't give them the same support and opportunities given white franchisees.

The 52 plaintiffs, who owned around 200 U.S. stores before being forced to sell them over the last decade, are seeking compensation of \$4 million to \$5 million per store, according to the lawsuit. The suit was filed Tuesday in federal court in Chicago, where McDonald's is based.

According to the lawsuit, McDonald's steered Black franchisees to stores in inner-city neighborhoods with lower sales volumes and higher security and insurance costs. The company would provide them with misleading financial information or push them to decide quickly when a store became available, the lawsuit says.

Once Black franchisees owned a store, they would be asked to rebuild or remodel within a shorter period of time than white franchisees without the rent relief and other financial support given to white franchisees, the lawsuit says. Black franchise owners were also denied the chance to buy more profitable stores in better neighborhoods, it says.

As a result, the plaintiffs averaged sales of \$2 million per year. By comparison, McDonald's average U.S. store brought in \$2.7 million annually between 2011 and 2016 and \$2.9 million in 2019, the lawsuit says.

"Revenue is determined by one thing and one thing only: location," said James Ferraro, the Miami-based attorney representing the plaintiffs. "It's a Big Mac. They're the same everywhere."

Ferraro also noted that the number of Black McDonald's franchisees has fallen by half over the last two decades. The chain had 377 Black franchisees in 1998; it has 186 now. At the same time, the number of franchised restaurants has more than doubled to 36,000. McDonald's Corp. denied the allegation and defended its history with black franchisees.

"These allegations fly in the face of everything we stand for as an organization and as a partner to communities and small business owners around the world," the company said. "Not only do we categorically deny the allegations that these franchisees were unable to succeed because of any form of discrimination by McDonald's, we are confident that the facts will show how committed we are to the diversity and equal opportunity of the McDonald's System, including across our franchisees, suppliers and employees."

McDonald's has a troubled history with Black franchisees. In 1969, activists boycotted four McDonald's in Cleveland until the company sold them to Black owners. In 1983, a Black franchise owner from Los Angeles sued the company for discrimination; McDonald's eventually paid him \$4.5 million.

In 1996, McDonald's leadership acknowledged that Black franchisees weren't achieving parity with their white counterparts and resolved to make changes.

Don Thompson, the company's first Black president and CEO, served from 2012 to 2015.

But charges of discrimination continued. In January, two Black McDonald's executives sued the company. They claimed McDonald's shifted advertising away from Black customers, graded Black-owned stores more harshly than white ones and implemented business plans that had a discriminatory impact on Black franchisees.

At the time, McDonald's said it disagreed with the characterization of its actions. It noted that 45% of its corporate officers and all of its field vice presidents are people of color.

### *Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community delivers Special Jalsa Salana 2020 Address*

*August 10, 2020*





# FROM

# THE ARCHIVES

Muslim Sunrise, Vol. V, October-January, 1932-33, No. 1 and 2

## Two Slave Leaders of Islam Bilal and Zaid

(The following excerpt was taken from "Review of Religions")

God has created all men free and Islam was the first religion to recognize the inviolability of this most sacred heritage of humanity. We give below a brief sketch of the lives of Bilal and Zaid, both freed slaves, to show to what heights of spiritual, social and intellectual eminence Islam has raised the slave community.

Bilal was an Ethiopian slave. He was born at Mecca. The fact that he was one of those very few individuals who responded to the call of Truth in the very early days when the Prophet was quite helpless and his cause seemed to be hopeless shows, beyond all possibility of doubt, that the slaves looked upon the Prophet as their greatest friend and helper, the sincerest advocate and champion of their cause. Bilal was subjected by the Meccans to persecution and privations that beggar description. He was plainly told that the course he had adopted would lead to his destruction and that he would have to choose between death and recantation. Being a slave, he was quite helpless and there seemed to be no end to the persecution he had to endure. And yet Bilal the Ethiopian was not the man who could by any means be turned away from Islam and the Prophet. Deliberately and after mature thinking he had taken the step. The storm of persecution passed. The same Ethiopian slave became one of the most respected leaders of Islam. Omar, the mightiest monarch of his time used to stand up to show his respect to him whenever Bilal happened to visit him. He often called him the "Chief of the Muslims". He was the trusted personal companion of the Prophet and was in charge of the management of his household. After the death of his beloved master, Bilal requested Abu Bakr, who was then not only the head of the Muslim community but also his benefactor (Hazrat Abu Bakr had bought Bilal from Omayya and emancipated him) to allow him to

go and serve the cause of God in Iraq or Syria. The answer that this request of Bilal elicited from the khalifa was very pathetic. "Bilal", said Abu Bakr, "I beg you in the name of God and the right I have over you not to leave me in my old age." Such were the relations that existed between the head of the Muslim state and an Ethiopian freed slave. On the death of Abu Bakr, Omar repeated to him the request of his predecessor. But Bilal refused to be deprived any longer of the reward of serving the cause of Truth and Righteousness. His memory is held in very high esteem by Muslims in all countries. He lies buried in the Muslim graveyard at Damascus. By his side are enjoying their eternal sleep some of the most respected of the Prophet's companions and wives, Abu Obaida, Dihay-i-kalbi, Saad bin Waqqas, Umm-i-Habiba and Umm-i-Salma. But his tomb attracts more pilgrims than are attracted by any other tomb in Damascus. The love and affection which the Muslims bear towards him is only a reflection of the attachment which the Holy Prophet had for his loyal and devoted servant and of the respect and esteem in which he was held by his companions. The abiding place that Bilal has secured in the hearts of the Muslims all the world over is an eloquent testimony to the inestimable service that Islam rendered to the cause of slaves in raising them from the lowest depths of degradation to the highest pinnacles of social eminence.

Another freed slave was Zaid of eternal fame. He was given to the possession of the Holy Prophet by his wife Khadija, long before the Prophet was entrusted with his greatest and noble mission. The Prophet at once freed him. Though he was given his freedom without, however, any request or desire on his part, Zaid remained attached to the Prophet with a devotion at once unprecedented and unparalleled. Never had any slave carried out the



behests and commands of his master to completely, joyfully and faithfully as did Zaid obey the Holy Prophet and no father had ever been so loving and kind to his son as was the Prophet to Zaid. The Prophet's affection and kindness to Zaid was repaid by a pure, unmixed and unsullied fidelity and love by the latter. Even the imploring entreaties of a beseeching father and uncle could not persuade him to leave the Prophet. "Nothing in the world could separate me from the Prophet," Zaid told his father and uncle, when they came to take him home with them, "he is all in all to me in the world."

He was always looked upon and treated as a member of his family by the Prophet who loved him so much that he came to be known and called as "Zaid, son of Muhammad." The Prophet had him first married to Umm-i-Aiman whom he (the Holy Prophet) respected very much as she was his foster mother and then to Zainab who was his cousin. Zaid, according to some traditions, was the first man to believe in the Prophet. When Hamza, the Prophet's dear uncle, became Muslim he was linked into a chain of brotherhood with Zaid. Ayesha says that Zaid was never sent in any expedition, over which he was not put in command and he was never left behind by the Prophet

in any expedition when he was not made the chief of Muslims remaining behind and his representative and successor in Medina. He was entrusted with the supreme command by the Prophet in nine battles. Zaid sealed his devotion to his noble and beloved master with the blood of his life at the battle of Muta. Ayesha thinks that if Zaid had been living at the time of the Prophet's demise, the latter would have nominated him as his successor. From the manner in which the Prophet treated Zaid it does not seem a very remote probability that Zaid would have been selected by the Prophet as his successor and the head of the Muslim state after his death. From the very degraded position of a slave to the possibility of being nominated as the successor of the greatest of God's Prophets and the noblest son of man is indeed a marvelous change and this change in the position of the slaves was effected by Islam.



# Questions & Answers

## *Why should we stop thinking ill about others?*

"I tell you truly that the habit of thinking ill of others is a great affliction, which destroys a person's faith, flings him away from truth and rectitude, and turns friends into enemies. In order to acquire the excellences of the truthful it is necessary that a person should altogether shun the habit of thinking ill of others, and should he happen to fall into that attitude concerning someone else he should seek forgiveness repeatedly and should supplicate God Almighty that he may be safeguarded against such sinfulness and the consequences that flow

from it. This habit should not be underrated. It is a dangerous disease which destroys a person very quickly.

In short, thinking ill of another ruins a person. It is written that when those who are condemned to hell are brought face to face with Almighty God, He would say to them: 'You had become guilty of thinking ill of God.'"

### **Reference:**

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi .  
(Malfuzat, Vol. I, P. 372)

# The Detroit Address

by Wajeeh Bajwa and A. Bushra Salam Bajwa



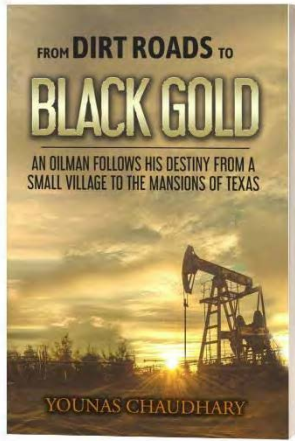
The United States has faced issues of racial tensions since its inception, and the problem of racial inequality continues to be the focal point of unrest within the country. “The Detroit Address” is a Friday Sermon delivered by Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh), the Fourth Khalifah of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, on October 16, 1987, at Detroit, MI to the members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. In this address, he pinpointed factors that have caused racial tension in some communities in the United States and presented Islam’s longstanding rejection of the notion that any one race is superior to another.

In this message, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh) addressed the root cause of racial prejudice and discrimination. Giving the example of the people of Hazrat Noah (as), Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh) warned Ahmadi Muslims that failure to change their ways and adopt mutual love and compassion between one another would result in an unfortunate fate for individual members as well as for their nation. Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh) used the teachings of the Holy Qur’an to analyze the causes of poverty, racism, and bigotry in the US. He addressed the problem of race relations between African American Ahmadi Muslims and Ahmadi Muslim immigrants from the Middle East and South Asia, particularly the majority from Pakistan. He discussed the cultural challenges affecting each race in the US, the vulnerability of both groups to the same spiritual and psychological disease which

Wajeeh Bajwa and A. Bushra Salam Bajwa



manifests in different ways. Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh) applied the teaching of the Holy Qur’an and the example of the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa) to offer ways to cure this disease. He urged that Americans must learn to openly embrace the poor and the marginalized with the loving message of unequivocal acceptance offered by Islam; this can only be done by understanding and embracing the true teaching of Islam of equality for all human beings. Delivered 23 years ago yet timeless words of wisdom by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (rh) can be said to resonate forcefully to this day.



# Be Inspired

I recently wrote a book titled “From Dirt Roads to Black Gold” which is a story of my life. I grew up in a small village in Pakistan and arrived in Edmonton, Canada with just \$30 in 1973. I did backbreaking hard work, encountered frequent challenges and religious persecution. I persevered and built several successful businesses in the USA and Canada using common sense, hard work, consistency and determination. My wife was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease in June 2014 and this led me to write this book.

I grew my businesses in a highly competitive, extremely fluctuating market. This book is for those who have ever doubted themselves or their abilities. My message is simple: perseverance, consistency and self-belief will make you successful. All proceeds from the sale of this book will benefit charitable causes supported by the YBC Foundation.

Book will be available soon in Urdu and Hindi translations

Website: [YBCFoundation.com](http://YBCFoundation.com)

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# COVID-19

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!



### Coronavirus (COVID-19) IMPORTANT INFORMATION

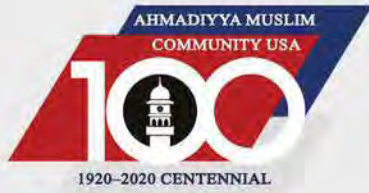
• **HANDWASH FREQUENTLY**

• **STAY HOME WHEN FEELING UNWELL**

• **SEE A DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY**

No.	WHAT? HOW?	DO NOW!
1.	<b>Feeling unwell?</b>  <i>Cough, Fever, runny nose, Difficulty in Breathing?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay home – See a doctor</li> <li>Please do NOT go to the Mosque or any public places or public events.</li> <li>Cover mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing by using a tissue or sneezing into the sleeve. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Have you travelled outside USA?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay at home if you begin to feel unwell, even with mild symptoms such as headache or runny nose until you recover.</li> <li>For the next 14 days, monitor your health for fever, cough and difficulty breathing; and see a doctor if needed.</li> </ul>
3.	<b>What are the Symptoms of Coronavirus disease?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fever</li> <li>Cough / Sneeze</li> <li>Difficulty in breathing</li> <li>Sore throat, runny nose, muscle aches</li> </ul>
4.	<b>What treatment is available?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently, there is no specific treatment for Coronavirus.</li> <li>Medical care is supportive and aims to help relieve symptoms and prevent complications.</li> <li>You must get medical help if you have any of the above symptoms or feeling unwell.</li> </ul>
5.	<b>How can I protect myself against Coronavirus?</b>  <b>WASH YOUR HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER FOR ATLEAST 30 SECONDS. IF SOAP AND WATER ARE NOT AVAILABLE, THEN USE ALCOHOL BASED HANDSANITIZERS. AVOID TOUCHING YOUR FACE, NOSE &amp; EYES.</b>	Maintain high levels of personal hygiene, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Handwash frequently</b> - Wash hands before and after food preparation, before eating, after using the washroom, after touching the nose or mouth, after coughing or sneezing, after changing diapers and whenever else hands are dirty.</li> <li><b>Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, nose or face.</b></li> <li><b>Avoid touching doorknobs, handrails, faucets</b> and surfaces in public area</li> <li><b>Maintain Social Distance</b> - Stay at least 1 meter (3 feet) away from people who are coughing or sneezing.</li> <li><b>Avoid handshakes</b> during current situation</li> <li><b>Frequently clean surfaces and materials</b> around you such as phones, keyboard, mouse, TV remotes, pens, stationary tools etc.</li> </ul>

**It is only “us” who can beat the virus!**



# CENTENNIAL DAY

2.15.2020

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