

# ISLAM & RACIALISM

By:

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(Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) who said; "No Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have superiority over an Arab. Nor does a white man have any superiority over a black man, or the black man any superiority over the white man. You are all the children of Adam, and Adam was created from clay." (Baihaqi).

In this manner Islām established equality for the entire human race and struck at the very root of all distinctions based on colour race and struck at the very root of all distinctions based on colour, race, language or nationality. According to Islām, Allah has given man this right of equality as a birthright. Therefore no man should be discriminated against on the ground of colour of skin, his birth place, the race or the nation in which he was born.

Some people spoke in derogatory terms about the Prophet's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) companion, Salmān Fārsi (R.A.) the Persian. They took a narrow nationalistic view and spoke of the inferiority of Persians in relation to Arabs. The Messenger of

Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) took a decisive step to put down all such narrow tendencies. He declared; "Salmān belongs to the Prophets family."

The Messenger of Allah's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) statement transcends all lineage, tribal and national considerations, which were of immense weight in Arabia.

Islām is the only solution to the racial problem. H.A.R. Gibb states; "But Islām has yet a further service to render to the cause of humanity. No other society has such a record of success in uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity, and of endeavour so many and so various races of mankind. The great Muslim communities of Africa, India and Indonesia, perhaps also the small Muslim community in Japan, show that Islām has still the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great societies of East and West is to be replaced by co-operation, the mediation of Islām is an indispensable condition." (Whither Islām? p. 379).

## The classification of races

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organisation, race is strictly a biological classification based on such physiological traits as skin pigmentation, colour and form of hair, shape of head, physical stature and form of nose. Most anthropologists agree on three major races: Caucasoid, Mongoloid and Negroid.

The **Caucasoid**, found in Europe, many parts of the Americas, in North Africa, the Middle East to North India, is characterised as white to brown in colour, of medium to tall stature, with long or broad head form. The hair is light blond to dark brown in colour, of a fine texture and straight or wavy. The colour of the eyes is light blue to dark brown and the nose bridge is usually high.

The **Mongoloid** race, including most of the people of East Asia and the Indians of the Americas is described as yellow to reddish brown in colour of medium stature with a broad head form. The hair is dark, straight and

coarse, body hair is sparse. The eyes are dark brown to black. The epicanthic fold which forms an almond—shape eye is common. The nose bridge is usually low or medium.

The **Negroid** race is characterised by brown to black skin, generally a large head form, varying stature and thick lips. The hair is dark and coarse. The eyes are dark, the nose bridge low and nostrils broad. The Negroid race includes chiefly the peoples of Africa south of the Sahara. (Readers Digest 1966 Almanac, P.668).

In the 19th Century certain men, interested in presenting forward the 'alleged' superiority of their own kind of culture, or nationality, began to attribute mental characteristics to the concept of race.

This approach, called **racism** is without scientific foundation and has long been discredited not only by the Qur'ān but by all reputable anthropologists.

### Islām is against racialism

Islām not only recognises absolute equality between men irrespective of any distinction of colour, race or

nationality, but it makes it an important and significant principle, a reality. Allah Ta'āla has laid down in the Qur'ān; "O mankind! We have created you from a male and female. And we set you up as nations and tribes so that you may be able to recognise each other. Indeed, the noblest among you before Allah are the most heedful of you." (Surah Al-Hujurāt Verse 13).

This verse means that the division of human beings into nations, races, groups and tribes is for the sake of distinction, so that people of one race or tribe may meet and be acquainted with the people belonging to another race or tribe and co-operate with one another. This division of the human race is neither meant for one nation to treat another with contempt or disgrace, or regard them as a mean and degraded race and usurp their rights.

Superiority of one man over another is only on the basis of Allah-consciousness, purity of character and high morals, and not on the basis of colour, race, language or nationality.

This statement by Allah Ta'āla is backed by the Messenger of Allah