

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
In the Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Ever Merciful

16/10/2017

Friday Sermon (*Khutbah*) – Black History Month- Challenging Racism

PART ONE: Black History Month- Challenging Racism

إن الحمد لله نحمده ونستعينه ونستغفره ونعوذ بالله من شرور أنفسنا ومن سيئات أعمالنا ، من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلل فلا هادي له وأشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له وأشهد أن محمدا عبده ورسوله يا أيها الذين ءامنوا اتقوا الله حق تقاته، ولا تموتن إلا وأنتم مسلمون.

My dear respected brothers and sisters,
Asalaamu Alaykum, Peace be with you

As you know, the Jumuah Khutbah (Friday Sermon) is one of the ways that we – as a Muslim Community – communicate with each other on issues that affect us and are of concern to us.

October marks Black History Month. Black History Month takes place every year in the UK and is an opportunity for the contributions of Black people to be celebrated. It is an important month as the contributions of Black people are often overlooked in society.

As Muslims, we often hear about the example of Bilal (May God be pleased with him), a Black Muslim who was deeply loved by the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him). Bilal was a slave who was one of the first individuals in Makkah to respond positively to the Prophet's call to truth and become a Muslim. He then became one of the most important companions of the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) and a *mu'adhin* (one who announces the call to Prayer – *Adhan*).

However, it is true that in today's day and age, Black Muslims face deep prejudices within our Muslim communities. Countless examples from the experiences of Black Muslims have been recorded including the following specific, anonymous examples told to the MCB:

- a) 'I was made to feel less Muslim because I was not Asian or Arab.'
- b) 'Being rejected for marriage due to the colour of my skin.'
- c) Whilst performing her Hajj pilgrimage, one young Black woman reported that she was asked to move by the woman standing in prayer next to her, and when she would not move fully, the woman pushed her whilst she was in *salah* (prayer).

In his last sermon, the Prophet (saw) said: '*All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; a white has no superiority over a black, nor does a black have any superiority over a white; [none have superiority over another] except by piety and good action.*'

This final message clearly explains that the only superiority that someone has over another is in piety and good action.

That we as Muslims today, have failed to internalise this and have allowed an ounce of racism to take place in our communities, is not Islamic at all and far from acceptable in the eyes of Allah (swt).

This must be challenged as it was challenged in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). In one incident, upon Abu Dharr using racist language, the response of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was to tell him, "You are the man who still has the traits of ignorance in him." Upon hearing this, Abu Dharr repented, apologised and offered the man his cloak to show his deep regret at what he had done. (Bukhari)

The Prophet (saw) challenged racism. In the same way, we too should adopt this Sunnah and challenge racism where we see it, be it in our schools, universities, mosques, workplaces or anywhere else.

أقول قولي هذا، واستغفر الله لي ولكم، فاستغفروه، إنه هو الغفور الرحيم.

PART TWO: Black Muslim Role Models

إن الحمد لله نحمده ونستعينه ونستغفره ونعوذ بالله من شرور أنفسنا ومن سيئات أعمالنا ، من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلل فلا هادي له وأشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له وأشهد أن محمدا عبده ورسوله

يا أيها الذين ءامنوا اتقوا الله وقولوا قولا سديداً، يصلح لكم أعمالكم، ويغفر لكم ذنوبكم، ومن يطع الله ورسوله، فقد فاز فوزاً عظيماً.

There are countless examples of Black Muslims in recent and Islamic history who should be celebrated as inspirational role models for all people of whatever ethnic background or faith. For example:

1. **Malcolm X** – Most of us know of Malcolm X. We know that he was an African-American man who fought tirelessly for justice and dedicated his life to this. So many of us know of him, we use him as an example for our children because of his courage yet we perpetuate racism that he was appalled by.
2. **Nana Asma'u** - A less well-known figure is Nana Asma'u. She was a poet, an educator and she was dedicated to the cause of teaching Muslim women at the time. She lived in the 18th century and was responsible for training woman from poorer areas to become teachers. Nana Asma'u is not a name that we hear of often, but it is a name that we should firmly be aware of.

Black British Muslims are using their voices and their skills to challenge the prejudices they face. Earlier this month, the 'Black and Muslim in Britain' film was launched at an event organised by young Black Muslims in the UK, who refuse to be boxed into a narrative that restricts or misrepresents them. These efforts should be welcomed, nurtured and promoted by Muslims everywhere.

The need to create something like this has arisen from Black Muslims being neglected by other Muslim communities. Black Muslims have reported being made to feel that they've adopted Islam rather than Islam being an inherent part of their identity.

So today, brothers and sisters, I encourage you to actively take part in Black History month by promoting the work of Black Muslims and those of other faiths. I encourage you to dedicate your time and efforts to rejecting the discrimination that our own communities reproduce. Do not take away from the achievements of Black Muslims, do not silence Black Muslims when they attempt to speak out about the racism that they face from fellow Muslims. Be an ally, be a friend.

May Allah make us of those who are able to tackle prejudice in our society, challenge structural racism within our communities and keep us steadfast in our faith.

End.