

**AGAINST
RACISM
AGAINST
HATRED**

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Racism has existed as far into history as we know and still exists through to our present time today. We see it in old biblical stories like that of Moses and Pharaoh and we've witnessed it in the modern-day scenes of genocide in places like Rwanda and Burma.

As a community of diverse people, there can often be feelings of resentment between groups of people due to a lack of understanding and interaction. This booklet is a small effort from the Muslim community to open the dialogue on this ugly issue. This booklet aims to highlight the importance of tackling racism in our society and encourage people to stand up 'Against Racism' wherever they may witness it.

As Muslims, we feel it is important to share some of our Islamic values in this regard and open the lines of interaction between communities for greater cohesion and understanding. We hope this booklet is informative and you also find it a useful short introduction into the religion of Islam to help understand the Muslim belief.

For more information about Islam, please log onto www.onereason.org



The belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races: theories of racism. - The definition of racism, Oxford Dictionary.

Take a moment to think back to your school days and see if you remember an incident when someone you knew was racially mocked. Most likely you do – maybe it was a gesture, a joke or even a physical attack. The reality is that this type of bullying can affect the life and self esteem of the victim for the rest of their life.

This behaviour doesn't stop with children, but continues on into adulthood in many cases. The Independent recently highlighted a shocking poll which revealed that 1 in 3 Brits had thoughts and feelings which would be considered as racist [1]. What's alarming is that previous such reports [2] have suggested that many people's feelings of hostility towards foreigners was passed down from previous generations.

This might seem obvious, since we know that racism isn't genetic so it must be learned behaviour. Just like a child is taught manners, morals or right from wrong, a parent or carer can nurture feelings of racial resentment in a child. You may have witnessed very young children in the playgrounds, too young to be tainted by such nurturing. When left with other children of a different colour, they will happily play together, as naturally as they would with children of their own colour. For such children, colour doesn't come into the equation - because racism isn't part of their natural disposition.

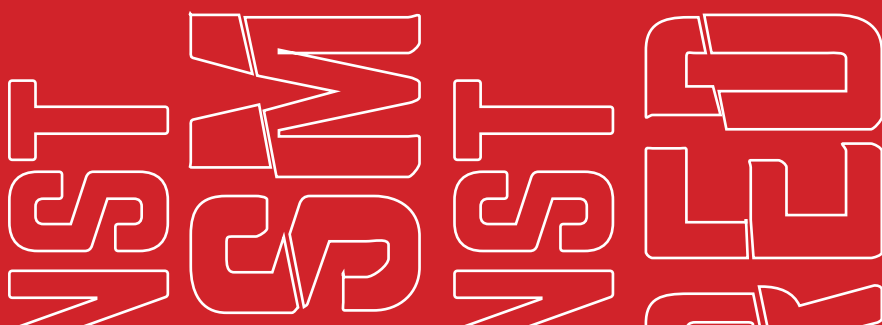
Most people may think that we have moved into the 21st century without the racial tensions and prejudices that have plagued our world in the past. Following the victory of the second world war in the 1940s, the U.S. Civil Rights Movements of the 60s, the disintegration of past apartheid states in the 90s, and the appointment of a black U.S. president in the new century, we do see greater integration in the world today...but the disease of racism continues to fester amongst us, as many will testify:

"Racism is still with us. But it is up to us to prepare our children for what they have to meet, and, hopefully, we shall overcome."

Rosa Parks, American Civil Rights Activist



So racism still exists in societies today. Maybe it's more hidden and subtle but the effects of it are still present, requiring us to educate ourselves on how to deal with it.



HAIKREU

ISLAM'S STANCE ON RACISM

There are many groups and individuals that still hold abhorrent views of other people who are of a different race or caste. An arrogant hatred stemming from feelings of racial superiority. We, as Muslims, are calling people to stand up against such views, whether held within our circle of friends, families, colleagues or communities - 'Against Racism, Against Hatred'.

ISLAM'S VIEW ON RACISM

Islam teaches that all people are equal and the only difference between people is their level of piety and God-consciousness. In the Qur'an, it clearly states:

"O Mankind, We (God) created you from a single pair of a male and a female (Adam and Eve), and made you into tribes and nations so that you may know one another (not so that you despise each other). Verily, the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah (God) is he who is most righteous of you."

The Qur'an, Chapter 49, Verse 13

So all humans descend from Adam and Eve. In that sense, we are all essentially brothers and sisters. Our differing colours and diversity are not there to cause division but are ways of recognising one another. Such traits do not elevate a person's status but rather our status with God is based on our level of piety and righteousness. In another verse from the Qur'an:

"And amongst his signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your language and colours; Verily, in these are signs for those who have knowledge."

The Qur'an, Chapter 30, Verse 22

The prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is authentically reported to have said:

"Allah does not look at your appearances or wealth but looks at your actions".

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also reiterated this point in his last sermon to the people, as can be seen from the following excerpt:

"O people, Remember that your Lord is One. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a black person has no superiority over a white person, nor a white person has any superiority over a black person, except by piety and God-consciousness (taqwa). Indeed the best among you is the one with the best taqwa."

The Prophet's Last Sermon as reported in Baihaqi

As can be seen from the above quote, Islam is the antidote to racism, since in Islam there is no tolerance for it. Muslims feel it is a duty to convey these messages within our wider society and work towards the common good, both in word and deed.

MALCOLM X'S LETTER FROM HAJJ

Islam also promotes racial integration through its practices. For example, the Islamic Hajj (pilgrimage to the Ka'bah, the first house of worship built by Abraham - see notes), which takes place every year, is attended by millions of people of different races and colours. As in other Islamic practices, there are no divisions based on race, colour or status as Muslims together perform the pilgrimage rites and pray side by side as one community.

Through such unity, the pilgrimage can have a profound effect on people. One such example of this was in 1967, when Malcolm X travelled to perform his pilgrimage. At the time, Malcolm X was still very much a black supremacist. He had been a member of the Nation of Islam (NOI), a black supremacist group established in 1950s America, which was far removed from orthodox Islam in fundamental matters of creed such as the fact that white people were devils and that black people were pure creatures.

On travelling to Mecca, Malcolm X was astounded at the racial integration and equality that he witnessed, which he had never experienced elsewhere. Here is an excerpt of a letter from Malcolm X after he attended the Hajj in 1967:



"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. But 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 non-white."

"America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered white - but the white attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color."

"During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept on the same rug - while praying to the same God - with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white. And in the words and in the deeds of the white Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt among the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan and Ghana."

"We were truly all the same (brothers) - because their belief in one God had removed the white from their minds, the white from their behavior, and the white from their attitude."

Al-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X)

On returning from the Hajj, Malcolm X became an orthodox Muslim, renouncing his black supremacist beliefs of the past.

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In order to become a Muslim there are no complex ceremonies, arduous tasks or associated paraphernalia. It's not based on your lineage or heritage but a simple belief in an All-Powerful Creator - God Almighty.

So all a person needs to do to be considered a Muslim is to make the testification of faith, 'La ilaha ila Allah, wa Muhammad ar-rasoolil-lah', which simply means:

"There is nothing worthy of worship except Allah (God) alone and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."

[As-Shahada - The Muslim testimony of faith]

The testimony has two essential parts that form the basis for the Muslims faith. One, that there is a single God and that He alone deserves to be worshipped. Two, that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent as a messenger by God to convey this message to people. Once a person makes this testimony then they are immediately considered a Muslim - one who submits to the One God.



MUSLIMS BELIEVE?

THE TESTIMONY OF FAITH

Part 1 - “There is no god and nothing worthy of worship except Allah (God) alone”

The fundamental message of Islam is simple; to believe in God and worship Him (Allah) alone. This first part of the Muslim testimony of faith forms the basis for understanding God in Islam.

Many faiths may claim a similar belief but the concept of God in Islam is strictly monotheistic and unitarian. God alone has absolute being, is totally independent and totally self-sufficient. Whatever exists does so by His will and He has no ‘partner’ in either creating the universe or in maintaining it in existence. He is the only cause for the universe and all of existence and He is Himself uncaused.



This is clearly stated and reiterated throughout The Quran (the revealed scripture of Islam). In one short verse it succinctly states:

“Say, He is Allah , the One and Only, Allah , The Self Sufficient (all depend upon Him and He has no needs and doesn’t eat or drink), He neither gives birth nor was He born, And there is no co-equal or comparable to Him.”

[The Quran, chapter 112]

“In summary, the God of Islam is transcendent, the All-Powerful, All-Knowing Creator and lawgiver, though at the same time infinitely merciful, generous and forgiving. The human, His creature and servant, stands before Him without intermediary or intercessor, meeting Him through prayer during this brief life on earth, and meeting Him face to face when life is over. In Islam God does nothing like a human being and doesn’t make Himself accessible through idols or images. He is what He is, absolute and eternal, and it is as such the Muslim worships Him”

(Hassan Gai Eaton - The concept of God in Islam).

Part 2 - “and Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the messenger of Allah”

Muslims hold in high esteem all the previous Prophets and messengers including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, Ishmael, Moses, David, Solomon, Jesus and many more (peace be upon them all); all of whom submitted and surrendered themselves to the One God. As the Quran states:

Say, (O believers), “We have believed in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Twelve Tribes (of Israel) and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims (in submission) to Him.”

[The Quran, chapter 2 verse 136]



In the Islamic view, the ‘message’ transmitted through the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is not a new religion, but a reaffirmation of the messages of former true prophets of God. The prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent to correct the falsifications and distortions which had taken place over time and reassert the pure doctrine of the One God; a call to the worship of One God.

The prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is seen as the last and final prophet in a long chain of prophets and messengers. For this reason, unlike previous prophets who were sent for a particular time or to a particular nation, the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is considered to be a messenger to all mankind until the end of time.

AGAINST
RACISM
AGAINST
TOLERANCE



Michael Hart, in his book 'The 100: a ranking of the most influential people in history' states:

"My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels. Of humble origins, Muhammad founded and promulgated one of the world's great religions, and became an immensely effective political leader. Today, thirteen centuries after his death, his influence is still powerful and pervasive."

The recognition of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a prominent figure is universal not only because of his message of equality, but because of his altruistic character. He constantly helped the poor and those who needed assistance. His teachings are therefore universal and apply to any period of time, to people from any part of the world, whether they be rich or poor.

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A MUSLIMS ARTICLES OF FAITH

There are six articles of faith for a Muslim. Two partly covered already in the testimony of faith (belief in God, belief in the messengers of God) mentioned earlier. The four other articles of faith include:

Belief in Divinely Revealed Scriptures and The Quran

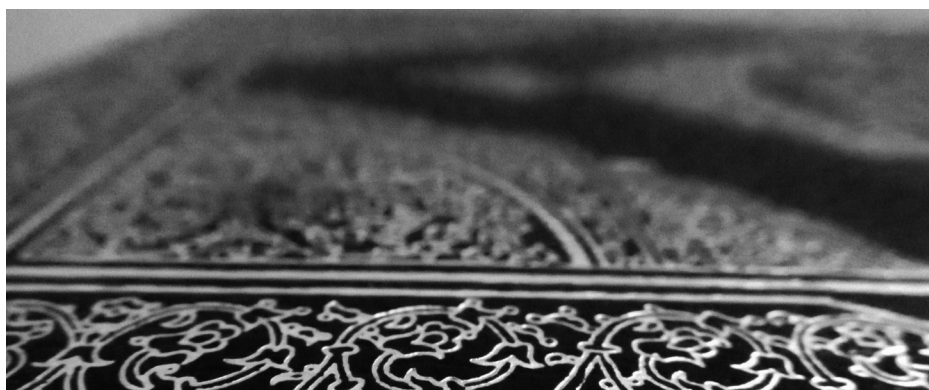
Just as the former prophets and messengers like Moses, Jesus and David (peace be upon them) were given books of revelation such as The Torah, The Gospel and The Psalms respectively, so too was the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the form of the Qur'an. Muslims are required to believe in these previous scriptures that are mentioned in the Qur'an and Islamic traditions, whilst recognising that their true meanings have been lost over time. Hence the Qur'an was revealed as a final lasting message to the whole of mankind.

The Quran was consolidated through successive revelations given to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) over a period of twenty-three years. The revelations were often transmitted by the archangel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad or through direct divine inspiration. Miraculously, the Quran exists in exactly the same form today as it did when it was revealed 1400 years ago.

The guidance contained in the Quran enables us to live a life in a way that God loves and is pleased with. As the Creator, God knows us and is therefore the best authority to guide us on how to live our lives in the best manner. The Quran is therefore a handbook, from the Creator to His creation:

“Oh mankind! there has come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) in your hearts, a guidance and a mercy for those who believe.”

[The Quran, chapter 10 verse 57]



HATRED

Angels

Besides believing in One God, belief in all the previous prophets and messengers, and the revealed scriptures, Muslims also believe in the existence of angels. It is recognised that angels are not like mankind but beings made to serve God and have been given commandments and duties. For example, the archangel Gabriel is responsible for bringing revelation.

Although these pure beings have special and powerful qualities, they are not to be worshipped nor should prayers be directed to them. Rather, only God deserves our worship and He is All Knowing and does not require any intermediaries between Him and us in aspects of worship.

The Day of Judgement

Muslims also believe in a final day of reckoning when every individual will be held to account for their actions. On this day, everyone's deeds will be judged by God (alone) and people will consequently enter paradise or hell. However, it is worth noting that Allah rewards and punishes justly and that one of His magnanimous qualities is that He is the Most Merciful.

Divine Decree

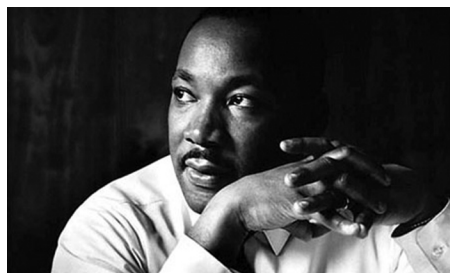
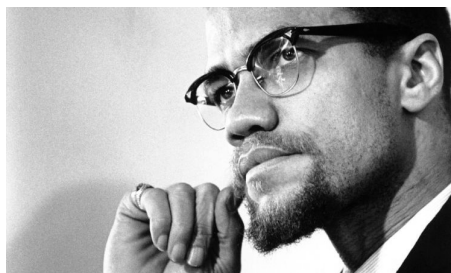
Muslims also believe in divine decree or predestination; that all good and evil has been proportioned and that Allah has full knowledge of all things. However, every individual has free will within their realm of responsibility and is not predestined against their will. Everyone is therefore responsible for the choices they make in their life.



FAMOUS ANTI-R

“Hating people because of their color is wrong. And it doesn’t matter which color does the hating. It’s just plain wrong.”

Muhammad Ali, Former World Heavyweight Boxing Champion

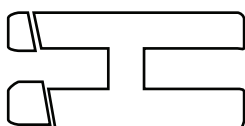


“...with nothing but the sky overhead I lay awake amid sleeping Muslim brothers and I learned that pilgrims from every land - every color, and class, and rank; high officials and the beggar alike - all snored in the same language.”

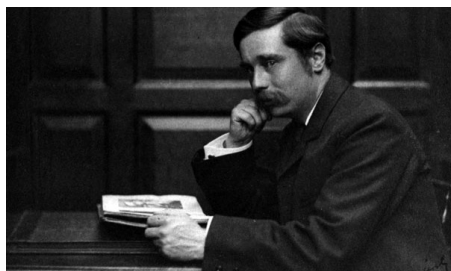
El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X)
African-American Muslim Minister & Human
Rights Activist (1925 to 1965)

“We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.,
Christian Pastor & African-American Civil
Rights Leader (1929 to 1968)

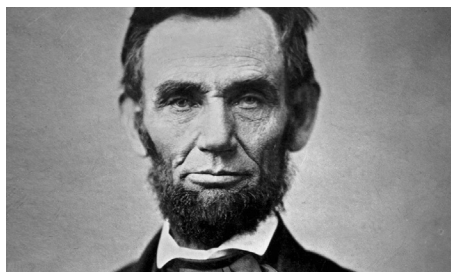


RACISM QUOTES



*“Our true
nationality
is mankind.”*

H.G. Wells, Writer (1866 - 1946)



*“Achievement
has no colour”*

Abraham Lincoln,
16th President of the United States
(1809 - 1865)

*“Racism is a cancer. It
doesn’t matter if you have
a lot or a little, it’s still
cancer!”*

Unknown

*“Racism is a weapon
of mass destruction”*

Unknown

*“At the heart of racism is the religious
assertion that God made a creative
mistake when He brought some people
into being”*

Friedrich Otto Hertz, Writer (1878 to 1964)

DEFINITION OF ISLAMIC TERMS USED

Ka'bah

The Ka'bah is the first place of worship built by Abraham (peace be upon him) and his son Ishmael and is situated in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. According to Islamic and biblical history, it is a region in the desert where Abraham left Hagar and his new born son Ishmael to reside.

One of the historic names for Mecca is also Bacca (3), as it is referred to in the Bible. It is recognised as a holy place where the archangel Gabriel came down and quenched the thirst of the baby Ishmael by God allowing for the creation of a spring. This spring is known as the well of Zam-Zam near the Ka'bah and still exists today, providing water to millions of pilgrims annually.

It is often misunderstood that Muslims believe that God resides in the Kabba. This is not correct. God in Islam is unseen and is outside of creation, in a manner befitting His majesty, presiding over everything.

PBUH - Peace be Upon him

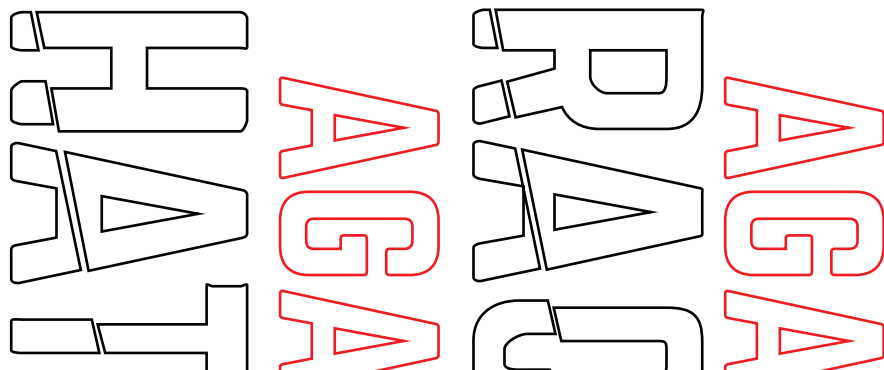
Whenever a prophet or messenger's name is mentioned then it is deemed part of Islamic manners to show respect by stating 'peace be upon him'.

Notes

[1]<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/racism-on-the-rise-in-uk-with-1-in-3-people-admitting-prejudice-9443555.html>

[2]<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2151056/Is-Britain-racist-nation-One-Brits-admits-racist-according-poll.html>

[3] The NIV Bible, Psalms 84:5-6



AGAINST RACISM AGAINST HATRED

“...WITH NOTHING BUT
THE SKY OVERHEAD I LAY
AWAKE AMID SLEEPING MUSLIM
BROTHERS AND I LEARNED THAT
PILGRIMS FROM EVERY LAND -
EVERY COLOUR, AND CLASS,
AND RANK; HIGH OFFICIALS
AND THE BEGGAR ALIKE -
ALL SNORED IN THE
SAME LANGUAGE.”

MALCOLM X
(1925 TO 1965)

*For more information about Islam or it's
views against racism, please log onto:*

ONEREASON.ORG/AGAINSTRACISM

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