

RACISM

**OPPRESSION, INJUSTICE
AND THE TEACHINGS OF ISLAM**

“And of His signs is the creation of the earth, the diversity of your languages and colours. Indeed in that are signs for those of knowledge.”

(Qur’ān, Al-Rūm: 22)



OPPRESSION & INJUSTICE

Muslims are commanded with justice in all affairs—Allāh stated, “O my servants, indeed I have made oppression unlawful for Me and unlawful for you, so do not commit oppression against one another.”¹ And the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, “Oppression will be layers of darkness on the Day of Resurrection.”² Unfortunately, Western countries are riddled with injustice and oppression between people as well as immorality and disobedience to the Lord of creation. Racism is just one ugly face of that injustice that we'll discuss in this short article.

“Verily, joining others in worship with Allāh is indeed a great injustice.”

- Qur'ān, Luqman 31:13

THE GREATEST INJUSTICE

The greatest injustice that humans perpetrate is their abandonment of the worship of Allāh, His guidance and commandments. Allāh said, “Verily, joining others in worship with Allāh is indeed a great injustice.” And if people are left to do as they desire without guidance, they will oppress one another, the sad reality of which we can see around us today. Allāh stated, “Whosoever turns away from My reminder (the Qur'ān), verily for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection.”³ Let us take the example of Makkah in Arabia in the pre-Islamic period—there were great injustices such as racism, tribalism, burying of young girls

"O people! Indeed your Lord is One, and your father (Ādam) is one. Verily, the Arab is no better than the non-Arab..."

- Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)



alive, murder, fornication, theft, usury, intoxication and so on. But once these people accepted Islām, submitted themselves to Allāh, worshipped Him alone, followed the guidance of the Qur'ān and the example of the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), the injustices came to an end—wrongdoers were punished and society flourished, safe and free from oppression. These are the fruits of following guidance. Allāh relays the story of the Prophet Noah (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ), “I said to my people: ‘Ask forgiveness from your Lord, for verily, He is Oft-Forgiving. He will send rain to you in abundance, give you increase in wealth and children, and He will provide for you gardens and provide for you owing rivers. What is the matter with you that you do not fear Allāh and you hope not for His reward?’”⁴

“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the noblest of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allāh is Knowing and Acquainted.”

ISLĀM AND RACISM

Islām is a religion that judges people according to their piety, righteous deeds and manners and not the colour of their skin, forms or gender. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: “O people! Indeed your Lord is One, and your father (Ādam) is one. Verily, the Arab is no better than the non-Arab, and the non-Arab is no better than the Arab, and a white person is no better than a black person, and a black person is no better than a white person—except for the person who is dutiful and fears Allāh. Have I conveyed the message?” They replied: “Indeed Allāh’s Messenger has conveyed the message.”⁵

Every Muslim who fears Allāh despises racism. There was no racism among the Companions of the Prophet. One of the closest Companions of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin ‘Awf married his sister to Bilāl bin Rabāḥ, the Companion who called the Muslims to prayer. She was a Qurayshī Arab woman and Bilāl was a freed black slave from Abyssinia but that made no difference—Islām gives honour to all who embrace it and follow guidance. Our Lord, Allāh (the Most High) said, “O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the noblest of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allāh is Knowing and Acquainted.”⁶

“You are all children of Ādam and Ādam came from dust.”

The righteous scholar, Shaykh Ibn Bāz stated, “Allāh has made clear in this verse that no person has distinction over another, nor virtue over another in the sight of Allāh except due to piety. The noblest of people with Allāh are the most righteous, obedient and God-fearing. The Prophet (ﷺ) was asked ‘Who are the most noble of people?’ so he replied, ‘They are the most righteous among them.’”⁷ The Prophet (ﷺ) also said: “Allāh, Most High, has removed from you the pride of the pre-Islamic period and its boasting in ancestry. A person is either a pious believer or a miserable sinner. You are all children of Ādam and Ādam came from dust. Let the people stop boasting about their ancestors and tribes. They are the fuel of Hell or they will have less worth with Allāh than the beetle which rolls dung with its nose.”⁸ From this brief article, the reader can see the justice of Islām and its stance on racism as well as offering a lasting cure to the ills and discord in society.

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References:

- (1) Muslim, no. 2577
- (2) Bukhārī, no.2447; Muslim, no. 2579
- (3) Tāhā 20:124
- (4) Nūḥ 71:10-13
- (5) Aḥmad, no 22978 authenticated by Al-Albānī in Ṣaḥīḥah, 6/199
- (6) Al-Hujurāt 49:13
- (7) Bukhārī no. 3353, Muslim no. 2378
- (8) Abū Dāwūd, no. 5116 authenticated by Al-Albānī

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